

UN Country Team Joint Submission on the Progress towards the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Lao PDR

This Joint Submission on the progress towards the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR) reflects the knowledge and analysis of both resident and non-resident UN agencies, funds, and programmes (UN AFPs) of the UN country team (UNCT) in Lao PDR produced within their individual mandates and joint priorities under the Lao PDR-UN Partnership Framework (UNPF 2017-2021) and the new 2022-2026 Lao PDR-UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

The preparation of this Joint Submission was led by UNDP on behalf of the UN country team.

TABLE OF CONTENT

LIST OF ACRONYMS	3
SYNOPSIS	6
I. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMITMENTS	6
Priority Recommendations:.....	6
II. NATIONAL DISABILITY PREVALENCE	6
Priority Recommendations:.....	7
III. NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK	7
Priority Recommendations:.....	9
IV. NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK	10
Priority Recommendations:.....	11
V. NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION	11
A. OVERALL NATIONAL PLANNING AND MONITORING	11
Priority Recommendations:.....	12
B. JUSTICE	13
Priority Recommendations:.....	14
C. PARTICIPATION	15
Priority Recommendations:.....	16
D. HEALTH	17
Priority Recommendations:.....	18
E. EDUCATION	19
Priority Recommendations:.....	21



F. EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION	22
EMPLOYMENT	22
Priority Recommendations:	24
SOCIAL PROTECTION	25
Priority Recommendations:	26
G. HUMANITARIAN SITUATIONS	27
DISASTERS	27
Priority Recommendations:	28
UXO	29
Priority Recommendations:	30
H. CHILDREN AND WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES	31
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES	31
WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES	32
Priority Recommendations:	33
I. ACCESSIBILITY	33
Priority Recommendations:	35
ANNEX	36
ANNEX A. LAO LEGAL TERMINOLOGY FOR DISABILITY	36
ANNEX B. UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION OF LAW NO.57 DISABLED PERSONS	39





LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADWLE	Association for Development of Women and Legal Education
AFA	Association for Autism
AFD	Association for the Deaf
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions (2008)
CDMC	Central Disaster Management Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
CERF	Central Emergency Relief Fund
CFV	Case-Free Village
COPE	Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise
CPAC	Committee for the Protection and Assistance to Children
CPCWC	Center for Protection and Counseling of Women and Children
CPN	Child Protection Network
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
CMR	Center for Medical Rehabilitation
CPIMS	Child Protection Information Management System
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DESB	District Education Sports Bureau
DHIS2	District Health Information System-2
DID WG	Disability-Inclusive Development Working Group
DLAP	Digital Legal Aid Platform
DMAS	Disability Mainstreaming Advisory Service Center
DMIS	Disability Management Information System
DMIS TWG	Disability Management Information System Technical Working Group
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSC	Disability Service Center
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EMIS	Education and Management Information System
EQS	Education Quality Standards
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
ESSDP	Education and Sport Sector Development Plan
FQS	Fundamental Quality Standards
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GGE	Gross Government Expenditure
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HEF	Health Equity Fund
HIS	Health Information System
HMIS	Health Management Information System
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health
IDA	Intellectual Disability Association
IEC	Inclusive Education Center
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ILFE	Inclusive Learner-Friendly Environment
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOS	Integrated Outreach Service
ISPO	International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
LAB	Lao Association for the Blind
LaoDi	Lao Disaster Information Management Database
LBA	Lao Bar Association
LCCC	Lao CSO Coordination Committee
LDC	Least Developed Country
LDPA	Lao Disabled People's Association
LDPO	Lao Disabled People's Organizations
LECS	Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey
LES MIS	Lao Education and Sports Management Information System
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
LNCCI	Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
LNOB	Leave No One Behind





LSIS	Lao Social Indicator Survey
LSMP	Legal Sector Master Plan
LSSO	Lao Social Security Organization
LSW	Labour and Social Welfare
LUMS	Lao University Management System
LWWDA	Lao Women's with Disabilities Association
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MIS	Management Information System
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoIC	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
MolCT	Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MoPS	Ministry of Public Security
MoPWT	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
MoTC	Ministry of Technology and Communication
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NA	National Assembly
NAPEVAWC	National Action Plan on Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children
NCAWMC	National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers, and Children
NCDE	National Committee for Disabled Persons and Elderly
NCDP	National Committee for Disabled People
NCM	National Coordination Mechanism
NEPRP	National Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
NHIF	National Health Insurance Fund
NHI	National Health Insurance
NHRC	National Human Rights Committee
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NPA	Non-Profit Association
NRA	National Regulatory Authority for the UXO/Mine Action Sector
NSDRR	National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
NSIE	National Strategy on Inclusive Education
NSPS	National Social Protection Strategy
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NTC	National Training Council
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
PES	Public Employment Service
PESS	Provincial Education Sports Service
PHC	Population and Housing Census
PCH	Policy on Primary Healthcare
PMIS	Personnel Management Information System
PPA	People's Provincial Assembly
PRSC	Provincial Rehabilitation Sub-Center
PSC-CMS	People's Supreme Court's Case Management System
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDGi	SDG Indicator
SFP	Safe Path Forward – UXO strategy
SNV	SNV Netherlands Development Organization
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SWG	Sector Working Group
TEMIS	Teacher Education Management Information System
TTC	Teacher Training College





TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UN AFP	UN agencies, funds, and programmes
UNCT	UN country team
UNPF	Lao PDR-UN Partnership Framework
UNSDCF	Lao PDR-UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VAC	Violence against Children
VAW	Violence against Women
VDBA	Vocational Development for the Blind Association
VDPCC	Village Disaster Preparedness and Control Committee
VEDC	Village Education Development Committee
VIS	Victim Information System
VMU	Village Mediation Unit
VNR	Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WASH FIT	WASH Facility Improvement Tool
WG	Washington Group Disability Statistics
WVMF	War Victims Medical Fund



SYNOPSIS

I. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COMMITMENTS

Over the past two decades, Lao PDR has made promising inroads in the signing, ratification, and endorsement of several international and regional frameworks on the rights of persons with disabilities, including the WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health Framework (ICF); the ILO Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation; the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM); the CRPD; as well as the Incheon Strategy and several ASEAN Declarations and Joint Workplans. This has enabled gradual improvements in disability recognition and inclusion, although implementation and reporting against the commitments made often remain inconsistent and delayed, as exemplified in Section V on the National Implementation.

Despite the recommendation accepted by the Government under the 2nd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2015, the CRPD Optional Protocol, facilitating direct complaints from individuals to the CRPD Committee, is yet to be signed and ratified.

No State Reports on the implementation of the Incheon Strategy have been submitted by Lao PDR to ESCAP to date.

Priority Recommendations:

- 1.1 Ratify the CRPD Optional Protocol.
- 1.2 In consultation with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), review the progress of Lao PDR's implementation of the Incheon Strategy and compile the final State Report for submission to ESCAP.

II. NATIONAL DISABILITY PREVALENCE

There are no regular special population-based disability surveys or disability module statistics about persons with disabilities, and reliable and comparable data on their prevalence, profile, and needs remain scarce.

Over the past two decades, national data collection efforts have mainly combined the National Population and Housing Censuses (PHC), as well as the results from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and Lao Expenditure and Consumption Surveys (LECS). By using different methodologies, definitions, and measurements of disability, the national data collection processes have provided inconsistent results, particularly when compared to disability studies undertaken by WHO and the World Bank based on international research standards.

The 3rd PHC (2010) used the medical-oriented methodology and estimated a disability prevalence rate of 1.3 per cent of the overall population. The 4th PHC (2015) included a series of questions in line with the ICF functional capacity and the Short Set of Questions of the Washington Group (WG) on Disability Statistics and identified the overall prevalence as 2.77 per cent. However, several limitations noted in its design, questionnaires, data collection, and quality control mechanisms restricted the reliability of the 2015 nationwide data. Both the 3rd and 4th Censuses did not take into consideration children with disabilities of age 0-5 years and had no direct questions on unexploded ordnance (UXO).

Lao PDR is currently considering the introduction of a centralized Disability Management Information System (DMIS), which will consolidate the various sector-specific disability records, support the rollout of a nationwide disability identification process and monitor and report on Lao PDR's national and international commitments. As the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) aims to develop "a central database of persons with disabilities and the elderly at the national level", it remains unclear whether the elderly will be a part of the upcoming DMIS database or targeted through another system.

The DMIS is to be piloted in two districts of two provinces in 2022.

Priority Recommendations:

- 2.1 (a) Improve the use of the WG Short Set of Questions in the next 5th PHC in accordance with the international standards for inclusion of disability into PHCs; (b) apply the WG Child Functioning Modules (ages 2-4 years; and 5-17 years) to the 5th PHC.
- 2.2 Use the WG Extensive Set of Questions for creating the DMIS collection and analysis tools.
- 2.3 Clarify whether DMIS will include data on the elderly as aimed by the 9th NSED.
- 2.4 (a) Strengthen the collaboration between the DMIS pilot and UNICEF modeling of the child protection system in Xieng Khouang province; (b) increase budgetary allocations to expand the DMIS pilot to at least nine provinces; (c) increase efforts to issue disability ID cards for all persons with disabilities in these provinces.
- 2.5 Make the DMIS database publicly available and accessible.
- 2.6 Ensure the protection of personal information of persons with disabilities in the DMIS database.

III. NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Several limitations persist in the legal provisions of Law No.57 on Disabled Persons. It does not directly categorize four out of eight principles of the CRPD, such as respect for individual autonomy, accessibility, equality of opportunities, and respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities.

The Law overlooks definitions of "communication", "language", "reasonable accommodation", and "universal design". It does not include sign language among other means of "accessibility and safety" and in the compulsory facilities to eliminate environmental barriers, it does not list "denial for reasonable accommodation" as a form of discrimination.

The Law does not directly recognize that women and children with disabilities are subject to multi-dimensional discrimination, nor does it incorporate a gender- and age-sensitive perspective to promote the full enjoyment of human rights by such groups.

The Law lacks special provisions and measures to guarantee persons with disabilities effective access to justice and legal aid, the right to liberty and security, freedom from torture and inhuman treatment, as well as to raise awareness to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities and combat stereotypes, prejudices, and harmful practices.

Several laws of general application, issued or amended after the ratification of the CRPD, are yet to be harmonized with the principles and rights recognized by the CRPD:

- The Constitution, Civil Code, Penal Code, Law No.37 on Criminal Proceedings, Law No.41 on Juvenile Criminal Procedure, Law No.105 on Election, Law No.25 on Military Service, Law No.54 on Social Security, and Law No.53 on Civil Aviation use the Lao terminology demeaning persons with intellectual and mental disorders, such as “crazy persons”, “persons who lost their intellect”, “persons who lost their mind”, “children with weak intellect”; while there remains a repeating confusion between the Lao terms of “disability” and “amputation” in the Constitution, Penal Code, Law No.72 on Court Fees, Law No.105 on Election, Law No.58 on Healthcare, Law No.54 on Social Security and Law No.53 on Civil Aviation (2018);
- Law No.37 on Criminal Proceedings, Law No.22 on People’s Courts, Law No.73 on Hygiene, Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Law No.60 on Health Insurance, Law No.53 on Vaccination, Law No.62 on Education, Law No.8 on the Development and Protection of Women, Law No.77 on Gender Equality, Law No.01 on Media, Law No.17 on Radio Communications, and Law No.09 on Telecommunications, do not explicitly include disability status among other prohibited grounds of discrimination;
- The Constitution, Law No.105 on Election, Civil Code, and Law No.37 on Criminal Proceedings deny persons with intellectual and mental disorders and persons deprived of their legal capacity to exercise civil and political rights, including voting, participating in the electoral process, creating of juristic acts, attending court proceedings as witnesses and providing testimony;
- Law No.58 on Healthcare defines “good health” as “absence of disease or disability, which, according to provisions on a good health requirement enshrined in other sectoral regulations, may impede persons with disabilities from being appointed as a judge, member of the National Assembly (NA) and People’s Provincial Assemblies (PPAs), civil servant, Lao National Team’s Athlete, vaccine professional or service provider, teacher, civil aviation professional and journalist, as well as obtaining driving licenses;
- Labour Law No.43 fails to protect persons with disabilities in areas such as workplace discrimination, while Excise Tax Law No.68 does not exempt goods and services produced by persons with disabilities, and Law No.54 on Social Security enshrines benefits from the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) only for “persons with amputation acquired in the Armed Forces and their caregivers”;
- Law No.71 on Disaster Management fails to define the special safety and security needs of persons with disabilities in the disaster management process, disaggregation of disability data in case of emergency, accessible early warning systems, post-disaster construction, and rehabilitation;
- Law No.05 on Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children denies children with intellectual and mental disorders to decide the method and place of appropriate medical treatment;
- Law No.8 on the *Development and Protection of Women* and Law No.77 on Gender Equality *have no direct references to the rights of women with disabilities, while* Law No.56 on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Children lacks provisions on disability-sensitive referral systems, recovery services and facilities, reintegration, accessible information, and education on exploitation, violence, and abuse;



- Law No.05 on Construction, Law No.24 on Land Transportation, Law No.53 on Civil Aviation, Law No.01 on Media, Law No.17 on Radio Communications, and Law No.09 on Telecommunications lack definitions of “accessibility” and “universal design”, and references to accessibility standards, a system of sanctions for non-compliance, and complaints mechanisms for persons with disabilities.

Priority Recommendations:

- 3.1 In consultation with OPDs, revise Law No.57 on Disabled Persons to bring it into full compliance with the CRPD, including by adding a definition of “children with disabilities” and children-specific provisions.
- 3.2 In consultation with OPDs, revise the sectoral laws to bring them into line with the human rights model of disability and remove Lao terminology that excludes and/or demeans persons with particular types of disability, particularly from the 2015 Constitution, Civil Code, Penal Code, Law No.37 on Criminal Proceedings, Law No.41 on Juvenile Criminal Procedure, Law No.72 on Court Fees, Law No.105 on Election, Law No.25 on Military Service, Law No.58 on Healthcare, Law No.54 on Social Security, and Law No.53 on Civil Aviation.
- 3.3 In consultation with OPDs, revise the sectoral legislation, particularly Law No.37 on Criminal Proceedings, Law No.22 on People’s Courts, Law No.60 on Health Insurance, No.73 on Hygiene, Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Law No.53 on Vaccination, Law No.62 on Education, Law No.8 on the Development and Protection of Women, Law No.77 on Gender Equality, Law No.01 on Media, Law No.17 on Radio Communications, and Law No.09 on Telecommunications, to include disability status among other prohibited grounds of discrimination.
- 3.4 In consultation with OPDs, revise provisions in the 2015 Constitution, Civil Code, Law No.37 on Criminal Proceedings, and Law No.105 on Election that deny persons with intellectual or mental disorders and persons deprived of their legal capacity to exercise civil and political rights.
- 3.5 Revise the definition of “good health” in Law No.58 on Healthcare to bring it in line with the WHO Constitution.
- 3.6 In consultation with OPDs, revise **(a)** Labour Law No.43 to protect persons with disabilities from discrimination in the workplace; **(b)** Excise Tax Law No.68 to exempt goods and services produced by persons with disabilities from exercising tax; **(c)** Law No.54 on Social Security to require registration with the NSSF of all persons with all types of disability beyond those with amputation from the Armed Forces.
- 3.7 In consultation with OPDs, revise Law No.71 on Disaster Management to bring it in full compliance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.
- 3.8 In consultation with OPDs, **(a)** particularly the Association of Children with Disabilities, revise Law No.05 on Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children, particularly the provisions that deny children with intellectual or mental disorders to decide the method and place of appropriate medical treatment; **(b)** particularly the Lao Women’s with Disabilities Association (LWWDA), mainstream rights of women with disabilities in Law No.8 on the Development and Protection of Women, Law No.56 on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Children, Law No.77 on Gender Equality and other sectoral legislation.
- 3.9 In consultation with OPDs, revise the sectoral legislation, particularly Law No.05 on Construction, Law No.24 on Land Transportation, Law No.53 on Civil Aviation, Law No.01 on Media, Law No.17 on Radio Communications, and Law No.09 on Telecommunications to establish and mainstream



universal design standards, a system of sanctions for non-compliance, and complaints mechanisms for persons with disabilities.

