



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur for Follow-up on Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), I have the honour to refer to the examination of the combined sixth and seventh report of the Lao People's Democratic Republic at the Committee's forty-fourth session, held in July-August 2009. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations were transmitted to your Permanent Mission (CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7). You may recall that in the concluding observations, the Committee requested the Lao People's Democratic Republic to provide, within two years, further information regarding the specific areas of concern identified by the Committee in paragraphs 24 and 43 of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report received in January 2013 (CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/7/Add.1), although it was received with a twenty six-month delay, under the CEDAW follow-up procedure. At its fifty-eighth session, held in July 2014 in Geneva, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made **in paragraph 24** of the concluding observations that the State party “adopt a specific law on domestic violence and gender-based violence against women”: The State party indicated that the first Congress of the National Assembly VII has included the anti-domestic violence bill in its legislative agenda for the 5-year term of the National Assembly VII (2011-2015) and the bill is expected to be adopted in 2013. The Committee considers that the State party has taken significant steps towards the adoption of the anti-domestic violence bill. It considers that, for the period under consideration, the recommendation has been **implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “develop and implement a coherent and multisectoral national action plan to prevent violence against women, including through legal remedies, effective protection measures and systematic data collection, in a participatory process between the Government and non-governmental sectors”: The State party mentioned the implementation and development of the National Action Plan to prevent violence against women. It further indicated that there is coordination with multi-sectors and national organizations to implement and develop the National Action Plan to prevent violence against women. However, the Committee is not clear on whether the mentioned National Action Plan is being developed. The Committee **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

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Regarding the recommendation that the State party “raise public awareness, through the media and education programmes, of the fact that all forms of violence against women are a form of discrimination under the Convention and, therefore, are in violation of women’s human rights”: The State party mentioned awareness campaign among the children and the youth at the primary and the secondary schools, at education institutes and among the villagers at the local communities. It also mentioned messages broadcasted in national and local radios and television programmes and published in newspapers and related media. The State party failed to provide information on whether the programmes mentioned were undertaken after the issuance of the concluding observations. It also failed to provide details on the content and frequency of these programmes. The Committee **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “remove any impediments faced by women victims in gaining access to justice and to immediate means of redress and protection”: The State party indicated that the Government made efforts to reduce and eliminate poverty, illiteracy, traditional belief and traditions that violate human rights, which are the main impediments to women’s access to justice. The Committee considers that the State party failed to date the actions taken to reduce and eliminate impediments to women’s access to justice and to provide information on specific actions taken in this regard. The State party also failed to indicate the actions taken to remove impediments to immediate means of redress and protection. The Committee considers that it **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “implement training for the judiciary and public officials, in particular law enforcement personnel, health-service providers and the Village Mediation Units in order to ensure that they are sensitized to all forms of violence against women and can provide adequate gender-sensitive support to victims”: The State party mentioned the existence of training for the judicial and public officers and counselling coordinators at provincial and district levels, and for members of village mediation units. However, the Committee considers that the State party failed to indicate whether the training have been undertaken after the issuance of the concluding observations. It considers that it **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “establish quality counselling services and additional shelters for victims of violence”: The State party mentioned the budget provided in 2011 for the construction of accommodation for victims of violence, the construction of counselling offices and the improvement of counselling network. The Committee considers that the State party took steps towards the establishment of quality counselling services and additional shelters for victims of violence. It considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “provide information on the laws and policies in place to deal with violence against women and girls and on the impact of such measures, as well as data and trends on the prevalence of various forms of such violence, disaggregated by age and ethnic group, and undertake studies and/or surveys on the extent of such violence and its root causes”: The State party provided detailed information on studies undertaken on violence against women. While noting that the studies were undertaken before the issuance of the concluding observations, the Committee considers that these studies were comprehensive and that the State party provided useful details on their outcomes.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to paragraph 24 of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, additional information on actions taken to:

- 1) Increase the scope of the anti-domestic violence bill by integrating in it all forms of violence against women, and finalize its adoption;

