



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under  
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of  
Discrimination against Women**

**Replies of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the list  
of issues and questions in relation to its tenth periodic  
report\*\*\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

\*\* The annexes to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



## **Women's rights and gender equality in relation to the coronavirus disease pandemic, recovery efforts and global crises**

1. To deal with and solve the occurred problems in current and long-term periods, Government has improved and adopted a number of Laws, Strategy, and plan of actions as follows:

- Amended Law on Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases, dated 29 December 2022, Article 5 state policy on prevention and control of infectious disease, Article 31 isolation; In addition, this law also added some new articles such as Article 36 responsibility of the state organization, Article 37 responsibility and private sector participation, Article 38 responsibility and social community participation, Article 39 responsibility and family participation, Article 40 responsibility and individual participation, Article 41 expertise on prevention and control of infectious diseases;
- Adopted and promulgated Decree on national strategy of social protection, no 224/PM, dated 1 April 2020, to continue widely and successfully implementation of social protection day by day, in addition, also crucially contribute for human resource development, development plan of relevant sectors and national socio-economic development plan in each period;
- Adopted and promulgated the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021–2025) that guiding directive and target in addressing and recovering the Covid-19 pandemic, including preparation of measures taken for its long-term impact, particularly from armed conflict, food security, energy crises and other relevant areas;
- Issued Prime Minister's Decision on Establishing Ad Hoc Committee to prevent, control and address the outbreak of Novel Corona Virus 'NCoV', no 09/PM, dated 03 February 2020; Notice of Prime Minister's Office, no 519/PMO, dated 27 May 2020; Agreement on performing policy implication for social welfare to address Covid-19 impact, no 1682/MD, dated 10 June 2020.

2. Lao PDR has severely been affected by coronavirus disease (Covid-19) for quite long period, including it has faced economic and financial difficulties, and natural disaster that happens frequently, with this circumstance, the Government has seriously prevented and addressed Covid-19 pandemic as follows:

- Health system: set up the Public Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), during infectious diseases prevention and control work (IPC), case Management, surveillance and Laboratory, Risk Communication through website: covid19.gov.la, Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM), Essential Health Service and Port of Entry (POE);
- From 2020 to 2022, the National Social Security Agency implemented a policy of supporting 22,628 Covid-19 patients (11,779 women), as total amount 20.895.204,599 kip; supporting unemployment 1.107 companies, with total 72,641 unemployments (49,732 women), as total amount 67.926.945.680 kip; utilized fund from the International Labour Organization to help garment workers whom were impacted by Covid-19 for 47 factories, with 20.698 workers (12.419 women), as total amount 18.628.200.000 kip.

## Constitutional, legislative and policy framework

3. Although, constitution there is not any specific article on the prohibition of gender-based discrimination, but prescribed gender equality in Article 37 of constitution, family law and other laws.

4. Law on Gender Equality 2019, Article 8 gender equality in each sector, Article 20 capacity-building for gender equality, Article 26 responsibility for gender equality, and Article 46 budget, recognized that this law is deal with many sectors. Therefore, personnel, technical and budget are the responsibility of the sectors from the central to the local level; In term of technical and budget supported by government. However, the UN, NGOs, and CSOs also support the sector by supporting specific projects and integrating them into the projects of the sectors through the implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2021–2025).

5. The Government pays attention to and tries to implement the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021–2025) which includes instructions assigned to each sector to be responsible, the sectors and localities have developed into their own plans as well as integrating them into the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan, the development plan of the sector and the socio-economic development plan of the province. In addition, in the Prime Minister’s decree on the implementation of the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan. Every year, each sector and locality have been determined that each sector and locality must develop such work into the project plans and activities, including the implementation and summary of reports. At the sector level, there has been a budget allocation to the CAWMC to monitor, promote, evaluate and summarize the work.

## Access to Justice

6. Implementing policies, Lao constitution, Law on Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women and Children; disseminating the Lao constitution, laws, and international conventions related to women and children to ensure that each woman in the above target groups is aware of and understands the protection of their rights and interests and access to justice according to the right prescribe into laws, during 2019–2023 total number of participants were 7.202 people (4.787 women) with this number there were 4,409 students (2,768 women), general people was 1,936 (1.547 women). Ministry of Labour and Social Welfares disseminated law on person with disabilities during 2021–2023 for 58 times with a total of 1.956 participants (1.109 women), and there were 767 disabled people (410 disabled women).

7. According to the Legal Aid Decree no. 77/Gov, dated 28 January 2018, the right to receive legal aid has been determined in 7 target groups: the poor, the disadvantaged, the disabled, children who need special protection (in target groups 2–4 must have the same conditions as the poor in cases related to costs of expenditure), criminals who are required by law to have a lawyer to help, women and children who are victims of violence, who are victims of human trafficking (target groups 5–7 can request legal assistance without any additional conditions).

(a) For the method of applying for legal aid, leading organizations that provide legal aid can proceed in the following means: submit a request in person, family representative or relative; Proposals of village administrations, schools, hospitals and other organizations; Contact by phone or other communication devices and other methods;

(b) For citizens abroad, apply through the embassy or consulate of the Lao PDR in receiving country.

8. Training on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, gender equality, Law on Gender Equality, Law on Combating and Preventing Violence against Women to build capacity for law enforcement authorities, judges and prosecutors in total 24 times, with a total of 1.132 participants (689 women).

9. The Penal Code of Lao PDR has defined the death penalty, but in practice, there has never been a case of death sentence for the offender (prisoner) in the past, but it will be changed to life imprisonment. According to the Penal Code, self-defence is a reason to reduce the criminal penalty.

10. The Government of the Lao PDR has issued Presidential Decree on Amnesty, no 001/PO, dated 20 March 2018, which defines the principles, regulations, and measures for amnesty activities by implementing humanitarian policies in reducing sentences and releasing prisoners on important national days particularly Lao National Day on December 2. In addition, the Prime Minister's Decree no 303/PMO, dated 1 November 2023 on custody-adjustment work. This Decree defines the principles, regulations and measures related to the management and monitoring of custody-adjustment work.

### **Women, peace and security**

11. The implementation of Resolution 1325 in the protection and participation will be defined in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd National Action Plans for Gender Equality and the 1st and 2nd National Action Plans to prevent and eliminate violence against women, but will not define armed conflicts. It will define violence against women, participation in decision-making and leadership positions in the political and public sectors, gender mainstreaming. The details of the implementation results can be seen from the reports of the two national Plans.

