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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 eighth session from 3 to 14 May 2010. The review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic was held at the 4th meeting, on 4 May 2010. The delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic was headed by the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Phongsavath Boupha. At its 8th meeting, held on 6 May 2010, the Working Group adopted the report on the Lao People's Democratic Republic.
2. On 7 September 2009, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of the Lao People's Democratic Republic: Argentina, Kyrgyzstan and Nigeria.
3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to resolution 5/1, 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.6/8/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.6/8/LAO/2);
 - (c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A/HRC/WG.6/8/LAO/3).
4. A list of questions prepared in advance by the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was transmitted to the Lao People's Democratic Republic through the Troika. Those questions are available on the extranet of the universal periodic review.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. At the 4th meeting, on 4 May 2010, the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs introduced the national report, prepared with the participation of civil society, the media, academia and other stakeholders. He emphasized that the engagement of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in the review process was part of its efforts to promote and protect human rights. He stated that the Lao multi-ethnic people had long suffered from colonialism and foreign aggression and had been liberated only after the establishment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 1975. Since that time, fundamental human rights had been gradually restored and protected and were now guaranteed by the Constitution to all Lao citizens.
6. In order to ensure the prosperity and well-being of the Lao people, the Government had embarked on socio-economic development strategies and had recorded achievements such as an economic growth rate averaging 7 per cent annually; a per capita income of more than \$900 in 2009, compared with less than \$200 in the 1970s; and a reduction in poverty from 49 per cent in 1990 to about 25 per cent in 2009. The school enrolment rate had exceeded 90 per cent, and the literacy rate of people older than 15 was now almost 80 per cent. The infant and maternal mortality rates had considerably decreased, and life expectancy had risen to more than 60 years.

7. The Government had made great efforts to promote human rights and had adopted a Legal Sector Master Plan envisioning a State ruled by law by 2020. A reform of the governance sector was considered a top priority so as to ensure a transparent, accountable and participatory system. In that context, judicial independence had been strengthened and capacity-building had been undertaken for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and police officers.

8. The Government had also adopted laws on the development and protection of women and a Law on the protection of the rights and interests of children. As a result, gender equality and the advancement of women had been enhanced.

9. With regard to international cooperation, it was noted that Laos had already acceded to six core human rights treaties and two optional protocols, and was a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and a signatory to the Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Laos had also played an active role in the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. The recent visit by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief was another sign of the Government's sincerity in working with the international community.

10. With regard to torture, Laos confirmed that acts of torture and maltreatment were considered criminal offences and that the Criminal Procedure Law did not allow the inhumane treatment of detainees in any circumstances. The Government had undertaken measures to improve prison conditions and had conducted training for prison officers and related personnel on the United Nations minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners. Furthermore, Laos would consider signing the Convention against Torture.

11. As regards the death penalty, it was emphasized that that sentence was intended to deter the most extreme and serious crimes, particularly drug trafficking. Although the death penalty was still in existence legally, no execution had ever taken place. Laos had upheld a moratorium for many years and would consider revising the Penal Law in the coming years, including with a view to limiting the scope of crimes to which the death penalty would apply.

12. It was emphasized that the Lao People's Democratic Republic consisted of 49 ethnic groups living together in peace and harmony. The Constitution and national legislation and policies encouraged solidarity among all ethnic groups and condemned ethnic discrimination, including against Lao Hmong. Those Lao Hmong who had been illegal migrants in Thailand had been welcomed back and had resettled in designated development areas, and they enjoyed all rights guaranteed by the Constitution, without discrimination. These included the right to freedom of movement within the country and to leave and return to their home country.

13. While referring to significant progress and achievements in advancing human rights, Laos was aware of challenges that needed to be addressed, including with regard to public awareness concerning national laws and regulations, especially among persons living in mountainous and remote areas, and in relation to the effective enforcement of the law.

14. The Government would thus continue its efforts to achieve the country's poverty alleviation goals and, through continued reform of the public administration and legal system, to further strengthen its capacity to effectively implement domestic laws.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

15. During the interactive dialogue, 54 delegations made statements. Additional statements that could not be delivered during the interactive dialogue owing to time

constraints will be posted on the extranet of the universal periodic review when available.¹ A number of delegations thanked the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the presentation of its report. Several delegations also thanked Laos for answering their advance questions. Recommendations made during the dialogue are found in section II of the present report.

16. Myanmar was encouraged by the efforts of Laos to implement its human rights commitments, including through the incorporation of international human rights treaties into national legislation. Myanmar also welcomed the country's cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion. It expressed its willingness to share its experience in poverty reduction, in particular in rural areas.

17. Brunei commended Laos for its achievements in promoting human rights, in particular in the area of poverty through its vision for development, as well as efforts to promote the right to work, education and health. It noted that it would continue to work closely with Laos through the newly established ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights.

18. The Russian Federation appreciated efforts made by Laos to ensure stability, harmony and peace and to raise living standards. It noted progress in acceding to international human rights treaties and a general interest in developing international cooperation in the area of human rights. However, it noted the many challenges that the country continued to face and encouraged efforts related to economic growth.

19. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea highlighted the successful efforts of Laos to ensure political stability and peace. It took note of measures taken in many human rights areas, as well as the development of strategies to extricate the country from least developed country status. It considered that, as a party to most core human rights treaties, Laos had been faithfully fulfilling its treaty obligations.

20. Viet Nam applauded the adoption of various long-term strategies to better protect human rights and noted with interest that Laos had closely cooperated with human rights mechanisms. It welcomed the country's recent invitation to the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and its intention to invite other special rapporteurs in the future.

21. Cambodia took note of the reform efforts of Laos in the areas of governance and public administration. It welcomed steps taken towards the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the signing of the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. It also appreciated the commitment, pledged in the universal periodic review report, to ratify other important human rights instruments.

22. Norway welcomed the leadership demonstrated by Laos in ratifying the Convention against Cluster Munitions. It noted the high rate of maternal and infant mortality and expressed concern at the illiteracy rates for women, as well as disparities among ethnic groups and between urban and rural women. Norway expressed appreciation for the commitment of Laos to cooperate with United Nations human rights mechanisms.