IV. NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The CRPD was officially translated into Lao in 2014, printed in handbook format, and distributed among civil servants, military police officers, and citizens. To date, it has been published on the website of the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO/Mine Action Sector (NRA) in English, but not on the “International Treaties” webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Lao Gazette website of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). There are no publicly available accessible translated formats of the CRPD, such as easy-read versions, in Braille and Lao sign language.

Although Law No.57 on Disabled Persons is available on the MoJ Lao Gazette website, it is yet to be produced and disseminated in accessible formats, and there is no official translation of the Law into English.

Law No.57 appointed the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) at the central, provincial, and district levels to administrate all disability-related activities in the country and lead the inter-governmental National Committee for Disabled Persons and Elderly (NCDE). The duties of the NCDE include, *inter alia*, studying international conventions and protocols, coordinating their implementation, and liaising with international organizations. Decree No.77 -- and as amended under Decree No.09 as of 25 February 2021, established an inter-governmental National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) under the MoFA, also mandated to coordinate the implementation of international human rights conventions and liaise with the international human rights mechanisms. Each NHRC member has a Ministry Focal Point on Human Rights responsible for, *inter alia*, collecting sectoral data for State reporting to the international human rights mechanisms. Although the NCDE maintains the lead role with regard to the CRPD, the potential overlap in the CRPD-related responsibilities with that of the NHRC is inherent and close coordination on the division of duties is critical.

In August 2020, the MoLSW, through the NCDE, enacted the National Strategy and Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2020-2030), which defines eight key areas, 23 projects, and 86 activities, divided into two five-year phases. The National Strategy and Action Plan do not separate access to justice, inclusive education, and disaster management as priority areas.

Law No.57 establishes the National Fund for Disabled Persons that targets, *inter alia*, employment and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), occupational skills development, and employment for persons with disabilities, assistance to persons with disabilities in case of an emergency, as well as allowances for poor households with a person with a disability. The operations of the NCDE are not reflected in the expenditures of the National Fund, and it remains unclear how they are financed.

In 2021, the MoLSW initiated the drafting of two new Decrees: (1) to establish a National Committee for Persons with Disabilities (NCD), distinguishing the focus on disability from aging; (2) to refine the terms of reference of the National Fund for Disabled Persons.



Since 2018, the Disability-Inclusive Development Working Group (DID WG) under the INGO network has been working to increase the coherence of INGOs, OPDs, UN AFPs, and other international development partners in their disability-related programming, partnerships, advocacy, information exchange, and joint activities.

Priority Recommendations:

- 4.1 Make the CRPD in Lao available in accessible formats (easy-read, in Braille and Lao sign language).
- 4.2 Publish the CRPD in English, Lao, and accessible formats on the MoFA website and the MoJ Lao Gazette website.
- 4.3 Make the official English translation of Law No.57 on Disabled Persons available for international development partners.
- 4.4 Elaborate additional interventions to promote access to justice and legal aid in the National Strategy and Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2020-2030).
- 4.5 Establish a standing platform for annual dialogue between the NCD(E) and DID WG.

V. NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

A. OVERALL NATIONAL PLANNING AND MONITORING

Disability inclusion has not been effectively integrated into the NSEDPs. While the 9th NSEDP mainstreams disability across the outputs on labour skills development and equal access to labour markets, equal opportunities and development, youth, social security services, lives safe from UXO, good governance and justice, certain outputs in areas of critical importance for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities overlook direct references to disability, including the outputs on healthcare services, education, infrastructure, as well as on prevention, control, and disaster response and post-disaster recovery.

The 9th NSEDP M&E Framework defines only two national indicators targeting data on persons with disabilities on: (1) unemployment; and (2) UXO survivors. Other relevant national indicators, including on health insurance, school and TVET enrolment, drop-outs and graduation rates, involvement in physical exercises and sports, poverty rates, access to social security and justice, and birth registration, do not require disaggregation by disability status. The 9th National Plan defines a separate indicator, monitored by the MoFA, on the percentage of the implemented recommendations emanating from the 2022 CRPD Country Review with the 2025 target of 50 per cent. Indicators for implementation of the CRPD and Incheon Strategy are not currently integrated into the 9th NSEDP M&E Framework.

The National Master List of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Indicators (SDGi) localized the Global Indicator Framework to the context of Lao PDR through 238 indicators. Lao PDR's Master List reflects three localized indicators to monitor disability data in education enrolment, hourly earnings, and population in UXO contaminated villages, which are not currently aligned with the 9th NSEDP M&E Framework. A number of global SDGi relating to disability, including on social protection floors/systems, parity indices in education, unemployment rate, poverty, access to public transport, and positions in national and local institutions, were adjusted to the Lao context and excluded disaggregation by disability status. While the global SDGi on open space for public use, victims of physical or sexual harassment and inclusive and responsive



decision-making that require data on persons with disabilities were not integrated into Lao PDR's Master List at all. The National SDGs Steering Committee appointed sectoral Ministry Focal Points on SDGs to collect and report data against the relevant localized SDGi.

The 2021 Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda included reporting on the division of functions on social relief for persons with disabilities, disability-disaggregated data relating to social protection, and the inclusion of more disability-specific "questionnaires" for the 5th PHC among the priority actions for the Government. However, the VNR lacked disability-specific reporting under SDG10 and SDG16, and lacked disability-disaggregated statistics against both the global and localized SDGi of the selected nine SDGs.

The National Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2020-2025) introduced a list of indicators for advancing the rights of persons with disabilities, including raising public awareness, data collection, healthcare, and accessibility. However, these indicators are not integrated with other national development targets and indicators, including the 9th NSEDP M&E Framework and National Master List of SDGi.

In 2021, the MoLSW initiated the development of priority indicators for implementation of the CRPD and Incheon Strategy, adapted for the Lao PDR context. Lao PDR's Master List of Disability Indicators is to be finalized in 2022 and will be critical to implementing and monitoring Law No.57 on Disabled Persons, National Strategy and Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2020-2030), CRPD, and SDGs, across both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

The National Master List of Disability Indicators is to be monitored by the new NCD(E)'s National Coordination Mechanism (NCM), consisting of line ministries, mass organizations, and OPDs. Each governmental NCM member is to appoint a Ministry Focal Point on Disability, who will be responsible for collecting data against Lao PDR's Disability Indicators and reporting through the DMIS database described in Section II on the National Disability Prevalence. It remains unclear how the duties of the MoLSW, NCDE, new NCD, new NCM, including its Focal Points on Disability, ministries' Focal Points on SDGs, NHRC, and its Focal Points on Human Rights, will be divided and coordinated.

During the 3rd UPR cycle, Lao PDR accepted all the disability-related recommendations, including on disability-inclusive climate-change adaptation, 9th NSEDP, access to social services, resources for the implementation of the National Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2020-2025), and special needs of children with disabilities. The draft UPR Action Plan includes eight disability-related priority actions different from those in the 9th NSEDP, National Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2020-2025), their M&E Frameworks, and localized SDGi.

Priority Recommendations:

- 5.1 In consultation with OPDs, mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities across all the outcomes, and at least 80 per cent of the outputs of the 10th NSEDP.
- 5.2 Ensure the 10th NSEDP M&E Framework is aligned with the reviewed National Master List of the localized SDGi, indicators of the National Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2020-2030), and the upcoming National Master List of Disability Indicators.

- 5.3 Revise the National Master List of the localized SDGi to ensure disability disaggregation of at least SDGi 1.3.1 (social protection floors/systems), 4.5.1 (parity indices in education), 8.5.2 (unemployment rate), 10.2.1 (people living below 50 per cent of median income), 11.2.1 (access to public transport) and 16.7.1 (positions in national and local institutions), in compliance with the Global SDGi Framework.
- 5.4 Ensure that the upcoming National Master List of Disability Indicators encompasses all the existing disability-related indicators across sectors.
- 5.5 Assign and strengthen the capacity of the existing sectoral ministries' Focal Points on SDGs and NHRC's Focal Points on Human Rights to collect statistics against the upcoming National Master List of Disability Indicators, and report through the DMIS database.
- 5.6 Clarify the distribution of duties on awareness-raising, implementation, monitoring, and reporting on the CRPD between the MoLSW, NCDE, new NCD, new NCM, and NHRC.
- 5.7 Ensure the Plan of Action for the Implementation of the 3rd UPR cycle's recommendation accepted by Lao PDR is implemented in alignment with the 9th NSEDP, National Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2020-2025), their M&E Frameworks, and localized SDGi.
- 5.8 Prioritize the collection and reporting of disability data on the reviewed localized SDGi for 2024 VNR.

B. JUSTICE

There is no available data disaggregation by disability status on the experiences of persons with disabilities in accessing legal processes. The national surveys on access to justice confirm that public knowledge of justice institutions is very low and lower among certain marginalized and vulnerable groups, while customary justice mechanisms remain the most trusted and accessible among the public.

There is no data on the number of court cases involving persons with disabilities to date. The piloted People's Supreme Court's Case Management System (PSC-CMS) lacks disaggregation/search function by disability status. Law No.72 on Court Fees does not exempt claims filed by persons with disabilities from the Court service fee except for compensation for damages causing a disability.

Village Mediation Units (VMUs), responsible for solving village-level disputes, including civil, family, labor, trade, environmental, and minor criminal disputes, do not *de facto* allow for persons with disabilities to act as a Mediator, nor are VMU members capacitated or sensitized to the needs of persons with disabilities. Decree No.626 on Village-Level Dispute Mediation does not exempt persons with disabilities from the VMU service fee, but only people in poverty. As the standardized form for annual dispute data collection does not include disability status, data on the number of VMU disputes involving persons with disabilities filed and/or resolved to date is not available. The Dispute Mediation Handbook and VMU Training Manual lack references to persons with disabilities and their needs, including when providing recommendations for mediation room arrangements.

Under Decree No.77 on Legal Aid, persons with disabilities are included as target recipients of free legal aid covered by the Legal Aid Fund, which is yet to be established. To date, there is no



data available on persons with disabilities who received legal aid. Legal aid services are provided through phone calls or in-person meetings, with no option for persons who are blind and deaf, and many Legal Clinics are inaccessible for persons with physical disabilities. The current legal aid induction programme for Legal Aid Officers does not include guidance on the specific needs of persons with disabilities in receiving legal aid. Assignments to a lawyer are administered by the Lao Bar Association (LBA) and often made irrespective of their competence and relevant skills in representing persons with disabilities.

Information on whether the Government designated Law Model Villages and Law Model Families that obey the Law have community or family members with disabilities is not available.

Many national legal dissemination platforms are not yet accessible for persons with disabilities, including the “LaoLaw” mobile phone application which is linked to the LaoGazette website and hosts predominantly scanned documents. Another MoJ mobile application, “LaoLaw Term”, which provides more than 10,000 legal terms from existing laws and regulations, lacks an official term of “disability”, and related terms from Law No.57 on Disabled Persons.

In 2021, the MoJ piloted the Digital Legal Aid Platform (DLAP) to provide legal information in an easy-to-understand format for the general public. Several FAQs on non-discriminatory employment of persons with disabilities are currently being developed. The website, including the chat function, is accessible for speech input and output technologies.

To date, the overall number of persons with disabilities deprived of liberty and placed in institutional settings is unknown. According to the Government’s response to the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, in 2018, there were 1,010 children with disabilities living in specialized institutions across the country.

Priority Recommendations:

- 5.9 (a) In consultation with OPDs, undertake a comprehensive study of experiences of persons with disabilities in accessing formal and informal justice services, particularly VMUs, Legal Aid Offices, Lawyers, and Courts, to assist in guiding policy and practices; (b) include respondents with different types of disability in the methodology of all national service user surveys.
- 5.10 (a) Collect data on persons with disabilities involved in disputes/cases at both VMU and Court levels (disaggregated by age, gender, and type of disability), and requests for procedural accommodations made and satisfied on an annual basis, including by refining the VMU dispute registration form and disaggregation function on the Supreme Court’s Case Management System; (b) ensure the protection of personal data of persons with disabilities.
- 5.11 In consultation with OPDs, strengthen the capacity of VMUs on the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, including by mainstreaming disability within the Dispute Mediation Handbook and VMU Training Manual.
- 5.12 In consultation with OPDs, award at least three Law Model Villages and 15 Law Model Families with community and family members with disabilities for their efforts in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.
- 5.13 (a) Collect data on persons with disabilities seeking and receiving legal aid from the governmental service providers (disaggregated by age, gender, and type of disability) on an annual basis; (b) ensure the protection of personal data of persons with disabilities.

- 5.14 Increase efforts to raise awareness of free legal aid available for persons with disabilities in easy-to-understand and accessible formats.
- 5.15 Develop a training module on the rights and needs of persons with disabilities for the induction of all Legal Aid Officers.
- 5.16 Develop and enforce minimum accessibility standards for the governmental Legal Aid Offices and services and the provision of reasonable accommodation.
- 5.17 Create a pool of lawyers (in Vientiane, the north and south of the country) competent and with a record in the area of the rights of persons with disabilities.
- 5.18 **(a)** Strengthen the accessibility of the “LaoLaw” and “LaoLaw Term” mobile applications for persons who are blind, persons with vision impairment or low vision; **(b)** add the term of “disability” and related terms, including universal design and accessibility, in compliance with Law No.57 on Disabled Persons and the CRPD, to the “LaoLaw Term” application.
- 5.19 Produce easy-to-understand FAQs on the entire spectrum of the rights of persons with disabilities, in compliance with Law No.57 on Disabled Persons and the CRPD; and make them available and accessible on the DLAP.
- 5.20 **(a)** Collect data of persons with disabilities deprived of liberty and placed in institutional settings (disaggregated by age, gender, and type of disability) on an annual basis; **(b)** ensure the protection of personal data of persons with disabilities.

C. PARTICIPATION

Persons with disabilities are represented by formalized OPDs or other groups existing under ad-hoc arrangements. There are seven OPDs formally established as Social Welfare and Development Non-Profit Associations (NPAs) by the MoLSW and three Disability Service Centers registered as enterprises by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC). In practice, the process of the establishment and management of NPAs is burdensome, with annual registration needing to be renewed on an annual basis, and foreign funding and assets requiring MoFA’s approval. Under the UPR 3rd cycle, the Government of Lao PDR has committed to advancing the freedom of association and building an enabling environment for NPAs, including OPDs, through procedural and administrative reforms.

