



**Convention on the Rights
of Persons with Disabilities**

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**Consideration of reports submitted by parties to
the Convention under article 35**

**Replies of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the list of
issues in relation to its initial report***

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Replies to the list of issues (CRPD/C/LAO/Q/1)

A. Reply to paragraph 1 of the list of issues

1. In providing the definition of “Persons with Disabilities”, the Decree on Persons with Disabilities (2014) did not encompass the definition provided in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention or CRPD here onwards). As such, on 10 December 2018 the National Assembly has adopted the Law on Persons with Disabilities, in which Article 2 has stipulated the definition of “Persons with Disabilities” more accurately and in line with Article 1 of the Convention.

2. The Government has changed its approach towards persons with disabilities, from charity and medical oriented model to a more human rights-oriented model, since the adoption of the amended Constitution (2015) and the Law on Persons with Disabilities (2018), specifically Article 34 para 2 and Article 25 of the said documents respectively.

B. Reply to paragraph 2 of the list of issues

3. Regarding the consultation and involvement of persons with disabilities, the Government has created a mechanism for coordination through its periodic consultation meetings to update the policy, legislation and development plans for persons with disabilities with the involvement of (including but not limited to) Association for persons with intellectual or psychological disabilities and the Association for Autism.

4. In terms of implementing and monitoring of the law, the Government has included representatives of persons with disabilities as members of the National Committee for Persons with Disabilities, fully involved in legislation making and amending processes, the implementation and monitoring of the relevant policy and legislations (Articles 49, 50 and 53 of the Law on Persons with Disabilities 2018).

C. Reply to paragraph 3 of the list of issues

5. The Government has made an effort to research and study on ratification of the Optional Protocol and found that current realities are not conducive for such further commitments. Therefore, it is not possible to ratify the Optional Protocol at this time.

D. Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues

6. The Government guarantees equality and non-discrimination principles as enshrined in the Constitution’s Section 4 on fundamental rights and duties of citizens, specifically Article 34 and 35; also stipulated in the Law on Persons with Disabilities Article 5 number (4) on principles relating disabilities, Article 19 on equality for persons with disabilities, Article 20 on political equality, Article 21 on equality before the law, Article 22 on economic, social and cultural equality, Article 23 on equality within family, Article 24 on equality in emergencies and vulnerable situations and Article 58 on general prohibitions (number 1 and 8); Law on Medical Treatment (Amended) Article 44 on non-discrimination, negligence and duty to treat all patients. Furthermore, the principles of equality and non-discrimination have also been included in other relevant laws such as the Penal Code Article 225 which stipulated non-discrimination against persons with disabilities including those affected by leprosy.

E. Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues

7. The Government of the Lao PDR has a consistent policy on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, including women with disabilities, of all ethnic and religion, women victims of unexploded ordinance and those affected by leprosy as reflected

in various legislations such as: the Penal Code Article 224 on discrimination against women, the Law on Persons with Disabilities Article 28 on medical treatment, Article 29 on rehabilitation, Article 30 on inclusive education, Article 31 on specific assistance to education for persons with disabilities, Article 32 on expenditure for education of persons with disabilities, Article 33 on para-sports and para-gymnastics, Article 34 on participating in artistic and cultural activities, Article 36 on vocational and labour skills trainings, Article 37 on support for the vocational and labour skills trainings, Article 38 on employment and Article 39 on promoting small businesses of persons with disabilities.

8. The Government supports and provides enabling conditions for the development of Lao women with disabilities through allocation of land, supporting the equipment and meals for the trainees. In addition, it has also provided all necessary facilitation to the Lao Disabled Women's Development Centre, such as organizing charity events, fundraising events and others.

F. Reply to paragraph 6 of the list of issues

9. Apart from the provisions of the Law that provided for the support and promotion of women with disabilities, in practice, the Government and relevant organizations have organized training workshops on gender equality and non-discrimination in general, and specifically on rights of person with disabilities, for Government officials and communities, to raise awareness and better understanding. Meanwhile, it has also provided opportunities for women with disabilities to develop themselves towards leadership roles in various organizations based on their capacities. This is well reflected as all associations relating to disabilities have women with disabilities in their management boards and some of whom are presidents of the association, such as: the President of the Lao Association for Blind, President of the Intellectual Disabilities Association, as well as the Association for Autism and the Association for the Deaf.