23. Brazil welcomed the ratification of the ICCPR and the intention to consider signing the Convention against Torture. Brazil inquired about challenges faced in providing health services and education to women in rural areas and noted that the country had adopted legislation and policies on gender equality.

¹ Ireland, the Republic of Korea, Australia, Azerbaijan, the United States of America, Latvia, Poland, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Costa Rica, Iraq, Nigeria.

24. Turkey requested information about the reform of the education system. It asked whether Laos planned to establish a national human rights institution and urged the Government to develop a human rights action plan that encouraged the participation of civil society in treaty body reporting. Turkey also inquired whether Laos envisaged adopting a plan to combat human trafficking and requested information about measures taken to reduce maternal and infant mortality.

25. Indonesia commended the efforts of Laos to enhance good governance and its fight against poverty, highlighting the adverse effects of regional wars. It noted the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the emphasis placed on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as efforts to reform the judiciary and prison management. It encouraged Laos to train prison officers, noting that such an effort would be enhanced through the signing of the Convention against Torture and the ratification of the Convention on Enforced Disappearance.

26. Kazakhstan applauded efforts and policies to eradicate poverty and to create conditions for the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. It also noted the recent completion of the ordinance on treaty making, which should contribute substantively to the harmonization and implementation of international conventions ratified by Laos.

27. Germany noted that CRC had expressed concern at insufficient measures taken, in particular regarding access to education and health services and protection against exploitation. It requested further details about efforts to guarantee the rights of all children and to improve the position of women in rural and remote areas. With regard to law enforcement, Germany asked whether technical assistance by the international community would be welcome.

28. Algeria congratulated Laos on having ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and asked about measures envisaged for its implementation, including financial measures. It also congratulated Laos on its efforts to eliminate obstacles to development, in particular poverty. It welcomed the strategy for development adopted during the period 2001-2010, which had permitted the reduction of poverty from 48 per cent in 1990 to 26 per cent in 2008.

29. India commended Laos for progress in development and noted recent legislation encouraging the existence of civil society groups, liberalized media controls and expanded access to information. India referred to priorities and commitments in the national report, including efforts to reform the legal system and improvements in health care and education. India requested that the role of women in local development planning be strengthened and that an independent national human rights institution be established. India also requested Laos to share its experience with the 2006 Law on Handling Petitions, intended to facilitate the administration of justice for all ethnic groups.

30. Cuba highlighted the fact that the promotion and protection of human rights had been a priority for Laos and that the national socio-economic development plan for 2006-2010 had led to substantial results. Cuba commended Laos for its achievements related to employment, the rights of women and children, persons with disabilities, education and progress in health services.

31. Singapore expressed admiration for the commitment of Laos to improving the standard of living, exemplified by its adoption of the Millennium Development Goals as a priority. It noted impressive economic growth over the previous few years and welcomed efforts made in the areas of governance, education, health care, infrastructure, environmental protection, finance reform and the rule of law. It also noted the country's support for the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and expressed its willingness to share its development experience.

32. Qatar highlighted the adoption by the National Assembly of some 90 laws for the promotion of human rights, particularly in the areas of women's and children's rights, freedom of the press, education and health. Qatar welcomed efforts made by Laos to adopt and implement programmes to eradicate poverty and raise living standards in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals.

33. Pakistan noted the decision of Laos to enter into human rights dialogue with other countries, which provided an opportunity to exchange good practices. Pakistan recognized the country's socio-economic development policies, through which investments were made in rural development to alleviate poverty. Pakistan expressed the hope that Laos would request and receive technical assistance from the international community, for socio-economic development, national capacity development and human rights training.

34. France commended Laos for its recent ratification of important human rights conventions. It congratulated Laos on the existence of a de facto moratorium on the death penalty since 1989. It expressed concern at the situation of the Hmong and the persistence of certain discriminatory laws and practices in the area of freedom of religion, as well as restrictions on the freedom of expression.

35. The Netherlands referred to the situation of the Lao Hmong people sent from Thailand to Laos in 2009, including recognized refugees selected for third-country repatriation. It expressed concern at the vulnerable situation of children with regard to trafficking and sexual exploitation. The Netherlands also referred to reported attempts by local officials to force Christians to recant their faith.

36. Slovenia noted that the two mandate holders who had visited Laos had expressed appreciation for the cooperation and assistance extended to them. However, although the situation concerning freedom of religion seemed to have improved, the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion remained concerned about individual cases and certain policies violating that freedom. Slovenia inquired about measures intended to implement the Special Rapporteur's recommendations.

37. Sri Lanka expressed appreciation for achievements in terms of poverty alleviation, the right to work, education and health, as well as the efforts of Laos to graduate from its least developed status by 2020. It observed that challenges remained with regard to freedom of religion and welcomed the visit by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion, expressing the hope that her report would assist the Government in improving the situation.

38. Belarus noted that Laos has established a broad legislative basis for guaranteeing the promotion of human rights. Belarus further noted the willingness of the Government to improve the judicial system, as well as efforts to eradicate poverty. It appreciated the efforts of Laos, as a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to implement the National Plan of Action and the National Programme to combat the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children.

39. Thailand noted the progress achieved by Laos, including the adoption over the years of more than 90 laws that had had an impact on human rights. It appreciated the ongoing implementation of the Master Plan on the Development of the Rule of Law. It welcomed the efforts made in the socio-economic area. It noted, however, that there were still various challenges to overcome, such as poverty and underdevelopment.

40. Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) commended the Lao people for having overcome decades of colonial domination and invasions by neocolonial Powers. It noted efforts in the field of women's rights and highlighted the increase in the number of women in high governmental positions. It also noted improvements in the private sector, where women now accounted for more than half of the workforce.

41. Spain highlighted efforts with regard to projects concerning access to drinking water and basic sanitation, including the investment plan for the urban water sector for the period 2005-2020, and made a number of recommendations.

