

## **Annex 1 - UN COUNTRY TEAM contribution to the the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR of the Lao People's Democratic Republic**

### **UN Country Team Recommendations to strengthening the follow-up and implementation of UPR outcomes**

The UN Country Team in Lao PDR commends the Government for the advancements made since the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. Building on this and the commitments made to further progress, the UNCT wishes to contribute to further developments and look forward to working in support of the Government's efforts in realising these with the objective of leaving no one behind:

#### *International Commitment and Cooperation*

1. Take concrete steps towards ratifying/acceding to remaining international human rights instruments
2. Conduct inclusive consultation in preparation of timely treaty reports and in implementation of the treaties and concluding observations
3. Accept outstanding visit requests from Special Procedures, consider issuing a standing invitation to them, and fully implement their recommendations
4. Expedite the development and adoption of a system, such as a NMRF to track, monitor and evaluate implementation of international obligations and UN human rights recommendations, and improve data collection, quality and transparency to enable evidence-based policy-making and impact assessment

#### *Equality, Non-Discrimination and Vulnerable Groups*

5. Adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination definition in domestic law, incl. by expanding the list of prohibited grounds for discrimination in line with international human rights and labour law
6. Consider strengthening the legal identity system through the implementation of a holistic civil registration, vital statistics and identity management system that address lifelong legal identity needs and services, from birth to death, and thus meet the targets set under SDG16.9
7. Adopt a rights-based approach to eliminate discrimination and disparities, ensure inclusive growth, particularly targeting vulnerable groups, and to accelerate measures toward meeting the targets set for Lao PDR under the SDGs
8. Enhance existing poverty monitoring mechanisms and systems to improve data collection and analysis to ensure all levels of government and officials develop the capacity to operationalise the pledge to "Leave No One Behind" under the 2030 Agenda by assessing the five intersecting factors: namely discrimination, geography, governance, socio-economic status, and vulnerabilities to shocks
9. Further strengthen the content and enforcement of the 2015 Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Children, incl. by clarifying State obligations in prevention, protection, prosecution, redress, monitoring, and coordination; scaling up dissemination of the Law and ensuring knowledge- and capacity-building among law enforcement and other relevant officials.
10. Ensure victims of GBV have access to effective remedies, incl. through establishing accessible and adequately resourced and mandated mechanisms for receiving, processing and responding to complaints from victims
11. Scale-up public awareness-raising activities aimed at advocating against and eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination, at home and in the workplace, among public and private sectors
12. Further strengthen capacity to harmonise domestic law and practices with CEDAW
13. Consider a phased implementation of the Essential Service Package to fulfil national and international agreements and obligations; Concluding Observations of CEDAW, CSW, ICPD and Beijing Declaration
14. Ratify the respective Optional Protocol on individual communications to CEDAW and CRC
15. Continue the efforts to develop a comprehensive national strategy and policy on all the rights in the CRC, including a comprehensive child protection system, with specific budget allocation, sufficient human resources, and adequate follow-up mechanisms for its full implementation

#### *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*

16. Allocate greater financial and human resources to education, particularly operation costs and human resource (especially teachers) at sub-national level
17. Address disparities in education and learning, especially in access, participation, learning outcomes, and skills development, by prioritising policies, interventions and resource allocations in a more pro-equity manner

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18. Ratify the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) and incorporate its provisions under domestic law
19. Further increase health spending from domestic resources, expand health insurance coverage, and enhance service quality and equitable access, including better protection for poor and vulnerable groups and reduction of reliance on out-of-pocket spending
20. Continue to strengthen national and sub-national level resource allocations to develop and maintain an enabling environment for young people, women and men, and those living in remote areas to access quality sexual and reproductive health and family planning services
21. Take steps to ensure access to safe abortion and consider decriminalising abortion
22. Remove legal, policy and other barriers in accessing HIV/AIDS services, and expand services to reach everyone, including key populations
23. Continue to ensure the development, revision, adoption and enforcement of laws and implementation of policies in land management and use, including the 2019 Land Law, are consultative, transparent and fully compliant with international human rights law and standards
24. Ensure open, fair and transparent access to effective remedies by persons and communities adversely impacted by State and non-State actors' actions in land management and use
25. Consider introducing a systemic response to the challenges posed by overuse of pesticides incl. strengthening protocols and capacity to monitor import and remediate pesticide contamination at provincial and national levels; raising consumer awareness to reduce exposure of the most vulnerable groups; and reintroducing alternatives/reduced use through more integrated efforts at the local level
26. Adopt a comprehensive, gender-responsive and disability-inclusive approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, consistent with the UNFCCC and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, to address the economic, cultural and social impact and challenges that climate change represents, for the full and effective enjoyment of human rights for all
27. Strengthen the Labour Law, including by improving promotion and protection of collective bargaining rights, the procedures for resolving disputes between workers and employers, definition of sexual harassment, and definition of child labour in line with ILO Convention 182

### *Civil and Political Rights*

28. Continue to conduct gap analysis to align domestic law with international obligations and ensure the results contribute to concrete legal sector reforms that protect human rights
29. Remove the death penalty from the Penal Code
30. Reinforce efforts to improve access to effective remedies, incl. capacity-building of officials and justice sector professionals, provision of legal aid, outreach of justice service delivery, and possible establishment of a Paris-Principles-compliant national human rights institution
31. Strengthen the overall oversight capacity of the NA to promote and protect human rights
32. Accelerate and simplify the registration process for civil society organisations, and establish accessible, safe and inclusive channels for dialogues to inform policy-making and monitoring of implementation and impact
33. Develop and maintain a safe and enabling environment for civil society to independently and freely contribute to national development and the promotion and protection of human rights
34. Fully implement the legal provisions protecting fundamental freedoms in accordance with the ICCPR and other international human rights law and standards
35. Continue to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement officers to be able to identify victims of trafficking; enhance coordination between law enforcement agencies, mediation units, and victim protection providers; and prosecute trafficking cases effectively
36. Noting with concern that the disappearance of Mr. Sombath Somphone in December 2012 remains unresolved, the UNCT reiterates the recommendation made to the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of the UPR, requesting the Government to continue to prioritise its efforts in investigating the whereabouts and fate of Mr. Somphone to bring the investigation to a formal close