Representation of OPDs at the provincial level is limited, with only three OPDs with permanent representatives in the provinces outside of Vientiane. In general, and according to the 2021 Organizational Capacity Assessment, OPDs, both at the central and provincial levels, require capacity development support with regard to human resources, office space, association development strategies, administration, and human resources policies, accounting software, procurement policies, safety policies and procedures, management information systems, fundraising strategies and capacities, websites, communications and outreach strategies, as well as accessible IT equipment.

OPDs play a limited role as representative organizations for both their membership base and the wider population of persons with disabilities, with interventions, mainly focused on fragmented service delivery in the awareness-raising, education, and skills development areas, often dependent on financial support from small-grant programmes of INGOs.



Only two OPDs, mainly representing persons with physical disabilities, are consistently invited to the NCDE meetings. To date, there have been no systematic consultations with any OPDs by the sectoral ministries on drafting new or amending the existing legislation across sectors. OPDs currently do not have any existing partnership with the ministries beyond the NCDE Secretariat.

In 2019, to improve cooperation and cohesion among OPDs, the organizations operating at the central level initiated a proposal with the NCDE on the registration of a National Federation of OPDs that could represent all types of disability when participating in the NCDE-level discussions and events. OPDs drafted a Joint Regulation and submitted it to the NCDE for approval. The Committee rejected the initiative explaining the decision with Decree No.238 on Associations that does not regulate networks or councils of registered NPAs.

The NHRC is currently finalizing Lao PDR's Plan of Action to implement the recommendations accepted by the Government in the 3rd UPR cycle. The current draft lacks programmatic activities implemented by NPAs, including OPDs.

Although the Vientiane Declaration on Partnerships for Effective Development Cooperation aims to enhance partnerships with NPAs and their greater engagement in shaping national development policies at all levels, neither NPAs nor OPDs were consulted during the 9th NSEDP development process. NPAs and OPDs have not been systematically involved in the national Round Table Process, a multi-stakeholder mechanism supporting the design and implementation of the national development plans across 10 Sector Working Groups (SWG).

The MoLSW manages one special Veteran with Disabilities Village consisting of only persons with disabilities and their families from different provinces, while the Ministry of Health (MoH) supports several special Leprous Villages, with essential and special public services provided. There is no official data on the exact numbers of the special villages currently existing in the country.

Priority Recommendations:

- 5.21 Increase efforts to strengthen organizational and technical capacities of OPDs.
- 5.22 Support OPDs in establishing and formalizing a national umbrella organization of OPDs, representing different types of disability.
- 5.23 Appoint the national umbrella organization of OPDs, representing different types of disability, as an ordinary member of the NCD(E).
- 5.24 Develop guidelines for consultation of the national umbrella organization of OPDs, representing different types of disability, by ministries for drafting new or amending the existing legislation across sectors.
- 5.25 Establish a standing platform for annual dialogue between the NCD(E) and the national umbrella organization of OPDs, representing different types of disability.
- 5.26 Mainstream and support OPD-led programmatic activities in Lao PDR's Plan of Action to implement the recommendations accepted by the Government in the 3rd UPR cycle.
- 5.27 Ensure participation of at least one OPD in each SWG of the national Round Table Process.
- 5.28 Ensure consultations with the national umbrella organization of OPDs, representing different types of disability, in the development of the 10th NSEDP and its M&E Framework.

5.29 In consultation with OPDs, scale community awareness-raising campaigns and family engagement efforts, emphasizing the rights of persons with different types of disability and the importance of their non-discrimination and inclusion.

D. HEALTH

The National Health Insurance Strategy (2017-2020) aims to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and health insurance coverage for 96 per cent of the population by 2025, with a reduced out-of-pocket expenditure to no more than 35 per cent by 2020 but does not include persons with disabilities in the priority groups, among pregnant women, children and the poor.

Several national healthcare strategies and action plans lack sufficient disability-targeted interventions and indicators, including the National Strategy and Action Plan for Integrated Services on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (2016-2025), 2019 National Policy on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), National Nutrition Strategy (2016-2025) and Action Plan (2016-2020), and National Mental Health Strategy (2012-2020).

Tertiary and secondary healthcare services are carried out by the Central, Provincial, and District Hospitals, with Health Centers established to provide primary health services to approximately 10 villages each. 88 per cent of households are located within 11-30 km from the closest Health Center. Distance to Health Centers disproportionately impacts persons with limited mobility and disabilities.

Village Health Volunteers generally lack knowledge of disability and the skills to serve persons with different types of disability. Health officials generally do not receive training in working with persons with disabilities. They also do not consult with persons with disabilities as it is not seen as a priority focus of their work.

Transportation and lodging costs are significant deterrents for persons with disabilities seeking health information and treatment. This disproportionately impacts women with physical disabilities, who often require the accompaniment of two persons when traveling to seek healthcare or rehabilitation services. Services can lack privacy safeguards for what can be intimate treatments with patients feeling uncomfortable and embarrassed.

Most health facilities still lack proper ramps and roads, accessible WASH facilities, materials, and signage available in Braille, or staff competent in the Lao sign language. There are rarely assistive services or staff available to help persons with disabilities navigate hospital procedures, while healthcare providers are often unaware of what services and support are available for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities often report confusion when accessing healthcare and rehabilitation services due to a lack of uniform and consistent sharing of information about the services catering to persons with disabilities, particularly in rural and remote areas.

The majority of healthcare services available for persons with disabilities appear to cater to persons with physical disabilities. There is no substantial capacity to diagnose the diversity in intellectual disabilities, including syndrome-specific conditions, in the country, with many families reliant on diagnosis and treatment support from neighboring countries at their own



expense. Persons with sight and hearing impairments also have difficulties in finding appropriate and suitable care outside of Vientiane, and it is estimated that there is a treatment gap of 90 per cent or more for persons with epilepsy across the country.

Five Hospitals and three specialized centers in Vientiane offer rehabilitation services in their facilities, and almost all Provincial Hospitals have a rehabilitation medicine section. These services are then assisted by the Center for Medical Rehabilitation (CMR) and four Provincial Rehabilitation Sub-Center (PRSCs) that primarily provide rehabilitation treatments and assistive products for adults and children with limb loss and paralysis. Due to the lack of district-level and community-based rehabilitation services, rural and remote communities continue to have limited awareness and access to rehabilitation treatment.

Regulations on the procurement and provision standards, as well as minimum standards for rehabilitation treatment, are yet to be developed by the Government.

The rehabilitation workforce comprises mainly Prosthetics and Orthotics Specialists, and Physical Therapists. As of 2017, 1,000 individuals were trained in physical therapy, although none were trained at a bachelor's degree level, and the curriculum and clinical supervision of trainees do not meet international standards.

Routine data collection by Provincial Hospitals does not consider disability data collection a priority. A platform for rehabilitation data is available within the District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2) but has not been populated. The MoH has recently included disability data as part of its Health Population Census called "Family Folder," which is also hosted on DHIS2 and covers every household in the country.

Priority Recommendations:

- 5.30 In consultation with OPDs, mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities within the next National Strategy and Action Plan for Integrated Services on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health; National Policy on WASH and National Mental Health Strategy, and their M&E Frameworks.
- 5.31 Ensure sufficient budgetary allocations to implement all the health-sector activities planned under the National Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2020-2025).
- 5.32 **(a)** Revise the WASH Committee's Community Booklet with the disability-inclusive standards for building toilets and WASH facilities; **(b)** revise the WASH Committee's terms of reference to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities.
- 5.33 **(a)** In consultation with OPDs, develop a manual and train healthcare workers, in serving persons with disabilities and the services available for them, prioritizing Health Center workers and Village Health Volunteers; ensure the inclusion of a training session(s) on epilepsy in the manual and trainings; **(b)** develop/provide continuing professional development programmes, particularly on rehabilitation.
- 5.34 **(a)** In consultation with OPDs, undertake a nationwide accessibility audit of health services, incorporating facility inspections and health service forms and information and consultation practices; **(b)** develop an Action Plan, resources, and budgetary allocations to address critical gaps considering all types of disability.
- 5.35 In consultation with OPDs and Lao Women's Union, develop and enforce gender-sensitive standards for accessible healthcare and rehabilitation facilities (including transport options,

- lodging, WASH facilities, medical information, consultation, and administration) where women and girls with disabilities can receive treatment with dignity, and effective protective measures are in place.
- 5.36 (a) Strengthen intellectual disability diagnostic capacities of health professionals; (b) consider partnerships and centralized payment options with healthcare facilities in the neighboring countries to improve access to specialists for persons with intellectual disabilities from low-income households.
- 5.37 In consultation with OPDs, improve healthcare and rehabilitation service information packages, and community engagement with persons with disabilities and their families to raise their awareness of the available services and financial assistance in easy-to-understand and accessible formats; (b) integrate disability inclusion awareness-raising activities and disability-screening community outreach into the terms of reference of Health Center workers and Village Health Volunteers.
- 5.38 Increase budgetary allocations to expand the CMR's community-based rehabilitation programme to at least nine provinces; ensure the inclusion of pediatric rehabilitation in the programme.
- 5.39 (a) Develop and enforce regulations on the assistive product procurement and provision standards, mandatory for governmental and non-governmental rehabilitation service providers; (b) develop the Priority Assistive Product List, and integrate it into the MoH Medical Products Procurement and Supply.
- 5.40 (a) Support scholarships for physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy at internationally accredited schools; (b) increase efforts to achieve the international accreditation for the national programmes on Physical Therapy and Prosthetics and Orthotics.
- 5.41 Enable free healthcare and rehabilitation coverage for all persons with disabilities regardless of individual wealth by prioritizing the extension of the National Health Insurance (NHI) Scheme co-payment exemption to persons with disabilities.
- 5.42 (a) Incorporate disability-disaggregated data into the Health Information System (HIS)/DHIS2; (b) include data disaggregation in the 5th PHC that enables comparison of persons with disabilities and the total population across the key health indicators; (c) ensure the protection of personal data of persons with disabilities.

E. EDUCATION

The new Education and Sport Sector Development Plan (ESSDP) (2021-2025) targets persons with disabilities for increased graduation from early childhood to upper secondary education, youth and adult literacy rates, as well as engagement in sports, while lacking disability-related indicators in the M&E Framework.

The national inclusive education development and systems strengthening are predominantly under the responsibility of the Inclusive Education Center (IEC) under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). Education development at the provincial, district, and grass-root levels is overseen by the Provincial Education Sports Service (PESS), District Education Sports Bureaus (DESB), and Village Education Development Committees (VEDC), respectively. While VEDCs prepare and execute the school operating budget, monitor pupil attendance, and local curricula, as well as lead the school self-assessments against Education Quality Standards (EQS), there are no requirements to include persons with disabilities in their membership.

Distance to mainstream education disproportionately impacts the school enrolment and progression of children with limited mobility and disabilities, particularly girls whose parents might not let them travel to a school by themselves or with friends due to concerns over safety.

While the National School Construction Guidelines require an entrance ramp, emergency exits, and classroom doors accessible for wheelchair-users and students with crutches, they overlook accessibility standards for school toilets and WASH facilities. The Policy on Dormitories for Secondary Education and Guidelines for Secondary Education Dormitory Specifications only refer to a separate toilet for persons with physical disabilities “fitted at the girls’ section”. To date, there is limited evidence of continuous monitoring and reporting of the existing or new school facilities against the National Guidelines.

The MoES EQS for Primary Education and Secondary Education also require school facilities and toilets to be “convenient” for persons with disabilities and promote the enrollment of children with special needs, while overlooking disability in the standards for teacher qualifications, learning equipment, management, and administration. The new Fundamental Quality Standards (FQS) have only one disability-related benchmark on enrollment and participation of school-aged children, while lacking references to disability in the standards for school buildings, toilets and WASH facilities, learning materials, and pedagogical skills.

As primary and secondary schools are entitled to raise fees, families often see the school-associated costs as significant when compared to the uncertainty of the job market for children with disabilities, while many children with disabilities themselves remain unaware of the educational opportunities available for them.

The availability of assistive learning materials is not readily available in mainstream classrooms, with financial allocations to schools not accounting for additional materials for students with diverse learning needs. Minimum standards for learning materials and equipment for mainstream settings with children with different types of disability are yet to be developed.

The 2016 Handbooks and training on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Inclusive Teaching Methods cover such topics as impairments and barriers, inclusive education, inclusive learner-friendly environments (ILFEs), special and integrated schooling, as well as basic strategies to communicate, support writing and reading, and prepare IEPs.

Since 2012, a mandatory inclusive education module has been available through all Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs). However, this remains nascent due to a limited number of qualified trainers. There is also an optional module on Braille and sign language for pre-service and in-service teachers.

There are two Special Schools for the Deaf and Blind in two provinces that offer only five grades of primary and four grades of lower-secondary education levels, requiring their students to enter the mainstream education system to continue with upper secondary education.

There is one special private school for the deaf and four special private pre-primary facilities for children with intellectual disabilities and autism operated by OPDs. The facilities for children with intellectual disabilities and autism provide only day-schooling, charge tuition fees, and accommodate students from the cities of their location. To date, there are no official curricula



or Teacher Handbooks for serving students with intellectual disabilities and autism introduced by the Government. While the MoES provides stipends to students with disabilities that attend the two public Special Schools for the Deaf and Blind, there are no learning subsidies provided to students enrolled in special private schools.

Children with disabilities and their families often face increased financial and social costs when attending any of the special education facilities located in Vientiane and regional cities, due to the increased travel expenses and household implications of a family member often needing to relocate to accompany the student with disabilities, particularly girls.

The IEC is not sufficiently resourced to coordinate national surveillance of learners with disabilities, with the current datapoints not aligning with the Annual Education Census indicators. The MoES is currently developing a data collection system for children with disabilities in early childhood education by applying the WG Child Functioning Module. The Ministry is also finalizing the Lao Education and Sports Management Information System (LESMIS), which, to date, provides neither disability-disaggregated data from the mainstream schools nor student and teacher data from the Special Schools for the Deaf and Blind.

Priority Recommendations:

- 5.43 In consultation with OPDs, **(a)** strengthen the capacity of PESSs, DESBs, and VEDCs to assist children with disabilities in accessing education; **(b)** employ and train a PESS Officer in each province dedicated to assisting DESBs and VEDCs in onboarding and retaining students with disabilities; **(c)** revise the VEDC's terms of reference to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities.
- 5.44 In consultation with OPDs, **(a)** improve education information packages, and community engagement with children with disabilities and their families to raise their awareness of education opportunities and learning subsidies available in both mainstream and special education in an easy-to-understand and accessible formats; **(b)** upgrade the "Khang Panya Lao" Platform with curriculum applicable for homeschooling for children with different types of disability.
- 5.45 Scale equivalence programming for out-of-school youth and adult education programmes that support literacy and numeracy with effective engagement strategies targeting persons with different types of disability.
- 5.46 **(a)** In consultation with OPDs, undertake a nationwide accessibility audit of infrastructure in the educational system against the existing School Construction Guidelines and Policy on Dormitories for Secondary Education; **(b)** develop an Action Plan, resources, and budgetary allocations to address critical gaps considering all types of disability; **(c)** establish a centralized mechanism to formally request reasonable accommodation support, from both teachers and parents, in the educational system.
- 5.47 In consultation with OPDs, mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities within the FQS for both primary and secondary education.
- 5.48 **(a)** Improve the implementation of education fee subsidizations for children with disabilities, including those enrolled in the private Centers for Intellectual Disabilities and Autism; **(b)** provide mainstream schools and VEDCs with a recurring budget for reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities, to minimize school registration fees for children with disabilities.
- 5.49 **(a)** In consultation with OPDs, develop and enforce minimum standards for learning materials and equipment for mainstream schools with children with different types of disability; **(b)** increase

- budgetary allocations to print curriculum materials in Braille for all grades of primary and secondary education.
- 5.50 In consultation with OPDs, ensure that school meals are accessible for children with different types of disability.
- 5.51 **(a)** Prepare a pool of qualified trainers to deliver the mandatory inclusive education module at the TTCs; **(b)** increase the number and capacity of teachers that can use Braille and Lao sign language; **(c)** engage, train, and recruit persons with disabilities as teachers and administrators within the educational system.
- 5.52 In consultation with OPDs, develop official pre-school and primary curricula and Teacher Handbooks for serving children with intellectual disabilities and autism.
- 5.53 **(a)** Incorporate disability-disaggregated data from all levels of mainstream education and data from the Special Schools into the Education and Management Information System (EMIS) and LESMIS; **(b)** ensure the protection of personal data of persons with disabilities.

F. EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

EMPLOYMENT

Persons with disabilities are identified as a priority group for the TVET sector under the National TVET Strategic Plan (2006-2020). The Plan aims to increase access to TVET services nationwide by “promoting women, poor, disabled and ethnic groups”, with no stand-alone activities or indicators targeting persons with disabilities introduced. Several supporting national TVET strategies and action plans lack sufficient disability-targeted interventions and indicators, including the Master Plan for TVET Development (2016-2020), the ESSDP (2021-2025), and its Sub-Sector Development Plan for TVET (2021-2025).

The new Decent Work Country Programme (2022-2026) (DWCP) mainstreams disability across three Outcomes on social protection, inclusive employments, and skills and entrepreneurship development, and identifies four targets focused on disability inclusion and/or disaggregated by disability status.

Persons with disabilities often find themselves ineligible for many training opportunities due to the prerequisite education attainment, particularly in formal TVET programmes.

There is limited evidence of mainstream TVET and skills development institutions providing accommodating measures for persons with disabilities, as formal TVET facilities do not actively recruit, tailor courses, or assist teachers in disability-inclusive training skills and practices, and there are currently few opportunities for adults with disabilities to pursue basic education that includes learning to read and write.

The MoES has established two segregated TVET Centers specifically targeting persons with disabilities in Vientiane and Luang Prabang province, with the 3rd facility under construction in Savannakhet province. However, these Centers only offer mid-level qualifications and short-term skills development courses which are not aligned with the higher-level certifications required by many employers, while also often stereotyping clusters of persons with disabilities into similar vocations based on their type of difficulty.

There are no specific TVET scholarship or stipend arrangements for persons with disabilities outside of the segregated facilities, even though distance and road conditions to training centers disproportionately prevent the enrolment of persons with limited mobility and disabilities. Families often see the associated costs of TVET and skills development as significant when compared to the uncertainty of the job market for persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities, particularly in rural and remote areas, have limited knowledge or access to information regarding employment services and how to seek employment opportunities. Job services staff are often not trained in assisting persons with disabilities, while the Public Employment Service (PES) website is inaccessible for specific types of disabilities and does not provide non-discrimination information on the basis of disability.

Persons with disabilities' job applications are often reportedly overlooked by employers as there is a common perception that persons with disabilities place a burden on the organization, while job applications often require a "good health" certificate or include physical health travel requirements deterring persons with disabilities from applying. Discriminatory practices generally increase with the severity of the disability, disproportionately impacting persons who are deaf or have intellectual or mental disorders.

Building designs are rarely conducive for persons with mobility and sensory difficulties, and companies are often reluctant to hire individuals due to the extra costs that would be associated with making their workplaces accessible. Workplace accessibility is further impacted by the low levels of disability-inclusive transport services and urban planning.

Persons with disabilities account for a disproportionately higher percentage of the informal sector across the country, often seeking self-employment opportunities. However, accessing finances can be difficult for persons with disabilities looking to grow their own businesses, as the existing bank loan regulations require excessive proof for loan viability compared to those without disabilities.

Social stigma and negative attitudes towards disability are a significant deterrent for persons with disabilities seeking employment, as families and communities generally do not recognize persons with disabilities as capable of being productive members of society. This is reportedly more acute in rural and remote areas and disproportionately affects women with disabilities, who also experience the social expectations of prioritizing domestic duties.

Many persons with disabilities acknowledge demotivation and lack of confidence have themselves become a barrier to employment. Trends are now emerging where persons with disabilities gravitate to certain types of jobs, commonly working alongside other persons with disabilities in organizations or businesses specific to people with disabilities, rather than working in a mixed setting.

There is no systematic disability disaggregated data collection against TVET participation and engagement on the TVET-EMIS, and the 2017 Labour Force Survey methodology is only informed by household composition that includes disability.



Priority Recommendations:

- 5.54 **(a)** Prioritize a reporting section on persons with disabilities in the final evaluations of the ESSDP (2021-2025), and Sub-Sector Development Plan for TVET (2021-2025), including reporting against outputs and performance indicators; **(b)** develop an inclusive TVET and skills development strategy and action plan that are specific to the training needs of persons with disabilities and prioritize their equitable access to mainstream formal TVET facilities, as well as Training and Skills Development Centers; **(c)** introduce persons with disabilities participation and graduation targets across all national TVET qualification levels.
- 5.55 Ensure sufficient budgetary allocations to implement all the employment-sector activities planned under the National Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2026-2030) and to achieve the disability-related targets of the DWCP (2022-2026).
- 5.56 **(a)** In partnership with the Bank of Lao PDR, commercial and State-owned banks and financial regulators, revise the loan requirements and application processes to ensure they do not discriminate against persons with disabilities in accessing finances; **(b)** consider developing a small business grant scheme specifically targeting persons with disabilities; **(c)** consider tax-incentives to enable businesses owned and operated by persons with disabilities join the formal economy.
- 5.57 In consultation with OPDs, develop a disability inclusion module for TVET teacher capacity-strengthening.
- 5.58 Specifically identify persons with disabilities as eligible for TVET and skills development scholarships and stipends regardless of wealth and set an appropriate quota for financially assisted positions annually.
- 5.59 **(a)** Upgrade the PES website with non-discrimination policies, including on the basis of disability status, enshrined in Labour Law No.43; **(b)** strengthen the accessibility of the PES website and its video guidelines for persons with all types of disability.
- 5.60 **(a)** Strengthen capacities of personnel at Provincial Job Offices and employment services operators in basic disability inclusion and engagement practices; **(b)** strengthen capacities of OPDs in employment services qualifications and consider contracting short-listed OPDs to provide employment services support directly to persons with disabilities.
- 5.61 **(a)** In consultation with OPDs, establish career coaching courses and job preparation training for persons with disabilities in the segregated TVET Centers; **(b)** increase private sector partnerships and engagement with the segregated TVET Centers to promote the skills of students with disabilities; **(c)** increase course diversity and qualification levels at the segregated TVET Centers, improving the employability of persons with disabilities in a mixed setting.
- 5.62 Revise the National Labour Inspection Plan and inspection checklists with benchmarks on worksite accessibility standards, and other non-discrimination policies and practices.
- 5.63 In consultation with OPDs, scale community awareness-raising campaigns and family engagement efforts, emphasizing the right of persons with disabilities to work and the importance of non-discrimination in employment and the workplace.
- 5.64 Strengthen data disaggregation by disability status, including across **(a)** labour force information monitoring indicators; **(b)** all TVET monitoring indicators, with a particular focus on participation and graduation results, and ensure the protection of personal data of persons with disabilities.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

The NSPS aims to strengthen and further develop the three pillars of social protection: (1) health insurance; (2) social security; and (3) social welfare, with the intention to develop and scale-up benefits and services to vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities. While the Strategy is primarily geared toward systems strengthening and coverage capacity, there are limited interventions that address the existing financial, institutional, and service barriers experienced by persons with disabilities. The Strategy also fails to recognize disability as a key intersectional component in the country's planned poverty analysis.

Social protection services continue to fall short in resolving the financial barriers associated with disability. With no reference to exemptions from healthcare co-payments and additional subsidies in accessing services, persons with disabilities are disadvantaged due to their increased vulnerabilities and cost of living. The impacts of this contribute to persons with disabilities having significantly poorer health than people without disabilities. Women with disabilities are often at a greater disadvantage with lower rates of any form of insurance, despite their greater need for healthcare than women without disabilities.

Persons with disabilities still lack access to adequate protection from a variety of social and economic risks. With a higher prevalence of persons with disabilities either self-employed or working as employees in the informal sector, they are less likely to gain access to social security services – placing them in the vulnerable position of seeking voluntary contributions from their employers or using scarce personal resources. Without access to the NSSF and social insurance scheme, persons with disabilities are often excluded from protection assistance, including non-work-related disability, medical benefits, pensions, employment injury, and occupational and non-work-related disease (including long-term disability), among others.

While Lao PDR incorporates several services in defining the national social welfare safety net, including access to free educational support, welfare programmes and livelihood assistance, and essential services, there remains no systematic approach to social welfare services and benefits for persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable populations. Accessing social protection service delivery mechanisms remains a challenge for persons with disabilities, as many of the free social protection services continue to operate through the reimbursement of upfront costs. This continues to disincentivize households from accessing assistance due to limited income and the difficulties in collecting entitlements.

Persons with disabilities in rural areas identified that they lacked knowledge of their NHI Scheme and other entitlements and were not capable or willing to pay upfront costs for the extended transportation and related expenses in seeking assistance. Without an improved economic incentive and a better understanding of the entitlements already available under the NSPS, there is a risk of families devaluing services and losing motivation to register a family member or a child with disabilities.

Currently, Lao PDR displays among the lowest public social expenditure as a share of GDP, at less than 1 per cent, and the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) and the NSSF continue to operate at risk of collapse. The depleted funds inhibit the scalability of social security and social welfare services from targeting payments to identified vulnerable populations, such as persons



with disabilities, as well as limiting existing service packages and reimbursement schemes. The social welfare pillar of the NSPS, which is critical in reducing the financial barriers that many persons with disabilities experience in accessing education, appears to be deprioritized in terms of national funding contributions, suggesting that funding will likely continue to be dependent on Official Development Assistance.

There is currently no disability-disaggregated data to evaluate the accessibility, participation, and impact of health insurance, social security, and social welfare programmes on persons with disabilities across the country.

Priority Recommendations:

- 5.65 Explicitly recognize persons with disabilities as a vulnerable group under the NSPS.
- 5.66 Ensure sufficient budgetary allocations to implement all the social protection-sector activities planned under the National Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2026-2030).
- 5.67 Appoint the NCD(E) and national umbrella organization of OPDs, representing different types of disability, as members of the NTC.
- 5.68 In consultation with OPDs, undertake a comprehensive study of experiences of persons with disabilities in accessing social protection services, including health insurance, social security, and social welfare programmes, to assist in guiding policy and practices.
- 5.69 Enable free healthcare and rehabilitation coverage for all persons with disabilities regardless of individual wealth by prioritizing the extension of the NHI co-payment exemption to persons with disabilities (*duplicated from the recommendations in Section V on the National Implementation, Sub-Section D on Health*).
- 5.70 **(a)** Revise financial assistance delivery modalities of social welfare entitlements for persons with disabilities, including travel and lodging expenses, to enable upfront or real-time payments; **(b)** increase stipends and social welfare assistance to persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in rural and remote areas, improving accessibility to both education and health services.
- 5.71 In consultation with OPDs, improve information packages, and community engagement with persons with disabilities and their families to raise their awareness of existing social protection services entitlements and eligibility, in easy-to-understand and accessible formats.
- 5.72 **(a)** Strengthen knowledge of personnel at the provincial and district levels of the existing social protection services, entitlements, and eligibility of persons with disabilities and capacity on basic disability inclusion and engagement practices; **(b)** strengthen knowledge of OPDs of the existing social protection services, entitlements, and eligibility of persons with disabilities.
- 5.73 **(a)** Increase national expenditure across all social protection services, prioritizing social welfare and assistance programmes; **(b)** introduce persons with disabilities participation targets across all national social welfare and assistance programmes, ensuring that there are proportionate budgetary allocations to enable persons with disabilities to access essential services.
- 5.74 **(a)** Incorporate disability-disaggregated data into the National Social Protection MIS and Social Registry data collection process; **(b)** ensure the protection of personal data of persons with disabilities.

G. HUMANITARIAN SITUATIONS

DISASTERS

Although the National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction (NSDRR) (2021-2030) does not explicitly acknowledge that persons with disabilities may require additional support and inclusion in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters, one of its strategic objectives specifically addresses the need to understand the sources of vulnerability in disasters, including persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are then supported through two focus areas aimed to: (1) reduce the risk, protect and assist families and OPDs; and (2) develop a disability-inclusive and accessible early warning system.

To ensure the participation of vulnerable groups, the NSDRR commits to the establishment of an Advisory Group on Resilience of Women and Vulnerable Populations, of which the NCDE has been listed as a standing member alongside key sectoral ministries, international development partners, and NPAs. Under the NSDRR, the MoLSW and NCDE will also convene a National Taskforce on Disability and Disasters, responsible for undertaking research, increasing awareness, and supporting resilience-building initiatives for persons with disabilities and their families.

The representation of persons with disabilities on Village Disaster Preparedness and Control Committees (VDPCCs) is only preferred, and it remains unknown how many active VDPCCs have included persons with disabilities or if persons with disabilities have been incorporated into community-level disaster preparedness plans. The NSDRR also fails to recognize persons with disabilities as a target group for training community-level authorities in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and disaster management.

While the 2019 National Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (NEPRP) identifies the increased risks to persons with disabilities during disasters, it does not outline procedures, or budgetary allocations to ensure reasonable accommodation and/or professional assistance are available during emergencies to support persons with disabilities or other vulnerable groups.

Disasters exacerbate preexisting inequalities faced by poorer households, particularly the more vulnerable women, men, boys, girls, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. The impacts of disasters for these groups are experienced across employment levels, income, food security, gender-based violence (GBV), and general safety and security.

Following the 2018 floods in the south of Lao PDR, persons with disabilities, particularly children with disabilities, were reported to be experiencing stigma and discrimination in overcrowded camps with limited security and social protection mechanisms. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) persons with disabilities' access to services was further hampered by a lack of understanding of their identity, needs and while internally displaced persons with disabilities were excluded from decision-making and other camp activities, including the participation of children with disabilities in child family services.

The Hadyao temporary camp facilities, which included temporary housing units, bathrooms, and showers, were not accessible for persons with mobility difficulties and disabilities. Persons with disabilities were reliant on others when using the toilet and bathing, which had negative

repercussions on their hygiene and health, disproportionately impacting women with disabilities, particularly during menstruation.

Persons with disabilities also appeared to have limited opportunities, including in the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) programming activities, to engage in livelihood interventions in recovery, as the majority of interventions targeted manual labour and agricultural production.

