



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
4 November 2019

Original: English

---

**Human Rights Council**  
**Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**  
**Thirty-fifth session**  
20–31 January 2020

## **Compilation on the Lao People's Democratic Republic**

### **Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

#### **I. Background**

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review. It is a compilation of information contained in reports of treaty bodies and special procedures and other relevant United Nations documents, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

#### **II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies<sup>1, 2</sup>**

2. The Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic consider ratifying the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).<sup>3</sup> The Human Rights Committee recommended the ratification of the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.<sup>4</sup>

3. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure,<sup>5</sup> the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.<sup>6</sup>

4. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) encouraged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to ratify the Convention against Discrimination in Education.<sup>7</sup>

5. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended considering accession to the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption, of 1993,<sup>8</sup> and strengthening technical cooperation with, among others, the United Nations Children's Fund and regional mechanisms.<sup>9</sup> The Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material, recommended increasing collaboration with neighbouring



countries, including with regard to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.<sup>10</sup>

6. The Special Rapporteur also recommended issuing a standing invitation to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council.<sup>11</sup>

### **III. National human rights framework<sup>12</sup>**

7. The United Nations country team noted that the Government had integrated Sustainable Development Goals targets and indicators into its national planning framework, including the eighth national socioeconomic development plan (2016–2020).<sup>13</sup>

8. The Human Rights Committee<sup>14</sup> and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women<sup>15</sup> recommended that the Lao People’s Democratic Republic begin the process of establishing a national human rights institution fully compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

9. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women<sup>16</sup> recommended ensuring the strict application of the Family Law, which prohibited early marriage and polygamy, in particular among rural and ethnic communities.<sup>17</sup>

10. The Committee on the Rights of the Child welcomed the progress made in strengthening the legal and policy framework related to children’s rights and noted the continuing efforts by the Lao People’s Democratic Republic to incorporate the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into its national laws.<sup>18</sup> While noting with appreciation the adoption of the National Strategy for Mothers and Children (2016–2025) and the National Plan of Action for Mothers and Children (2016–2020), the Committee recommended adopting a comprehensive national strategy with a specific budget allocation and adequate follow-up mechanisms.<sup>19</sup>

11. The United Nations country team reported that the first phase of developing a national youth policy covering young people aged 15–25 had recently been completed. The policy was aimed at promoting access to social services, skills development opportunities and civic participation. The process had involved young people from across the country and included many young people from traditionally underrepresented groups, including youth with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth.<sup>20</sup>

12. The Human Rights Committee welcomed the adoption of the National Action Plan on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Children (2014–2020).<sup>21</sup>

13. The Committee on the Rights of the Child urged the Lao People’s Democratic Republic to take all necessary legislative, judicial and administrative steps to simplify and accelerate the registration process for civil society organizations working on children’s rights.<sup>22</sup>

### **IV. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law**

#### **A. Cross-cutting issues**

##### **1. Equality and non-discrimination<sup>23</sup>**

14. The Human Rights Committee recommended that the Lao People’s Democratic Republic take measures, including considering adopting a comprehensive anti-discrimination law, to ensure that the relevant legal framework provides adequate protection against all forms of discrimination, including in the private sphere, on all the

prohibited grounds under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and access to remedies for all victims of discrimination.<sup>24</sup>

## **2. Development, the environment, and business and human rights<sup>25</sup>**

15. The United Nations country team noted that, in promoting the commercialization of agroforestry and the expansion of hydropower, land concessions had been agreed with investors of development projects and hydropower dams. In that context, local communities, including ethnic groups, had reportedly been forced to relocate. Moreover, it appeared that in some instances no prior consultations had been held and no adequate compensation had been provided, resulting in an adverse impact on the livelihood and lifestyle of the communities concerned.<sup>26</sup>

16. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights stated that existing development strategies relying heavily on hydropower, infrastructure projects such as railways and land concessions needed to be complemented by policies to promote sustainable agriculture and the manufacturing, services and technology industries. The Special Rapporteur also stated that the human rights of people directly affected by dam construction and operation should be taken fully into account: private entities involved in the hydropower sector should be held fully accountable for adverse consequences suffered by affected people.<sup>27</sup>

17. The United Nations country team indicated that the Government was taking actions to address climate change. A law on disaster management and a decree on climate change should be adopted or promulgated in 2019.<sup>28</sup>

## **3. Human rights and counter-terrorism**

18. The Human Rights Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic revise the current broad definition of terrorism under the Law on Money-Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism, and ensure that any existing or new counter-terrorism legislation was fully compliant with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and that persons suspected of or charged with terrorist acts or related crimes were provided in law and practice with all legal safeguards.<sup>29</sup>

## **B. Civil and political rights**

### **1. Right to life, liberty and security of person<sup>30</sup>**

19. The United Nations country team noted that the revised Penal Code retained the death penalty. Despite a de facto moratorium since 1989, death sentences continued to be imposed, primarily for drug-related offences, which does not meet the threshold of "most serious crimes".<sup>31</sup> The Human Rights Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic maintain the moratorium on executions and give due consideration to the legal abolition of the death penalty. Pending the abolition of the death penalty, the Lao People's Democratic Republic should undertake a comprehensive review of relevant legislation to ensure that the death penalty could be imposed only for the most serious crimes, that is, only for crimes of extreme gravity involving intentional killing, and also ensure that, if imposed at all, the death penalty is never imposed in violation of fair trial procedures.<sup>32</sup>

20. The Human Rights Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic eliminate overcrowding in places of detention, including by the use of non-custodial alternative measures to detention, in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other relevant international standards, such as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules); redouble its efforts to improve conditions of detention in accordance with the Covenant and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules); refrain from imposing solitary confinement, except in the most exceptional circumstances for strictly limited periods; and establish an independent and

effective mechanism mandated to regularly monitor and inspect all places of deprivation of liberty, and facilitate visits by independent organizations.<sup>33</sup>

21. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention rendered an opinion regarding the deprivation of liberty of three Lao citizens stating that it was arbitrary and in contravention of articles 9, 10, 11 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and 9, 14 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>34</sup> The Working Group also considered that, taking into account all the circumstances of the case, the appropriate remedy would be to release the three persons immediately, and accord them an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, in accordance with international law.<sup>35</sup> On 25 July 2016, five special procedure mandate holders sent an urgent appeal to the Government asking for information concerning the legality of the arrest and detention of the above-mentioned persons, the location of their detention, the availability of legal counselling and measures to protect human rights defenders. Furthermore, the mandate holders expressed concern about the criminalization of the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and called on the Government to respect and guarantee those rights and ensure a safe environment for human rights defenders.<sup>36</sup>

22. The Human Rights Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic ensure that anyone arrested or detained should enjoy in practice all the fundamental legal safeguards enshrined in article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights from the outset of the deprivation of liberty, including prompt access to counsel, and should have the lawfulness of the detention decided upon by a court; anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge should be brought before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power within a few days, ordinarily within 48 hours; the use of excessively lengthy periods of pretrial detention should be addressed effectively; and that such a person should be tried within a reasonable time or released.<sup>37</sup>

## **2. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law<sup>38</sup>**

23. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the influence exerted on the judiciary by the ruling party owing to, *inter alia*, the procedures for the appointment, transfer and removal of judges and prosecutors, and the constitutionally secured oversight of the National Assembly over people's courts and the Office of the Public Prosecutor.<sup>39</sup> The Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic take measures to eradicate all forms of undue interference with the judiciary and safeguard, in law and in practice, the independence and impartiality of the judiciary by, *inter alia*, ensuring that procedures for the selection, appointment, promotion, suspension, removal of and disciplinary action against judges and prosecutors were in compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and relevant international standards.<sup>40</sup>

24. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the lack of a legal framework to define and criminalize all acts of enforced disappearance, and about the prevalent pattern of impunity for such acts.<sup>41</sup> The Committee recommended effectively criminalizing enforced disappearance and ensuring that such criminal provisions were enforced in practice; stepping up efforts to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into all cases of alleged enforced disappearances; ensuring that victims and their families were provided with full reparation, rehabilitation, adequate compensation and guarantees of non-repetition; and ensuring that perpetrators were prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with penalties appropriate for the gravity of the crime.<sup>42</sup>

25. The Human Rights Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic bring the definition of torture, including in the draft Penal Code under consideration, into conformity with article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international standards, preferably by codifying it as an independent crime that was not subject to a statute of limitations and that stipulated sanctions commensurate with the gravity of the crime. The Committee also recommended ensuring that all allegations of torture and ill-treatment and deaths in custody were promptly investigated by an independent body, that perpetrators were prosecuted and, if convicted, were punished with sanctions consistent with the gravity of the crime, and that victims and, where appropriate, their families were provided with reparation, rehabilitation and adequate compensation.<sup>43</sup>

26. The United Nations country team noted that victims of human rights violations who have limited education and were poor, faced greater barriers in accessing the formal justice system, as well as other reporting and complaint mechanisms, such as those concerning human trafficking and violence against migrants.<sup>44</sup>

### **3. Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life<sup>45</sup>**

27. The Human Rights Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic guarantee the effective exercise of freedom of religion in practice, ensuring, *inter alia*, the protection of Christians against any form of persecution or discrimination based on their religion, and sanction any such conduct.<sup>46</sup>

28. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about laws and practices that appeared not to comply with the principles of legal certainty, necessity and proportionality as required by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including broadly formulated offences of defamation, libel and insult, of "propaganda against the Lao People's Democratic Republic" and of "gatherings aimed at causing social disorder", and their use to curtail freedom of opinion, expression and peaceful assembly. The Committee also expressed concern at the criminalization of online criticism of the Government and the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, or of circulating false or misleading information online; at the State control over the media, including the restrictions reportedly aimed at ensuring strict adherence to and promotion of government policy; reports of arbitrary arrest, detention, trial without due process and criminal convictions for expression of political opposition and criticism of State authorities or policies, including through the Internet.<sup>47</sup>

29. The Human Rights Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic revise its laws and practices with a view to guaranteeing the full enjoyment of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly by everyone in practice, including by: repealing or otherwise amending the criminal provisions providing for broadly defined offences to ensure compliance with the principle of legal certainty, and refraining from applying such provisions to suppress conduct and speech protected by the Covenant; considering decriminalizing defamation; and promoting plurality of opinions in the media, and ensuring that the media can operate free from undue State interference.<sup>48</sup> UNESCO encouraged the Government to decriminalize defamation and insult laws and place them within the Civil Code, in accordance with international standards.<sup>49</sup>

30. The Human Rights Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic give effect to the constitutional guarantee of freedom of association in practice and revise relevant laws, regulations and practices with a view to bringing them into compliance with article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>50</sup> The United Nations country team noted that in November 2017 the Government adopted Decree No. 238 on the operation of non-profit associations and that, since then, such associations had expressed difficulties in carrying out their work.<sup>51</sup>

31. The Human Rights Committee noted the constitutionally defined leading role of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, and considered that the principles and procedures governing the nomination of candidates for elections, compounded by the restrictions on the freedom of expression, assembly and association, did not ensure the right of citizens to genuinely take part in the conduct of public affairs, to vote and to be elected.<sup>52</sup> The Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic take all measures necessary to give full effect to the right of citizens to genuinely take part in the conduct of public affairs, to vote and to be elected.<sup>53</sup>

### **4. Prohibition of all forms of slavery<sup>54</sup>**

32. The United Nations country team stated that most of those trafficked in rural areas were trafficked for the purposes of labour and sexual exploitation. The majority of child victims of trafficking were between 12 and 18 years of age and most trafficked girls had never attended school or had not even completed primary schooling. Ethnic minorities tended to be overrepresented among trafficked children.<sup>55</sup>

33. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic investigate, prosecute and adequately punish

perpetrators of trafficking in persons, ensure the protection of women and girls who were victims of trafficking and provide them with free and immediate access to specialized shelters, medical care, legal aid and rehabilitation and reintegration services.<sup>56</sup> The Committee also recommended investigating and punishing individuals who exploited women and girls in prostitution and providing assistance, including health care and rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, for women and girls exploited in prostitution.<sup>57</sup>

## **C. Economic, social and cultural rights**

### **1. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work<sup>58</sup>**

34. The United Nations country team indicated that a large proportion of the working-age population worked in subsistence-level activities in the agricultural and informal sectors, and that those activities were often characterized by low income, poor working conditions and inadequate access to social protection and workplace representation.<sup>59</sup>

35. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended improving access for women to formal employment by strengthening professional training for women and ensuring that the principle of equal pay for work of equal value was adhered to in all sectors; monitoring and improving the working conditions of women in the informal and private sectors, in particular through regular labour inspections to combat exploitative labour practices; and amending article 83 of the Labour Law to include a definition of sexual harassment and impose sanctions for perpetrators and adopt measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>60</sup>

### **2. Right to social security**

36. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended ensuring that all women engaged in unpaid work or in the informal sector, both in rural and urban areas, had access to non-contributory social protection schemes. The Committee also recommended introducing for women in the informal and rural economies the cash benefits in case of maternity, disability and old age that were available under the formal economy social security scheme.<sup>61</sup>

### **3. Right to an adequate standard of living<sup>62</sup>**

37. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty stated that people in rural areas had been left behind by economic progress and that they accounted for almost 90 per cent of those in poverty.<sup>63</sup>

38. The United Nations country team reported that the Government had adopted the National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action 2016–2020 and that the national action plan on gender equality placed an emphasis on food and nutrition, including on reducing the rate of girls under 5 years of age who were underweight.<sup>64</sup>

39. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic allocate sufficient financial, human and technical resources for the implementation of the National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action 2016–2020 and that it give critical importance to maternal, infant and young child nutrition in rural areas.<sup>65</sup>

### **4. Right to health<sup>66</sup>**

40. The Human Rights Committee<sup>67</sup> and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women<sup>68</sup> expressed concern that maternal mortality remained high and recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic redouble its efforts to reduce maternal mortality. The United Nations country team stated that good progress had been made concerning maternal and infant mortality and the mortality rate of children under 5 years of age. However, health outcomes continued to vary greatly based on factors such as geography, ethno-linguistic group, mother's education and socioeconomic status.<sup>69</sup>

41. The United Nations country team indicated that the prevalence of adolescent pregnancies was high, in particular in rural areas among girls from certain ethnic groups and from poor families.<sup>70</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended ensuring that women had access to good-quality sexual and reproductive health-care services, including access to modern contraceptives and age-appropriate education on sexual health.<sup>71</sup> The Human Rights Committee made a similar recommendation.<sup>72</sup>

42. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended implementing programmes aimed at reducing child mortality and morbidity rates, including by improving midwives' skills and adopting quality standards for maternal and newborn care.<sup>73</sup> The Committee also recommended adopting a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents with special attention to preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.<sup>74</sup>

43. The United Nations country team noted that the new Penal Code criminalized abortion except in cases where there was a risk to life. Unsafe abortions appeared to be prevalent.<sup>75</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended legalizing abortion in cases of risk to the health of the pregnant woman, rape, incest or severe fetal impairment and decriminalizing abortion in all other cases.<sup>76</sup> The Human Rights Committee recommended amending legislation with a view to ensuring effective access to safe, legal abortions when the life or health of the pregnant woman or girl was at risk, or where carrying a pregnancy to term would cause the woman or girl substantial pain or suffering, most notably when the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest, or when it was not viable, and ensuring that criminal sanctions were not applied to women and girls who underwent abortions or to medical service providers.<sup>77</sup>

44. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women also recommended guaranteeing equal access for women and men to HIV/AIDS prevention and adequate treatment resources, as well as free access to antiretroviral medicines for women and girls, paying particular attention to women in prostitution and migrant women.<sup>78</sup>

## **5. Right to education<sup>79</sup>**

45. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty noted that, although education was free, the ancillary costs of education, including for uniforms, food and transportation, kept children from poor families out of school.<sup>80</sup> UNESCO made similar remarks underlining that, although public schools from preschool to upper-secondary education were free of charge, children living in poverty and remote, rural areas experienced a serious educational disadvantage.<sup>81</sup>

46. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women welcomed the measures taken to increase access to education and improve literacy and enrolment rates among women and girls.<sup>82</sup> It recommended ensuring that all girls and women, in particular those living in rural and remote areas, had access to education; and eliminating discriminatory stereotypes that impeded access for girls to education and raised awareness among parents and community leaders of the importance of education for women.<sup>83</sup> UNESCO too noted that the literacy rate had significantly increased, from around 58 per cent in 2011 to 85 per cent in 2019, and the gender disparity was diminishing.<sup>84</sup>

## **D. Rights of specific persons or groups**

### **1. Women<sup>85</sup>**

47. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended ensuring that the prohibition of discrimination against women was accompanied by appropriate enforcement mechanisms and sanctions, with the allocation of adequate human, technical and financial resources.<sup>86</sup>

48. The Committee also recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic address the root causes of early marriage and polygamy and carry out public awareness-raising programmes to end such practices, including campaigns on the negative

consequences of early pregnancy and marriage for girls; and adopt measures to protect girls already in early marriages and unions.<sup>87</sup>

49. The Committee further recommended ensuring that women had effective access to justice by, *inter alia*, ensuring access to free legal aid and interpretation services, and that women who were victims of gender-based discrimination and violence could file complaints without fear of retribution or stigma and have access to effective remedies and victim support.<sup>88</sup> The United Nations country team stated that the 2015 Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Children contained a definition of violence and criminalized marital rape and sexual violence by partners and individuals. However, the Law did not clearly provide for protection orders and favoured the use of alternative dispute resolution processes, such as mediation, for dealing with cases of violence against women.<sup>89</sup>

50. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic establish clear procedures for the implementation of temporary special measures to ensure gender equality in the appointment of women to decision-making positions in the Government, the foreign service, the judiciary, the police and the military.<sup>90</sup>

51. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty stated that poor women were routinely shut out of decision-making processes, including ones with a profound impact on their lives, and were deeply disadvantaged in relation to education, access to formal work and positions of authority.<sup>91</sup>

52. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended implementing measures to increase access for rural women to education, health, competitive markets and income-generating activities, including by integrating a provision into the national rural employment strategy for support to young rural women, women heads of household and women with disabilities.<sup>92</sup>

53. The Committee also recommended adopting a comprehensive gender-sensitive migration policy to protect Lao migrant workers abroad effectively and addressing the root causes of migration among women; and implementing regulations concerning employment agencies for migrant workers, with sanctions for non-compliance, to ensure that migrant women were protected from exploitation.<sup>93</sup>

54. The Committee further recommended taking measures to combat discrimination and stigmatization faced by women and girls living with HIV/AIDS and adopt measures to ensure the sustainability of current programmes.<sup>94</sup>

## 2. Children<sup>95</sup>

55. The Committee on the Rights of the Child urged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to adopt a comprehensive strategy containing specific and well-targeted actions, including affirmative social actions to eliminate discrimination against children in marginalized or vulnerable situations – including girls, children belonging to ethnic or religious minorities and children living in rural areas.<sup>96</sup>