- 2) Develop and implement a coherent and multisectoral national action plan to prevent violence against women, including through legal remedies, effective protection measures and systematic data collection, in a participatory process between the Government and non-governmental sectors;
- 3) Raise public awareness, through the media and education programmes, of the fact that all forms of violence against women are a form of discrimination under the Convention and, therefore, are in violation of women's human rights;
- 4) Remove any impediments faced by women victims in gaining access to justice and to immediate means of redress and protection;
- 5) Implement training for the judiciary and public officials, in particular law enforcement personnel, health-service providers and the Village Mediation Units in order to ensure that they are sensitized to all forms of violence against women and can provide adequate gender-sensitive support to victims; and
- 6) Establish quality counselling services and additional shelters for victims of violence.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 43** of the concluding observations that the State party “adopt a comprehensive gender-sensitive migration policy”: The State party indicated that it has not yet enacted such policy. The Committee considers that the recommendation **has not been implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “conclude bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding with countries and regions to which Lao women migrate in search of work, while ensuring that such agreements fully reflect women's human rights and are in conformity with the Convention”: The State party indicated that, from 2009 to 2010, it continued the implementation of the bilateral Memorandum of Understanding with its neighbouring countries. The Committee considers that the State party failed to mention bilateral agreements concluded after the issuance of the concluding observations. The Committee **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

Regarding the recommendation that State party “strengthen its information activities so as to ensure that potential women migrants are fully aware of their rights, as well as of the potential risks of such employment”: The State party indicated that, in 2009-2011, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, with the cooperation of the employment services recruitment agencies and the provincial labour department, has jointly organized the workshops and trainings for workers who are working for the domestic labour units and who are preparing to work abroad. The Committee considers that the State party took some actions to provide information to ensure that potential women migrants are fully aware of their rights, as well as of the potential risks of employment abroad. The Committee considers, however, that the State party failed to indicate the measures taken to strengthen its information activities. The Committee **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “introduce gender-responsive policies, legislation and programmes to protect outgoing, returning and incoming women migrant workers, including those who go abroad through informal channels, from all forms of violations of their rights”: The State party mentioned the adoption of legal amendments related to the promotion of women's rights and domestic labour management and actions taken to assist and protect the rights and benefits of women migrant women. The Committee considers that the State party failed to indicate whether the actions were taken after the issuance of the concluding observations. It considers that it **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “take a coherent and comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes of women’s migration, including through the creation of the conditions necessary for sustainable development and of safe and protected jobs for women as a viable economic alternative to migration or unemployment, and to pay due attention to its general recommendation 26 in this respect”: The State party provided information on the root causes of migration, existing measures to provide employment within the country, the creation of conditions for sustainable development, and labour force and skills development activities. However, the Committee considers that the State party failed to indicate whether the actions mentioned were taken after the issuance of the concluding observations. The Committee considers that it **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

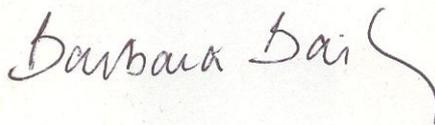
The Committee recommends that, in relation to paragraph 43 of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, additional information on actions taken to:

- 1) Adopt a comprehensive gender-sensitive migration policy;
- 2) Continue to conclude bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding with countries and regions to which Lao women migrate in search of work, while ensuring that such agreements fully reflect women’s human rights and are in conformity with the Convention;
- 3) Strengthen its information activities so as to ensure that potential women migrants are fully aware of their rights, as well as of the potential risks of such employment;
- 4) Introduce gender-responsive policies, legislation and programmes to protect outgoing, returning and incoming women migrant workers, including those who go abroad through informal channels, from all forms of violations of their rights; and
- 5) Take a coherent and comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes of women’s migration, including through the creation of the conditions necessary for sustainable development and of safe and protected jobs for women as a viable economic alternative to migration or unemployment.

The Committee looks forward to pursuing its constructive dialogue with the authorities of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic on the implementation of the Convention.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Barbara Bailey  
Rapporteur on follow-up  
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women