There was no official data disaggregated by disability status available during the 2018 floods. However, the Lao Disaster Information Management (LaoDi) Platform focused on the past natural and technological disasters has recently been updated to DesInventar Sendai server. The templates for future disaster data collection were also assessed to ensure their compliance with the Sendai reporting requirements, including disability disaggregation.

Priority Recommendations:

- 5.75 (Revise the terms of reference of the Central Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) to ensure the participation of OPDs.
- 5.76 Consider a percentage of funding reserved to assist persons with disabilities in accessing specialized and additional assistance in preparedness for or during an emergency within the newly endorsed National Disaster Management Fund.
- 5.77 **(a)** Ensure sufficient budgetary allocations to implement all the disability-related activities of the NSDRR; **(b)** ensure consultations with OPDs for the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in working with persons with disabilities in emergency response and early recovery needs; **(c)** appoint the national umbrella organization of OPDs, representing different types of disability, as a member of the upcoming National Taskforce on Disability and Disasters; **(d)** ensure consultations with OPDs for the development of Plan on Disability Inclusion in DRR (2026-2030).
- 5.78 **(a)** In consultation with OPDs, revise the VDPCC's terms of reference to include persons with disabilities; **(b)** establish a centralized mechanism to monitor the VDPCC membership and community-level disaster preparedness plans.
- 5.79 Revise the NEPRP with SOP for reasonable accommodation and/or professional assistance during emergencies for persons with disabilities or other vulnerable groups.
- 5.80 Enhance emergency response actions by increasing the participation of the affected persons with disabilities in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters.
- 5.81 Improve engagement with OPDs and specialist international non-governmental organizations in national planning, implementation, and monitoring of local disaster risk management policies, plans, and strategies.
- 5.82 **(a)** Increase capacity and awareness of the Government at all levels on how to best assist persons with disabilities in times of disaster; **(b)** ensure all DRR and preparedness guidelines and training manuals incorporate disability inclusion criteria, particularly in early warning, information sharing, evacuation, and livelihoods.
- 5.83 Develop and enforce national humanitarian standards for temporary shelters and internally displaced people camps that include gender- and age-sensitive provisions for persons with disabilities' accessibility and participation.
- 5.84 Include accessibility provisions for persons with disabilities in the resilient infrastructure requirements.

- 5.85 (a) Ensure disability-disaggregation of data collected for the LaoDi database to improve vulnerability mapping, analysis, and decision-making for persons with disabilities in emergencies; (b) train authorities at the provincial, district, and village levels on disability-disaggregated data collection in emergencies and update all emergency assessment templates to be disability-inclusive; (c) ensure that all Humanitarian Clusters use the WG Short Set of Questions during interviews and field visits; (d) ensure the protection of personal data of persons with disabilities.

UXO

While the number of UXO-related casualties has dropped significantly over the past decade, all 17 provinces and Vientiane remain UXO-contaminated, with approximately 25 per cent of villages still suffering from various degrees of UXO contamination.

The NRA was established in 2004 as an inter-governmental institution responsible for the oversight and management of the UXO sector. The NRA has seven Technical Units, including a Victim Assistance Unit, and five Technical Working Groups, that include INGOs and other international development partners with the existing programming on disability.

The most recent national strategy for the UXO sector (2011-2020), entitled “Safe Path Forward II” (SFP-II), is under evaluation as the Government finalizes the new 10-year strategic framework. The draft assessment identifies that there has been progress made in the utilization of the victim information system (VIS) database, and emergency medical evacuation capacities have increased in high-risk districts, while the MoH is improving patient discharge arrangements to streamline support to rehabilitation services.

The next cycle of UXO programming will consist of an overarching ten-year SPF-III, supported by two associated five-year workplans and a Victim Assistance Strategy. The new framework will align with the targets of the Lao-specific national SDG18, “Lives Safe from UXO,” the CCM obligations, and the associated Lausanne Action Plan 2021-2026 (actions 31-37).

The current Victim Assistance Strategy identifies the importance of a survivor-centered approach and provides definitions for the terms of “UXO survivor” and “UXO victim”, as well as acknowledges both the rights and needs of UXO victims in the contexts of disability and development. It utilizes the term “victim assistance” to be inclusive of medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological support, social and economic reintegration.

To date, there is no centralized information about available victim assistance services, coverage, eligibility, and procedures for requesting support in the national strategies and standards on victim assistance. The NRA Operation Dashboard provides statistics on the provision of the following victim assistance “items”: limb prosthesis, physical therapy, walking aids, glasses, wound healing, surgery, TVET, micro-grants for livestock, cash assistance, scholarships, religious ceremonies, and funeral allowance. While the standardized Victim Assistance data collection form adds wheelchairs, hearing aids, dentures, micro-grants for agriculture, handicrafts production and (re-)starting a business, financial accounting training, house repair, psycho-social support, and mental treatment to the list of potential UXO victim assistance means.



Since 2006, the NRA has administered the War Victims Medical Fund (WVMF), which covers medical care, surgery costs, transportation, and food allowance, accommodation, dental services, assistive devices, funerals, and other religious ceremonies for UXO survivors of any age. However, access to the Fund is conditional upon the context of the incident.

There is a disparity across the country's UXO victim assistance providers as not all of them have the financial capabilities to reimburse survivor transportation and lodging costs. This can be confusing for many UXO survivors, further exasperated by the often different and incoherent UXO victim assistance service information, which is inconsistently distributed, and seldom known by local authorities and communities.

UXO accident and victim records are reported through the nationwide VIS database integrated into the overall UXO sector MIS database operationalized on the international "IMSMA" platform. All survivors recorded through the Victim Surveys are given a unique identification code and individual survivor number and also assigned a victim assistance provider. The service providers assigned to the survivors registered on the NRA Operation Dashboard in 2015-2021 include the COPE Center, World Education, Terra Renaissance, and the Lao Disabled People's Association (LDPA).

In 1996-2020, approximately 394M USD was allocated to support the UXO programme, with 3 per cent contributed from the State Budget. It is unlikely that the current model of programming can be sustained long-term, and planning should commence now to ensure that UXO victims are not burdened by a drop or gap in service delivery. The NRA budget only covers victim data management and the coordination of victim assistance programming, with medical care, physical and psycho-social rehabilitation, economic reintegration, and TVET services relying on the regular budgetary allocations of relevant ministries.

Priority Recommendations:

- 5.86 Appoint the NCD(E) and national umbrella organization of OPDs, representing different types of disability, as members of the NRA, and its Technical Working Groups.
- 5.87 **(a)** In consultation with OPDs and UXO survivors, conduct an independent evaluation of the National UXO/Mines Victim Assistance Strategy (2014-2020) across all six pillars to inform the development of the next Strategy; **(b)** improve qualitative monitoring and reporting of the next Strategy within the NRA Annual Reports.
- 5.88 In consultation with OPDs and UXO survivors, undertake a comprehensive study of experiences of UXO survivors in accessing victim assistance services, including emergency transport, and psycho-social/mental support services, to assist in guiding policy and practices.
- 5.89 **(a)** Map all the existing UXO victim assistance providers, including their locations, services, coverage, eligibility criteria, and access procedures; **(b)** develop and enforce standards and regulations for victim assistance service provision, coverage, eligibility, and procedures for accessing them.
- 5.90 In consultation with OPDs and UXO survivors, improve UXO victim assistance information packages, and community engagement with UXO survivors and their families to raise their awareness of the available victim assistance and financial assistance in easy-to-understand and accessible formats.

H. CHILDREN AND WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The primary responsibility for identifying children and families at protection risk formally lies with the inter-governmental Committee for the Protection and Assistance to Children (CPAC) under the MoLSW, which membership does not include the NCDE. Under the CPAC, Child Protection Networks (CPNs) have been established in 14 per cent of villages across the country to monitor neglected children, collect grass-root data and provide direct counseling. The MoLSW is currently revitalizing the CPNs by piloting a Standard CPN Operationalization Model in two provinces. The Child Protection Case Management SOP provides, *inter alia*, case management protocols for responding to child protection cases involving children with disabilities. In 2022, the Government also introduced the Guidelines on Alternative Care for Children without Appropriate Care, supported by the Minimum Standards for Residential Care Institutes, including Centers for Children with Disabilities.

The Lao Women's Union established 3-4 officers based in every province and district for, *inter alia*, providing direct counseling to children and women, free legal aid, and victim-witness protection through the prosecution process. It also appoints 1-2 village volunteers to collect grass-root data on vulnerable and marginalized children and women. The Union operates the Center for Counseling and Protection of Women and Children (CPCWC), through which manages a hotline, counseling center, and shelters in Vientiane, Savannakhet, and Luang Namtha provinces, as well as other counseling centers in most provinces. However, shelters available for victims of violence against children (VAC) and violence against women (VAW) do not currently extend to meeting the accessibility standards or providing reasonable accommodation necessary to effectively support persons with disabilities and their families. Although the Lao Women's Union's hotline service is now expanded with a WhatsApp contact modality and became accessible for children and women with hearing and speech difficulties, it may exclude those unable to access a phone or the Internet.

There are very few qualified social workers in the country, with a large majority of governmental and INGO staff involved in the child (and women) protection work at the sub-national level serving as volunteers. To date, there is no national certification system for social workers and no centralized social work training established by the Government. While, as of 2019, only 64 per cent of provincial and district LSW Officers and 26 per cent of CPNs members received induction trainings, the recently updated induction programmes do cover disability inclusion. There is no evidence of whether the practical trainings delivered for the Lao Women's Union sub-nation staff include basic standards for protecting persons with disabilities.

Due to the limited disability-disaggregated data, it is unknown what form of violence is prevalent for children with disabilities, the average reporting among them, and whether the national trends of early marriage linked to school drop-outs are experienced by girls with disabilities that are unable to finish school.

Some families in rural areas keep children with severe disabilities at home due to fear of gossip or negative social stigma and beliefs that disability is an indicator of bad luck. While this behavior can be considered a form of child neglect, it is understood that this is also driven by a perceived threat of violence, including sexual violence, against women and girls with disabilities.



The Lao Women’s Union has recently piloted a parenting package that includes holistic development and violence protection messages targeting mothers and fathers in two provinces, with priority messages on the rights and needs of children with disabilities.

With the Lao Women’s Union shelters and counseling centers, SOS Villages, and other fragmented INGO programmes on VAC (and VAW) predominantly located in urban areas, child (and women) protection services remain inaccessible to families and children in rural and remote areas, where disability prevalence is higher.

There is no known budget allocation under the MoLSW, Lao Women’s Union, and non-governmental programming targeting service delivery improvements for children with disabilities that experience violence.

There remains no national data on the intersection of disability and VAC in the country. The findings of the recent nationwide data pertaining to VAC and Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) II are not disaggregated by disability. In 2022, the MoLSW initiated the development of a Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) to standardize and systemize the collection, analysis, and management of data on child protection.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

The primary responsibility for establishing policies and collecting data for protecting children and women from violence and assisting victims of VAC and VAW lies with the inter-governmental National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers, and Children (NCAWMC), which membership does not include the NCDE.

As outlined above, the Lao Women’s Union offers victims of VAC and VAW counseling, healthcare, free legal aid, and victim-witness protection through the prosecution process, as well as provides temporary shelters, TVET, and reintegration support. However, its services do not currently extend to meeting the accessibility standards or providing reasonable accommodation.

There is no evidence that the existing VAW prevention, response, and rehabilitation staff capacity-building trainings and course curriculum have considered the intersectionality of disability and VAW or if there have been disability inclusion trainings provided separately to local NPAs, VMUs, and the Lao Women’s Union counseling staff and village volunteers.

Due to limited disability-disaggregated national data, it is unknown what form of violence is prevalent for women with disabilities and what average reporting among them. However, there is a strong perception, particularly in rural and remote areas, that women with disabilities experience additional challenges in accessing essential services due to the higher perceived risk of sexual assault or attack for women traveling alone or with a man who is not her husband.

Women with disabilities may also be less likely to report VAW due to increased stigma and social exclusion, higher levels of dependence on intimate partners and other family members, as well as the lack of awareness of violence prevention, the national legal system regarding VAW, and women’s rights.

There is no known budget allocation under the NCAWMC, Lao Women’s Union, and non-governmental programming targeting service delivery improvements for women with disabilities that experience violence.

There remains no national data on the intersection of disability and VAW in the country. The findings of the recent nationwide data pertaining to VAW are not disaggregated by disability.

Priority Recommendations:

- 5.91 (a) Appoint the NCD(E) as a member of the CPAC and NCAWMC; (b) encourage the national umbrella organization of OPDs, representing different types of disability, to participate in the Gender Network.
- 5.92 (a) In consultation with OPDs, integrate modules on disability-inclusive protection from VAC and VAW, including in emergency contexts, in the existing trainings for staff and volunteers of the MoLSW, Lao Women’s Union, CPNs, law-enforcement personnel, public health staff, and VMU officials; (b) recruit and train women and men with disabilities for working with victims of VAC and VAW; (c) strengthen capacities of disability service providers and OPDs in VAC and VAW prevention and response, and link them with the upcoming National GBV Coordination Mechanism and a nationwide referral system for GBV.
- 5.93 In consultation with OPDs, (a) develop disability-accessible information packages and community engagement with children and women with disabilities and their families to raise their awareness of VAC and VAW prevention, the national legal system, and the rights of children and women.
- 5.94 In consultation with OPDs, (a) embed an accessible helpline specific to children and women with disabilities into the existing hotline services to provide counseling, mental health and psycho-social support, and referral services; (b) develop accessible contact options for the existing hotline services, including face-to-face counseling and telecommunications relay services; (c) ensure that all survivor shelters and counseling centers are accessible for children and women with disabilities; (d) mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in the upcoming National GBV Coordination Mechanism and a nationwide referral system for GBV.
- 5.95 In consultation with OPDs, undertake a comprehensive study that specifically analyzes the intersectionality between disability and violence.
- 5.96 (a) Incorporate disability-disaggregated data into the next LSIS, CPIMS, and VAW Prevalence Study; (b) ensure the protection of personal data of persons with disabilities.

I. ACCESSIBILITY

The National Strategy and Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2020-2030), acknowledges that the environment, transportation, information, and communications generally remain inaccessible for persons with disabilities in the country.

In 2011, the Vientiane Master Plan underwent several consultation processes in its development, with nine Working Groups, each having at least two official opportunities to provide feedback throughout the drafting process. Although, there is no evidence to suggest that persons with disabilities, OPDs, nor the NCDE were consulted on accessibility and inclusive social and economic environments throughout the Plan’s development. It is also unclear if updated versions have revised the Master Plan in compliance with the legislation and regulations on persons with disabilities developed over the past decade.



According to OPDs, inaccessible pathways, roads, minimal disability-friendly parking, and narrow, multi-story buildings (incentivized by previous tax laws) create barriers for persons with disabilities, as persons with physical and vision impairments experience difficulties in crossing streets, finding safe areas to walk, and commuting to and from work. This is most acute in rural areas.

The 2016 National Building Code recognizes accessibility standards for persons with disabilities and the elderly as one of four central controls, with a dedicated Section on “Health and Easement”. The Building Code requires hospitals, hotels, schools, terminals, shopping centers, banks, sports facilities, and amphitheatres to consider the elderly, pregnant women, and “handicapped groups.” However, the Building Code implementation is stalling as the regulations meet the private sector. Construction companies remain unaware of the Building Code requirements, and enforcement to comply with physical accessibility standards is low, leaving public buildings and commercial spaces generally unaltered.