### **National human rights institution**

12. The Lao PDR is not yet ready to build a human rights institution based on the Paris principles to implement this work because it is not yet consistent and appropriate to the reality in the Lao PDR. In the past, the Lao PDR has conducted research on the establishment of mechanisms or national human rights institutions that promote and protect human rights in accordance with the reality, environment and conditions of the country in order to monitor the implementation of citizens' rights as well as various obligations that occur under international conventions to which the Lao PDR is a party, including the exchange of lessons and experiences with some countries that have their own national human rights institutions according to the Paris principles, which we observe that in the current situation, Lao PDR will continue to gradually improve and strengthen its existing internal mechanisms instead of creating any new mechanisms, such as National Committee on Human Rights, National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children, the National Committee for the Person with Disabilities and the National Committee on Anti-Trafficking in Persons.

### **Women human rights defenders**

13. The Constitution, Article 6 stipulates that the state protects the freedom and democratic rights of the people that no one can violate. Prohibit all criminal acts and threats that will harm the honour, body, life, mind and property of the people. For issues related to UN Doc. [A/HRC/WGAD/2017/61](#) and UN Doc. [A/HRC/WGAD/2021/6](#), Law on Criminal

Procedure 2017, Article 238 sets out the release of prisoners and Article 239 sets out how to implement the release of prisoners. Prisoners have the right to be released when they have served their prison sentences as determined by the court. Prisoners who have behaved well and are making progress in serving their sentences are eligible for amnesty according to Presidential Decree no. 001/PO, dated 20 March 2018.

14. The Government has opened opportunities for social organizations to organize and operate their work according to the roles and rights of their organizations in accordance with the law and the decree on the establishment of associations. Individuals or legal entities proposing to establish social organizations can do the following:

(a) There are two levels of approval in the registration process of social organizations, namely the Ministry level and the provincial level, with the implementation of 4 steps as follows: Step 1: Propose and consider approval of the appointment of the committee on establishment association (60 days); Step 2: Propose to open the meeting and consider approval to open the meeting for establishment association (30 days); Step 3: Requesting, approval and consideration for adoption of association rules and regulations (60 days); and Step 4: Propose and consider to register association (15 days), currently there are a total of 204 associations and 45 foundations that have completed registration for implementation in the Lao PDR;

(b) Procedures for the registration of non-governmental organizations according to the guidelines for the implementation of the Prime Minister's Decree on Non-Governmental Organizations no. 1064/MOFA.DOI.3, dated 17 February 2015, defines: a letter requesting permission to operate in the Lao PDR from the main office of the organization to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a copy of the registration document from the country of origin, a copy of the constitution or regulations of the non-governmental organization, financial status documents, documents about the plan of aid in the Lao PDR, information on the activities of the non-governmental organizations in the past.

15. Lao citizens are not restricted in their right to express themselves through various media and receive protection, management and guarantee of their rights as stipulated in the constitution, laws and legislation, have the right to freedom of access to information sources both domestically and abroad, such as the Constitution, Article 44, defines that: Lao citizens have the right to speak and write without violating the law; The Law on Media defines the freedom of Lao citizens in the media, including the right to express opinions based on the truth. This can provide useful information for economic and social development, such as news, analysis, research on various issues, entertainment news, etc. In addition, in the Law on Information Communication Technology, the Law on Protection of Electronic Data, the Decree on the Management of Information Services via the Internet in 2014, the Guidelines on the Use of Social Media for Safety in 2020 have also defined the right to access information as well.

### **Temporary special measures**

16. The Government has attached the importance and attention to the awareness-raising campaigns for politicians, members of National Assembly, and community leaders to have awareness-raising and understanding about gender equality and the promotion of gender equality since the dissemination workshop on gender equality, the international convention on women's rights, the law on gender equality for leadership officials, training on gender roles for civil servants in the various sectors; At the same time, it also conducted the awareness-raising and correctly understanding of the promotion of gender equality for community leaders, eminent persons

including the people and specific male groups in order to eliminate discrimination against women and the promotion of gender equality to make people aware of gender equality, sexual health and reproductive health and the prevention of violence against women such as in Bokeo, Champasak, Attapue and Borikhamxay provinces, with a total of 155 participants (55 women).

17. The sectors have adopted temporary special measures at the local level to solve the problem of access to education and employment as follows:

- In the education sector, temporary special measures have been adopted and there have been trial implementations to provide access to education, such as the decree on the education of poor students, the provision of education funds for remote poor students and ethnic girls;
- The labour and social welfare sector has made an effort to encourage and promote the creation of jobs for both men and women, especially women living in rural areas, with measures such as the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Department of Employment, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the International Labour Organization and the project steering committee meeting for the promotion of employment in rural areas of the Lao PDR for the period of 2023–2027 and the plan for the implementation of the program to promote employment in rural areas of the Lao PDR for 06 months at the end of the year 2023 has been considered, the project has been determined 03 targeted provinces: Luang Prabang, Savannakhet and Champasak provinces. The objective is to give opportunity for poor women and men of all nationalities and ethnicities without discrimination to access to employment and have income for their families.

### **Gender stereotypes**

18. 10 training sessions on gender roles were conducted, with a total of 317 participants (228 women). These trainings aim to have basic knowledge about preventing and ending violence against women and children and being able to learn coexistence and social norms as well as learning mechanisms and measures to promote gender equality and the advancement of more women in universities including disseminating legal aspects to young students to promote gender equality and gender roles. Learning how to prevent, access to justice, the right of women and children in order to awareness-raising to clear traditional attitudes towards gender roles and the responsibilities of women and girls which are obstacles to access to education, economic integration, decision-making and increasing the risk of gender-based violence.

19. The Ministry of Education and Sports uses measures to integrate gender equality into the curriculum of secondary education, qualifications and citizenship education, which includes the content of awareness-raising of gender equality and combating the use of violence in educational institutions, as well as conducting training to use the curriculum for teachers in all 16 teachers training institutions that take into account gender roles, with a total of 1.489 teachers have been trained (1.456 women).

20. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) encourages and promotes valuable and fair work, especially to create opportunities for women to have a job, to earn income in various places of work in order to reduce unpaid in the household, including the determination of gender equality in work under the Labour Law which we have taken measures to implement through monitoring the implementation of the Labour Law and the Social Security Law by the labour inspector every year. In 2023, there has been an inspection of the implementation of the Labour Law of 2,600 labour units, separated by sector: 680 industrial units, 295 agricultural units and 1.625

service units, with a total of 78.341 workers (28.397 women), 7.985 foreign workers (1.450 women); There are 41,34 people with labour contracts (16.915 women), 5.948 people without labour contracts (2.746 women); There are internal rules within 1.300 units.