42. In response, Laos explained, with regard to questions on women's and children's rights, that it promoted the advancement of women and gender equality, as provided for in the Constitution. In 2004, the National Assembly had adopted the Law on the Development and Protection of Women, and in 2006 it had adopted the Law on the Protection of Rights and Interest of Children. The country had also acceded to various international conventions, such as CEDAW and CRC and its two Optional Protocols.

43. The Lao People's Democratic Republic had developed appropriate national mechanisms to promote and protect the rights of women and children, such as the National Commission for the Advancement of Women and the National Commission for Mothers and Children, and it had developed a number of national strategies and plans on the issue. In addition, the Lao Women's Union had established information and counselling services in various provinces and districts. Gender equality had been mainstreamed into the five-year social and economic development plans. The Government would continue to implement strategies and programmes to enhance access to education and health services for women and girls, in particular in rural areas, including through Government-funded ethnic boarding schools in most provinces.

44. With regard to health services, it was noted that a programme of immunization had been conducted throughout the country and that the Government would continue to provide medical services and first-aid kits for all villages.

45. Concerning gender equality, attention was drawn to the fact that women now accounted for a quarter of the deputies in the National Assembly. An increasing number of women also held high-ranking positions in the Government, including the Vice-President of the National Assembly, two ministers and seven vice-ministers. At the local level, many women acted as provincial vice-governors, district chiefs or heads of provincial or district departments or offices, or as village heads. The school enrolment rates for girls and women were also increasing.

46. As for child labour, Laos had ratified and implemented the ILO Convention on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. With regard to human trafficking, the country had adopted laws to combat trafficking and had also set up a National Steering Committee for that purpose. It was a party to the Palermo Convention and its relevant protocols, and it cooperated with countries in the region as well as with international organizations. Law enforcement agencies had been strengthened, and a number of perpetrators had been prosecuted.

47. On questions relating to the judiciary, Laos noted that its Constitution clearly defined the role, function and authority of the People's Court and the Public Prosecutors, which were separate from the executive branch of the Government. High-ranking officials of the People's Court and the Public Prosecutors were appointed by the National Assembly and reported to it.

48. Since the promulgation of the Constitution in 1991, Laos had progressively worked to develop the rule of law and promote the independence of the courts and public prosecutors. A law on the operation and functioning of the People's Court and a law on public prosecutors had been adopted by the National Assembly in 2003, and a separate budget had been allocated for their operation and development.

49. The People's Court and the public prosecutor were working independently, and any interference in their work was prohibited. In addition, a law on the handling of petitions had been adopted in 2006. The law provided for the right to file individual complaints,

requests and petitions regarding the violation of rights with various authorities concerned, including Government authorities, the People's Court, the public prosecutor and the National Assembly.

50. With regard to questions concerning ethnic groups and the Hmong issue, it was noted that Laos was a nation with 49 ethnic groups that lived together in peace and harmony. The Government pursued an unswerving policy of enhancing the solidarity and equality among the Lao multi-ethnic people. Equality for all ethnic groups was provided for in the Constitution, and the State pursued a policy of promoting unity and equality among all ethnic groups; ensuring for all groups the right to protect, preserve and promote their customs and cultures. Acts of segregation or discrimination aimed at ethnic groups were prohibited; the State implemented every measure to gradually develop and upgrade the socio-economic development levels of all ethnic groups. The Government had paid great attention to alleviating poverty with regard to each ethnic group in order to gradually improve their living conditions.

51. Laos noted that the Hmong were one of the ethnic groups that stood side by side with other such groups in the struggle for national liberation and in carrying out the strategic tasks of safeguarding and constructing the country. Although the Hmong represented less than 7 per cent of the population, their representation in the party was 12 per cent; in the Government, more than 10 per cent; in the National Assembly, 8 per cent; and among newly graduated students at primary and secondary schools and university, more than 12 per cent.

52. Regarding concerns over the repatriation of Hmong from Thailand, it was noted that more than 7,000 Lao Hmong who had illegally migrated to Thailand for economic reasons had been safely welcomed back in accordance with the bilateral agreement between the Governments of Laos and Thailand. A great number of them had voluntarily returned to their original home towns, with the assistance of the Government. For those who did not wish to return to their original home towns or villages, but rather to move to the new Government-sponsored development villages arranged for returnees, the Government had responded accordingly and continued to provide assistance.

53. Those who had once considered migrating to a third country had now changed their minds and decided to resettle in their mother land, since they had met their loved ones and relatives after having been apart for three years, and had been treated fairly by the Government. The Government maintained its consistent position of welcoming goodwill visits to their sites by representatives of diplomatic missions and international organizations.

54. With regard to the 158 Hmong recognized as "persons of concern" under the mandate of UNHCR, it was noted that they should no longer be seen as persons of concern, since the repatriated Hmong were now living safely in their homeland without fear and were being assisted by their own Government. The returnees were full citizens of Laos and could travel inside the country and abroad, like other Lao citizens.

55. With regard to freedom of religion, Laos confirmed that it was guaranteed under the Constitution and that all citizens were free to believe or not to believe in any religion. All acts creating division or constituting discrimination against religions and creating social disorder were prohibited. In addition, laws and regulations such as Prime Minister Decree No. 92-PM, on the Management and Protection of Religious Activities in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, also provided for religious freedom.

56. Over the previous two decades, the establishment of hundreds of new evangelist and other churches had been authorized and tens of thousands of persons had been converted. If any social problem had arisen from this, it had been caused by a local dispute between those who respected traditional rituals and those who had adopted new rituals. In some

instances, the local authorities had had to intervene to appease the dispute, but no one had ever been arrested on grounds of faith or religious conviction.

57. Although remaining a minority, Christians were growing in number, while the number of Buddhists was decreasing. According to a 2005 census, Buddhists made up 67 per cent of the population and Christians 1.5 per cent, with approximately 41,746 Catholic and 60,700 Protestant believers. There were 95 Catholic and 225 Protestant churches.

58. The Lao Government was considering implementing the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief during her visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

59. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya asked about methods used to deal with unexploded munitions, which were an obstacle to social and economic development, claimed the lives of innocent people and caused disabilities. It also asked Laos about its plans to empower its people through education, including higher education, and made a number of recommendations.