Women with disabilities experience increased barriers in accessing essential services and participating in social and economic activities where basic accommodation have not been met. This is most apparent when disability-friendly WASH facilities are unavailable in public places, as they feel a “higher sense of shame” when reliant on their family members to use WASH facilities outside the home.

Persons with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by the lack of quality public transport options and increasing dependency on private vehicles as a “good health” certificate is a requirement in driving license applications.

Of the limited public transport available, there is no specific accommodation for persons with disabilities, such as lower entryways or reserved seating. Tuk-tuks remain the main alternative option for commuter transportation, which creates a unique set of challenges for people with disabilities due to the difficulties in getting on and off. While, tuk-tuk drivers, as well as occasionally public bus operators, refuse to accept passengers with disabilities due to the additional “burden” of having to support them entering and exiting the vehicle.

As outlined above, women with disabilities experience additional challenges in accessing transportation due to the perceived risk of violence for a woman traveling alone or with a man who is not her husband. While there is an ongoing pilot programme providing a taxi service to persons with disabilities in Vientiane, the service does not have designated female drivers.

The costs of public transport are a deterrent for persons accessing services, particularly when traveling from rural and remote areas. While some social assistance programmes do support reimbursements for related travel expenses, there are no standardized fee subsidies or tax exemptions for persons with disabilities using public transport in the country.

Accessible media remains ad-hoc and under-resourced. Persons with disabilities’ participation in media and information services has also been reduced with the cancelation of the inclusive radio programme “Friends of the Disabled,” in 2010 due to the lack of funds.

Little progress has been made in improving information accessibility for persons who are blind. The pilot speech input software in the Lao language is no longer operational and there are few



examples of materials being developed in Braille. While persons who are deaf are also limited in their social and educational interactions as the Lao sign language is yet to be officially recognized, and there are currently less than 10 qualified interpreters in the country, with no sign language interpreter schemes existing in public services.

Accessibility implementation is not closely monitored, and there is little understanding of accessibility compliance across ministries that oversee key service facilities that interact with the public, including hospitals, schools, courthouses, and evacuation centers. To date, there is also no disability-disaggregated data collection on access to and usage of public and private transport by persons with disabilities.

Priority Recommendations:

- 5.97 Ensure sufficient budgetary allocations to implement all the accessibility-sector activities planned under the National Action Plan on Disabled Persons (2020-2025).
- 5.98 In consultation with OPDs, mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities within sectoral strategies, policies, and programmes when considering the expansion of public infrastructure, transport, information, and communications services.
- 5.99 **(a)** Appoint the NCD(E) as a member of the Environmental and Social Considerations Working Group as part of the consultation process on the next Vientiane Urban Master Plan; **(b)** include OPDs as part of the NPA membership invited to provide feedback on the next Vientiane Master Plan and ensure that the community feedback survey is disseminated through the OPD networks.
- 5.100 In consultation with OPDs, **(a)** undertake a comprehensive study of experiences of persons with disabilities under the current Vientiane Master Plan, collating lessons learnt to be included in the Plan's updates; **(b)** undertake a nationwide accessibility audit of transport facilities, airports, hospitals, Government buildings that require public access, public WASH facilities, marketplaces, and public spaces, including parks, meeting halls, and recreational facilities, against the Building Code; **(c)** develop an Action Plan, resources and budgetary allocations to address critical gaps considering all types of disability.
- 5.101 In consultation with OPDs, **(a)** undertake an accessibility audit of all ministries' public information packages, forms, and platforms; **(b)** develop an Action Plan, resources, and budgetary allocations to address critical gaps considering all types of disability.
- 5.102 Consider a subsidy or tax exemption payment system for persons with disabilities accessing public transport to further incentivize accessing services.
- 5.103 In consultation with OPDs, **(a)** prioritize the development and rollout of improved Voice Input-Output Software in the Lao Language; **(b)** officially recognize Lao sign language and develop training programmes and employment incentives to strengthen interpreter and trainer capacity.
- 5.104 In consultation with OPDs, re-establish the "Friends of the Disabled" radio programme, with consideration to integrating broadcasting and community engagement across social media platforms.
- 5.105 **(a)** Establish disability-accessible targets for public facilities and information across all the ministries and ensure budget sufficiency for their implementation; **(b)** collect disability-disaggregated data on the accessibility of public services and information, including public transport and digital access.

ANNEX

ANNEX A. LAO LEGAL TERMINOLOGY FOR DISABILITY

Law	Year	Article Referring to Disability	Word(s) Used in Lao	Literate Translation into English
Law No.57 on Disabled Persons	2018	Title of the Law	ຄົນພິການ	Disabled person
		Article 1	ຄົນພິການ	Disabled person
Constitution	2015	Article 28	ຜູ້ເສຍອົງຄະ	Amputee
		Article 36	ຜູ້ເປັນບ້າ, ເສຍຈິດ	Crazy person, person who lost her/his mind
		Article 39	ເສຍອົງຄະ	Amputee
Civil Code	2018	Article 71	ຜູ້ມີບັນຫາສຸຂະພາບຈິດ	Persons who have mental health issues
		Article 176	ເປັນບ້າເສຍຈິດ	Crazy person who lost her/his mind
		Article 217	ຜູ້ທີ່ບໍ່ມີຄວາມສາມາດທາງດ້ານການປະພຶດ, ບ້າເສຍຈິດ ຫຼື ພິການ	Persons who do not have behavior abilities, crazy persons or disabled persons
		Article 487	ຄົນບ້າເສຍຈິດ	Crazy persons
Penal Code	2017	Article 3	ຜູ້ພິການທາງສະໝອງ	Persons with intellectual disabilities
		Article 41	ເສຍອົງຄະ, ຜູ້ເສຍອົງຄະ,	Amputated, amputee
		Article 51	ຜູ້ພິການທາງສະໝອງ	Persons with intellectual disabilities
		Article 225	ຄົນພິການ	Disabled person
		Article 226	ຄວາມພິການ	Disability
		Article 261	ເມຍ ຫຼື ຜົວຂອງຕົນທີ່ເສຍອົງຄະ	Spouse with an amputation
		Articles 143-145, 147-150, 175-184, 212, 215, 289-290, 324, 371 and 396	ເສຍອົງຄະ ຫຼື ພິການ	Amputee or disabled
		Article 188	ຄົນທີ່ບໍ່ສາມາດຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອຕົວເອງໄດ້	Persons who cannot help her/himself
Law No.37 on Criminal Proceedings	2017	Article 70	ຄົນຫູໜວກ, ຕາບອດ, ປາກກີກ, ບັນຍາອ່ອນ, ເສຍຈິດ	Deaf, blind, mute persons, persons who lost intellect, persons who lost mind
		Article 117	ຄົນຫູໜວກ, ຕາບອດ, ປາກກີກ, ຄົນບັນຍາອ່ອນ, ເສຍຈິດ	Deaf, blind, mute persons, persons who lost intellect, person who lost mind
		Article 146	ຄົນເປັນບ້າເສຍຈິດ	Persons who became crazy, lost mind
		Article 265	ນັກໂທດເມື່ອເປັນບ້າ ເສຍຈິດ	Prisoners who became crazy, lost mind
		Article 266	ຜູ້ຖືກກັກຂັງທີ່ເປັນບ້າ ເສຍຈິດ	Detainees who became crazy, lost her/his mind
Law No.41 on Juvenile Criminal Procedure	2013	Article 53	ເດັກພິການ, ເດັກຫູໜວກ, ຕາບອດ, ປາກກີກ, ບັນຍາອ່ອນ, ເສຍຈິດ	Disabled children, such as deaf, blind, mute children, children with weak intellect or lost mind



		Article 84	ເດັກພິການ	Disabled children
Law No.72 on Court Fees	2019	Article 42	ການເສຍອົງຄະ	Amputation
Law No.105 on Election	2020	Article 7	ຜູ້ເປັນບ້າ, ເສຍຈິດ	Crazy persons, lost mind
		Article 34	ຜູ້ເສຍອົງຄະ	Amputee
Law No.25 on Military Service	2012	Article 14	ເປັນຄົນໃບໄ, ບ້າ, ເສຍຈິດ, ເສຍອົງຄະ, ພິການ	Person who is mute, crazy, lost her/his mind, amputee, disabled
Law No.74 on Sport and Physical Activities	2019	Article 6	ການພິການ	Disability
		Article 13	ການພິການ	Disability
		Article 15	ຄົນພິການ	Disabled person
		Article 38	ພິການ	Disabled
		Article 40	ເສຍອົງຄະ	Amputee
Law No.73 on Hygiene, Disease Prevention and Health Promotion	2019	Article 43	ຄົນພິການ	Disabled person
Law No.58 on Healthcare	2015	Article 3	ບໍ່ພິການ	Non-disabled
		Article 4	ຜູ້ພິການ, ຜູ້ເສຍອົງຄະ	Disabled person, amputee
		Article 35	ໃບຢັ້ງຢືນເສຍອົງຄະ	Certificate of amputation
Law No.63 on Education	2015	Article 32	ຄົນພິການ	Disabled person
		Article 45	ຄົນພິການ	Disabled person
Law No.63 on TVET	2019	Article 3	ຜູ້ຮຽນທີ່ມີບັນຫາ, ຜູ້ພິການ, ຜູ້ເສຍອົງຄະ	Learners who have problems, persons who are disabled, amputees
Labour Law No.43	2013	Article 4	ຄົນພິການ	Disabled person
		Article 9	ຄົນພິການ	Disabled person
		Article 33	ແຮງງານພິການ	Disabled labour
Profit Tax Law No.67	2019	Article 35	ຄົນພິການ	Disabled person
Law No.54 on Social Security	2018	Article 3	ການຂາດສະພາວະປົກກະຕິທາງຈິດ ເສຍອົງຄະ	Loss of normal mind condition Amputation
		Article 90	ຜູ້ຮັບອຸດໜູນເສຍອົງຄະ	Persons who acquired amputation in the Armed Forces
		Article 28	ຂາດສະມັດຖະພາບທາງແຮງງານ, ເສຍອົງຄະ	Lack of labor ability, amputation
		Article 41	ລູກທີ່ເປັນຄົນພິການ ຫຼື ເສຍຈິດ	Child who is disabled or lost her/his mind
		Article 64	ລູກທີ່ເປັນຄົນພິການ ຫຼື ເສຍຈິດ	Child who is disabled or lost her/his mind
Law No.71 on Disaster Management	2019	Article 43	ຄົນພິການ	Disabled person
Law No.56 on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Children	2014	Article 4	ຄວາມພິການ	Disability



Law No.05 on Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children	2006	Article 2	ເດັກພິການ	Disabled children
		Article 16	ເດັກບໍ່ມີສະຕິສົມບູນ ເດັກພິການ	Children who are not fully conscious Disabled children
		Article 30	ເດັກພິການ	Disabled children
		Article 62	ສະພາບຮ່າງກາຍ ແລະ ຈິດໃຈ	Physical and mental conditions
Law No.86 on Youth	2020	Article 9	ຊາວໜຸ່ມພິການ	Disabled youth
		Article 18	ຊາວໜຸ່ມພິການ	Disabled youth
		Articles 25	ຊາວໜຸ່ມພິການ	Disabled youth
		Article 38	ຊາວໜຸ່ມພິການ	Disabled youth
Law No.05 on Construction	2009	Article 5	ຜູ້ພິການ	Disabled person
Law No.24 on Land Transportation	2012	Article 24	ຄົນພິການ, ຄົນເສຍອົງຄະ	Disabled persons, amputees
Law No.53 on Civil Aviation	2018	Article 3	ຜູ້ເສຍຈິດ	Persons who lost mind
		Article 106	ເສຍອົງຄະ	Amputation





Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

National Assembly

No. 111/NA
Vientiane Capital, December 10, 2018

Resolution
Of the National Assembly
On the Adoption of the Law on Disabled Persons

Pursuant to the Constitution of the Lao PDR (amended in 2015), Article 53, Paragraph 1 and the Law on National Assembly (amended in 2015), Article 11, Paragraph 1.

After an extensive and thorough discussion and consideration of contents of the Law on Disabled Persons during the 6th Ordinary Session of the National Assembly 8th Legislature held on December 10, 2018,

National Assembly has reached the following agreements:

- Article 1 Adopt the Law on Disabled Persons with majority votes.
- Article 2 This Resolution shall become effective after the day of signing.

President of the National Assembly

Signed and Sealed

Pany Yarthortou





Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

National Assembly

No. 57/NA
Vientiane Capital, December 10, 2018

Law on Disabled Persons
Part 1
General Provisions

Article 1 Objectives

This law defines principles, regulations and standards on the management and monitoring of works related to disabled persons in order to safeguard their legitimate rights and interests, eliminate all forms of discrimination against disabled persons, create the environment that enables self-development, self-reliance and social participation for disabled persons, while ensuring political, legal, economic, cultural and social equality for them, and helping them integrating with the region and making contributions to the national socio-economic development.

Article 2 Disabled Persons

Disabled persons refer to those having physical, visual, hearing, speaking, intellectual and memorizing impairment, as well as other forms of obstacles that hinder their full engagement in daily works, learning and social activities.

Article 3 Definitions

Terms used in this law bear the following definitions:

1. **Obstacles** refer to the environment lacking basic facilities for disabled persons, namely: walkway, wheelchair ramp, handrail, restroom, elevator, rest area, parking space, symbol, braille alphabet and direction sign; behaviors and attitudes of people and society considered as discrimination against disabled persons;
2. **Discrimination** refers to acts of ridiculing, insulting, obstructing, restricting, isolating and rejecting disabled persons;



3. **Safe facilities development** refers to the development and improvement of the environment that provides safe facilities for disabled persons, such as walkway, wheelchair ramp, handrail, restroom, elevator, rest area, parking space, symbol, braille alphabet and direction sign;
4. **Supportive equipment** refers to equipment used for helping disabled persons to carry out their daily activities, namely prosthetic arm, prosthetic leg, walking cane;
5. **Assistive equipment** refers to equipment used for helping disabled persons to carry out their daily activities, such as wheelchair, tricycle and so on;
6. **Public places** refer to all places accessible and usable by everyone, for instance: school, hospital, temple, public park, tourist site, sport stadium, airport, port, market, parking lot, petrol station, event venue, bank;
7. **Accessibility** refers to the access to services without any obstacle in terms of the environment and attitudes.

Article 4 Government's Policies on Disabled Persons

Government highly values works related to disabled persons by making contributions in terms of budget, materials and facilities to help strengthening the works, while ensuring that they are carried out in an effective and efficient manner.

Government supports and promotes jobs for disabled persons, allows the establishment of civil society organizations and funds that tailored specifically for their needs, while educating and raising awareness among the publics in order to better their understanding in helping and protecting rights of disabled persons.

Government supports and encourages individuals, legal entities and organizations, both domestic and international, to help and develop basic facilities, while making financial and technical contribution to the development of disabled persons.

Article 5 Principles for Works Related to Disabled Persons

Works related to disabled persons should be implemented in compliance with the following principles:

1. Align with national directions, policies, Constitution, laws and socio-economic development plan;
2. Managed in a harmonized and unanimous manner throughout the country;
3. Ensure political, legal, economic, cultural and social equality for disabled persons;
4. Ensure that there is no discrimination; violence; sexual, physical and psychological harassment hurting their dignity, including exploitation of disabled persons;
5. Respect gender equality, abilities and differences, while accepting disabilities as part of human diversity;

6. Engage disabled persons and all social parties in the protection, assistance and development of disabled persons;
7. Implement international agreements and treaties partied by the Lao PDR.