G. Reply to paragraph 7 (a) of the list of issues

10. Besides the legislations stated in the Initial National Report under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Government attaches importance on the development for all children, including those with disabilities as provided for in the Law on Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Child, Article 35 on child assistance and protection; the Law on Combatting and Preventing Violence against Women and Children, Article 18 on preventing violence against women and children, Article 19 on awareness raising on combatting and prevention of violence against women and children, Article 21 on promotion of the right of the child; the Penal Code Article 226 on discrimination; the Law on Juvenile Procedure Article 7 on protection of the rights and interests of the child.

11. In practice, the relevant sectors have put in place specific strategic and work plans, for instance, the Strategic Plan on Inclusive Education, the Strategic Plan on Rehabilitation which includes provisions on support for children with disabilities to cost-free education, free lunch programs, rehabilitation programs for children affected by UXOs including free of charge medical treatment, care for children with malnutrition and care for children with leprosy and children with disabilities in emergency situations.

H. Reply to paragraph 7 (b) of the list of issues

12. The Lao PDR has made efforts to prevent and provide treatment for leprosy and considers it as one of the priority diseases for free-of-charge treatment and assigned the Dermatologist Hospital to take lead on the matter, along with preventive trainings for staffs and awareness raising for communities.

I. Reply to paragraph 8 of the list of issues

13. The Government has provided enabling conditions, support and promotion of the activities of the Association for Autism such as: preparation for children with autism before they enter inclusive education programs, accommodating adjustments to the curriculums and pedagogical methods.

J. Reply to paragraph 9 of the list of issues

14. The Government attaches importance to and promotes awareness raising campaigns and has organized dissemination workshops, seminars, trainings on relevant treaties, laws and regulations. For instance, dissemination workshops on the Law on Persons with Disabilities and trainings for relevant government officials in 11 provinces, with more than 4,700 participants. In addition, other sectors have integrated the rights of persons with disabilities into their respective training programs. As for leprosy, the Government has included it as one of its priorities in providing treatment, while also organizing dissemination campaigns, training and seminars for relevant government officials and local communities in a total of 56 events with 3,682 participants (1,768 women) since 2016–2019.

K. Reply to paragraph 10 (a) of the list of issues

15. The Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 44 on access to facilities, public locations, Article 45 on access to public transportation; Law on Construction, Article 5 on principles (number 4), Article 9 on types of construction, all of which have been summarized into a handbook on “Hand Book on Basic Standards of Facilitations” as a reference for the relevant sectors to implement accordingly and progressively realized, with an aim at providing better accessibility for person with disabilities to buildings, facilities including public spaces and transportation. In practice, access to facilities have been built and improved for schools, hospitals and State office buildings and private buildings in the urban area and some in the rural areas.

L. Reply to paragraph 10 (b) of the list of issues

16. Implementation of the Decree on Persons with Disabilities 2014 on access to information and communication technologies, in practice, the Government in collaboration with the relevant Associations have created a handbook, sign language for the deaf, as well as the “Hand Me Hand Talk” application, texts books in Braille language including the Law on Persons with Disabilities. As for persons with disabilities who are without visual or hearing impairment, they have access to electronic information and communication technologies just the rest of the public do.

M. Reply to paragraph 11 (a) of the list of issues

17. In times of emergencies and natural disasters or social risks, persons with disabilities shall receive protection and humanitarian assistance just as any other persons as guaranteed for in the Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 24 on equality in emergencies or vulnerable situations; and the Law on Disaster Management, Article 23 on emergency rescues, Article 35 on relief efforts and Article 43 on the rights of persons affected by disasters (number 3).

N. Reply to paragraph 11 (b) of the list of issues

18. In practice, the Government has put in place systems for warning, rescues, and reparation and development after disasters which is managed by the National Committee for Natural Disaster Management at levels of Central, Provincial, District and Village. The

efforts include training sessions on preparing for responses to disasters at each level including for communities, families, ethnic groups, and persons affected by UXOs to be aware and prepared as well as to provide them with special attention during times of disasters.

