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Universal periodic review

## Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review\*

### Lao People's Democratic Republic

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## Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its thirty-fifth session from 20 to 31 January 2020. The review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic was held at the 3rd meeting, on 21 January 2020. The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic was headed by the Minister to the Prime Minister's Office, Chairman of the National Committee on Human Rights, Bounkeut Sangsomsak. At its 9th meeting, held on 24 January 2020, the Working Group adopted the report on the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

2. On 14 January 2020, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia and Italy.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic:

(a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/35/LAO/1);

(b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) (A/HRC/WG.6/35/LAO/2);

(c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/35/LAO/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Belgium, Canada, Germany, Liechtenstein, Portugal, on behalf of the Group of Friends on national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America was transmitted to the Lao People's Democratic Republic through the troika. These questions are available on the website of the universal periodic review.

## I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

### A. Presentation by the State under review

5. The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic highlighted that the promotion and protection of human rights in the country had been a part of its long history. Over the past five years, the Lao People's Democratic Republic had maintained political stability, social order and economic growth leading to a gradual enhancement of people's living conditions and enjoyment of their rights. The Government was in the final year of its implementation of the eighth national socioeconomic development plan (2016–2020), and was in the process of formulating its ninth such plan, for 2021–2025, integrating the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

6. The Lao People's Democratic Republic had actively cooperated with international and regional human rights mechanisms. It had become a party to almost all of the human rights instruments. It had engaged in bilateral human rights dialogues with Australia and the European Union. During the reporting period, the State had submitted a number of national reports to treaty bodies and had received visits from the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material, in 2017, and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, in 2019.

7. The State had an open and supportive policy for all people to have the freedom to express their opinions in a creative manner and the freedom of peaceful assembly, to conduct research and to produce publications that were not contrary to the law. Those rights

were guaranteed in the Constitution and the law on mass media. The Government also paid attention to restraining abuses of online social media, such as spreading fake news, disinformation and pornographic material.

8. Noting the importance of non-profit associations and foundations as partners for socioeconomic development and poverty alleviation, the delegation highlighted Decree No. 238, on associations and foundations, which allowed civil society organizations to receive funding and technical support in accordance with the national law and guidelines. Currently 163 associations and 25 foundations had been approved by relevant authorities.

9. With regard to a disappearance case, the delegation gave assurances that the Government had not ceased its efforts to continue the investigation in accordance with the law and as requested by the family. However, many questions remained unanswered. The investigation committee it had established continued to look into all aspects that might deliver further clarity on the cause of the disappearance. The investigation could take time and the Government would continue its efforts in that regard.

10. Poverty reduction was one of the top priorities of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The country aimed to graduate from least developed country status by 2024 and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in order to steadily improve the livelihoods of its people. The Government had adopted its Vision 2030 framework, the strategic plan for rural development and the eradication of poverty (2016–2025) and a strategic development plan to 2030, which had been incorporated into its eighth national socioeconomic development plan (2016–2020), with a view to elevating the country to middle-income status. Significant progress had been made in terms of poverty reduction in the past few years.

11. Education was another area of priority. The country had adopted a number of laws relating to the education sector, such as the Law on Education, in 2015, the decree on higher-level education, in 2015 and a decree on monastic education, in 2017. The country was implementing its education and sports development plan for 2016–2020 and its education vision to 2030 framework, and the Government had strived to allocate 17 per cent of its gross domestic product to the education sector annually.

12. Since the second cycle of the universal periodic review, the Government had continued to reform its public health sector, in order to provide its people with broad and accessible health-care coverage. The implementation of the health reform plan for 2016–2020, the National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and the National Nutrition Plan of Action for 2016–2020 was ongoing. The Government had also focused on improving the infrastructure for, and expanding, its public health network in urban and rural areas.

13. Land was a national treasure under the ownership of all of the country's multi-ethnic people, with the State administering the land on behalf of the people in a collective and uniform manner. The State acknowledged and protected the right to land ownership for inherited land. In 2016, Decree No. 84/PM, on land compensation and resettlement of people affected by development projects, had been adopted to provide fair compensation and land replacement. In 2018, the National Assembly had adopted a law on settlement and sustainable jobs allocation, and in 2019, it had adopted the law on land. Permission for land concession for development projects required the certification of environmental and social impact assessments, and economic and technical analyses. Committees had been established to seek public opinion and consult with the people who might be affected. Where relocation of people was needed, the State provided new areas for resettlement and implemented a compensation policy.

14. The Lao People's Democratic Republic attached importance to the protection of the rights and best interests of children, and had created the national action plan on the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children (2014–2020), the national action plan for mothers and children (2016–2020) and the national action plan on the elimination of child labour (2014–2020).

15. The Lao People's Democratic Republic had adopted the law on persons with disabilities in 2019 in order to strengthen the protection of the rights and interests of persons with disabilities, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against persons with

disabilities and to provide such persons with enabling conditions for self-development, self-reliance and access to social activities.

16. Remaining challenges included the need for promoting a better understanding of the law among law enforcement officers, government officials, judicial officials and the public in general, addressing the lack of sufficient resources to further its socioeconomic development to achieve its target of graduating from least developed country status, and addressing the impact of unexploded ordnance and other war remnants, which hindered national socioeconomic development and had a negative impact on the livelihoods of people in remote rural areas.

## **B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review**

17. During the interactive dialogue, 89 delegations made statements. Recommendations made during the dialogue are to be found in section II of the present report.

18. Cuba highlighted the efforts made to implement the recommendations accepted during the previous periodic review, in particular progress made in education, health, and poverty reduction.

19. Cyprus noted the adoption of the strategic development plan for 2016–2025, the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into the country's planning framework, and the reduction in illiteracy.

20. Czechia noted the improved legal framework on children's rights, and applauded the improved school enrolment rates among girls and the reduced scope of offences punishable by the death penalty.

21. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea commended progress made in human rights through the adoption and implementation of the strategic development plan for 2016–2025.

22. Denmark commended the strengthened legal and policy framework related to children's rights, and noted that human rights were indispensable in the pursuit of sustainable development.

23. The Dominican Republic welcomed the approval of laws aimed at facilitating, to a greater extent, the registration approval process and the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

24. Croatia commended the efforts made in harmonizing legislation with international standards and the steps taken towards establishing the rule of law. It regretted that incidents of torture continued to be reported.

25. Estonia commended the commitment to eliminating violence against children and gender-based violence. It encouraged the country to ensure women's access to sexual and reproductive health care, contraceptives and sexual education.