56. The Special Rapporteur on sale of children called on the Lao People's Democratic Republic to adopt legislative measures to ensure that all forms of sexual abuse, violence, exploitation and sale of children were prohibited and criminalized with appropriate sanctions.<sup>97</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended establishing a child-friendly complaints mechanism for all kinds of abuse, exploitation and violence against children.<sup>98</sup> The Special Rapporteur made similar recommendations.<sup>99</sup>

57. The ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations urged the Government to take effective measures to protect children from becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation in the tourism sector; to raise awareness of the actors directly related to the tourism industry on the subject of commercial sexual exploitation; and to ensure that, in practice, thorough investigations and prosecutions were carried out of persons engaged in trafficking in children, including foreign nationals and State officials suspected of complicity, and that sufficiently effective and dissuasive sanctions were imposed.<sup>100</sup> The Special Rapporteur on sale of children stated that the

Government should address impunity for the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child marriage and child prostitution, including by strengthening effective transnational cooperation and developing an integrated formal national child protection system.<sup>101</sup> The Special Rapporteur recommended prohibiting and criminalizing the sale of children as a separate crime from trafficking;<sup>102</sup> and prohibiting surrogacy arrangements that amounted to sale of children.<sup>103</sup> The Special Rapporteur also recommended increasing the number of care centres for children to provide comprehensive assistance to child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation.<sup>104</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child made similar recommendations.<sup>105</sup>

58. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended ensuring that corporal punishment, however light, against children in all settings was explicitly prohibited in the Penal Code; conducting awareness-raising programmes for parents, professionals and the public in general;<sup>106</sup> and ensuring the allocation of adequate resources to implement long-term programmes addressing the root causes of physical, sexual and mental violence against children.<sup>107</sup> The Committee also recommended speeding up the adoption of the guidelines on children left without parental care and ensuring that residential care was used as a measure of last resort.<sup>108</sup>

59. The Special Rapporteur on sale of children recommended prohibiting child marriage, including marriage between children under the age of 18, without exceptions.<sup>109</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed deep concern that although the minimum age for marriage was set at 18, child marriage remained highly prevalent and so made similar recommendations.<sup>110</sup>

60. The United Nations country team noted that children made up a significant portion of the workforce and specifically that children from rural areas comprised the bulk of all working children in the country. The Labour Law defined the kind of light work that was permissible for children under 14 years of age and prohibited the worst forms of child labour for all children under 18 years of age. The Special Rapporteur on sale of children recommended prohibiting child labour according to international norms and standards, including by setting the minimum age for employment at 14 years, without exceptions.<sup>111</sup>

61. The Committee on the Rights of the Child urged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to provide regular cash benefits to children with disabilities as a basic social protection and to increase resources in mainstream schools and develop an efficient system for identifying the individual support needs of children with disabilities.<sup>112</sup>

62. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic intensify efforts to facilitate the timely birth registration of children, especially in rural and remote areas, by conducting awareness-raising campaigns, removing language barriers and deploying mobile civil registration units.<sup>113</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child made similar recommendations,<sup>114</sup> viewing the deployment of such mobile units in particular as a measure to prevent the recruitment of children, including children living in remote areas and villages and children in street situations, for armed conflict.<sup>115</sup>

63. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic strengthen its mine awareness programmes and demining activities in order to protect children against mines and unexploded ordnance. The Committee also recommended that it ensure the provision of adequate services tailored to child victims' specific needs, in particular children with disabilities caused by remaining mines and unexploded ordnance, and to provide them with physical and psychological rehabilitation and social assistance.<sup>116</sup>

### **3. Persons with disabilities<sup>117</sup>**

64. The Committee on the Rights of the Child urged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to allocate financial and human resources to implement the National Plan of Action on Persons with Disabilities.<sup>118</sup>

#### 4. Minorities and indigenous peoples<sup>119</sup>

65. The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty stated that ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples continue to experience poverty at a vastly higher rate than the Lao-Thai majority. People in rural areas have been left behind by economic progress and account for almost 90 per cent of those in poverty.<sup>120</sup>

66. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about reports of the forced relocation of a number of ethnic minority communities as a result of land grabbing and land concessions to development projects, without adequate consultation or compensation, and about reports of the arbitrary arrest and detention of farmers and villagers protesting against land leases and concessions. The Committee also expressed concern about reports of the Government's persecution of the Hmong ethnic minority group, about allegations of the detention and enforced disappearance of Hmong men and about malnutrition and lack of access to health care.<sup>121</sup>

67. The Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic take all steps necessary to ensure that meaningful consultations were held with communities with a view to obtaining their free, prior and informed consent for development projects with an impact on their livelihood, lifestyle and culture; that it ensure that communities participated in any process concerning their relocation; and that it provide adequate compensation when relocation was not possible.<sup>122</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child urged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to prevent and/or end the displacement of indigenous children owing to the construction of hydropower dams and the operations of large-scale extractive industries.<sup>123</sup>

68. The Human Rights Committee recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic cease the persecution of members of the Hmong ethnic minority, including their arbitrary arrest, detention and enforced disappearance; investigate such acts, bring perpetrators to justice and provide full reparation to victims or their families; and take robust measures to ensure effective access for members of the Hmong community to adequate food and health care.<sup>124</sup>

69. UNESCO recommended ensuring that children who had Lao as a second language did not face barriers to learning through specialist teacher-training programmes and the expansion of pre-primary education where feasible.<sup>125</sup>

70. The Committee on the Rights of the Child urged the Lao People's Democratic Republic to continue and strengthen measures to ensure that all children, including children from Hmong-Mien households, were registered at birth.<sup>126</sup>

#### 5. Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons<sup>127</sup>

71. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic remove barriers that prevent migrant women from gaining access to social protection benefits, including by modifying the eligibility requirements regarding documentation and the minimum qualifying periods and expanding coverage to all sectors.<sup>128</sup>

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Tables containing information on the scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies for the Lao People's Democratic Republic will be available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/LAIndex.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.1–121.40, 121.42–121.43, 121.48, 121.62, 121.64, 121.66–121.78, 121.105 and 121.186.

<sup>3</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 38 (f).

<sup>4</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 18.

<sup>5</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 47.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 48 (a) and (b).

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 28.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 9 (e).

- <sup>10</sup> A/HRC/40/51/Add.1, para. 71 (d).
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 71 (f).
- <sup>12</sup> For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.124–121.126, 121.41, 121.44–121.47, 121.49–121.61, 121.65 and 121.109.
- <sup>13</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, para. 11.
- <sup>14</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 8.
- <sup>15</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 18.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 18.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 50 (a).
- <sup>18</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 5.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 6.
- <sup>20</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, para. 15.
- <sup>21</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 3 (b).
- <sup>22</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 12.
- <sup>23</sup> For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.183–121.184.
- <sup>24</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 16.
- <sup>25</sup> For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.162–121.165 and 121.167–121.169.
- <sup>26</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, para. 55.
- <sup>27</sup> [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24417&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24417&LangID=E).
- <sup>28</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, para. 60.
- <sup>29</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 14.
- <sup>30</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.103–121.104, 121.106–121.107 and 121.156.
- <sup>31</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, para. 67.
- <sup>32</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 18.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 26.
- <sup>34</sup> A/HRC/WGAD/2017/61, para. 40.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 42.
- <sup>36</sup> Letter dated 25 July 2016 from the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers addressed to the Permanent Representative of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.
- <sup>37</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 28.
- <sup>38</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.63, 121.85–121.102, 121.108, 121.113 and 121.127.
- <sup>39</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 29.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 30.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 19.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 20 (a)–(d).
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 24 (a) and (c).
- <sup>44</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, para. 78.
- <sup>45</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.129–121.155, 121.157, 121.187 and 121.188.
- <sup>46</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 32.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 33.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 34.
- <sup>49</sup> UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, p. 7.
- <sup>50</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 36.
- <sup>51</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, para. 71.
- <sup>52</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 37.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 38.
- <sup>54</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.110, 121.112 and 121.114–121.123.
- <sup>55</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, para. 82.