O. Reply to paragraph 12 (a) of the list of issues

19. The Government attaches importance to creating and amending legislations in various sectors to best suit the realities of the society, aimed at guaranteeing and protecting the interests of the multi-ethnic people with equality before the law, especially for children and persons with disabilities as stipulated in the Penal Code Article 225 which prohibits discrimination against person with disabilities, any individual who discriminate, divide, obstruct or limit the activities of persons with disabilities shall be criminally punished; the Law on Civil Procedure (2012) Article 135 provides measures for those with unsound mind, the Court may prescribe a sentence of mandatory treatment to the civil offender or civil responsibility, or to proceed with carrying out the sentence or enforce the judgment after the offender has receive medical treatment. In addition, there are also relating articles in the Law on Persons with Disabilities (2018), namely, Article 25 and 26 on the rights and duties of persons with disabilities.

P. Reply to paragraph 12 (b) of the list of issues

20. The Law on Criminal Procedure (2017) Article 117 on statement collection from children under the age of 18, persons with hearing or visual impairments, mute, intellectually or mentally challenged or those incapable of exercising their own rights must have the presence of their parents, guardian, teacher, lawyer or other protector during the statement gathering process in accordance with the law for an official record to be made, Article 100 of the same law also states regulations on investigation records.

Q. Reply to paragraph 13 (a) of the list of issues

21. Measures taken to include procedural and age-appropriate have been provisioned in various legislations, especially on in administration of justice which includes facilitation for access to information and communication procedures and obligation to accommodate persons with disabilities, particularly persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, persons who are deaf, blind or have difficulty hearing.

R. Reply to paragraph 13 (b) of the list of issues

22. Persons with disabilities have the same access to free legal aid just as any other persons as provisioned in the Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 21 on equality before the law; the Decree on Legal Aid, Article 2.

23. In Practice, the Government's legal aid units and the Lao Bar Association's legal aid units have provided free-of-charge legal advises to the public, but have yet to have received any person with intellectual, hearing or visual disabilities seeking service at their offices.

S. Reply to paragraph 13 (c) of the list of issues

24. As for the contents used in trainings for the relevant staffs, families and the person with disabilities are under the following topics: Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Equality of Persons with Disabilities in Political, Economic, Social and Cultural spheres; Rehabilitation, Treatment, Education, Sports, Vocational Training, Employment, Access to Buildings and Facilities, Public Facilities, Transportation and Information.

T. Reply to paragraph 14 (a) of the list of issues

25. There is no legislation that allows for deprivation of liberty or forced treatment of any person, unless the person has broken the law.

U. Reply to paragraph 14 (b) of the list of issues

26. Throughout the implementation of the law, there has been no forced deprivation of liberty, no information is available on this question.

V. Reply to paragraph 15 of the list of issues

27. The measures for protecting persons with disabilities from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading, treatment or punishment have been stipulated in Law on Criminal Procedure, Article 12 (para 3); Penal Code, Article 212 on torture, Article 214 on the sale of or stealing of human organs or tissue, Article 218 on forcing, Article 221 on violation of individual freedom, and Article 263 on abuse of women and children; the Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 5 (number 4) on principles concerning persons with disabilities, and Article 58 (number 2) on general prohibitions.

W. Reply to paragraph 16 (a) the list of issues

28. The elimination of all forms of violence against persons with disabilities has been stipulated in the Constitution's Article 6; the Law on Combatting and Preventing Violence against Women and Children, Article 5; and the Penal Code's Article 263.

X. Reply to paragraph 16 (b) of the list of issues

29. Lao PDR has included the preventive measures in the Law on Combatting and Preventing Violence against Women and Children, Article 6 on principles, Article 18 on preventive measures, Article 19 on creating awareness, Article 20 on promoting the advancement of women and gender equality, Article 22 on strengthening the relevant institutions, Article 23 on studies and data gathering, Article 24 on responsibilities of Social Organizations, and Article 27 on responsibilities of men; the Law on Development and Protection of Women, Article 37 on combatting and suppressing violence against women and children; at the same time awareness raising and advocating campaigns have been organized for the general public, as well as events to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November of every year.