## **Gender-based violence against women**

21. The Penal Code is based on the assessment results of the implementation of the laws in each period. However, the definition of rape is defined in Law on Combating and Preventing Violence against Women and Children, Article 4, Clause 10. In the proceedings, this law is used as a reference to help the victims and determine the punishment of the perpetrators.

22. Carry out the campaigns to disseminate the constitution, laws and international conventions related to women and children, especially the use of violence against women and children, combating the use of gender-based violence for 98 times, with a total of 11.682 participants (9.720 women) to raise women's awareness of the state's policies, laws, protection and assistance to victims, negative impact of violence against women and knowing how to protect themselves/families from becoming victims. Conducted 16 Days of Activism against violence to cease violence against women and girls. The important event is Prime Minister/Deputy Prime Minister giving statements to the Lao people, which shows the attention of the government and the role model for leadership. In addition, there is a notice for all stakeholders to create an awareness raising process from the central level to the village level which has a variety of activities. At the same time, laws were published, creating and printing brochures and posters about the problems and effects of using violence, especially access to assistance and the rights and benefits that victims should receive in total nearly 8.000 copies and spreading information through various online media.

23. Carry out trainings for village and male governing bodies on the prevention of violence against women and gender-based characteristic violence against women, especially related laws and the problems of using violence including the definition, assistance and punishment for the perpetrators in Bokeo, Champasak, Attapeu and Bolikhamxay provinces, with a total of 155 participants (55 women). At the same time, there was an initial desk review on what customs in Bokeo, Bolikhamxay, Savannakhet, Champasak and Attapeu provinces have the natures of prejudices, discrimination and use of violence in order to create a document for those groups to recognize, understand and transform such practices and to train village-level governing bodies on violence against women, especially the standards and procedures for coordination and referral of women and girls who have been victimized by violence for the village administration to comply with the legislation and the needs of the victims, as well as adjust their attitude towards violence.

24. Protective measures to help women victims of sexual violence against women are defined in Article 42 of the Law on Combating and Preventing Violence against Women and Children, measures to protect victims of violence which includes 8 measures and Article 44 Emergency Protection. In addition, there are operational standards for assisting women and children who have been victims of violence, which was approved and used in 2023; In 2024, there is a training plan for law enforcement officers such as justice officers, police officers, prosecutors, court officers and lawyers to have a deep understanding of legal assistance and the prosecution of such cases. From 2021 to October 2023, the Lao Women's Union, which provides social assistance, can provide free legal, health and mental counselling services (face-to-face and hotline 1362) to people with problems who come to seek counselling and victims staying at the Centre, with a total of 1.383 people (872 women), 33 people

under the age of 18 (32 women), including 1,370 cases, the number of counselling sessions for 7.349 times.

25. To ensure that the victims of violence have the option to solve the problem of gender-based violence through the laws, customary laws, through mediation or send official applications according to of the Law on the Development and Protection of Women which defines Article 33, Article 35, Article 36, Article 38, the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Children, has also been identified as defined in Article 29, Article 31, and Article 47. In addition, there are standards operational procedure (SOP) for assisting women and girls who have been victims of violence, which determine the SOP of Health, SOP of Justice and Policing, SOP of Social and SOP coordination, governance coordination and referral pathway.

26. Specific measures are in place to protect women and girls with disabilities who are victims of gender-based violence against women and to ensure access to reporting sites for victims, especially the Lao Women's Union has a central hotline number 1362, the hotline number of each province by adding the provincial code number in front and followed by 1362, eight numbers that can be called and contact through WhatsApp, which has a total of 11 numbers: 5554 1362, 5558 1362, 5799 1362, 5557 1362, 2324 1362, 2326 1362, 2252 1362, 5598 1362, 5580 1362, 9613 1362 and went down to the victimized women to facilitate those who could not travel to report as well as having a representative to represent the victims who are disabled such as hearing impaired, visually impaired; victims can report to police officers where they reside or report directly to the Ministry of Public Security or call hotline 1300 or 020 22881300, 24 hours a day.

### **Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

27. The government gives importance to the prevention of trafficking in girls, child abduction in the form of forced marriages by:

- Strengthening immigration police officers and other relevant authorities to ensure that there is no discrimination against children who are legally displaced and to issue temporary or permanent residence permits in Lao PDR to those who meet the requirements according to the relevant laws of Lao PDR;
- Trying to focus on preventing, solving and finding the causes that lead to children being moved illegally such as lying, kidnapping and abduction abroad; The National Steering Committee on Anti-Human Trafficking, Committee on Child Protection and Assistance at central and local levels work to protect and assist children as a monitoring and investigation mechanism as well as coordination with neighbouring countries;
- Paying attention to awareness raising campaigns to prevent the problem of child migration. At the local level, the Provincial Women's Union launched a campaign to raise awareness about safe migration, the Provincial Public Security invested in campaigning in the villages along the Mekong River and many villages with labourers going to work abroad. The campaigns focus on the negative impact of human trafficking in order to raise awareness among the people and to be careful not to fall to the scam;
- In 2019–2023, the Lao Women's Union had assisted victims of trafficking in girls, child abduction in the form of forced marriages, especially ethnic women and poor women, by providing counselling services to those who come to ask for assistance, with a total of 2.340 people (1.539 women), could help the victims to access justice, with a total of 459 people, (370 women).



28. The Lao Government has established the Gold Triangle Special Economic Zone Security Command and the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone Labour Office in 2023 to prevent and solve the problems of human trafficking, forced labour, forced prostitution and other human rights violations in the area. Next steps will proceed solving the problem, especially the criminal proceedings against the perpetrators and the necessary assistance to the victims by coordinating with all relevant authorities.

29. Trainings on anti-human trafficking work in particular to create awareness about the criminal nature of human trafficking for police officers in 17 provinces and 1 capital city to strengthen knowledge and understanding of the work and create focal points for anti-human trafficking work in 10 provinces with a total of 140 participants; Capacity building for a total of 350 soldiers at the provincial level; and prosecuted a total of 98 perpetrators (47 women), 38 foreigners (5 women).