26. Ethiopia congratulated the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the adoption of the strategic development plan and its Vision 2030 framework, and recognized the significant progress made in the field of gender equality.

27. Fiji congratulated the Lao People's Democratic Republic for its achievements in the implementation of recommendations from the previous cycle.

28. Finland thanked the Lao People's Democratic Republic for its national report and made recommendations.

29. France noted that despite the efforts undertaken by the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the human rights situation in the country remained of concern.

30. Georgia expressed appreciation for the measures taken to protect children's rights, and for the adoption of a national strategy and national plans of action in that regard.

31. Germany welcomed the progress in implementing human rights instruments and hosting special rapporteurs, while remaining concerned at restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly.
32. Honduras expressed satisfaction at measures taken to strengthen the legal and normative framework for children's rights, and to increase women's and girls' access to education.
33. Iceland welcomed the recent reduction in the scope of offences for which the death penalty could be imposed.
34. India acknowledged the challenges faced and commended the achievements of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in meeting most of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the significant reduction in poverty levels.
35. Indonesia commended progress in economic, social and cultural rights, emphasizing the need for continued cooperation to reduce the poverty gap between urban and rural areas.
36. The Islamic Republic of Iran commended the Lao People's Democratic Republic for accepting nearly 60 per cent of the recommendations made during the previous cycle of the universal periodic review.
37. Iraq welcomed the commitment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to submitting national reports to treaty bodies and to developing national plans to promote the rule of law and good governance.
38. Ireland encouraged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to take steps to further strengthen the human rights framework by establishing a national human rights institution in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).
39. Italy appreciated the adoption of constitutional amendments to better protect human rights and the law on combating violence against women and children.
40. Japan expressed appreciation for the adoption of laws to improve human rights, the submission of four reports to treaty bodies and the acceptance of visits from two special rapporteurs.
41. Jordan expressed appreciation for the adoption of 42 new pieces of legislation since 2015, testifying to the country's commitment to improving human rights.
42. Kuwait applauded the adoption of laws, the development of plans and the strengthening of cooperation with the international community and mechanisms on human rights protection.
43. Kyrgyzstan welcomed the strengthening of the legislative and policy frameworks in the field of children's rights, in particular the adoption of national plans for mothers and children.
44. Latvia welcomed information on the country's cooperation with special procedure mandate holders. Latvia expressed concern about continued restrictions on freedom of expression.
45. Luxembourg expressed appreciation for its bilateral partnership with the Lao People's Democratic Republic. It encouraged the authorities to ensure that national policies supported equitable development throughout the whole country.
46. Malaysia lauded the country's commitment to developing and improving laws and policies to guarantee people's rights, and expressed appreciation for the contribution made by the Lao People's Democratic Republic to building the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Community.
47. Maldives commended the measures taken to raise awareness of the country's Constitution by facilitating access to legal information.
48. Malta welcomed the country's cooperation with treaty bodies and special procedure mandate holders, as well as the measures taken to improve freedom of expression and of association, and to safeguard women and families.

49. The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic noted that, in accordance with article 94 of its Constitution and with the Law on the People's Court, any interference in court affairs was prohibited and court decisions could be based only on the law. Judges and their families were protected from any harm and threats.

50. The delegation highlighted the importance of improving and developing detention conditions to ensure suitable living conditions for inmates. There were 18 detention facilities, including 2 in the capital. The Government had allocated about \$107 million to improve infrastructure and to address overcrowding in prisons.

51. The Penal Code that went into effect in 2018 reduced the number of articles carrying the death sentence to 12. During the special debate of the draft Penal Code, the majority members of the National Assembly were of the view that there was a need to maintain the death penalty, but reserve it for the most serious crimes. It was at the discretion of the courts to decide on the most appropriate sentence, while the law guaranteed impartiality, transparency and the rights of the accused in trials. Those who were sentenced to death had a right to appeal.

52. Mexico appreciated efforts made to incorporate into national legislation the explicit criminalization of torture and trafficking, and encouraged the country to continue strengthening its legal framework.

53. Mongolia called on the Lao People's Democratic Republic to step up efforts to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and to accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

54. Montenegro encouraged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to further engage in the promotion of human rights and the provision of equal access for women and men to resources and treatment for HIV/AIDS.

55. Morocco welcomed the adoption of 42 new laws and the plan for making and amending laws (2015–2020). It commended the incorporation of international instruments into domestic law.

56. Myanmar commended achievements made by the Lao People's Democratic Republic in poverty alleviation and its efforts to graduate from least developed country status by 2024.

57. Nepal appreciated the continued cooperation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic with human rights mechanisms and its commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and improving maternal health-care services.

58. The Netherlands welcomed the commitment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to bringing domestic legislation into line with international human rights instruments, but remained concerned about the restricted space for civil society.

59. New Zealand noted positively that the death penalty had not been enforced since 1989 and commended improvements in the education of girls.

60. Nicaragua welcomed the presentation of the national report by the Lao People's Democratic Republic and made recommendations.

61. Norway noted the positive step taken by the Lao People's Democratic Republic to invite the Special Rapporteur on human rights and extreme poverty to visit the country.

62. Pakistan appreciated the efforts made to ensure gender equality and health care and commended the national plan on reproductive health, services for mothers and newborns and child health care.

63. Paraguay expressed appreciation for the efforts made by the Lao People's Democratic Republic to incorporate international treaties into its legislation and for the national action plan on the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children.