60. Italy commended Laos for the de facto moratorium on the death penalty. It also welcomed progress in the area of religious freedom, as recently confirmed by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion following her 2009 visit. Italy noted, however, that restrictions on religious minorities, especially Christians, were still being reported. It made a number of recommendations.

61. Mozambique noted programmes for public health and the development of the rule of law. It encouraged the Government to accelerate the implementation of those programmes. It asked Laos to share its experiences in implementing the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (2006-2010) and to pay special attention to the prevention, suppression and punishment of the trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

62. Tajikistan welcomed the intention of Laos to pursue a consistent human rights policy. It noted efforts to improve and enhance the democratic system so that State mechanisms truly served the nation and the people. It also noted that Laos had acceded to six core human rights conventions and two optional protocols, as well as other relevant instruments.

63. Finland commended Laos for having ratified core human rights treaties, including ICCPR and the Convention on Persons with Disabilities, and asked what measures were envisaged for their implementation. While recognizing efforts made to promote women's rights, it inquired about measures to combat violence against women, including awareness-raising programmes.

64. Switzerland welcomed the ratification of ICCPR as well as cooperation with special procedures, in particular with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. Switzerland expressed concern about the treatment of the Hmong and the confiscation of lands without adequate compensation. It also expressed concern about the conditions of detention.

65. Kyrgyzstan noted that Lao was a multi-ethnic country, constantly implementing policies to guarantee human rights and reduce poverty. The Government acknowledged that much remained to be done. Kyrgyzstan noted that Laos had taken measures to expand access to health-care services and to improve its legal and judicial system through the adoption of more than 90 laws.

66. The Islamic Republic of Iran noted positive developments and achievements in areas such as poverty eradication, the right to work, education and health, the rights of women and children, the right to life, the right to participate in public affairs, cultural rights and the right to information. It also noted that, as a multi-ethnic nation, Laos was pursuing a policy

of ensuring unity and equality among all ethnic groups and of protecting their rights, customs and cultures.

67. Nepal noted achievements in terms of maintaining political stability and social harmony in a multi-ethnic society. Nepal welcomed the adherence of Laos to the rule of law, characterized by the separation of powers. It noted the country's commitment to promoting human rights and its compliance with international human rights instruments, as well as its willingness to cooperate with special procedures and other human rights mechanisms.

68. Egypt welcomed the establishment of inter-agency mechanisms to promote human rights. It welcomed the implementation of the national strategy for the advancement of women (2006-2010) and the adoption and implementation of policies and strategies relating to the rights of children, which had increased the amount of attention accorded to the protection of children from abuse, child labour, sexual exploitation and trafficking.

69. The United Kingdom noted with satisfaction that Laos was considering signing the Convention against Torture and acceding to other human rights conventions. It asked what time frame was being considered for their ratification. It expressed concern at the repatriation of more than 4,000 Hmong from Thailand and asked Laos to ensure that international humanitarian organizations, including UNHCR, and the diplomatic community were allowed access.

70. Mexico highlighted the ratification by Laos of most of the core human rights treaties and expressed the hope that the Convention against Torture and the Convention against Enforced Disappearance would soon be ratified. Mexico recognized efforts to eradicate poverty and improve health services and asked for further information about measures to create an adequate environment for civil society and women's groups, as recommended by CEDAW.

71. Canada expressed concern at reported restrictions on freedom of speech and on the Hmong repatriated from Thailand to Laos in 2009. It applauded the leadership shown by Laos on the issue of cluster munitions and the planned hosting of the first meeting of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It also applauded the adoption of the decree on the registration of domestic associations, which would allow for the development of civil society.

72. Malaysia commended Laos for its commitment to socio-economic development, demonstrated through its investment in poverty eradication, economic growth and human resource development. It considered that its focus in critical areas such as education, health and gender equality would have a positive impact on human rights, and it made a number of recommendations.

73. Armenia noted the cooperation of Laos with United Nations institutions, including human rights treaty bodies and special procedures, such as the Special Rapporteur on Freedom and Belief. In that regard, Armenia observed with satisfaction statements in the national report indicating that Laos was considering issuing invitations to other special rapporteurs.

74. The Philippines noted the establishment of inter-agency mechanisms devoted to the implementation of human rights treaties, which demonstrated the commitment of the Government to comply with its human rights obligations. It commended the establishment of a National Human Rights Research Centre. The Philippines noted measures to assist persons with disabilities, many of whom had been victims of landmines.

75. The Maldives congratulated Laos on measures taken to promote access to health care, especially for persons living in remote areas, and for war victims and persons with

disabilities. It also commended Lao for having achieved a decrease in maternal and child mortality rates. It made a recommendation.

76. Hungary recalled that the fate of Hmong individuals reported to have returned voluntarily to Laos continued to be a source of concern for the international community, as highlighted by the Secretary-General in December 2009. Hungary further noted that the situation of women in rural and remote areas should be accorded special attention, including through their involvement in the design and implementation of local development plans.

77. Lebanon welcomed the efforts made by the Government to increase the protection of human rights and praised its economic development strategy, which would contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable groups. Lebanon also commended Laos for the ratification of a number of international human rights conventions.

78. Belgium acknowledged that Laos had had a difficult historical background. It noted with satisfaction the existence of a moratorium on the death penalty since 1989. Belgium expressed concern that the freedoms of expression and association were rarely respected in practice and that political criticism, the media and the Internet were censored.

79. China noted with appreciation that Laos had experienced continued economic growth as well as progress in human rights. It also noted that Laos was committed to poverty reduction targets and had actively implemented programmes and plans in that area. Furthermore, it commended Laos for its efforts to ensure the right to education, health and work. Recognizing the various challenges faced by Laos, China appealed to the international community to provide it with assistance.

80. Denmark noted with concern reports of torture and asked when the Government intended to ratify the Convention against Torture. Denmark noted with concern reports indicating discrimination against religious minorities and asked for information about measures to ensure freedom of religion. It asked how the Government ensured that indigenous peoples had the opportunity to influence Government decisions and what measures had been taken to avoid their displacement and to ensure compensation.