30. Carry out dissemination campaigns for people in the community and disseminate through brochures, leaflets and online media about the forms of human trafficking and the risk of human trafficking in villages, schools, universities, factories, industrial zones and Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone and other areas that are at risk so that they are aware of the negative impact, dangers and be careful not to become victims of human trafficking. There are 306 companies and 29 neighbourhoods participating; Create related activities to raise awareness about the risks related to human trafficking by posting awareness campaigns for teachers, students and the people about this issue for 13 times, with a total of 5.014 participants (3.797 women).

31. In order to ensure the identification of victims of human trafficking and appropriate referral services for assistance and rehabilitation, the Ministry of Public Security has adopted a manual for the identification, protection, assistance and referral of victims of violence, in which the identification of victims human trafficking has been divided into two phases: the initial identification phase and the identification phase during the investigation and detailed procedures as well as conducting training for police officers and women's union officers and related sectors that provided assistance to the victims for 43 times, with a total of 2.071 participants (1.500 women). Lao Women's Union, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ban Sengsavang, Village Focus International helped with 21 medical examinations at the hospital, 111 victims (101 women); Treatment-rehabilitation and care for victims who were sent back to family and society for 103 times (84 women); Helping the under privileged and the victims of human trafficking, with a total of 49 women; Assisting vulnerable groups to stay at the shelter with a total of 73 people.

32. Collaborate with Winrock International, Village Focus International to discuss on vocational training assistance and employment promotion for groups at risk from human trafficking in Champasak province as well as assessing the needs and providing assistance to those at risk, disadvantaged and needy people with a total of 113 people focusing on helping disadvantaged children and youth that impacted by human trafficking in the community.

33. Lao Women's Union, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ban Sengsavang, Village Focus International had trained beauty professionals, tailors, hairdressers, promoted to the general education system, cooking, fund to the teacher's college, sent to the general education system in the community, finding job and vocational fund for 171 people.

### **Participation in political and public life**

34. The government pays attention to build-maintenance female officers in connection with the plan of determining the leadership-management officers in three

forms: build according to educational institutions, professions, political schools and administrations at each level including both domestically and abroad; create in actual specialized work and create in the process of grassroots work; build-maintenance of civil servants have followed by the plan of determining the officers related to the strategic plan of human resources development, the leading-management officers and technical officers have been trained and upgraded in political theory, specialized subjects and experiences in every year quite a lot; For the political-administrative line that the central level is responsible for build-maintenance at home and abroad. In 2023, there were a total of 1.023 comrades, 219 female comrades accounting for 21,40 per cent. In this, there are 239 students, 60 of whom are female, accounting for 25,10 per cent.

35. Statistics for the decision making of the year 2023, see annex.

36. In order to achieve gender equality in the decision-making positions above 1). The government has created a plan to determine leadership-management officers to ensure female structure. Currently, the creation of a plan to determine leadership-management officers at the central level has been completed. 2). The Party Central Committee Secretariat issued an Order No. 411, dated 08 August 2023 on the preparation and conduct of the Party's 3-stage Congress (content on the designation of women), the Party Central Committee issued an Instruction No. 211, dated 16 August 2023 on the preparation and conduct of the Party's 3-stage Congress and a number of other legislations, which specifies about the structure of women "pay attention to the structure of gender, ethnic groups, the number increases according to the special points of the party committee at each level".

## **Nationality**

37. The Government implements the National Strategy on Public Administration and Citizen Statistics Collection (2016–2025) by assigning an organization of the Ministry of Home Affairs from central to district levels to be responsible for the registration of births, divorces, deaths, name changes, nationality changes and migration. The World Bank provided 25 million US dollars for 2020–2025 to improve the coverage rate of citizen registration through the establishment of an electronic citizen information management system. This effort aims to reach the cover rate of 70 percent of birth registration from now until 2024. Based on the fundamental statistics in 2019, it archived 38,70 per cent.

38. MoHA has carried out many activities for capacity building and raising awareness of birth registration at provincial, district, and village levels in the whole country by: improving Lao and English questionnaires, book of notification and family registration, including printing, publishing, and distribution. In addition, the information disseminations on population management and registration have been conducted. The main goals of these activities are to increase understanding and ensure consistent implementation and compliance with the law. These activities were conducted with a total of 1.700 participants in 69 districts across 15 provinces, while there were 1.260 participants in 998 villages across 19 districts in 3 provinces.

39. To increase the amount of birth registration, the fees and service charges regarding the birth registration of children under the age of 18 have been waived according to articles 47 and 48 of the Decree on the Determination of Fees and Service Charges (2021). Additionally, information for raising understanding and importance of citizen registration was disseminated through publications, electronic media and mass media products, such as TV, radio, village speakers, brochures, posters, short series, Facebook, YouTube, short-talks.

40. Improving working method by setting up a registration unit by having birth registration officers at district level, collaborating with village administration and mobile citizen statistics, providing mobile services so that people can access them, especially those who have difficulties in rural and remote areas, collecting information about children and creating a database as a management tool for population data collection at the district level, which has been implemented in some rural areas of 05 provinces.

## Education

41. The Government attaches importance to the education system. From 2019 to 2023, the National Assembly has approved 171.242,01 billion kip to implement 21 projects. In addition, it also received financial support from development partners, international organizations, and social organizations. The number of civil servants working in the education and sports sectors in 2023 was 79.944 officers (42.429 women), including 9.019 administration officers (3.646 women) and 70.925 teachers (38.783 women).

42. In order to increase the number of girls accessing to education, the education and sports sectors have put in place specific measures and pilot programs, such as:

- Providing scholarships to poor students and ethnic girls in rural areas with a total of 2.000 ethnic children (1.654 females);
- The school lunch program has been implemented in 17 provinces, 65 districts, and 2.620 schools. There are a total of 222.183 children (108.317 females) in kindergarten and primary school who have lunch at school with the support of the government budget, the World Food Organization, and the World Relief Organization. Among them are 26.575 kindergarten children (13.143 females), 195.608 primary school students (95.174 females);
- Building dormitories for students in which a total of 6.450 students (2.789 females) can utilize the facilities;
- The GPE III + BEGUAL reading development project, as well as the provision of vehicles in various forms to facilitate students to go to schools by village education development committees;
- A project on developing the quality of education and sports that relate to the three-build work plan in 40 poor districts;
- A project to reinforce Lao language reading after school hours for ethnic children in class year 1 of the Research Institution of Educational Science in 10 target provinces which a total of 27.624 students (15.423 females) from more than 100 schools have benefits from this project;
- In 2023–2024, there are 212.609 kindergarten students (121.341 females), while primary schools has 706.915 students (348.883 females); junior high schools has 351.488 students (175.352 females); and secondary high schools has 134.226 students (68.689 females). Besides that, the whole country has 25 ethnic boarding schools with a total of 10.496 students (4.757 females) and there are 02 disability schools with a total of 192 students, (91 females). These students also received tuition and accommodation policies from the government.