64. The Philippines commended the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the advances made in the areas of development and poverty reduction, including in the areas of basic education and health-care services.
65. Poland expressed appreciation for efforts made to improve and develop national laws in line with United Nations human rights standards, but expressed concern about the detention and enforced disappearance of human rights defenders.
66. Portugal welcomed the progress made in the protection of the rights of the child and the promotion of gender equality, as well as visits by United Nations special rapporteurs.
67. Qatar expressed appreciation for the measures taken to implement recommendations from the previous review and noted efforts to strengthen national institutions and to create new machinery to comply with treaty obligations.
68. The Republic of Korea noted the progress made on gender equality and was encouraged by the efforts made in poverty reduction, judicial reform and access to health and education.
69. The Russian Federation expressed satisfaction with the reforms undertaken to implement the master plan for rule of law, and the active participation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in regional cooperation on human rights.
70. Serbia welcomed the efforts invested and measures taken to improve human rights, including in the raising of awareness of and training on human rights.
71. Singapore commended efforts made in children's education and poverty reduction. It urged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to investigate and resolve the case of Mr. Somphone's disappearance in an expeditious manner.
72. Slovenia welcomed the importance accorded to awareness-raising and human rights training for State officials and the public and noted the handbook on basic human rights.
73. Solomon Islands noted that the National Steering Committee on Human Rights had been renamed the National Committee on Human Rights, which had a mandate to promote human rights.
74. Spain welcomed the progress made in strengthening the normative framework on the rights of the child. It noted an increase in detentions of and attacks on human rights defenders.
75. Sri Lanka welcomed the amendments to the Constitution and noted that the Lao People's Democratic Republic had incorporated the provisions of ratified human rights treaties into its domestic law.
76. Switzerland expressed concern about cases of enforced disappearance, the lack of progress in Mr. Somphone's case, and restrictions on the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association.
77. The Syrian Arab Republic welcomed the efforts made by the Lao People's Democratic Republic, particularly with regard to improving living standards and the gradual improvement made under the strategic development plan for 2016–2025.
78. Thailand commended progress towards graduation from least developed country status and applauded the achievements in promoting gender equality and the efforts to increase literacy and school enrolment rates.
79. Timor-Leste welcomed the measures taken to increase access to education and the adoption of the national action plan on the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children.
80. Tunisia welcomed the ratification by the Lao People's Democratic Republic of a number of international conventions, the launch of new programmes and the adoption of the law on combating gender-based violence.
81. Turkmenistan welcomed the efforts made by the Lao People's Democratic Republic to become an upper-middle income country by 2030, and acknowledged the adoption of the plan for making and amending laws (2015–2020).

82. The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic noted progress made in the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women. The National Assembly had adopted the law on gender equality in 2019 and there had been an increase in the proportion of women in the National Assembly and the judiciary. The Government remained committed to increasing women's participation in political decision-making and the presence of women in leadership positions at the local level.

83. A study had been conducted with regard to a national human rights institution, which indicated that there was a strong need to further strengthen the legal framework and the existing mechanisms, such as the National Committee on Human Rights, the National Commission on the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children and the national committee on elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, there was a law on complaints and petitions, providing a right to lodge a complaint against individual decisions taken by government organizations and to receive remedies.

84. Ukraine recognized the steps taken by the Lao People's Democratic Republic to ensure the enjoyment of human rights by its citizens, but expressed concern over information regarding the shrinking space for civil society.

85. The United Kingdom expressed appreciation for the increasing infrastructure and development, but remained concerned about projects resulting in forced land appropriation.

86. The United States remained deeply concerned about human rights in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, particularly about severe restrictions on fundamental freedoms that deprived citizens of an opportunity to exercise their basic rights.

87. Uruguay urged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to continue reforms to guarantee the protection of human rights for its entire population, paying special attention to minorities, migrants and women.

88. Uzbekistan welcomed the institutional, political and socioeconomic reforms, in particular the amendments to the Constitution strengthening protection of basic rights and liberties.

89. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomed education and health policies and the priority given to poverty reduction, aimed at achieving graduation from least developed country status by 2024.

90. Viet Nam noted the efforts made in improving legislation and policies on human rights, as well as impressive economic development and poverty reduction.

91. Yemen welcomed efforts to align domestic legislation with international instruments against torture, trafficking in persons and discrimination, and on the rights of women and persons living with disabilities.

92. Zambia commended the implementation of recommendations from the previous cycle and the adoption of the national action plan on the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children.

93. Afghanistan acknowledged the significant progress made in reducing illiteracy and gender disparity, but remained concerned about pressure on the media and limitations on some rights.

94. Algeria welcomed measures to improve access to education, literacy and the enrolment of girls in school, as well as the strengthening of the legal and political framework for children's rights.

95. Argentina commended the Lao People's Democratic Republic for its cooperation with the international community and international organizations with a view to implementing past universal periodic review recommendations.

96. Armenia welcomed the adoption of the national strategic plan on reproductive health, services for mothers and newborns and child health care, and efforts to implement human rights treaties.

97. Australia commended the Lao People's Democratic Republic for its commitment to improving social and economic rights and increasing engagement with special procedure mandate holders.

98. Azerbaijan welcomed the increased cooperation with treaty bodies and special procedure mandate holders and measures aimed at building an environment for the enjoyment of all human rights.

99. Bangladesh noted the initiatives taken to amend and adopt several laws and policies, expressed appreciation for the country's economic growth and applauded the country's submission of reports to treaty bodies.

100. Belarus commended the strengthening of human rights legislation and the adoption of a number of strategies, including on sustainable development and protection of motherhood and child rights.

101. Belgium commended the country's cooperation with two United Nations special rapporteurs and expressed its conviction that more progress could be achieved in line with human rights treaties.

102. Benin welcomed the legislative and institutional reforms and the adoption of a strategy and plans of action on mothers and children and against violence against women and children.

103. Bhutan noted the efforts made in streamlining the domestic laws in line with international treaties and congratulated the Lao People's Democratic Republic for progress in promoting and protecting the rights of women and children.

104. Brazil appreciated the preliminary results from the national action plan for mothers and children and encouraged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to continue to implement measures to reduce maternal mortality.

105. Brunei Darussalam commended the adoption of national plans on mothers and children and the introduction of a system in which education up to lower secondary school was mandatory and free.

106. Bulgaria appreciated the progress made in strengthening the legal and policy framework for the rights of women and children, and encouraged the country to make further efforts in the area of child protection.

107. Cambodia applauded the country's impressive economic growth, anti-corruption legislation, and efforts to engage with ASEAN and United Nations human rights mechanisms.

108. Canada recognized the commitment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations mechanisms. It encouraged the country to reconsider Decree No. 238, which limited the activities of civil society.

109. Chile welcomed the national action plan on the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children, and the ratification of international conventions on torture and persons with disabilities.

110. China commended the efforts made in improving people's living standards, developing education and public health services, and protecting the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities.

111. Egypt commended the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the establishment of national committees for the empowerment of women and children, persons with disabilities and older persons, and on anti-trafficking efforts.

112. The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic noted that in order to better facilitate the lawful religious activities of its citizens, the country had amended Decree No. 92, on the management and protection of religious activities, and had adopted Decree No. 315, in 2016.