81. Slovakia welcomed the recent ratification by Laos of ICCPR and CRPD and its planned signing of CAT. However, it expressed concern regarding freedom of expression and strict controls imposed on the media by the authorities, the mistreatment of the Hmong and the persistence of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

82. New Zealand welcomed progress in combating human trafficking, including through the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative. It referred to the situation of repatriated Lao Hmong, including persons approved by UNHCR for resettlement. New Zealand also expressed concern about reports of discrimination against minorities and restrictions on freedom of religion and freedom of expression. It noted that access to education was limited, especially for women.

83. Australia welcomed the invitation extended by Laos to the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion to visit the country in November 2009. It also welcomed the country's commitment to extending invitations to other special rapporteurs. However, Australia remained concerned about reports regarding the treatment of religious minorities and noted reports of alleged arrests and detentions on the basis of religion. Australia also expressed concern at the treatment of the Lao Hmong and the situation of some 4,500 Lao Hmong forcibly repatriated in 2009.

84. Luxembourg welcomed the partnership it had established with Laos in the field of development cooperation, which included projects to promote human rights, in particular the right to health, education and food. It noted that, according to UNCT, spending on

health was modest, although the situation of maternal health was still dramatic, in particular in poorer areas. In that regard, it welcomed the fact that maternal health was one of the country's national priorities.

85. Bahrain requested further information about steps taken to eradicate poverty and to implement national plans for social and economic development in the country. It also commended efforts made to promote and protect human rights, in particular the right to education. Bahrain requested additional information about policies aimed at ensuring the right to education for all, as part of the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

86. Japan expressed appreciation for the ratification of major international human rights instruments and cooperation with special procedures. However, Japan noted reports that freedom of expression and freedom of assembly were not being adequately guaranteed. Japan also noted that women and children were a focus of international concern, in particular with respect to the issues of trafficking and sexual exploitation. Japan expressed the hope that effective measures would be adopted, including the provision of assistance to victims. It noted efforts made to improve prison conditions, but it regretted occurrences of torture in prisons.

87. In response, Laos noted, with regard to the freedoms of speech, the press, assembly and association, that those freedoms were guaranteed under the Constitution and relevant legislation. Article 44 of the Constitution stipulated that Lao citizens enjoyed freedom of speech, the press and assembly, and had the right to establish associations and to stage demonstrations that were not contrary to the law. A Law on Media, a Law on Trade Unions and a Decree on Associations had recently been adopted. The Lao Government recognized that media played a crucial role in promoting and protecting human rights and that the violation of those freedoms was a criminal offence.

88. The Lao Government was strongly committed to ensuring that all laws governing the freedoms of expression, assembly and association were implemented effectively in practice. Indeed, remarkable progress and achievements had been accomplished in that area.

89. To date, private print, radio and television media had significantly increased. High-speed Internet access at low cost was available in most major towns and even in rural areas, without any restriction. Thus far, the Government had never taken any measures to interfere with any radio or television broadcasting, including international cable channels, or to block Internet sites.

90. Lao media were free to report on views and opinions expressed by the people on any issue. Despite progress made over the years in implementing the Constitution and other laws pertaining to the freedoms of expression and the press, a number of challenges still needed to be addressed. Print media and radio and television broadcasts still did not reach all areas of the country. To further address that concern, the Government had invested in the media network, including digital broadcasting.

91. With regard to law enforcement, it was noted that the police force of the Lao People's Democratic Republic worked according to a well-established system that took into account respect for humanitarian principles. Complaints about violations could be addressed directly to the relevant authority, such as the National Assembly. The authorities concerned were also working to improve detention and re-education centres. In that connection, the Ministry of Public Security was working on a draft instruction of the Minister on the Management of Detention and Re-education Centres with a view to addressing relevant concerns.

92. With regard to a request by ICRC to visit detention centres, it was noted that such a request should be submitted in written form through diplomatic channels for consideration. Over the previous 10 years, a number of foreign delegations and representatives of international organizations had been permitted to visit detention and re-education centres.

93. With regard to preparations to host the first meeting of States parties to the Convention on cluster munitions, Laos highlighted that it was the country most affected by cluster munitions, given that some 3 million tons of bombs had been dropped on Lao soil, killing and victimizing more than 50,000 people. More than a third of the country's territory was still contaminated by such unexploded ordnance. Even more than 30 years after the war, some 300 people were still victimized by unexploded ordnance every year, which deprived the Lao people of fundamental human rights, including the right to life and development.

94. In order to address that challenge, the Government had adopted a national strategy and an action plan, incorporated into the national socio-economic development plan so that the issue could be addressed in a development context. At the international level, Laos was working closely with all countries to put an end to cluster munitions and promote the Convention.

95. In conclusion, Laos expressed its appreciation to all delegates for their active participation and their contributions to its review. While having accomplished significant achievements in the promotion and protection of human rights, Laos was aware of remaining shortcomings and challenges. Laos was keen to engage in discussions, exchanges and cooperation with the international community on the basis of equality, trust and mutual respect, in order to further strengthen its people's enjoyment of human rights. In that context, the universal periodic review mechanism would facilitate the sharing of experience and promote understanding of human rights based on historical, cultural and social diversity. Finally, the Lao delegation thanked the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the troika and coordinator, and others who had contributed to the success of this engagement.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations

96. The recommendations listed below have been examined by Laos and enjoy its support:

96.1. Continue its recent efforts in the area of the ratification of important human rights conventions, and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and accede to the Convention against Torture (France);

96.2. Sign and ratify the Convention against Torture (Italy, Spain); ratify the Convention against Torture (Denmark, Switzerland); ratify the Convention against Torture in a timely fashion (Japan); sign and ratify the Convention against Torture as soon as possible and implement its provisions (United Kingdom); become a party to the Convention against Torture (Canada);

96.3. Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Spain);

96.4. Review periodically its reservations to the ICCPR, as recommended by the Human Rights Committee in its general comment 24 (Brazil);