43. Enhance the knowledge of teenagers both men and women on the reduction of early marriages and unintended pregnancy, higher education institutions have added the subject of sex education into university courses by fully integrating sex education into the syllabus regarding sexual health, reproductive health, prevention of sexually

transmitted diseases, AIDS prevention, gender equality, children's rights, and the safely use of information and communication technology.

44. The Ministry of Education and Sport has trained the teachers and staffs of 25 ethnic boarding schools in the whole country. During 2023–2024, the number of teachers and staffs in those 25 schools was 752 people (395 women), while students had 10,496 people (4,757 women). These students have received scholarships and accommodations directly from the government. Since 2022, the Centre for promoting Lao language reading in remote areas, including Teacher Education Department, has organized trainings for students and ethnic teachers who teach Lao language to ethnic students after school hours in class year 1 in 10 target provinces and more than 100 schools. The Department of Out-of-School Education has a mobile teacher project that assigns teachers in that area to teach in order to facilitate Lao language communication at the basic level. Also, there is a program to provide scholarships and allowances to poor students and ethnic girls every year until they graduate from the general education system.

45. The Government has improved the quality of education in terms of studying-teaching, scientific research, technology development, and the promotion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to develop the quality of humans suitable for the labour market and to implement the development of gender roles in promoting access to education framework. The target (Gender Action Plan) has increased the number of female students enrolled in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) so that they can find jobs and be able to participate in vocational courses. The number of students enrolled in natural science, technology, and engineering has increased by 50 per cent compared to students in other fields.

## **Employment**

46. The government pays attention to the development of labour skills and facilitating access to employment in both the domestic and international markets and, as follows:

- The government has cooperated with relevant stakeholders to carry out this task: 1) The MoLSW cooperated with the World Bank created the *Development Project: Lao PDR Priority Skill for Growth* in 2022. 2) The MoLSW and non-deposit microfinance institutions cooperated to facilitate providing loans to Lao workers who want to work abroad. 3) The MoLSW, the bank of Lao PDR, Lao Development Bank, the Agricultural Promotion Bank and non-profit microfinance institutions cooperated to facilitate creating favourable conditions for Lao worker to access employment the domestic and international markets. 4) The MoLSW signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Onude Ireland Company on the development of labour skills and exporting Lao skilled workers to work in Japan and 5) The MOU with 52 districts of the Republic of Korea for seasonal workers in Korea, where a total of 2,121 Lao workers (972 women) work in Korea;
- The government promoted labour units to develop skills according to various professional sectors, which trained a total of 26,819 people (13,113 women), including where are 8,684 people (4,683 women) for agriculture sector; 12,596 people (5,578 women) are trained in industry field and 5,539 people (2,852 women) for service sector. In addition, the government has tried to reduce the cost of living for vulnerable workers by increasing the minimum wage of the Lao PDR from 1,1 kip to 1,2 million kip in 2022 and to 1,3 million kip in 2023;
- A total of 150,469 workers (80,203 women) or 53,3 per cent including 1,665 people (6,381 women) for agriculture sector, 75,003 people, (39,510 women)

for industry sector and 60.801 people (34.312 women) for service sector entered the domestic labour market and went to work abroad.

47. Advertisements and inspects the implementation of the Labour Law to delete the gender gap in the labour market. The labour units were trained 5.036 times, resulting in 161.251 workers (63.718 women). Additionally, the government encouraged labour units to establish and update 683 internal regulations and to have 292 labour contracts. The government received a total of 316 dispute labour complaints, completed mediation in 242 cases, or 76,58 per cent of disputes, and workers received benefits of 7.956,34 million kip, 38.000 baht and 3.507,79 US dollars in cash; 13 cases are pending mediation and 74 cases were considered by the People's Court, and 1 case was dismissed; and provided counselling on labour laws and regulations to resolve labour employee and employers 3.000 times.

48. There is a legal advisory unit and labour management regulations for employers and workers with 1.149 service visits, covering 2.980 workers (969 women); collecting the level of wages and living expenses of workers in 2 provinces: Vientiane Capital and Vientiane Province. In addition, monitoring workers on the Lao-China railway and the provinces where the railway runs through to ensure that workers are safe and receive fair wages without discrimination as defined in Labour Law Article 96, Article 83 of the Labour Law.

49. The government has issued Decree No. 473/GOL on the elderly, dated July 12, 2021; Decree on the organization and activity of the National Committee for the Elderly No. 389/PMO, dated 29 December 2023 and completed the National Action Plan for the Elderly for 10 years (2026–2035) and some activities of the project such as the study of the feasibility of creating a counselling centre and health care for the elderly and build a total of 597 nursery kindergarten schools in order to reduce and improve redistribute unpaid care work and home-base carried out by women, by investing in basic infrastructure and social services.

50. The Lao Law stipulates that it prohibits gender-based discrimination, discrimination based on family, pregnancy, and marital status in employment, such as

- The Labour Law, which does not allow the termination of the labour contract of a woman who is pregnant or has a child under one year old (Article 87);
- Female workers have the right to maternity leave before and after giving birth for at least one hundred and five days, but at least must maternity leave not less than forty-two days after giving birth. In the case of giving birth to twins, take maternity leave for at least one hundred and twenty days. During the absence of work, the person has the right to receive a salary or full wages as usual from the employer (Article 98);
- If workers have long maternity leave periods prescribed for treatment, or health recovery due to childbirth, female workers have the right to receive extra allowances as stipulated in the Law on Social Security;
- After giving birth for one year or less, female workers have the right to take an hour off work every day to breastfeed or take care of their child, as well as the right to bright the child to get immunizations in accordance with health standards. Furthermore, female workers who miscarry or pass away while still in the womb are entitled to maternity leave at the doctor's discretion and they also have the right to receive a salary or normal wages.

51. Labour law prohibits employers from discriminating against female workers in employment in the following situations: 1. Checking pregnancy before employment; 2. Creating working conditions that prevent or reject female workers who are married or pregnant; 3. Creating conditions to cancel the labour contract due to marriage or

pregnancy. Moreover, male workers have the right to maternity leave for at least not less than 3 days to take care of their wife when their wife gives birth or miscarry, with full wages (Article 58, Labour Law). Male civil servants have the right to vacation a minimum of 15 days to care for their wife and child after delivery of a child or miscarry, while still receiving their full wages (Article 28, Civil Servants Law).