113. Trafficking in persons was a criminal offence under the law against trafficking in persons and the Penal Code. The Government had actively focused on combating

trafficking in persons and rescuing victims. The third national action plan on trafficking in persons, for 2021–2025, was currently under consideration. In order to tackle the root causes, the Government had taken a preventive approach aimed at raising awareness and creating a better understanding of the risks of falling victim to trafficking.

114. In conclusion, the delegation expressed its gratitude and appreciation to all Member States for giving guidance and recommendations to improve the human rights situation in the country, and expressed hope that the recommendations would be followed up by improvements before its next review.

## **II. Conclusions and/or recommendations**

115. **The following recommendations will be examined by the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the forty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council.**

115.1 **Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Belgium) (Cyprus) (Estonia) (Honduras);**

115.2 **Consider acceding to or ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, as previously recommended (Slovenia); Step up efforts to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Uruguay); Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, considering Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Paraguay);**

115.3 **Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty and enact legislation abolishing the death penalty for all crimes and in all circumstances (Croatia);**

115.4 **Establish a formal moratorium on the death penalty with a view to ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Australia);**

115.5 **Fully abolish the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Iceland);**

115.6 **Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, signed in 2008 (France);**

115.7 **Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Chile) (Montenegro); Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance without reservations (Ukraine); Consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Uruguay); Accede to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Iraq);**

115.8 **Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and ensure its implementation (Switzerland);**

115.9 **Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and ensure its effective implementation (Belgium);**

115.10 **Conclude the process of ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance quickly, and investigate all cases of enforced disappearance, including the case of Sombath**

**Somphone, and of Laotians abroad, and bring perpetrators to justice (Germany);**

**115.11 Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and initiate full and impartial investigations into allegations of enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment (Italy);**

**115.12 In addition to considering the early ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, continue to make efforts to address the case of the missing human rights defender (Japan);**

**115.13 Ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Honduras);**

**115.14 Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Sri Lanka);**

**115.15 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Cyprus) (Denmark) (Honduras);**

**115.16 Consider accession to the Optional Protocol on the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Sri Lanka);**

**115.17 Ratify and implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and establish an independent, efficient and well-resourced national preventive mechanism with powers to conduct unimpeded visits to all places of detention (Croatia);**

**115.18 Ratify the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) (Honduras);**

**115.19 Ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) to advance towards the targets of Sustainable Development Goals 5.4, 8 and 16 (Paraguay);**

**115.20 Consider ratifying the ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) (Brazil);**

**115.21 Ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Honduras);**

**115.22 Accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court (Estonia);**

**115.23 Accede to and fully align national legislation with all of the obligations under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, as previously recommended (Latvia);**

**115.24 Ratify the Convention against Discrimination in Education (Serbia);**

**115.25 Align national laws with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Iraq);**

**115.26 Consider the extension of a standing invitation to all special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, as previously recommended (Latvia);**

**115.27 Issue a standing invitation to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council (Cyprus) (Montenegro) (Ukraine);**

**115.28 Strengthen regional and international cooperation in the field of human rights (Malaysia);**

115.29 Continue its work in the direction of the adoption and implementation of human rights treaties by ratifying and implementing the international human rights instruments in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations bodies (Armenia);

115.30 Continue constructive cooperation with treaty bodies and the special procedures (Egypt);

115.31 Establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Finland) (Germany) (Mexico); Establish an independent national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Ukraine); Establish a unified national human rights institution with sufficient resources in accordance with the Paris Principles (Spain); Deploy efforts to establish a national human rights institution, in line with the Paris Principles (Chile); Consider the creation of an independent national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles (Tunisia); Consider establishing a national human rights institution fully compliant with the Paris Principles (Afghanistan) (Republic of Korea);

115.32 Strengthen the national human rights mechanisms in compliance with the Paris Principles (India);

115.33 Make efforts to strengthen national human rights institutions in accordance with the Paris Principles (Nepal);

115.34 Begin the process of establishing a national human rights institution fully compliant with the Paris Principles (Zambia);

115.35 Continue taking targeted steps to improve the national legislation in the area of human rights and freedoms (Russian Federation);

115.36 Continue incorporating the international norms on human rights into the national legislation (Uzbekistan);

115.37 Further strengthen the capacities of public officials on human rights, including through collaboration with other States (Indonesia);

115.38 Take further measures to raise awareness and understanding of human rights in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Japan);

115.39 Continue with actions to cooperate with the international community to improve the country's capacities (Jordan);

115.40 Further intensify its efforts on human rights education and capacity-building for duty bearers and stakeholders (Philippines);

115.41 Continue with efforts to provide further training and information on human rights standards to government officials and judges, as well as human rights education to businesses, students and the general public (Thailand);

115.42 Further continue its awareness-raising and training activities on human rights for State officials and the general public to raise legal awareness across the country (Turkmenistan);

115.43 Approve a comprehensive national strategy on the rights of the child that includes a specific budget line and appropriate monitoring mechanisms (Spain);

115.44 Request cooperation from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish a permanent national mechanism for the implementation of, reporting on and follow-up to human rights recommendations, within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17 (Paraguay);

115.45 Continue to strengthen actions to implement and monitor recommendations received and accepted in the context of the universal periodic

review, and also to establish a mechanism to link this with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (Dominican Republic);

115.46 Adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that addresses direct and indirect discrimination and encompasses all the prohibited grounds of discrimination, including sexual orientation and gender identity (Iceland);

115.47 Continue taking steps to improve the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, particularly by identifying their needs, and consider involving lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex representatives in decision-making processes (Malta);

115.48 Take the necessary measures to prevent and combat discrimination and persecution against ethnic and religious minorities, and to guarantee their right to freedom of expression and conscience, as well as their access to health care, education and an adequate standard of living (Mexico);

115.49 Adopt a comprehensive, gender-responsive and disability-inclusive approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation policies, consistent with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, to address the economic, cultural and social impacts and challenges that climate change represents, for the full and effective enjoyment of human rights for all (Fiji);

115.50 Continue taking effective measures to combat climate change (Nicaragua);

115.51 Enhance its strategy of mitigating vulnerabilities against prolonged drought and floods through a robust climate resilience scheme (Ethiopia);

115.52 Review the Government's economic strategy, taking necessary steps to conserve the environment by developing guidelines to conduct studies on the environmental impacts of foreign investment projects (Maldives);

115.53 Consolidate the progress made towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals and in the improvement of human development indicators (India);

115.54 Make every effort to promote the right to development, which positively affects the people's rights, in particular in economic and social areas (Islamic Republic of Iran);

115.55 Continue with its hard work to incorporate the targets and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals into the national plans (Nicaragua);