96.5. Harmonize national legislation with the international obligations under the respective conventions (Germany);

- 96.6. Continue its efforts to ensure that the provisions of international human rights conventions to which it is a party are incorporated into domestic law (Thailand);
- 96.7. Pursue the adoption of the draft law on the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with its international obligations, particularly under the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified in 2009 (Qatar);
- 96.8. Enhance the level of cooperation with treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders, which implies submitting overdue national reports, such as in the case of CERD and CESCR, and give consideration to responding to questionnaires and requests for visits of the mandate holders (Hungary);
- 96.9. Continue to cultivate its cooperation and interaction with the human rights mechanisms in seeking the support and technical assistance that will enable the Lao People's Democratic Republic to develop and implement its policies consistently and effectively (Indonesia);
- 96.10. Follow up on the recommendations addressed to it by the treaty bodies and special procedures (Canada);
- 96.11. Adopt and implement efficient measures to combat the persistence of trafficking and sexual exploitation (Slovakia);
- 96.12. Continue efforts to curb trafficking, in cooperation with neighbouring countries, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations, including by developing safe channels of labour migration and by strengthening law enforcement, policing and awareness-raising activities (New Zealand);
- 96.13. Adopt and implement a comprehensive national action plan for combating trafficking, and improve the implementation of the 2005 memorandum of understanding with Thailand on trafficking, especially along the border areas (Slovenia); examine the possibility of drafting and adopting a special law to combat trafficking in persons (Belarus);
- 96.14. Continue to strive for the inclusion of a gender perspective in all of its development plans and programmes, with positive measures to achieve the effective promotion and protection of the rights of women (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) ; pay special attention to the promotion of the rights of women and girls by adding a gender perspective to all national strategies and action plans, including development projects (Kazakhstan); incorporate gender policies in all development plans and projects (Belarus);
- 96.15. Continue to strengthen its efforts to ensure equal access for girls and women to all levels of education, including by taking concrete steps to overcome obstacles for girls' and women's access to, and completion of, education in rural areas (Norway);
- 96.16. Undertake measures to assist and protect the most vulnerable social groups (Kyrgyzstan); strengthen programmes to promote and protect the human rights of vulnerable groups, such as women and children in rural areas, and persons with disabilities (Philippines); continue efforts undertaken to promote the rights of women and children, particularly in areas such as education, safety and health (Islamic Republic of Iran);

- 96.17. Strengthen its efforts to combat all forms of exploitation of children in line with the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (Netherlands);
- 96.18. Continue its policies and efforts to enhance the solidarity and equality among its multi-ethnic population (Pakistan);
- 96.19. Issue travel and identification documents to all Lao Hmong returnees in a timely manner, and guarantee freedom of movement (Australia);
- 96.20. Continue reform programmes with the support of the international community, as reflected in the Government's Development Strategies Plan and Policies, in its efforts to further advance human rights and improve the well-being of its people (Cambodia);
- 96.21. Expedite reform of governance, public administration and the legal system aimed at deepening and broadening democratic norms, principles and standards (Malaysia);
- 96.22. Continue efforts on public administrative reforms (Viet Nam);
- 96.23. Continue efforts to further strengthen its capacity to effectively implement domestic laws (Democratic People's Republic of Korea);
- 96.24. Pursue efforts to promote a culture of law and transform Lao society into a society ruled by equity and justice (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya);
- 96.25. Focus efforts on successfully achieving improvements in the judicial system (Belarus);
- 96.26. Provide human rights training to judges, police officers, prison guards and all law enforcement officers (Brazil);
- 96.27. Increase efforts to provide human rights education to everyone involved in the judicial process, particularly people working in prisons (Japan);
- 96.28. Intensify training for its police and other enforcement authorities to improve capacities in dealing with the problem of gender violence and trafficking in women and girls (Malaysia);
- 96.29. Continue its effective policies to combat organized crime (Kyrgyzstan);
- 96.30. Strengthen its legal complaints system to ensure that women have effective access to justice (Finland);
- 96.31. Continue efforts to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development (Russian Federation); continue efforts to eradicate poverty (Belarus); continue efforts to alleviate poverty as a means to enhance the lives and well-being of the people (Thailand); continue efforts to achieve the country's poverty alleviation goals (Pakistan); continue efforts towards achieving the poverty alleviation goals, and implement strategic plans and programmes related to poverty alleviation, including the national strategy for growth and the realization of the development goals (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya); continue efforts to achieve the country's poverty alleviation goals (Tajikistan);
- 96.32. Continue the implementation of existing programmes and projects to enhance various socio-economic rights with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (Islamic Republic of Iran); continue the steadfast implementation of its national development strategies and plans aimed at poverty alleviation (Philippines); continue to support the implementation of the

socio-economic development plan aimed at the eradication of poverty in the country (Cuba);

96.33. Continue to take active measures to develop remote mountainous areas in order to reduce the gap between mountainous regions and urban regions (China); enhance efforts to build and improve infrastructure in rural areas (Pakistan);

96.34. Continue its fight against poverty and in particular against malnutrition in rural areas and, to that end, identify its needs in terms of technical and financial assistance, and consider requesting the aid of United Nations agencies and programmes competent in this area (Algeria);

96.35. Continue efforts to provide basic health and education services for vulnerable segments of its population, and continue its commitment to a people-oriented development policy by tackling poverty-related issues through investment in social infrastructure and by addressing the probable shortcomings in this regard (Myanmar);

96.36. Further strengthen measures to promote health care, the quality of education and job creation for the people living in rural and remote areas (Viet Nam);

96.37. Continue the implementation of ongoing policies and programmes to guarantee access for the entire population to health services and quality education (Cuba);

96.38. Undertake the efforts necessary to increase the budget for social programmes, particularly regarding education and adequate food (Mexico);

96.39. Continue the implementation of the national health care programme (Tajikistan);

96.40. Continue to strengthen efforts to reduce maternal and infant mortality, including by developing the midwifery workforce and making the services of skilled birth attendants available, accessible and, where necessary, free of charge (Norway);