52. The Labour law ensures women have the right to maternity leave to give birth. In case a worker is deducted from his salary due to maternity leave for giving birth, they can be claimed by the worker's representative or the grassroots union in the labour unit, the Lao Workers' Union at the central to the local level, the labour management organization from the village level to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, and the Central Lao Workers' Union.

53. The MoLSW issued an agreement on the management of domestic workers No. 4369/ MoLSW, dated 2 November 2022; which in article 19 of the cancellation of the labour contract and article 25 stipulated prohibition for domestic employers and article 33 stipulated measures against violators.

54. From 2021 to 2023, there will be an emphasis on the promotion of vocational training and employment of disabled people and funding for disabled people to run their own businesses with support from international organizations and disabled organizations such as HI Organization, CBM Global Organization, AAR Organization, Lao National Association of Disabled People, Autistic Association and Disabled Women Association.

55. The list of occupations in the Lao PDR is used to choose names for occupations that will be used in the registration of individual codes in the citizen database. This will help to organize and facilitate the selection of names for occupations and include data in the Ministry of Home Affairs' Electronic Citizen Information Management System, which is open to the public and serves residents of nine provinces throughout the country. This data will serve as the foundation for encouraging both men and women to create non-traditional occupations.

### **Women migrant workers**

56. The migrant worker policy considers the role of gender in protecting Lao workers abroad, the government has prepared to establish a Migrant Worker Assistance Centre under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. It has also updated the handbook for the management and protection of migrant workers for the three ministries: the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Public Security, and made a guidebook for Lao worker before they travel to work abroad.

57. The MoLSW has coordinated with the relevant sectors to create a mechanism to protect and manage Lao workers who works abroad in accordance with the memorandum of understanding of the two sides. Foreign workers who work in the Lao PDR in accordance with the law, especially to fulfil their obligations to the state and occupations reserved for Lao workers; monitoring and assisting Lao workers work aboard such as in Japan and Korea; and the project on reduce poverty through safe migration, develop labour skills and increase job placement in Lao PDR Phase II.

58. The MoLSW pays attention to advertising, raising awareness of rights, risks that may occur and steps to help when rights are violated in many ways and ensuring worker have more access to information, such as organizing a ceremony to celebrate International Migrant Workers' Day on December 18 in Vientiane, which has a total of 2.504 participants to make the whole society aware and understand about the rights

of migrant workers, safe migration; Disseminate information on work abroad through online, youth radio programs, and newspapers for workers and society.

59. The MoLSW issued an agreement on the exporting of Lao workers to work abroad; organized the Workshop on Strengthening Lao PDR's Legal Framework for Recruitment of Migrant Workers, including in the Fishing and Seafood Processing Sector, and established the regulations on the employing association and company.

60. The MoLSW assisted female migrant workers returning to the country by organizing training for Lao workers returning from abroad on modern agriculture, which female migrant workers received good opportunities to generate income under the poverty reduction program, training on the development of labour skills and upgrading the skills of workers sent back to the country during COVID-19 and unemployed workers in Savannakhet and Champasak provinces.

## Health

61. The provision of health care services to the members of the health insurance gives the Lao people's ethnic groups access to basic health care services, covering 94,5 per cent of the citizens. This lowers the cost of public health care for poor people. Pregnant women can receive free prenatal care, postnatal care, check-ups, normal childbirth, and caesarean sections from the National Health Insurance Fund, with a total of 109.015 women giving birth in 2022. In addition, low-income families can receive food assistance and travel reimbursement when they use medical services in the public medical sector. The Lao PDR is one of the 57 countries with a rapid decrease in maternal and child mortality (78 per cent and 40 per cent), as evidenced by the rate of access to services for pregnant women and children under the age of five, which has increased tenfold (pregnant women access to external examination service 0,41 times per person/year in 2015, increasing to 4,3 times per person/year in 2022), and the rate of use of the external examination service for children under the age of five has increased from 0,15 times per person/year in 2015 to 1,56 times per person/year in 2022.

62. The government implemented a strategy on mental health, a national action plan for mental health services and a policy on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases supported by the World Health Organization, such as developing a manual for supporting mental health and psycho-social services to help develop national capacity in psychology and manage treatment at all levels of the health system. The youth development strategy sets strategic goals by increasing investment in research and strengthening existing services, such as psycho-social counselling services at schools and healthcare facilities, to address the mental health of youth by educating, providing advice, counselling, advertising, and disseminating mental health issues to Lao people's ethnic groups across the nation, so they can understand and access services and mental health treatment. Additionally, 121 people (62 women) participated in psychotherapy training intended for medical staffs who assist victims of human trafficking and sexual violence in healthcare facilities.

63. The government has been undertaking the National Strategic Plan (2021–2030) and Action Plan (2021–2025) for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and STI. The intervention for reducing HIV/AIDS/STI-related stigma and discrimination lies in Strategic Objective 01 of the said National Strategic Plan, which is to “strengthen an enabling environment for an effective HIV/AIDS and STI response strategic intervention”. Strategic Intervention 1.6 is to reduce HIV/AIDS and STI-related stigma and discrimination in the community, as follows:

- To identify approaches for organizing seminars for medical personnel and people living with HIV/AIDS and STI to enhance their awareness and capacity

on HIV/AIDS and STI in order to reduce related stigma and discrimination in health service facilities and self-stigma, as well as procuring them necessary medical equipment;

- To improve the confidentiality of health services (in health service facilities, including among medical personnel and family members of people living with HIV/AIDS and STI); identify activities aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination in the community and society; and learn from the outcomes of those activities;
- Along with the activities aimed at reducing stigma and discrimination, the government has provided friendly and innovative services such as 196 facilities for HIV counselling and index testing throughout the country, 11 antiretroviral drug (ARV) treatment facilities, and 13 points-of-care (POC) for antiretroviral drug distribution;
- In order to continuously expand capacity building for medical personnel, the government has developed and improved the manuals for healthcare services such as antiretroviral drug (ARV) treatment, complication treatment, counselling, mobile services in workplaces and communities, online counselling, distribution of self-testing kits for HIV infection, pre-exposure prophylaxis, and monitoring of stigma and discrimination reduction in service facilities and communities.