Y. Reply to paragraph 16 (c) of the list of issues

30. Lao PDR attaches importance to victim rescue and protection, as it has set up the Centre for Counselling and Protection of Women and Children, which offers legal counselling, psychological and physical rehabilitation, all free-of-charge to women and children who have problems at home or in society; it also provides other assistance such as: safe temporary shelter, legal, medical, education and vocational training, facilitation of safe and voluntary return to their family and reintegration into society; the Centre also provides rehabilitation for women and children who were victims of human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation; the Centre also acts as legal protectors of women's and children's rights and interests in the court of law; it has a hotline number 1362 that provides free-of-charge counselling and also has a network from central to locals that provide assistance to the victims in emergencies.

Z. Reply to paragraph 16 (d) of the list of issues

31. In accordance with the Law on People's Court, Article 15, and the Law on Civil Procedure which stipulated that legal hearings shall be conducted openly, and the Law on Criminal Procedure which provides basic principles of criminal procedures.

32. Through implementing the law in the Lao PDR, thus far, there has been no prosecution concerning persons with disabilities.

AA. Reply to paragraph 17 of the list of issues

33. The Lao PDR has adopted new and amended laws in order to guarantee the protection of the rights and interest of children, especially those with disabilities, based on the principle of equality. For instance, the Law on Combatting and Suppressing Violence against Women and Children; Law on Family; Law on Labour; Law on Gender Equality; and Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 27 (number 3) on rights of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the Government has adopted the 2030 Vision; National Strategy for Gender Equality (2016-2025) and the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2016-2020); National Action Plan for Protection and Elimination of Violence against Women and Children (2014-2020); National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons; National Strategic and Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities. In addition, it has also created the handbook for the parents and guardians, handbook for the village focal point on caring for children with disabilities at community level.

AB. Reply to paragraph 18 of the list of issues

34. Persons with disabilities have the equal rights to be respected of their inviolable dignity, body, mind and intellectual as enshrined in the Constitution's Article 42; the Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 58 (number 1 and 2) on general prohibitions.

35. Through implementing the law, there has yet to be any case of violation against the mental or physical integrity particularly of those with psychological or intellectual disabilities and persons affected by leprosy.

AC. Reply to paragraph 19 of the list of issues

36. The Law on Persons with Disabilities, has an aim to promote persons with disabilities to be able to live independently and included in the community which is stipulated as their rights in Article 25 (number 1, 4) and a number of other rights, such as: rights to receive care, treatment and rehabilitation, education, vocational training, employment, social welfare, participation in activities and sports, arts and literature, culture and vacation, access to buildings and facilities, public transportation, and information.

37. In practice, the Government encourages all sectors in society, including Government sectors themselves, to emphasize on dissemination of legislations relating to the protection and promotion of rights and interests of persons with disabilities, with an aim to increase their inclusion and participation in society. At the same time, the Government has many endeavours to provide better access to various services for persons with disabilities.

38. Based on the inherent culture and traditions of the multi-ethnic Lao people, it is customary for everyone, including persons with disabilities, to live with their family without any division, segregation or separation. In cases of emergencies, they shall be cared for equally.

AD. Reply to paragraph 20 (a) of the list of issues

39. In order to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to carry on with their daily lives, join in on social activities and other Lao traditional and customary events, the Law on

Person with Disabilities has thus stipulated on production of assistive, adaptive and rehabilitative devices and technologies in Article 47 on equipment production.

40. In practice, the Government has upgraded the Centre of Prosthetic and Orthotic production 686 (Ban Kern) to the Orthopaedic & Rehabilitation Factory 686, with modernization of the Centre, the Centre of Medical Rehabilitation, and other centres and sub-centres at central and provinces. Altogether, these centres have provided rehabilitation as well as devices free-of-charge. During 2015–2019, there were 11,258 individual cases of service provided.

AE. Reply to paragraph 20 (b) of the list of issues

41. After the assistive, adaptive and rehabilitative devices have been provided, training sessions have been organized for persons with disabilities and supporting staffs on how to use and maintain those devices.

AF. Reply to paragraph 21 of the list of issues

42. The Budget that the State has allocated for the Centre of Medical Rehabilitation was set at 800 million Kips per year, and 900 million Kips per year for the Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation Factory 686. Comparing to the actual demands, these figures are still insufficient.