Article 6 Obligations on Disabled Persons

Individuals, legal entities or organizations are obliged to respect equality and rights of disabled persons as stipulated by the Constitution and applicable laws, while making contributions and participating in works related to disabled persons.

Article 7 Scope of Application

This law shall be applied on disabled persons, including individuals, legal entities and organizations, both domestic and international, engaging in works related to disabled persons.

Article 8 International Cooperation

Government promotes regional and international cooperation by exchanging knowledge, data, information, science and technology and human resources to help improving Lao capacity in dealing with works related to disabled persons, as well as implementing international agreements and treaties partied by the Lao PDR.

Part II Types and Statistics of Disabled Persons Chapter 1 Types of Disabled Persons

Article 9 Types of Disabled Persons

Below are different types of disabled persons:

1. Physical;
2. Visual;
3. Hearing and speaking;
4. Intellectual;
5. Memorizing;
6. Others.

Article 10 Physically Disabled Persons



Physically disabled persons refer to those having physical impairment which complicates physical functioning and mobility, including other impairments and the loss of limb.

Article 11 Visually Disabled Persons

Visually disabled persons refer to those having a visual impairment or loss of vision, for instance blindness, color blindness, blurred vision that impede visual effort.

Article 12 Hearing and Speaking Disabled Persons

Hearing and speaking disabled persons refer to those having an impairment or loss of hearing and speaking ability, for example deafness, dumbness, stuttering, unclear speech that impede hearing and speaking effort.

Article 13 Intellectually Disabled Persons

Intellectually disabled persons refer to those who experience slower mental development, and have limitations in carrying out their daily life and participate in social activities.

Article 14 Memorizing Disabled Persons

Memorizing disabled persons refer to those with mental disorder, for instance people with learning and cognitive disorder, including constantly changing emotions.

Chapter 2 Collecting Statistics and Registering Disabled Persons

Article 15 Statistics

Statistics demonstrate data and numbers reflecting the actual situation of disabled persons in each period of time. They also show information of disabled persons in terms of number and types of disability, residence, gender, age, occupation, living condition to be used as reference for managing and developing works related to disabled persons.

Article 16 Data Collection



Data collection refers to an act of recording information pertaining to disabled persons via interview; data gathering, summary and processing; research and analysis based on scientific and statistical methods stipulated in the Law on Statistics.

Article 17 Registering Disabled Persons

Registering disabled persons refers to an act of documenting their information, who are Lao nationals, into a management and monitoring system of the Disabled Persons' Management Authority.

Disabled Persons' Management Authority must collaborate with internal sectors, public security and local authorities to perform the registration work.

Article 18 Disabled Persons ID

Disabled persons ID refers to a document certifying a disability status for bearers, who are Lao nationals, consisting information, such as name and last name, date of birth, address and type of disabled persons.

Part III

Equality, Rights and Obligations of Disabled Persons

Chapter 1

Equality of Disabled Persons

Article 19 Equality of Disabled Persons

Disabled persons, regardless of their gender, age, social status, educational level, belief and ethnic background including their disability causes, are all entitled to political, legal, economic, cultural, social, family and other forms of equality as similar to other people as stipulated by laws.

Article 20 Political Equality

Disabled persons have political equality to elect, run for election, participate in political activities, discussions and making nationally important decisions. They can also be appointed with any position based on terms and conditions stipulated by laws.

Article 21 Legal Equality

Disabled persons have legal equality to propose, file lawsuits and make appeals, while respecting and implementing the Constitution and laws just like other people.

Article 22 Economic, Cultural and Social Equality



Disabled persons, as equal to other people, can engage in any economic, cultural and social activities, such as education; public health; business operation; trade; service; sport and acrobatic activities; art and literature activities; cultural and traditional activities; research, innovative, technological and scientific activities based on their actual conditions and capabilities.

Article 23 Equality in Family

Disabled persons and other family members are all equal as stipulated by applicable laws.

Article 24 Equality during Emergency and Risky Situations

In case of emergency and risky situations caused by natural or social hazards, disabled persons must be subject to humanitarian protection and assistance as equal to other people.

Chapter 2 Rights and Obligations of Disabled Persons

Article 25 Rights of Disabled Persons

Disabled persons have the following fundamental rights:

1. To live freely, safely and equally with others in the community;
2. To be provided with care, treatment and health rehabilitation services;
3. To be protected from physical and psychological harm;
4. To access education, vocational trainings, jobs, social welfare, sport and acrobatic activities, art and literature activities, buildings, places, public transportation and information;
5. To be given opportunities to apply their creativity and talents in conducting scientific research and making use of modern technology to manufacture products that serve society;
6. To comment on any matter affecting their rights and individual interests, including national and social interests;
7. To be exempted from or subject to tax, fee, service rate or other cost reduction as stipulated by applicable laws and regulations;
8. To exercise other rights as stipulated by laws.

Article 26 Obligations of Disabled Persons



Disabled persons are obliged to respect and implement the Constitution and laws, while making contributions to the socio-economic development, public security and national defense based on their actual conditions and capabilities.

Part IV
Protection and Development of Disabled Persons
Chapter 1
Disability Prevention, Treatment and Health Rehabilitation

Article 27 Disability Prevention

Disability prevention is a procedure that prevents disabilities by birth, disease, accident or other causes.

Disability prevention shall be carried out as following:

1. Advertise and raise public awareness about disability prevention;
2. Provide guidance and essential healthcare services, such as prenatal, perinatal and postnatal care;
3. Provide vaccination;
4. Implement nutritional policies to ensure proper child growth;
5. Provide care and health rehabilitation services in an accurate and timely manner;
6. Prevent road, occupational, UXO and other forms of accident.

Article 28 Healthcare

Disabled persons have the right to access to healthcare services, namely disease prevention, analysis and diagnosis, at the hospital, health center, clinic as well as rehabilitation center as stipulated by applicable laws.

Disabled persons living in poverty and misery, those who are unable to help themselves as well as those who live without caretakers will be exempted from healthcare charge.

Article 29 Health Rehabilitation

Health rehabilitation refers to services provided for disabled persons receiving physical and psychological rehabilitation, medical operation and physical mutilation, supportive and assistive equipment based on proper medical guideline.

On a case-by-case basis, health rehabilitation can be carried out either at the hospital or rehabilitation center, at the central, community and home level.



Disabled persons living in poverty and misery, those who are unable to help themselves as well as those who live without caretakers will be exempted from health rehabilitation, supportive and assistive equipment charge.

Chapter 2 Education and Sports

Article 30 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education for disabled persons shall be carried out as following:

1. Disabled persons can study with other people at both public and private academic institutions based on their actual conditions and capabilities;
2. Academic institutions hosting disabled students must provide the following essential facilities:
 - Proper classroom and study place;
 - Curriculum designed specifically for each type of disabled persons;
 - Proper teaching-learning equipment and materials;
 - Enabling study environment within school.
3. Academic institutions hosting disabled students must consider applying proper teaching-learning methodologies, and recruiting qualified teachers and caretakers for disabled students.

Article 31 Specific Educational Assistance for Disabled Persons

Intellectually, memorizing, visually, hearing and speaking disabled persons shall be provided with specific educational assistance on a case-by-case basis, for instance in terms of curriculum, teachers, sign language, braille code, voice assistant software, equipment, media and other teaching-learning facilities.

Article 32 Educational Charge for Disabled Persons

Both public and private academic institutions must implement a policy exempting or reducing study fee and charge for disabled students as stipulated by laws.

Students with outstanding performance shall be provided with a scholarship and other privileges.

Article 33 Sport-Acrobatic Activities for Disabled Persons

Disabled persons can engage in any sport-acrobatic activity in a training ground, competition venue without discrimination. He/she shall be trained by a trainer and

provided with appropriate sport-acrobatic equipment so that they can participate in a competition whether at the local, national, regional or international level.

Chapter 3

Art, Cultural and Recreational Activities

Article 34 Participation in Art and Cultural Activities

Disabled persons can participate in any art, cultural as well as traditional activities. They shall also have opportunities and facilities to participate in art-cultural exhibitions or competitions, as well as the celebration of both national and international events.

Article 35 Recreational Activities

Disabled persons can engage in recreational activities, such as watching movies, TV and soap operas; listening to radio; accessing public parks, and cultural, historical and natural tourist sites.

Chapter 4

Vocational Training and Job Application

Article 36 Vocational Training and Skill Development

Disabled persons can participate in any vocational training and skill development at both public and private vocational and skill development center as seen appropriate.

Vocational and skill development center must provide proper facilities, such as materials, curriculum, teaching-learning methodologies designed specifically for each type of disabled persons.

Trainers offering vocational and skill development for disabled persons shall be provided with opportunities to upgrade their knowledge, skills and techniques in a proper manner.

Article 37 Support for Vocational Training and Skill Development

Disabled persons are subject to study, dormitory and equipment fee exemption or reduction when participating in vocational training and skill development.

Vocational and skill development center has a duty in providing advices and suggestions on selecting appropriate job for disabled persons.

Article 38 Job Application



Disabled persons can apply for a job with any labor unit, both public and private organization, including international organization active in the Lao PDR based on their qualifications, and must be given wage, salary, promotion, position and welfare as equal to other people.

Labor units, public and private organizations, including international organizations active in the Lao PDR must ensure that disabled persons are given favorable conditions supporting their job application and priority for being recruited in a position matching their qualifications, while providing necessary facilities for disabled persons at a workplace.

Article 39 Promotion of Business Run by Disabled Persons

Disabled persons who run their own business, production or service group will be provided with policies easing their access to financial sources, investment expansion, customs and tax exemption, including transfer of knowledge, technology, production, service and marketing technique as seen appropriate.

Disabled persons running their own business, production or service group can access to financial sources via commercial banks and other financial institutes operated in the Lao PDR as stipulated by applicable laws.

Disabled persons who run their own business, production or service group will be subject to customs exemption for importing raw materials, equipment, components and vehicles to directly serve their production. Disabled persons will also be exempted from profit tax, income tax and excise tax as stipulated by laws.

Details on policies related to the access to financial sources, investment expansion, customs and tax exemption are elaborated further in a separate regulation.

Chapter 5 Assistance to Disabled Persons

Article 40 Assistance and Care Taking for Disabled Persons

Families, organizations and relevant authorities must take part in assisting, taking care and improving basic living conditions for disabled persons, for instance to provide them with food, clothes, accommodation, medications, facilities and safety.

In case of risk, emergency or casualty, families, organizations and relevant authorities must pay close attention in providing assistance to disabled persons in a timely manner.

Article 41 Subsidizing Disabled Persons



Disabled persons living in poverty and misery or those who are unable to help themselves are eligible to receive subsidy, plus assistance from families, society and government as stipulated by concerned regulations.

Organizations protecting disabled persons must coordinate with relevant sectors and local authorities to implement such subsidizing policy.

Chapter 6

Access to Information and Communication

Article 42 Access to Information

Disabled persons can have access to information via published, electronic, social and other forms of media as seen appropriate.

Organizations and relevant sectors must create favorable conditions helping disabled persons access information, while providing essential information regarding health rehabilitation services, places providing supportive and assistive equipment, healthcare, education and job vacancies.

Article 43 Access to Communication Services

Disabled persons can have access to various forms of communication service, namely telecommunication, post, Internet as well as other necessary communication services.

Telecommunication service providers must create favorable conditions helping disabled persons access their communication services.

Chapter 7

Access to Buildings, Places and Public Transportation

Article 44 Access to Public Buildings and Places

Disabled persons can have access to public buildings and places.

Individuals, legal entities and organizations owning buildings and places should build, install or provide facilities for disabled persons, such as walkway, wheelchair ramp, handrail, elevator, restroom, parking lot, symbol and direction sign.

Article 45 Access to Public Transportation

Disabled persons can have access to public transportation to support their commute in a convenient and safe manner. They are also subject to service fee exemption or reduction as stipulated in relevant regulations.



Individuals, legal entities and organizations owning public transportation must build, install and provide facilities for disabled persons, such as passage for getting in and out of the bus, seats designated for disabled persons, services within the transportation system.

Part V
Scientific Research and Manufacturing of Equipment
for Disabled Persons

Article 46 Scientific Research

Individuals, legal entities and organizations, both domestic and international, can conduct scientific research on disabled persons, for example research on causes and ways to prevent disability, medical operation and physical mutilation, invention and design of equipment for disabled persons using modern technology.

Article 47 Equipment Manufacturing

Individuals, legal entities and organizations, both domestic and international, can manufacture supportive and assistive equipment to help disabled persons carrying on their daily life, engaging in education and performing their tasks.

Individuals, legal entities and organizations investing in a business that manufactures supportive and assistive equipment will be given special policies easing their access to financial sources, and customs and tax exemption as stipulated by applicable laws, for instance raw materials, equipment, components, essential vehicles imported to serve their production.

Part VI
National Committee for Disabled Persons
and Disabled Persons' Management Authority
Chapter 1
National Committee for Disabled Persons

Article 48 National Committee for Disabled Persons (NCDP)

NCDP is a non-standing organization, has a duty to collaborate with domestic and international authorities in promoting works related to disabled persons to make sure that the people are served by effective, convenient, swift and advanced services, while contributing to the national socio-economic development.

NCDP consists of the National, Provincial and District CDP.



Article 49 Personnel Structure

National Committee for Disabled Persons consists of:

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Minister of Labor and Social Welfare | Chairperson; |
| 2. Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Welfare | Vice Chair; Standing |
| Committee Member; | |
| 3. Deputy Minister of Health | Vice Chair; |
| 4. Deputy Minister of Education and Sports | Vice Chair; |
| 5. Deputy Minister of Finance | Member; |
| 6. Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment | Member; |
| 7. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs | Member; |
| 8. Deputy Minister of Justice | Member; |
| 9. Deputy Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism | Member; |
| 10. Deputy Minister of Public Works and Transport | Member; |
| 11. Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce | Member; |
| 12. Representative from civil society organization (CSO) | Member; |
| 13. Director General of the Department of Policy to Devotees, Disability and the Elderly | |
- acts as a Committee Member and Head of the NCDP Secretariat.

NCDP is appointed by the Prime Minister as proposed by the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare. Department of Policy to Devotees, Disability and the Elderly will serve as a main office for the NCDP Secretariat.

For Provincial and District CDP, Vientiane Mayor, Provincial Governor, Chief of Municipality Area, District Governor shall appoint and establish such committee based on their scope of responsibility in compliance with the actual situation to promote works related to disabled persons within their local area.

Article 50 Rights and Duties of NCDP

NCDP has the following rights and duties:

1. Conduct studies and researches on policy directions, strategic plans, laws and regulations pertaining to disabled persons;
2. Advertise and disseminate policy directions, strategic plans, laws and regulations pertaining to disabled persons, in order to help whole society better their perception and understanding of works related to disabled persons, while making contributions to the development of this field of work;
3. Seek mechanisms to promote works related to disabled persons at both central and local level, before presenting findings to Disabled Persons' Management Authority;



4. Study treaties, agreements, protocols, declarations and other international instruments on disabled persons, before proposing the Government for consideration and adoption;
5. Collaborate with concerned sectors, both public and private, in implementing treaties, agreements, protocols, declarations and other international instruments partied by the Lao PDR;
6. Cooperate with foreign countries regionally and internationally to help promoting works related to disabled persons as per designated;
7. Summarize and report its activities to the Government on a regular basis;
8. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by applicable laws or as per designated.