## **Economic and social benefits**

64. In 2020, the Government endorsed the National Social Protection Strategy to provide quality and accessible social protection services everywhere, with three major goals: Goal 1: the health insurance system is further developed and strengthened; Goal 2: the social security system is further developed and strengthened; and Goal 3: the social welfare system is further developed and strengthened, which has outstanding achievements, as follows:

- There were 21.896 insured people receiving maternity benefit, of whom 13.896 were female, or 4,01 per cent of all female insured people; 4.059 insured people receiving loss of working capacity benefit, of whom 323 were female, or 1,16 per cent of all insured people; 12.754 insured people receiving unemployment benefit, of whom 3.304 were female, or 3,66 per cent of all insured people; 1.159 insured people receiving employment injury benefit, of whom 103, or 0,33 per cent, are women, or 0,02 per cent of all insured people were female; 35.921 insured people receiving pension benefit, of whom 14.251 were female, from the contribution fund and non-contribution fund, or equivalent to 10,31 per cent of all insured people, of whom 4,09 per cent were female; 312.230 working-age people receiving benefits from the Social Security Fund, of whom 150.809 were female, or equivalent to 6,91 per cent, or 3,33 per cent out of all 4.516.000 working-age people were female; and 22.449 unregistered employees receiving benefits from the Social Security Fund, of whom 9.684 or 6,44 per cent were female, or equivalent to 2,78 per cent out of all insured people were female;
- During 2021–2022, the Government signed a contract with Star Fintech Sole Co., Ltd. for the purpose of transferring subsidies to pregnant women and children under the UN Joint Programme on Social Protection, “Leaving No One Behind: Establishing the Basis for Social Protection Floors in Lao PDR”. Furthermore, the Government was responsible for coordination with relevant development partners, specifically collaborated with UNICEF in Lao PDR to carry out tasks and activities under the pilot programme for granting subsidies to pregnant women and children (age under 1,000 days), which amounted to



6.002.029.000 kip in cash that was granted to 2.038 beneficiaries in Sanamxay District, 368 beneficiaries in Phouvong District, Attapeu Province, and 1.123 beneficiaries in Nong District, Savannakhet Province, or a total of 135 villages;

- In 2023, 1.763.990.000 kip was granted to pregnant women and preschool children in Sanamxay District and Phouvong District, Attapeu Province, and Nong District, Savannakhet Province. The total number of beneficiaries was 1.562 (814 women).

65. All unpaid working women or unregistered employees in both urban and rural areas have accessed to the social protection system that they do not contribute to. Women working in the informal and rural economic systems were encouraged to receive their maternity, disability, and elderly benefits from the formal social security system, such as by providing mobile social security to facilitate various forms of unregistered employees in local provinces to access the social security system voluntarily and broadly. During 2021–2023, there were 22.449 unregistered employees receiving benefits from the National Social Security Fund (9.684 women). In addition, the Government was supported by the ILO to raise awareness and provide information on the rights and interests to social security for self-employed people in the agricultural sector, especially in the fields of tea and coffee cultivation in 34 villages, 3 districts, and 3 provinces, which covered 2.801 farmers (1.293 women), to enhance their understanding and create enabling environments to allow them to receive their benefits from social security in the future.

66. The Government improved living conditions for poor and disadvantaged people, including single mothers, in cooperation with the World Food Programme and the World Renew, carrying out various activities, such as building rice banks, cash for work, providing fish breeding, building running water, building roads, repairing irrigation systems, providing bamboo seeds, raising awareness on hygiene, and encouraging children to enrol themselves in school, which covered 2.364 beneficiary families or 13.376 beneficiaries (6.638 females).

67. The Government provides financial services through the banking system for 46.108 women to transact small and medium-sized enterprises in each sector with a total loan value of 28.846.702,35 kip, see annex.

## **Women in rural areas**

68. According to Land Law No. 70, dated 21 June 2019, individuals, legal entities, and governmental and private organizations are entitled to equal land use rights without discrimination based on gender or ethnicity. Acknowledgment of women's rights by giving them the right to land titles, in accordance with the law, which are initial and acquired assets by undertaking public relations before proceeding with the issuance of land titles in the targeted villages every time.

69. Gender equality was integrated into all policies related to the agricultural sector, such as the National Forestry Strategy 2050 and the National Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Strategy 2040. MAF adopted and implemented a training manual for integrating gender equality into the agriculture and forestry sectors, eco-friendly agricultural production, agricultural land management, and responsible agricultural investment. As a result, women in rural areas have access to economic resources, and land for crops and livestock farming in 23 districts, 211 villages, 15.550 families, equivalence to 311.100 people (166.100 female), and There were 1.405 heads of families – females.

70. In order to implement the strategy and development plan of the agriculture and forestry sector and the action plan for integration of gender equality into the

agriculture and forestry sector, the Government created and integrated indicators and outputs into programmes and activities of the agriculture and forestry sector to facilitate farmers access to economic benefits, as follows:

- Encourage farmers to run small and medium-sized enterprises such as crops, livestock farming, and integrated agricultural production in 121 districts, 1.217 villages, 3.082 groups, 26.846 families, equivalence to 36.190 family members (18.256 females);
- Encourage farmers to contribute to the agricultural affairs process to create employment and income for their family members in 237 villages, 1.047 groups, and 13.734 members (12.360 females);
- Set up 530 village nutrition groups with 19.277 members (2.590 were pregnant women and 1.587 were mothers with infants);
- Farmers in poor areas have access to funding resources such as the Poverty Reduction Fund, bank credits with low interest rates, and government grants for the production of crops, livestock, and fisheries in a total of 115 districts, 1.964 villages, 69.505 families, and 139.010 people (70.870 people were female heads of families). There were production units of goods, services, cooperatives, and production groups in 182 villages, and agricultural and forestry technical centres or learning rooms on irrigation in 145 villages;
- 16.245 poor families have access to funding resources from the Rural Development Fund, and 23.930 poor ethnic families have access to funding resources.

71. The Government issued Decision on Organization and Activities of Village Authorities No. 649/MOHA, dated 24 August 2016 as a measure to increase the number of women village chiefs. In 2023, there were 8.371 village chiefs (277 females); and 24.144 vice chiefs of villages (3,630 females).

72. The Bank of the Lao PDR is currently researching the instructions for the implementation of the Decree on Microfinance Institutions, which stipulates the promotion of credits for women throughout the country. However, from 2020 to 2023, rural women have been facilitated to access credits through financial institutions as amount 3.266,25 billion kip (30 per cent) compared to total amount of 9.082,36 billion kip.