AG. Reply to paragraph 22 of the list of issues

43. The Government, particularly the Ministry of Education and Sports, in collaboration with the Lao Association for Persons with Disabilities, have created a local sign language and integrated into the pedagogical methods for the deaf, created a compilation book on sign language by the Association for the Deaf which is one of the associations approved by the Government and has a role to further research and develop the Lao sign language to be used in pedagogical for the deaf, but a nationally adopted sign language is still in its development process.

AH. Reply to paragraph 23 (a) of the list of issues

44. The Ministry of Education and Sport has collaborated with the representatives of persons with disabilities to develop the Lao Braille and sign language, audio programs for persons with disabilities to access education, including various information sources for those with visual and hearing impairments.

AI. Reply to paragraph 23 (b) of the list of issues

45. As for the sign language interpreters, the Government in cooperation with the associations for persons with disabilities, have organized training of trainers for those with the talent and potential to become interpreters, including persons with disabilities and government officials who work in the social services sector.

AJ. Reply to paragraph 23 (c) of the list of issues

46. As for the websites including those developed by WAI, we still lack the capacity to provide such development.

AK. Reply to paragraph 23 (d) of the list of issues

47. The radio program was cancelled due to lack of specialized personnel and funding for the program. However, the Government does agree that it is important for persons with disabilities to receive news and information. Therefore, it has allocated a television program on the National Broadcast Channel 3 for such purpose, which is a program designed for persons with disabilities and broadcasts twice per month free-of-charge. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has its own mass media unit that helps disseminate on social welfare matters. In the said unit, Lao associations for persons with disabilities can use it as a tool and channel to advocate their work through a radio program on every Sunday at 9 a.m. In addition, other mass media channels are available for news and information relating to persons with disabilities, celebration of important events can also be disseminated through these channels.

AL. Reply to paragraph 24 of the list of issues

48. In order to ensure that children and children with disabilities are protected from abandonment and separation from their family, the Lao PDR has included the obligations of the parents in caring for their children in the Law on Family Article 35 and 43; Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 40 on caring for persons with disabilities.

49. In reality, it has yet to be found, any cases of children with disabilities to be abandoned, concealed, neglected or segregated from their family.

AM. Reply to paragraph 25 (a) of the list of issues

50. In the pursuit of a more comprehensive Law on Education, in 2015 the Lao PDR has amended its Law on Education of 2007, particularly Article 25 has been amended into Article 32 on standard criteria of education, and Article 45 on student allowances. Additionally, the matter has been further stipulated in the Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 30 on inclusive education, and Article 31 on specialized assistance for students with disabilities.

51. In reality, the Government has implemented the second phase of its Strategic Plan on Inclusive Education, which recorded 5,075 students with disabilities, in 1,968 schools, has created 81 specialized teachers (Lao sign and Braille languages), and created 2,151 teachers for inclusive classrooms, the Government has also provided support in a form of allowances for 239 students with disabilities (113 girls) in the amount of 200,000 Kips/person/month for 12 months, along with other supporting measures such as waiver of school fees from pre-school to higher diploma education level.

AN. Reply to paragraph 25 (b) of the list of issues

52. The financial, equipment and human resources provided is still unsustainable and insufficient, according to the actual needs, as they are mostly provided for by international assistance.

AO. Reply to paragraph 25 (c) of the list of issues

53. The Lao PDR has adopted the amended Law on Education which no longer has any provision that allows for segregated education, and the said law is well in line with the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

AP. Reply to paragraph 25 (d) of the list of issues

54. In terms of building human resources and budget allocation for teachers on inclusive education, Braille and sign language literacy is still very limited.

AQ. Reply to paragraph 25 (e) of the list of issues

55. The Education and Sports sector, institutions, vocational training centers of both public and private sectors has been preparing to meet the needs for learning materials, teachers training and adaptive learning environment in schools and dormitories, a number of students with disabilities have received those support and enhancements.

AR. Reply to paragraph 26 (a) of the list of issues

56. The right to health of all Lao citizen have been provided for in the Law on Health Insurance, Article 9 on health insurance systems, Article 10 on public healthcare (para 2); which stated that people in poverty and persons with disabilities are exempted from mandatory contribution to the National Healthcare Fund but have full right to free healthcare as stipulated in the said law. Furthermore, persons with disabilities have been included in the reproductive health programs, as well as other public health schemes such as: the AIDS prevention and treatment program, the anti-polio programs and the combatting of the FHN5 virus programs, all in both urban and rural areas without any discrimination.