96.41. Take further action to further reduce the high rate of maternal and infant mortality and provide full access to health care and health education by women, and address problems relating to poverty, hard work and illiteracy (Kazakhstan);

96.42. Provide vaccination to all segments of society, especially women and children, in order to reduce mortality rates and raise life expectancy (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya);

96.43. Continue to improve the quality of education and further increase access to education for the Lao multi-ethnic people (Democratic People's Republic of Korea); improve the quality of education and increase access to education (Tajikistan); continue its commendable efforts with a view to improving access to education for its citizens (Algeria);

96.44. Continue its current reform programme in the education system to provide a better education for its people throughout the country, particularly in rural areas (Islamic Republic of Iran); further pursue efforts to develop education, particularly in rural areas of the country (Kyrgyzstan);

- 96.45. Undertake more effective measures to ensure the accessibility of crucial public services, such as education and healthcare, to the general population, particularly those living in rural areas (Malaysia);
- 96.46. Continue to increase investment in education to endeavour to raise the level of education for the whole nation in order to meet the requirements for social and economic development (China);
- 96.47. Continue activities to increase access for children to education, promote maternal and infant health, and eradicate trafficking in persons (Belarus);
- 96.48. Seek to introduce human rights sensitization in school and university curriculums (Qatar);
- 96.49. Enhance cooperation at the regional and international levels with relevant stakeholders with a view to achieving relevant Millennium Development Goals, related to poverty eradication, nutrition, sanitation and environmental sustainability (Malaysia);
- 96.50. Seek further technical assistance from relevant international organizations to ensure continual success on the path towards achieving human rights and equal access to education, health, employment and livelihood for all (Maldives);
- 96.51. Seek the technical assistance of the international community, in light of the present stage of development in Laos, in order to provide it with needed assistance in strengthening the capacity of its national mechanisms responsible for preparing periodic reports for treaty bodies, and in training its law enforcement officials, judges and police officers in the area of human rights (Egypt);
- 96.52. Further enhance and strengthen the work of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Human Rights Commission to effectively promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the peoples of ASEAN (Indonesia);
- 96.53. Involve civil society, including human rights non-governmental organizations, in the follow-up to this review (United Kingdom).
97. The following recommendations enjoy the support of Laos, which considers that they are already implemented or in the process of implementation:
- 97.1. Strengthen its commitment to ensuring that the fundamental rights of minorities are better respected (Switzerland);
- 97.2. Allow privately owned media outlets to be established (New Zealand);
- 97.3. Remove all Internet monitoring and control facilities restricting the use of the Internet (Netherlands).
98. The following recommendations will be examined by Laos, which will provide responses in due course, but no later than the fifteenth session of the Human Rights Council, in September 2010:
- 98.1. Ratify the two optional protocols to the ICCPR (Canada, Luxembourg, Spain);
- 98.2. Accede to and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at the abolition of the death penalty (Australia, Slovenia);

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- 98.3. **Ratify the Second Optional Protocol of the ICCPR, and formally establish a moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its abolition (Italy);**
- 98.4. **Sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (Switzerland, Spain);**
- 98.5. **Ratify the Optional Protocol to CEDAW (Canada, Spain);**
- 98.6. **Ratify/accede to the Rome Statute of the ICC (Canada, France, Luxembourg);**
- 98.7. **Sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Spain);**
- 98.8. **Consider acceding to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Egypt);**
- 98.9. **Ratify the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (Switzerland);**
- 98.10. **Become a party to the Ottawa Convention on Landmines (Canada);**
- 98.11. **Further harmonize its national legislation with the international obligations of Laos under the respective conventions, and accede to instruments allowing for individual complaints (Finland);**
- 98.12. **Develop a national human rights plan of action to improve awareness of the conventions to which the Lao People's Democratic Republic is a party, and encourage civil society engagement on human rights issues (Germany);**
- 98.13. **Consider issuing a standing invitation to special procedures (Brazil); consider extending an open invitation to the special procedures (Armenia);**
- 98.14. **Extend an open and standing invitation to all special procedures (Spain); issue a standing invitation to the special procedures (Canada);**
- 98.15. **Invite the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders to visit the country in the near future (Norway);**
- 98.16. **Seek the assistance of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing to mitigate the problem of the lack of adequate land and assistance to the rural population (Spain);**
- 98.17. **Adopt measures to legally abolish the death penalty (Germany);**
- 98.18. **Broaden the current de facto moratorium on the death penalty so as to abolish it in all cases, including serious crimes, and sign and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR (Spain);**
- 98.19. **Impose an immediate de jure moratorium on executions, with a view to the complete abolition of the death penalty for all crimes (Belgium);**
- 98.20. **Commute without delay death sentences to prison terms, and definitively abolish capital punishment in all circumstances (France); abolish the death penalty, which is still in effect despite the de facto moratorium on capital punishment (Finland);**
- 98.21. **Adopt and implement a national action plan to combat trafficking in persons, emphasizing the protection of indigenous women and migrants (Mexico);**