115.56 Develop a national action plan for full implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (Norway);

115.57 Incorporate the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities and other relevant groups into its ninth national socioeconomic development plan, and consider taking integrated approaches in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and human rights policies, where applicable (Thailand);

115.58 Intensify the ongoing efforts towards inclusive economic growth, further poverty reduction, and increased investment in rural health-care services (Cambodia);

115.59 Abolish the death penalty (Canada) (Portugal);

115.60 Take measures aimed at the definitive abolition of the death penalty (Luxembourg);

115.61 Consider abolishing the death penalty for all crimes in all circumstances (Malta);

115.62 Consider taking further action towards the abolition of the death penalty (New Zealand);

- 115.63 Enact legislation abolishing the death penalty for all crimes and in all circumstances, following on from the revision of the Penal Code, which reduces the scope of offences for which the death penalty may be imposed (Ireland);
- 115.64 Introduce a de jure moratorium on executions, with a view to the complete abolition of the death penalty (Italy);
- 115.65 Establish an official moratorium on the application of the death penalty, as a preliminary step to its final abolition, and modify the Penal Code to reduce the number of crimes for which capital punishment can be imposed (Spain);
- 115.66 Take the necessary steps to repeal the death penalty from its national legislation (Argentina);
- 115.67 Consider an official moratorium on the death penalty, as a first step towards the abolition of capital punishment (Brazil);
- 115.68 Officially establish a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to abolishing it, and commute capital punishment to imprisonment (France);
- 115.69 Maintain the moratorium on executions and abolish the death penalty (Czechia);
- 115.70 Ensure impartial and independent investigations and prosecution, as well as bring all perpetrators of enforced disappearance to justice (Finland);
- 115.71 Establish an independent body to investigate deaths and enforced disappearances in the country and provide this body with the investigative powers by law that are necessary to conduct free, independent and reliable investigations (Maldives);
- 115.72 Continue taking measures to improve investigations into cases of enforced disappearance (Malta);
- 115.73 Ensure independent and impartial investigations into cases of enforced disappearance and hold perpetrators to account (Netherlands);
- 115.74 Undertake full, independent investigations into all unresolved cases of alleged enforced disappearances, including that of Sombath Somphone (New Zealand);
- 115.75 Undertake impartial, thorough and transparent investigations into enforced disappearances, including that of Sombath Somphone (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
- 115.76 Conduct independent, impartial and transparent investigations into all alleged cases of enforced disappearance, including that of Sombath Somphone, ensuring family members are regularly informed of any progress (Australia);
- 115.77 Conduct credible and in-depth investigations into all alleged cases of enforced disappearance, including the disappearance of Sombath Somphone and other human rights defenders (Canada);
- 115.78 Conduct thorough, independent and impartial investigations to clarify all unexplained enforced disappearances of human rights defenders in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Poland);
- 115.79 Undertake domestic independent investigations into the disappearances and deaths of democracy and human rights activists (United States of America);
- 115.80 Take all necessary steps to define the crime of enforced disappearance in its national legislation in order to investigate and punish the perpetrators of such acts (Argentina);

115.81 Prevent and combat arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment, in particular against members of the Hmong community; initiate impartial and independent investigations of such acts; and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Portugal);

115.82 Amend national legislation to ensure that it is fully consistent with the international human rights obligations of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and, in particular, to provide for fair trials and freedom from torture and arbitrary detention (Ukraine);

115.83 Continue to implement measures and programmes to improve conditions of detention and guarantee the rights of persons deprived of liberty (Dominican Republic);

115.84 Redouble efforts to improve conditions of detention centres in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) (Zambia);

115.85 Strengthen the independence of the judiciary, and ensure full and effective access to judicial remedies to vulnerable people and minorities (Italy);

115.86 Take effective measures to safeguard the independence and impartiality of the judiciary (Czechia);

115.87 Continue efforts to promote the rule of law and good governance, notably the strengthening of the justice sector (Morocco);

115.88 Strengthen justice sector organizations and build the capacity of law students and legal professionals (Syrian Arab Republic);

115.89 Strengthen its ongoing process to improve the justice sector and build good governance and public administration through its legal sector master plan for rule of law 2009–2020 (Turkmenistan);

115.90 Ensure the right to freedom of expression (Cyprus);

115.91 Enhance freedom of expression, lifting restrictions for independent media and providing a safe environment for the work of journalists and human rights defenders (Italy);

115.92 Ensure that freedom of expression is safeguarded in all its forms (Norway);

115.93 Ensure freedom of expression and media freedom by bringing national legislation into line with international standards (Latvia);

115.94 Guarantee the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression by revisiting relevant legislation, including article 65 of the Penal Code (Denmark);

115.95 Guarantee the effective exercise of freedom of expression, assembly and association by revising its legislation so as not to hinder the work of NGOs and human rights defenders (Luxembourg);

115.96 Ensure the right to freedom of expression by repealing article 56 of the Penal Code on acts of betrayal towards the nation and article 65 of the Penal Code on propaganda against the State, in line with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Declaration on Human Rights Defenders) (Netherlands);

115.97 Review and amend legislation and practices relating to freedom of expression and assembly to fully enable the function of non-governmental organizations and civil society (New Zealand);

- 115.98 Repeal all legislation inhibiting freedom of opinion and expression that is not compatible with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
- 115.99 Ensure that any restrictions on the exercise of the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly comply with the requirements of articles 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Belgium);
- 115.100 Guarantee freedom of expression of the press, assembly and association as well as freedom of religion and belief, in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Uruguay);
- 115.101 Reform criminal defamation legislation in conformity with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Estonia);
- 115.102 Fully fulfil the obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to respect and guarantee the right to freedom of expression (Canada);
- 115.103 Guarantee unhindered and private access to domestic and foreign media information for all, both offline and online (Estonia);
- 115.104 Bring the Criminal Code into line with obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and immediately release individuals whose arrest and detention under these provisions restricted the legitimate exercise of their right to freedom of opinion and expression (United States of America);
- 115.105 Guarantee the effective exercise of freedom of expression by revising its legislation on the media as well as legislation on the fight against cybercrime (Luxembourg);
- 115.106 Amend laws that restrict freedom of expression, assembly and association to comply with international human rights law (Australia);
- 115.107 Adopt legislative changes that guarantee the protection and free exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly (Spain);
- 115.108 Guarantee the freedom of peaceful assembly, opinion and expression, and freedom of the press by releasing all those detained solely because they exercised or defended the exercise of these rights (France);
- 115.109 End the arbitrary arrest of individuals for exercising their right to freedom of opinion and expression, including those who peacefully criticize the Government, speak out about negative impacts of infrastructure or investment projects or expose instances of corruption (Germany);
- 115.110 Refrain from initiating criminal proceedings against individuals for the peaceful exercise of their civil rights, including the right to privacy and freedom of expression, association and assembly, having regard to the importance of creating and maintaining a safe and enabling environment for journalists, human rights defenders and other civil society actors (Ireland);
- 115.111 Ensure the full enjoyment of the freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and progress to fully investigate all allegations of arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances and criminal convictions for expressions of political opposition or criticism of State policies (Czechia);
- 115.112 Create and maintain a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders and civil society to constructively contribute to policymaking and national development (Norway);
- 115.113 Put an end to the arrests of those who peacefully express their opinions (Switzerland);