- <sup>56</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 28 (c).
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 30 (a) and (c).
- <sup>58</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.158–121.159.
- <sup>59</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, para. 63.
- <sup>60</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 38 (a), (b) and (d).
- <sup>61</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 44 (a).
- <sup>62</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.160–121.161, 121.166, 121.170–121.173 and 121.176.
- <sup>63</sup> [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24417&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24417&LangID=E).
- <sup>64</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, para. 47.
- <sup>65</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 35 (a).
- <sup>66</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.174–121.175.
- <sup>67</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, paras. 21 and 22 (a).
- <sup>68</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, paras. 39 (a) and 40 (a).
- <sup>69</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, para. 40.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 45.
- <sup>71</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 40 (b).
- <sup>72</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 22 (c).
- <sup>73</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 32 (c).
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 33 (a).
- <sup>75</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, para. 46.
- <sup>76</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 40 (d).
- <sup>77</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 22 (b).
- <sup>78</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 42.
- <sup>79</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.177–121.185.
- <sup>80</sup> [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24417&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24417&LangID=E).
- <sup>81</sup> UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, p. 5.
- <sup>82</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 35.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 36 (a) and (b).
- <sup>84</sup> UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, p. 5.
- <sup>85</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.79–121.82.
- <sup>86</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 12 (a).
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 50 (b) and (c).
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 14 (a) and (b).
- <sup>89</sup> United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, para. 20.
- <sup>90</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 32 (a).
- <sup>91</sup> [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24417&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24417&LangID=E).
- <sup>92</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 46 (a).
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 48 (a) and (d).
- <sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 42.
- <sup>95</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.93–121.95 and 121.111.
- <sup>96</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 14.
- <sup>97</sup> A/HRC/40/51/Add.1, para. 66.
- <sup>98</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 23 (c), and CRC/C/OPAC/LAO/CO/1, para. 9.
- <sup>99</sup> A/HRC/40/51/Add.1, paras. 68 (c) and (e) and 70 (d).
- <sup>100</sup> [www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100\\_COMMENT\\_ID:3953523](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:3953523).
- <sup>101</sup> A/HRC/40/51/Add.1, para. 64.
- <sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 66 (a).
- <sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 66 (f).
- <sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 70 (c).
- <sup>105</sup> CRC/C/OPSC/LAO/CO/1, para. 28.
- <sup>106</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 22.
- <sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 23 (a).
- <sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 27 (a) and (b).
- <sup>109</sup> A/HRC/40/51/Add.1, para. 66 (d).
- <sup>110</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 24.
- <sup>111</sup> A/HRC/40/51/Add.1, para. 66 (e).
- <sup>112</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 30 (b) and (f).

- <sup>113</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 34.  
<sup>114</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 19.  
<sup>115</sup> CRC/C/OPAC/LAO/CO/1, para. 15 (a).  
<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 23.  
<sup>117</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.189–121.190.  
<sup>118</sup> CRC/C/LAO/CO/3-6, para. 30 (a).  
<sup>119</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, para. 121.190.  
<sup>120</sup> [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24417&LangID=E](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24417&LangID=E).  
<sup>121</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 39.  
<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 40 (a) and (b).  
<sup>123</sup> CRC/C/OPSC/LAO/CO/1, para. 22 (a).  
<sup>124</sup> CCPR/C/LAO/CO/1, para. 40 (c).  
<sup>125</sup> UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, p. 6.  
<sup>126</sup> CRC/C/OPSC/LAO/CO/1, para. 22 (c).  
<sup>127</sup> For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.192 and 121.196.  
<sup>128</sup> CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, para. 44 (b).
-