- 98.22. Take measures to guarantee effective access for women victims of gender-based violence to justice, redress and protection (Brazil); heed the advice of CEDAW by adopting comprehensive measures to address all forms of violence against women and girls, in accordance with CEDAW general recommendation 19 (Hungary);
- 98.23. Widen the definition of rape in its Penal Code to include any sexual relations without the woman's consent, and remove the exception for marital rape (Slovenia);
- 98.24. Recognize the rights of persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples as set out in international law, regardless of the names given to such groups in domestic law (Hungary);
- 98.25. Ensure equitable treatment of all groups in society and, as a first step, invite the Independent Expert on Minority Issues to undertake a country visit (New Zealand);
- 98.26. Include a definition for discrimination in the Constitution or other legislation (Germany);
- 98.27. Consider the greater participation and incorporation of indigenous peoples in governmental decisions, and ensure that the Hmong are integrated into society on an equal footing with other citizens (Denmark);
- 98.28. Adopt and implement the measures necessary to grant the Hmong the same rights and freedoms as the other members of the Lao population in accordance with international human rights standards, including through genuine engagement with the international community on the issue (Slovakia);
- 98.29. Take all measures necessary to find a lasting solution to the situation of the repatriated Hmong, notably by settling the question of the legal status of persons concerned and granting refugee status to those to whom the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has accorded the status of "person of concern", in full cooperation with UNHCR, and allowing the delivery of international assistance for resettlement, as proposed by certain States (France);
- 98.30. Deepen dialogue with UNHCR regarding the situation of individuals belonging to the Hmong minority returned from third countries (Brazil);
- 98.31. Allow international humanitarian organizations, including UNHCR and the diplomatic community, unfettered access to Hmong returnees, and further ensure that the Hmong people repatriated from Thailand are treated in accordance with international law, including the 158 eligible for third-country resettlement (United Kingdom); allow the international community meaningful and confidential access to Lao Hmong returnees from Thailand (New Zealand); ensure independent access for UNHCR and other international humanitarian agencies to all Lao Hmong returnees from Thailand to Lao, including in Phonekham, and assess their well-being (Australia); allow meaningful and confidential access for international groups to persons returned to the Lao People's Democratic Republic from Thailand (Canada);
- 98.32. Fulfil its obligation under article 12 of the ICCPR by allowing the Lao Hmong refugees who have received third-country invitations to migrate to these countries if they wish to do so, and provide the means for them to do so (Netherlands);

- 98.33. Conduct more human rights training programmes for law enforcement and judicial officials; allow access for independent international observers, especially to the penitentiary and detention centres; and offer more guarantees of independence to the judicial power, in accordance with article 14 of the ICCPR (Spain);
- 98.34. Take effective measures, assigning adequate resources, to ensure respect for international standards, notably concerning the food, health and sanitation of persons deprived of their liberty, and accept the assistance and cooperation of international actors such as the ICRC (Switzerland);
- 98.35. Adopt adequate measures to protect freedom of religion or belief with a view to ensuring for all the full enjoyment of the right to practice one's religion (Italy); ensure the right to practice religion freely without discrimination and in accordance with international human rights standards (Netherlands);
- 98.36. End all restrictions on the right to practice one's religion of choice without discrimination (Denmark);
- 98.37. Implement measures, including through legislation, to protect all citizens from discrimination due to their religious beliefs; and prosecute those involved in the persecution of religious groups (New Zealand);
- 98.38. Implement all recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion in order to remedy the situation described in her most recent report, which noted the persistence of discriminatory legal provisions and practices, which run counter to freedom of religion (France);
- 98.39. Reform decree No. 92 such that it guarantees the rights to freedom of religion and belief, opinion and expression as set out in the ICCPR, and take steps to improve the awareness of State officials of their duty to protect these rights (United Kingdom);
- 98.40. Ensure that relevant authorities, particularly at the local and district levels, are aware of their duty to protect individuals' right to freedom of religion (Australia);
- 98.41. Fully implement legal provisions protecting freedom of speech in accordance with the ICCPR (Canada);
- 98.42. Lift existing restrictions on freedom of expression, and guarantee the free activity of civil society and human rights organizations (France);
- 98.43. Review domestic legislation on the media in order to bring it into line with article 19 of the ICCPR (Italy);
- 98.44. Amend further its Law on the Media, the Law on Publication and other related regulations to comply with international human rights standards (Slovakia);
- 98.45. Revoke laws that allow for the suppression of the rights to freedom of assembly and expression (New Zealand);
- 98.46. Allow media and civil society organizations to undertake education, advocacy, monitoring and reporting on human rights issues (Australia);
- 98.47. Comply fully with article 25 of the ICCPR, relating to the right to political participation (Mexico);
- 98.48. Increase the budget for health so as to strengthen primary care, in particular in rural areas, including sexual education, and ensure that

programmes for family planning and awareness duly take into account the traditions and physical obstacles faced by women in rural areas (Luxembourg).

99. The recommendations set out below did not enjoy the support of Laos:

99.1. Consider establishing a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Egypt);

99.2. Establish an independent national human rights institution, in conformity with the Paris Principles (Germany); establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Canada);

99.3. Free those persons who were detained owing to their participation in peaceful demonstrations, and in particular the student leaders who were arrested in 1999 (Belgium).

100. All conclusions and/or recommendations set out in the present report reflect the positions 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 Laos was headed by Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Phongsavath Boupha and composed of the following members:

- H. E. Mr. Yong Chanthalangsy, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Lao PDR to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations at Geneva; Deputy Head of Delegation;
- Mr. Khamkheuang Bounteum, Director-General, Department of Treaties and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Chanthavong SeneAmatmontry, Chief of Cabinet, Lao Front for National Construction;
- Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith, Director-General, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Viengthavisone Thephachanh, Acting Director-General, Department of Foreign Affairs, National Assembly;
- Ms. Sirikit Boupha, Director-General, Department of Development, Lao Women's Union;
- Mr. Savankhone Razmounry, Director General of Lao Press in Foreign Languages, Vice President of Lao Journalist Association;
- Mr. Khonepheng Thammavong, Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Lao PDR to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations at Geneva;
- Mr. Bountha Songyerthao, Deputy Chief of Cabinet, Ministry of Justice;
- Mr. Bounpheng Saykanya, Deputy Director-General, Department of Treaties and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Oudom Sisongkham, Deputy Director-General, Department of Foreign Relations, Ministry of Public Security;
- Mr. Phay Phanthavone, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Lao PDR to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations at Geneva;
- Mr. Kingphet Vannachareun, Director of Treaties and Law Division, Department of Foreign Relations, Ministry of Defense;
- Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo, Director of UN Social-Economic Affairs, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Sanexay Sadettan, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Lao PDR to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations at Geneva;
- Mr. Vongvilay Thipalangsy, Deputy Director of Human Rights Division, Department of Treaties and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Mr. Phasouk Nanthalangsy, Officer, Human Rights Division, Department of Treaties and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

- Mr. Sengpraarthid Snookphone, Assistant Project Manager of International Law Project, Department of Treaties and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
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