115.114 Amend Decree No. 238 and its associated amendments to align it with the international human rights obligations and commitments of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, including by eliminating the following: burdensome registration requirements; arbitrary curtailment of activities and finances of associations; criminalization of unregistered associations and the Government's harassment of their members; and the ability to arbitrarily dissolve non-profit associations, without the right of appeal (United States of America);

115.115 Facilitate a supportive environment to better enable civil society organizations to operate (Australia);

115.116 Review and amend Decree No. 315 to ensure that administrative procedures for religious groups are not arbitrary, vague and discriminatory, and to eliminate the wide latitude local officials have to discriminate against and persecute religious minorities (Solomon Islands);

115.117 Allow all religious communities to meet and conduct activities freely, regardless of whether they are incorporated or registered (Solomon Islands);

115.118 Introduce a mechanism to monitor and regulate local officials, especially in rural areas, to ensure they conform with human rights standards and do not arbitrarily and discriminatorily target Christians and other religious minorities (Solomon Islands);

115.119 Intensify efforts to combat human trafficking, especially of women and children, including by enhancing the work of the national steering committee on anti-human trafficking (Georgia);

115.120 Develop and implement a national action plan on human trafficking and modern slavery, using this as a framework to evaluate progress on combating modern forms of slavery, and allocate funded budgets to the national action plan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);

115.121 Take steps against trafficking in persons and related labour and sexual exploitation, with special emphasis on child victims, women and members of ethnic minorities (Czechia);

115.122 Continue to enhance measures and programmes to combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children (Philippines);

115.123 Increase further efforts to combat trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, including by improving law enforcement practices with a view to bringing to justice and punishing the perpetrators, as well as by providing victims of trafficking with protection and rehabilitation (Belarus);

115.124 Continue the efforts to ensure the protection of women and children victims of trafficking, including by providing them with improved access to shelters (Republic of Korea);

115.125 Take all the necessary measures to put an end to child trafficking, including for the purposes of labour and sexual exploitation, as well as to all harmful practices against women and girls, including child, early and forced marriage (Italy);

115.126 Intensify efforts to enhance bilateral, regional and international cooperation to combat trafficking in persons (Qatar);

115.127 Strengthen efforts to eliminate human trafficking by enhancing awareness-raising campaigns for vulnerable groups in remote areas (Indonesia);

115.128 Take preventive and awareness-raising measures in order to further develop the fight against human trafficking (Azerbaijan);

115.129 Provide protection to families, as the natural unit and the most important foundation of society, in a more effective manner (Islamic Republic of Iran);

115.130 Continue its measures to implement the national action plan for poverty reduction, in order to alleviate poverty and to improve the standards of living (Myanmar);

115.131 Ensure effective implementation of national targeted development programmes to further improve the living conditions of the population (Uzbekistan);

115.132 Continue to take concrete actions aimed at eliminating poverty, and continue to improve the living standards of the population (Cuba);

115.133 Continue to take concrete measures to eliminate poverty and improve living standards for its people (Pakistan);

115.134 Continue its poverty reduction efforts and effectively implement poverty reduction plans and programmes (Bhutan);

115.135 Continue to promote economic and social sustainable development and reduce the number of people living in poverty (China);

115.136 Continue to develop policies and legislation for inclusive growth and poverty reduction (Singapore);

115.137 Continue efforts in socioeconomic development and poverty eradication to further facilitate the enjoyment of the human rights of its people (Viet Nam);

115.138 Continue efforts, with the international community's support and assistance, in promoting and protecting human rights, particularly the economic, social and cultural rights of its people (Bangladesh);

115.139 Accelerate efforts to achieve economic growth aimed at raising the living standards of all people, including those living in remote areas (Democratic People's Republic of Korea);

115.140 Strengthen efforts to provide social services in remote areas (Syrian Arab Republic);

115.141 Continue to implement its development plans to raise the standard of living of the population and provide them with the necessary services, especially in rural areas (Yemen);

115.142 Develop a national policy to enable people in rural areas to benefit from economic programmes aimed at reducing poverty (Qatar);

115.143 Continue implementing its poverty reduction efforts across the entire country, in particular in rural areas (Azerbaijan);

115.144 Take further steps to enhance access to social services by vulnerable sectors, including women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities, among others (Philippines);

115.145 Continue to implement poverty alleviation measures and investment in health and education sectors, including by incorporating human rights knowledge in such measures as well as in the education curricula in order to sensitize and increase nationwide awareness of human rights principles (Indonesia);

115.146 With the support of international cooperation, continue to strengthen its targeted policies of investment in health, education and poverty reduction (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);