AS. Reply to paragraph 26 (b) of the list of issues

57. The Law on Health Treatment, Article 5 on principles of medical treatment and procedure. In practice, all diagnostics and treatment must be consulted, concurred and consented by the patients or their relative when necessary, before a treatment can commence.

AT. Reply to paragraph 26 (c) of the list of issues

58. Health insurance and treatment are provided for in the Strategic Plan on Health Insurance, especially the Ministerial Order number 0476/PH, dated 16 May 2018 on collection of additional fund, expenditure and rate of service fees, number 3.6 on waiver of collection for persons with disabilities. Additionally, training of trainers' sessions have been conducted for the relevant officials in order to further disseminate to all insured persons, including those with disabilities.

AU. Reply to paragraph 27 of the list of issues

59. The Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 29 para 3 on persons with disabilities who are in poverty and those who are dependent and have no caretakers shall be exempted from habilitation and rehabilitation fees, as well as for adaptive and assistive devices.

60. In practice, rehabilitation centres have a policy to waiver fees for those in poverty and also through the community rehabilitation project in cooperation with the HI organization which is a project that creates opportunities for persons with disabilities to access and be aware of basic rehabilitation and prevention of permanent disabilities.

61. Despite having adopted the National Medical Rehabilitation Strategic Plan (2018–2025), we have only been able to disseminate in 6 provinces thus far, and will continue to further disseminate in 6 Northern provinces in the near future.

62. The said strategic plan has yet to be further developed into an action plan, as such, progress on implementation has yet to be made. The action plan is currently being developed.

AV. Reply to paragraph 28 (a) of the list of issues

63. The Law on Persons with Disabilities has prescribed in its Article 37 on employment for person with disabilities. Throughout the data gathering process on the rate

of employment of persons with disabilities, there has been many difficulties faced including in terms of human resource, budget constraint and lack of equipment. However, the National Strategic and Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities have already included this matter.

AW. Reply to paragraph 28 (b) of the list of issues

64. The Law on Persons with Disabilities has stated in its Article 38 on employment, and Article 25 on the rights of persons with disabilities (number 4).

AX. Reply to paragraph 28 (c) of the list of issues

65. In terms of recruitment of persons with disabilities, in both public and private sectors, a specialized unit has been set up to research, interview and conduct selection process based on the merits of the applicants, for persons with disabilities who have qualified merits shall receive special consideration, in accordance with the Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 38 on employment (para 2) and the Law on Labour (Amended 2013) Article 30 on employment services network.

66. In practice, the Government has provided enabling conditions for person with disabilities to receive vocational training at centres for persons with disabilities as well as other vocational centres in general, which recorded a total of 680 graduates who were person with disabilities (2016–2019). Most of them have went on to be employed: 522 persons were self-employed, as for those in the government office and enterprise seem to be in small number as the number of persons with disabilities who have graduated with degrees are still too few. On the other hand, we are working on improving our policy for promoting education for persons with disabilities up to higher education level.

AY. Reply to paragraph 29 (a) of the list of issues

67. In order to ensure that the implementation of social protection shall cover all objectives and in a comprehensive systematic manner, the Government is in the process of considering the draft Strategic Plan on Social Protection, which shall cover persons with disabilities as well as other disadvantaged groups, including those affected by UXOs, of ethnic groups, and those affected by leprosy. These matters have been included in the Decree number 309/PM on Poverty and Development Criteria, as well as in the Poverty Reduction Project plans, the Poverty Reduction Fund, the Strategy on UXOs 2011–2020, and the National Policy on Inclusive Education.

68. In practice, the relevant sectors have attached importance on social protection, which has provided assistance and development opportunities for the disadvantaged, such as: Government allowance for students with disabilities as mentioned above (response number 25 (a)), waiver of school fees for students with disabilities from pre-schools up to higher education level, as well as for students of ethnic groups have also received the same policy in a total of 8,874 ethnic students in 2018 (3,987 female) in the common education system. Labourer who are person with disabilities also receive income tax exemption.