### **Women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination**

73. The Convention is equally implemented for women and girls from ethnic groups, who are particularly vulnerable to poverty and other rights violations. The provisions of the Convention were expanded to the Constitution and related laws such as Law on prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Children, and Law on Gender Equality, including strategic plans and development plans relating to gender equality.

74. According to the Land Law No. 70, dated 21 June 2019, Article 154 states that when it is necessary to use land, the State will re-acquire those land use rights but shall pay compensation to the right holders. For the compensation, a committee shall be established to assess the damage to property on the land and the land value as prescribed in Article 109 of this Law. The compensation unit is determined based on the conditions of each type of land, province, and area by the compensation committee under the supervision of the leadership of the province/city as an endorser.

75. The Law on Disabled People No.57, Article 19 (Equality of disabled people), Article 5 (Principle of disability affairs) provides that the State shall ensure that there

is no discrimination, violence, sexual, physical, mental and dignity abuses, as well as exploitation of disabled people (Para 4), and provides that the disability affairs shall be implemented by taking into account of gender equality, ability, and difference, and accepting disabled people as part of human diversity (Para 5).

76. The Decree on Social Welfare No. 169/GOV, 19 June 2013, Article 10 defines social welfare as consisting of 7 types. Furthermore, Article 7 defines targets of social welfare. In the past years, social work has supported those five target groups mentioned above, irrespective of the number of participants, especially those who cannot speak Lao. Since 2021, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and its provincial branch in Attapue province have conducted workshops for victims of disasters in four vocational skills: tailoring, automotive repairs, electricians, and beauty salons, with 20 people for each skill, for a total of 80 people, out of whom 40 are women. In addition, there was also a virtual workshop to enhance capacity for staff of the Lao Disabled Women's Development Centre on basic accounting and conduct vocational training for women with disabilities so they can work toward greater self-reliance in tailoring, computing, foreign languages, weaving, and so on.

### **Marriage and family relationships**

77. The Government of Lao PDR aims to intensify efforts to eliminate child marriage and ensure a bright future for all women and girls by:

- Conducted a national study on marriage in teenagers and adolescents and early pregnancy and childbearing;
- In 2019, policy was amended towards extending reproductive health and included in the curriculums of the medical training academic, the medical science college, and the University of Medical Science, which focus on reducing unintended pregnancies, early child marriage and pregnancy, anaemia in youth, and preventing HIV. Furthermore, it also amended the youth and juveniles' development strategy (2021–2030), which focuses on early child marriage and pregnancy, nutrition, access to reproductive health services, including contraception, and promoting safe medication;
- Conducted law dissemination for the public, especially the Law on Family Registration, including the punishment and other measures provided in the Lao Penal Code, particularly Article 269 [Marriage with Minors], by raising public awareness of its negative effects on the health, life, and development of children and youth from early marriage and pregnancy, which are considered unlawful as prescribed by laws. These public awareness-raising programs have been conducted in 63 villages with a total of 6,300 participants. Produced media advertisements to raise awareness about its branch at local levels and to advertise through media such as television, radio, websites, and other online media platforms. And also produced brochures and leaflets related to early child marriage and its negative effects on health, particularly for mothers and newborns, economics, and livelihood;
- Conducted trainings on life skills for students in schools and conducted trainings on pre-vocational skills for children and youth.

78. The Lao Civil Code 2019, Article 142, provides that marriage is governed by the system of monogamy. In the case of a violation of this article, it shall be considered a criminal offense that falls under Article 247 of the Lao Penal Code. Therefore, polygamy is prohibited by the laws mentioned earlier.

79. Join Save the Children to provide protection and assistance for children in their early marriages, where they can enjoy their lives and earn to cover their living costs.

By this, the Lao Women Union has trialled a number of activities, specifically in Luangprabang province, as 1.923 people, women 1.099 people and men 824 people, see annex.

80. From 2019 to 2023, the Lao Women's Union provided counselling services regarding parenting education and children's disputes, with a total of 72 cases. It also received seven complaint letters, of which five could be solved at the village mediation level and two were left in court proceedings.

81. For a divorcee who has not received heritage, it was not a matter of cultural practice or law enforcement. The 2015 Lao Constitution, Article 35, and Part III, Chapter 6, Article 181 of the Civil Code regarding the share of initial and acquired assets between husband and wife must be implemented.

### **Climate action and disaster risks reduction**

82. The government has asserted its efforts to strengthen preventing and responding to disasters as well as rehabilitation through the integration of its National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction into sectoral workplans and programs for enhancing resilience in disaster correspondence, particularly with the focus on improving the information base and alerting system to be clear and prompt to reduce all possibilities of impacts from disasters, as well as the early warning systems. Some improvements include:

- The adopting process of the National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction has included women's participation at both the central and local levels to share comments and opinions on its draft version, which covered 35 per cent of total participants;
- Women participation, especially those who live in rural areas, ethnic women, and women with disabilities, are represented in the process of preparation and adoption of the national plan of action, particularly in consultation processes such as the Plan of Action on Climate Change, the National Plan of Action on Disaster Correspondence and Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction at the district level of many provinces: Luangprabang, Savannakhet, Champasak, and Attapue;
- Finalizing the draft of the Decree on the Establishment of the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC), amending the Decision on the Division of Responsibility of the Central Disaster Management Committee (CDMC), and the Decision on the Establishment of the Central Disaster Management Fund;
- Designing tools and materials for trainer training regarding inclusive community risk assessment;
- Collecting data on inclusive community risk assessment in order to improve disaster risk management and climate response plans.

83. In terms of personnel management, contribute to the implementation of the national plan of action mentioned above. The government also established disaster management committees at the provincial and district levels, and strengthened their capacity through a number of activities, as follows:

- Trainings for the Provincial and District Disaster Management Committees on disaster risk management and climate change with an inclusive planning approach. These trainings were held in Luangprabang and Champasak, with a total of 118 participants (54 women);

- Establishing and structurally improving 490 disaster management committees in 481 villages in a total of 9 districts;
  - Trainings on preparedness and effective response for the provincial and district disaster management committees in Xayyabouly province, with a total of 52 participants (13 women);
  - Training on the GIS system in data collection for the emergency disaster assessment, with a total of 19 participants (7 women);
  - Training on emergency vehicle operation, training on writing the village disaster risk reduction plan, and creating guidance for a temporary shelter for victims;
  - Strengthening capacity for staff who work in the field of food security and urbanizing the utilization of weather and disaster information.
-