- 115.147 Accelerate efforts to achieve economic growth aimed at raising the living standards of all people, particularly regarding health-care services and those living in remote areas (Kuwait);
- 115.148 Continue measures towards inclusive socioeconomic development through investment in the health and education sectors, including in the rural areas (Nepal);
- 115.149 Continue its efforts to eradicate poverty and promote access to education for all citizens (Bangladesh);
- 115.150 Ensure that population relocations as a result of land concessions to development projects are carried out in accordance with relevant international standards, in particular the principle of non-discrimination, and with adequate consultation and compensation (Poland);
- 115.151 Improve planning of development and investment projects to avoid forced displacement, and improve resettlement and compensation plans for land expropriation (Luxembourg);
- 115.152 Manage all infrastructure projects, including dams and their safety, to the best of its ability to avoid forced displacement, include the communities concerned in the decision-making process and, in the event of inevitable displacement, guarantee effective compensation and relocation programmes in accordance with international standards (Switzerland);
- 115.153 Ensure that the adoption and enforcement of laws, including the land law of 2019, and implementation of policies in land management and use, are consultative, transparent and fully compliant with international human rights law and standards (Germany);
- 115.154 Ensure the full and effective implementation of the national strategic plan on reproductive health, services for mothers and newborns and child health care and the national plan of action for mothers and children (Brunei Darussalam);
- 115.155 Continue implementing policies to improve access to and the quality of public health services, with special focus on rural areas and the reduction of infant mortality (Cuba);
- 115.156 Enhance efforts to reduce the rate of maternal and child mortality (Islamic Republic of Iran);
- 115.157 Implement policies aimed at reducing high rates of child and maternal mortality (Georgia);
- 115.158 Extend the public health system with a view to providing more basic health services to all and reducing child mortality (Kyrgyzstan);
- 115.159 Continue to strengthen the national health system to further reduce maternal and infant mortality (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);
- 115.160 Redouble its efforts to reduce maternal mortality and implement programmes aimed at reducing child mortality and morbidity (Afghanistan);
- 115.161 Effectively implement programmes to reduce infant mortality and morbidity rates, in particular by upgrading the skills of midwives and by establishing quality standards for maternal and neonatal care (Algeria);
- 115.162 Continue with its efforts towards combating infant, child and maternal mortality and malnutrition rates (Armenia);
- 115.163 Continue to reinforce efforts to support inclusive growth and prioritize budgetary allocations in primary education and in the reduction of malnutrition and maternal and infant mortality rates (India);
- 115.164 Continue to strengthen national and subnational 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 services (Fiji);

115.165 Address barriers preventing women and girls from accessing sexual and reproductive health services as made available by the 2016 guidelines on the prevention of unsafe abortions (Iceland);

115.166 Legalize abortion in cases of risk to the health of the pregnant woman, rape, incest or severe fetal impairment and decriminalize abortion in all other cases (Estonia);

115.167 Continue its effective measures to improve women's access to health services, in particular reproductive health services (Malaysia);

115.168 Make greater efforts to implement policies and programmes ensuring that women and girls have access to sexual and reproductive health services throughout the national territory (Uruguay);

115.169 Ensure that all women and girls have access to appropriate sexual and reproductive health services, and implement policies, including awareness-raising, to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls (Norway);

115.170 Continue to increase access to health services and education among women and girls, in particular those living in rural and remote areas (Japan);

115.171 Scale up the investment in and improve the availability and quality of services in rural and remote areas, in particular access to education and health, including sexual and reproductive health, addressing the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, girls and members of ethnic minorities (Portugal);

115.172 Continue its efforts to improve implementation of its policies on public health and develop health-care infrastructure in remote areas (Democratic People's Republic of Korea);

115.173 Expand the public health network in urban and rural areas (Syrian Arab Republic);

115.174 Allocate adequate resources to provide affordable and quality basic medical services to its people (Viet Nam);

115.175 Further develop health services and strengthen public health systems (China);

115.176 Continue ongoing efforts to develop the health sector and achieve universal health coverage (Egypt);

115.177 Continue efforts to promote and protect the rights of children to education (Brunei Darussalam);

115.178 Further promote education and strive to provide compulsory education to all children (China);

115.179 Strengthen measures to improve the quality and scope of the education system, particularly in remote areas (Cuba);

115.180 Strengthen partnerships with regional and international bodies that are responsible for education to ensure quality education for all (Jordan);

115.181 Continue creating favourable conditions for ensuring access to free and quality primary and secondary education for all children (Kyrgyzstan);

115.182 Continue to take the necessary measures for all children to have equal access to quality education, especially those who live in rural and remote areas (Qatar);

115.183 Continue its efforts to create favourable conditions for ensuring access to free and quality education for all children (Democratic People's Republic of Korea);

- 115.184 Continue efforts to provide quality education for all (Malaysia);
- 115.185 Keep moving towards full and free access to quality primary and secondary education, for all children, boys and girls, and adolescents (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);
- 115.186 Further strengthen measures to ensure sufficient allocation of teachers and improvement of school facilities in remote areas (Myanmar);
- 115.187 Make further efforts towards addressing disparities in the education of girls (New Zealand);
- 115.188 Continue to take concrete action to address disparities in access to education, especially among rural ethnic groups, as a means to combat poverty, early marriage and human trafficking (Norway);
- 115.189 Strengthen measures to further realize the right to education, by providing adequate school facilities and teachers in remote areas (Pakistan);
- 115.190 To address the teacher shortage, consider working, where appropriate, with bilateral partners and relevant United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Children's Fund, to attract and train volunteer teachers (Singapore);
- 115.191 Strengthen measures to further promote the right to education, especially to ensure sufficient teachers and school facilities in remote areas (Viet Nam);
- 115.192 Continue its exerted effort to empower women for more participation in all levels of decision-making (Myanmar);
- 115.193 Continue its efforts to empower women in decision-making roles at all levels (Pakistan);
- 115.194 Continue to implement measures to improve the political participation of women (Philippines);
- 115.195 Continue consolidating national mechanisms that enable greater participation of and equality for women, as well as promotion and protection of the rights and well-being of women and girls (Dominican Republic);
- 115.196 Continue efforts to ensure gender equality and build an appropriate environment to promote women's empowerment (Tunisia);
- 115.197 Enhance endeavours to increase women's participation in public affairs and economic development (Cambodia);
- 115.198 Take measures to increase the representation of women in politics, particularly applying the 25 per cent quota for the representation of women at all levels of government (Canada);
- 115.199 Continue adopting and implementing national plans to empower women in all spheres of life (Azerbaijan);
- 115.200 Ensure that all girls and women, especially those living in rural and remote areas, have access to education, eliminate discriminatory stereotypes keeping girls from attending school and build awareness among parents and local authorities on the importance of education for women (Algeria);
- 115.201 Continue measures of promoting and protecting the rights of women and children, including awareness-raising and training (Bhutan);
- 115.202 Continue efforts to develop a comprehensive child protection system with specific budget allocation, human resources and adequate follow-up mechanisms to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Fiji);
- 115.203 Continue the satisfactory progress, and the reform of the judicial and legal framework, related to the rights of the child (Nicaragua);