AZ. Reply to paragraph 29 (b) of the list of issues

69. Person affected by leprosy also receive benefits, equal rights and equality before the law, in accordance with the Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 19 on equality. As for monthly allowance, with the current difficult socio-economic conditions, the Government is not yet in the position to provide such schemes.

BA. Reply to paragraph 29 (c) of the list of issues

70. The Government continues to integrate the matters of persons with disabilities into its Ninth National Socio-Economic Development Plan and the National Plan for Poverty Reduction. Furthermore, there are other specific plans, such as the National Strategic and Action Plans for Persons with Disabilities which are being considered by the Government. At the same time, various sectors have integrated matters of persons with disabilities into their respective strategic and action plans.

BB. Reply to paragraph 30 of the list of issues

71. The Government does not discriminate against person with disabilities in any form, including their enjoyment of political rights, which has been guaranteed for in the Constitution's Article 37; the Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 20 on equal political rights, and Article 22 on equal economic, social and cultural rights.

72. Through the implementation over recent years, various sectors of the Government and private sectors, including international organizations have provided enabling conditions for their access and participation, such as the right to vote and to stand for election, able to participate in formation of laws, policy, national strategic and action plans for persons with disabilities. All of which have been done with consultation and consensus from persons with disabilities and relevant sectors.

BC. Reply to paragraph 31 (a) of the list of issues

73. The Law on Sports has included in its Article 31 on sports and recreational activities for person with disabilities. At the same time, the Government has improved its National Paralympics Committee by including persons with disabilities as committee members. Also, in the Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 34 on participation in arts and culture, Article 35 on leisure; and this matter has also been included in the Strategy on Education and Sports.

74. Through the actual implementation of promoting sports and recreational activities, the Paralympics and Special Olympics Committees are the responsible agencies for facilitating the participation of persons with disabilities in sports and recreational activities, with periodic activity plans and have organized trainings, national level competitions, as well as regional and international events. For instance, they have participated at ASEAN level twice, the World Special Olympics in the United Arab Emirates, and hosted the games for those with mental disabilities.

75. As for access to various leisure or tourist sites, there have been constructions and improvement of facilities for person with disabilities to have better access.

BD. Reply to paragraph 31 (b) of the list of issues

76. As for the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled, the Government will continue to study the possibility of ratification.

BE. Reply to paragraph 32 of the list of issues

77. In 2015, the Lao PDR has conducted its Forth National Population and Housing Census with the inclusion of the Washington Group Short Set of Questions on Disability, disaggregated by age, sex, disability and provincial location. As such, the results found that there are a total of 160,881 person with disabilities aged above 5 years old (80,115 females), out of whom 75,506 persons (40,640 females) were those who have difficulty walking, 78,175 person (40,753 females) were those with visual difficulties, 71,667 persons (37,824 females) were those with hearing difficulties, 54,964 persons (29,732 females) have

difficulties in communicating, and 63,665 person (35,226 females) were those with difficulties in self-reliance. All the details are in the book, entitled after the census mentioned above (Lao version page 75–78, English version page 69–72).

BF. Reply to paragraph 33 of the list of issues

78. In terms of international cooperation and promotion the participation of persons with disabilities in engaging with international, regional and local CSOs, the Government has integrated the matters of persons with disabilities into the Eighth National Socio-Economic Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (Goals number 8.5, 11.2 and 11.7). As for INGOs there are 172 organizations from 21 countries registered in the Lao PDR, with 158 projects and a total assistance worth 180 million USDs, out of which roughly 33% have been allocated for matters of persons with disabilities. As for CSOs, there are currently 152 associations and 14 foundations, out of which 12 associations and 1 centre is in the area of promotion for persons with disabilities.

BG. Reply to paragraph 34 of the list of issues

79. In order to steadily fulfil the obligation under Article 33 of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on monitoring national implementation, the Government has assigned the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare at the central level, and its provincial and district offices to manage and monitor the matters of persons with disabilities, which is guaranteed in the Law on Persons with Disabilities, Article 66 on administering agency for persons with disabilities. The said organization is the focal point in coordination with other Government sectors, as well as private sectors in implementing the right of persons with disabilities across the country.