- 115.204 **Adopt a comprehensive strategy to eliminate discrimination against children in marginalized or vulnerable situations (Timor-Leste);**
- 115.205 **Take measures to further develop a comprehensive national policy and strategy for child protection with the aim of eliminating discrimination against children in marginalized or vulnerable situations, including girls (Bulgaria);**
- 115.206 **Foster efforts to strengthen child protection and protect children against violence (Tunisia);**
- 115.207 **Prohibit all forms of corporal punishment of children in all settings (Uruguay);**
- 115.208 **Ensure that corporal punishment of children, however light, is explicitly prohibited in the Penal Code (Zambia);**
- 115.209 **Expand and accelerate implementation of existing frameworks in order to reduce the high rates of child marriage in rural areas (Iceland);**
- 115.210 **Take steps with a view to prohibiting early and forced marriage (Cyprus);**
- 115.211 **Establish legislation to effectively criminalize child marriage and adopt effective measures to eliminate such practice (Chile);**
- 115.212 **Implement programmes and measures to end early pregnancy among and forced and early marriage of girls, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal targets 5.3 and 5.4 (Paraguay);**
- 115.213 **Guarantee the strict application of the family law prohibiting early marriage and polygamy, particularly in rural and ethnic communities (Spain);**
- 115.214 **Reform legislation to prohibit forced marriage and put an end to impunity for perpetrators of violence against women and girls (France);**
- 115.215 **Take immediate actions to criminalize the sexual exploitation, abuse and sale of children (Cyprus);**
- 115.216 **Adopt legal provisions to criminalize all forms of sexual exploitation of children in compliance with international legal standards, specifically on sexual exploitation of children in prostitution and online child sexual exploitation, in order to afford substantive protection to all children, including those belonging to ethnic minorities (Poland);**
- 115.217 **Adopt legislative measures to ensure that all forms of sexual abuse, exploitation and sale of children are prohibited and criminalized (Denmark);**
- 115.218 **Increase efforts to prevent child sexual exploitation (Timor-Leste);**
- 115.219 **Adopt legislative measures to criminalize all forms of sexual abuse, violence, exploitation and sale of children (Estonia);**
- 115.220 **Prohibit child labour in accordance with international norms and standards, including by setting the minimum age for employment at 14 years, without exceptions, and take specific measures to ensure and stimulate that all children, including girls, attend school, in particular in rural and remote areas (Portugal);**
- 115.221 **Adopt legal and administrative provisions for the issuance of birth certificates free of charge, as well as for the establishment of civil registration offices in all districts, with a particular focus on rural areas (Mexico);**
- 115.222 **Allocate financial and human resources to implement the national plan of action for persons with disabilities (Syrian Arab Republic);**
- 115.223 **Allocate financial and human resources to implement the national plan of action for persons with disabilities (Timor-Leste);**

115.224 **Continue its actions and initiatives to implement the national plan of action for persons with disabilities (Benin);**

115.225 **Consider developing an efficient system for identifying and addressing the individual support needs of children with disabilities (Bulgaria);**

115.226 **Ensure that refugees and asylum seekers are protected, and any attacks on them are subject to prompt, thorough and independent investigation (Afghanistan).**

116. **All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.**

## Annex

### Composition of the delegation

The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic was headed by H.E. Mr. Bounkeut Sangsomsak, Minister to the Prime Minister's Office, Chairman of the National Committee on Human Rights and composed of the following members:

- H.E. Mr. Thongphane Savanphet, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Head of Delegation;
- H.E. Mr. Kham-In Khitchadeth, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the Lao PDR to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, Delegate;
- Hon. Mr. Viengthavison Thephachanh, Member of the National Assembly, Vice-Chairman of Foreign Affairs Committee, National Assembly, Delegate;
- H.E. Mr. Khamphanh Bounphakhom, Vice President of the People's Supreme Court, Delegate;
- H.E. Mr. Phoukhong Sisoulath, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of Belgium, and to the European Union, Delegate;
- Brig. Gen. Mr. Somlid Daohongsuli, Director-General, Department of Detention and Corrections, Ministry of Public Security, Delegate;
- Mr. Douangmany Gnotsyoudom, Director-General, Department of Treaty and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Delegate;
- Mr. Pineprathana Phanthamaly, Director-General, Department of Mass Media, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Delegate;
- Mr. Nalonglith Norasing, Director-General, Department for Law Review and Assessment, Ministry of Justice, Delegate;
- Mr. Sosonephit Phanouvong, Director-General, Department of Ethnic and Religious Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, Delegate;
- Mr. Phongsaysack Inthalath, Director-General, Department of Labour Management, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Delegate;
- Mr. Chit Thavisay, Executive Director of the Poverty Reduction Fund, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Delegate;
- Ms. Chansoda Phonethip, Executive Board Member of the National Commission for Advancement of Women and Mother-Child, Director General of the Secretariat Office to the National Commission for Advancement of Women and Mother-Child, Delegate;
- Mr. Sitsangkhom Sisaketh, Counselor, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Lao PDR to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations Delegate;
- Mr. Sisavath Koumphon, Deputy Director-General, Department of Policy for Devotees, Disabilities and the Elderly, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Delegate;
- Mr. Kanya Khammoungkhoun, Deputy Director-General, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Delegate;
- Ms. Vilayluck Seneduangdeth, Deputy Director-General, Department of Treaty and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Delegate;

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- Mr. Thiphasone Sengsourinha, Director of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Division, Department of Treaty and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Delegate;
  - Mr. Xayfhong Sengdara, Deputy Director of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Division, Department of Treaty and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Delegate;
  - Mr. Khonesavanh Panyanouvong, Deputy Director of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Division, Department of Treaty and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Delegate;
  - Mr. Alomlangsy Rajvong, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Lao PDR to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations, Delegate (Interpreter);
  - Mr. Phetvanxay Khouasakoun, Official, Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Division, Department of Treaty and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Delegate (Interpreter);
  - Ms. Sililat Siengsounthone, Third Secretary, the Embassy of the Lao PDR to the Kingdom of Belgium, Delegate;
  - Mr. Kittiphone Sayaphet, Attaché, Permanent Mission of the Lao PDR to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations, Delegate (Focal Point);
  - Mr. Khankeo Somsengdeuane, Secretary to the Minister to the Prime Minister's Office, Delegate;
  - Mr. Sathaphone Mounlasarn, Photographer, Permanent Mission of the Lao PDR to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations, Delegate;
  - Mr. Thongchanh Douangmalalay, President of the Lao Disabled People Association, Observer; and
  - Mrs. Virith Kattiignavong, Director of Sengsavang (SSV), INGOs support the Venerable Child and Women, Observer.
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