Provincial and District CDP shall define their own rights and duties based on the scope of their responsibility as long as they are in alignment with rights and duties of the NCDP.

Article 51 NCDP Meetings

NCDP Meetings consist of Ordinary and Extraordinary Session.

Ordinary Session is held once per year under the chairmanship of the CDP Chairperson at each level to consider and agree on important issues surrounding the encouragement and promotion of works related to disabled persons carried out by CDP at each level, while discussing funding sources for NCDP as well.

Extraordinary Session shall be held at any time when deemed necessary, vital and urgent. The session shall be convened and presided by CDP Chairperson at each level or as proposed by the Head of NCDP Secretariat.

CDP Meeting at each level can be held only when it is attended by at least 2/3 of the total members.

Meeting resolution shall become effective when it receives more than half of the majority vote from all attended members. In case of equal votes, Chairperson shall make his/her final decision.

Chapter 2

Disabled Persons' Organization

Article 52 Disabled Person's Organization

Disabled persons' organization refers to association, foundation, club or other forms of organization approved by the Government, and has duties to represent and



harmonize disabled persons to encourage, promote and protect their legitimate rights and interests.

Article 53 Rights and Duties of Disabled Persons' Organization

Disabled persons' organization has the following rights and duties:

1. Create its own activity plan in each period of time by collaborating with Disabled Persons' Management Authority, ministries, organizations, local authorities and other relevant sectors;
2. Support and promote works related to disabled persons to make sure that the people are served by effective, convenient, swift and advanced services;
3. Seek methodologies to collaborate, monitor and address issues obstructing works related to disabled persons;
4. Cooperate with foreign countries regionally and internationally to carry out its activities as per designated;
5. Evaluate, summarize and report implementation result of works related to disabled persons to Disabled Persons' Management Authority on a regular basis;
6. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by applicable laws and as per designated.

Part VII **Disabled Persons Fund**

Article 54 Disabled Persons Fund

Disabled Persons Fund is established to specifically serve disabled persons, for instance to be spent in vocational training, skill development and job promotion, assistance for disabled persons during emergency and risky situation, caretaking and other forms of welfare for disabled persons living in poverty, misery including those who are unable to help themselves.

Article 55 Revenue Sources for Disabled Persons Fund

Disabled Persons Fund is contributed by the following sources:

1. Contributions made by individuals, legal entities, CSOs, international organizations and other organizations both within and outside the country;
2. Contributions from the state budget;
3. Disabled persons' activities;
4. Other legal revenue sources.



Article 56 Target Spending of Disabled Persons Fund

Disabled Persons Fund shall be spent based on the following targets:

1. Vocational training, skill development and job promotion;
2. Assistance provided for disabled persons during emergency and risky situation;
3. Financially support disabled persons living in poverty, misery as well as those who are unable to help themselves, including the casualty of disabled persons;
4. Other targets.

Article 57 Disabled Persons Fund Management

NCDP is responsible for managing Disabled Persons Fund, with support from NCDP Secretariat as stipulated by the Law on State Budget, as well as applicable laws and regulations.

Details on Disabled Persons Fund management are elaborated further in a separate regulation.

**Part VIII
Prohibitions**

Article 58 General Prohibitions

Individuals, legal entities and organizations are prohibited from engaging in the following behaviors:

1. Discriminate against or obstruct disabled persons from expressing their opinions;
2. Torture, use violence and harass disabled persons and seek interests from them;
3. Show no respect on personal life, family and accommodation of disabled persons;
4. Limit the livelihood of disabled persons in living together with the community;
5. Obstruct, hinder and neglect the implementation of works related to disabled persons by concerned officials;
6. Give or receive and act as a medium for giving or receiving bribes for concerned officials;
7. Advertise or disseminate distorted and dishonored information about disabled persons and works related to them;
8. Discriminate, insult and frame individuals, legal entities or organizations implementing works related to disabled persons;
9. Engage in other behaviors that are considered legal violation.

Article 59 Prohibitions for Concerned Officials

Concerned officials are prohibited from engaging in the following behaviors:



1. Limit the movement and nationality holding of disabled persons;
2. Make use of their rights, duties and positions to prolong and delay any process in order to seek bribery for benefits of their own, family or friends, inflicting damage upon national, collective or individual interests;
3. Implement their duties in a careless, neglecting, irresponsible or unethical manner, inflicting damage upon the government, individuals, legal entities or organizations;
4. Request for fees, service charges or spend technical revenues intended to support disabled persons in a way that conflicts with applicable laws;
5. Disclose personal data of disabled persons or confidential information of the government, individuals, legal entities or organizations pertaining to works related to disabled persons without permission;
6. Issue documents related to disabled persons and disabilities illegally, including forging of such documents;
7. Engage in other behaviors that are considered legal violation.

Part IX

Dispute Resolution

Article 60 Forms of Dispute Resolution

Dispute resolution for disabled persons can be carried out through the following forms:

1. Compromise or mediation;
2. Administrative resolution;
3. Economic Dispute Resolution Authority;
4. People's Court;
5. International means.

Article 61 Compromise or Mediation

In case of disputes arise out of works related to disabled persons, parties involved can seek resolution via discussion, negotiation, compromise or mediation.

Article 62 Administrative Resolution

In case of disputes arise out of works related to disabled persons, parties involved can propose to Disabled Persons' Management Authority for proper consideration and resolution. The authority shall address such conflicts within 20 days. Failing to do so, parties involved must be notified in writing.



Article 63 Economic Dispute Resolution Authority

In case of disputes arise out of works related to disabled persons, parties involved can propose to Economic Dispute Resolution Authority for proper consideration and resolution.

Article 64 People's Court

In case of disputes arise out of works related to disabled persons, any party involved can propose to People's Court for proper consideration and judgment.

Article 65 International Means

In case of disputes arise out of works related to disabled persons that yield international impacts, parties involved can propose to either Domestic or International Economic Dispute Resolution Authority for proper consideration and resolution, in compliance with international treaties and agreements partied by the Lao PDR.

Part X
Management and Monitoring of Works Related to Disabled Persons
Chapter 1
Management

Article 66 Disabled Persons' Management Authority

Government manages works related to disabled persons in a harmonized and unanimous manner throughout the country by assigning Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare take direct responsibility and collaborate with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Ministry of Science and Technology as well as relevant local authorities to implement such works.

Disabled Persons' Management Authority consists of:

1. Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare;
2. Vientiane/Provincial Labor and Social Welfare Department;
3. District/Municipal/City Labor and Social Welfare Office.

Article 67 Rights and Duties of Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MoLSW)

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare has the following rights and duties in managing works related to disabled persons:

1. Study the creation or improvement of policies, strategic plans and laws governing works related to disabled persons before submitting to the Government for consideration;



2. Translate policies, strategic plans and laws governing works related to disabled persons into clear regulations, plans, programs and projects for implementation;
3. Advertise, disseminate and provide education on policies, strategic plans and laws governing works related to disabled persons;
4. Study and propose the Government to consider allocating state budget into Disabled Persons Fund;
5. Guide and manage vocational training and skill development for disabled persons, including how to find suitable jobs for them;
6. Issue agreements, instructions, recommendations as well as notifications pertaining to disabled persons;
7. Guide and monitor the implementation of works related to disabled persons throughout the country based on its vertical organizational structure;
8. Consider a request for establishing, terminating and managing disabled persons' organization;
9. Build, support, enhance, manage and make use of available personnel in implementing works related to disabled persons;
10. Consider approving summary, activity plan and budget of Disabled Persons Fund in each period of time;
11. Accept and consider settling any request from individuals, legal entities or organizations pertaining to works related to disabled persons;
12. Cooperate with foreign countries regionally and internationally on works related to disabled persons;
13. Summarize and report the implementation of works related to disabled persons to the Government on a regular basis;
14. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by laws.

Article 68 Rights and Duties of Vientiane/Provincial Labor and Social Welfare Department

Vientiane/Provincial Labor and Social Welfare Department has the following rights and duties, based on their scope of responsibility, in managing works related to disabled persons:

1. Implement policies, strategic plans, laws, regulations, plans, programs and projects pertaining to disabled persons;
2. Advertise, disseminate and provide education on policies, strategic plans, laws and regulations governing works related to disabled persons;
3. Guide District Labor and Social Welfare Office in implementing works related to disabled persons;

4. Build and enhance capacity for personnel implementing works related to disabled persons;
5. Monitor and support activities of disabled persons' organization;
6. Accept and consider settling any request from individuals, legal entities or organizations pertaining to works related to disabled persons;
7. Collaborate with concerned divisions and sectors in managing, monitoring and promoting works related to disabled persons;
8. Cooperate with foreign countries on works related to disabled persons as per designated;
9. Summarize and report the implementation of works related to disabled persons to the MoLSW and Provincial Disabled Persons' Management Authority on a regular basis;
10. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by laws.

Article 69 Rights and Duties of District/Municipal/City Labor and Social Welfare Office
District/Municipal/City Labor and Social Welfare Office has the following rights and duties, based on their scope of responsibility, in managing works related to disabled persons:

1. Implement policies, strategic plans, laws, regulations, plans, programs and projects pertaining to disabled persons;
2. Guide and monitor the implementation of works related to disabled persons;
3. Disseminate policies, strategic plans, laws and regulations governing works related to disabled persons;
4. Monitor and support activities of disabled persons' organization;
5. Accept and consider settling any request from individuals, legal entities or organizations pertaining to works related to disabled persons;
6. Request for capacity building and enhancement for personnel implementing works related to disabled persons;
7. Collaborate with concerned offices and sectors in managing, monitoring and promoting works related to disabled persons;
8. Summarize and report the implementation of works related to disabled persons to Provincial Labor and Social Welfare Department as well as district authorities on a regular basis;
9. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by laws.

Article 70 Rights and Duties of Ministry of Health (MoH)

MoH has the following rights and duties, based on their scope of responsibility, in managing works related to disabled persons:

1. Request for the development or amendment of policies and laws, while studying the issuance of regulations on disability prevention, treatment and health rehabilitation;
2. Advertise, disseminate and provide education on policies, strategic plans, laws and regulations to raise awareness on disability prevention;
3. Guide and manage disability prevention, while creating conditions enabling disabled persons to access health services;
4. Summarize and report the implementation of works related to disabled persons to high-level authorities on a regular basis;
5. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by laws.

Article 71 Rights and Duties of Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)

MoES has the following rights and duties, based on their scope of responsibility, in implementing works related to disabled persons:

1. Request for the development or amendment of policies and laws, while studying the issuance of regulations on inclusive education, sport-acrobat, specific assistance on education and educational policy for disabled persons;
2. Advertise, disseminate and provide education on policies, strategic plans, laws and regulations governing inclusive education, specific assistance on education and educational policy for disabled persons;
3. Guide and manage the development or amendment of curriculum to accommodate each type of disabled persons, including to ensure qualified teachers, and proper equipment and teaching-learning materials, while making education accessible for disabled persons;
4. Summarize and report the implementation of works related to disabled persons to high-level authorities on a regular basis;
5. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by laws.

Article 72 Rights and Duties of Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT)

MPWT has the following rights and duties, based on its scope of responsibility, in implementing works related to disabled persons:

1. Request for the development or amendment of policies and laws, while studying the issuance of regulations governing the construction of facilities, ensuring safety, and access to buildings, places and public transportation for disabled persons;

2. Advertise, disseminate and provide education on policies, strategic plans, laws and regulations governing land transport to prevent road accidents;
3. Summarize and report the implementation of works related to disabled persons to high-level authorities on a regular basis;
4. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by laws.

Article 73 Rights and Duties of Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MoICT)
MoICT has the following rights and duties, based on their scope of responsibility, in implementing works related to disabled persons:

1. Request for the development or amendment of policies and laws, while studying the issuance of regulations governing art, cultural and recreational activities, as well as access to media for disabled persons;
2. Advertise, disseminate and provide education on policies, strategic plans, laws and regulations governing works related to disabled persons;
3. Create favorable conditions, opportunities and facilities enabling disabled persons to participate and engage in art, cultural, traditional and recreational activities, as well as celebrations, exhibitions or contests;
4. Summarize and report the implementation of works related to disabled persons to high-level authorities on a regular basis;
5. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by laws.

Article 74 Rights and Duties of Ministry of Finance (MoF)

MoF has the following rights and duties, based on their scope of responsibility, in implementing works related to disabled persons:

1. Study and allocate budget for implementing plans and projects pertaining to disabled persons as approved by the National Assembly;
2. Instruct and monitor the implementation of budget revenue and spending as approved by the National Assembly and as designated by the Government;
3. Summarize and report the implementation of works related to disabled persons to high-level authorities on a regular basis;
4. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by laws.

Article 75 Rights and Duties of Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI)

MPI has the following rights and duties, based on their scope of responsibility, in implementing works related to disabled persons:

1. Study and consider incorporating programs, projects pertaining to disabled persons into the National Socio-Economic Development Plan in each period of time;
2. Mobilize funding from development partners as well as domestic and international investors, while encouraging them to invest in constructing facilities, ensuring safety, manufacturing supportive and assistive equipment, including providing education and vocational trainings for disabled persons;
3. Study and define modalities for surveying and collecting information from disabled persons in collaboration with Disabled Persons' Management Authority;
4. Summarize and report the implementation of works related to disabled persons to high-level authorities on a regular basis;
5. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by laws.

Article 76 Rights and Duties of Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST)

MoST has the following rights and duties, based on their scope of responsibility, in implementing works related to disabled persons:

1. Request for the development or amendment of policies, laws and regulations pertaining to scientific research and equipment study for disabled persons;
2. Advertise, disseminate and provide education on policies, laws and regulations governing findings from scientific research and equipment study for disabled persons, including to create conditions enabling disabled persons to access to information and communication;
3. Guide and manage the standardization of the production of voice assistant software, communication equipment and other tools for disabled persons, namely prosthetic arm and leg, cane, supportive and assistive equipment, wheelchair, tricycle and so on;
4. Summarize and report the implementation of works related to disabled persons to high-level authorities on a regular basis;
5. Exercise other rights and duties as stipulated by laws.

Article 77 Rights and Duties of Sectors, Local Authorities and Other Relevant Parties

Sectors, Local Authorities at different levels and other relevant parties have rights and duties in collaborating with labor and social welfare sector, NCDP, disabled persons' organization, based on their role and responsibility, to help managing and developing disabled persons, while contributing to the protection of their legitimate rights and interests.

Chapter 2 Inspection

Article 78 Disabled Persons' Inspection Authority

Disabled Persons' Inspection Authority consists of:

1. Internal Inspection Authority which is the same as Disabled Persons' Management Authority as stipulated in Article 66 of this Law;
2. External Inspection Authority refers to the National Assembly, Provincial People's Assembly, State Inspection Authority, State Audit Organization, local audit authorities, Lao Front for National Development, Lao National Veterans Federation, mass organizations, mass media and citizens in general.

Article 79 Content of Inspection

Disabled persons' inspection covers the following contents:

1. Compliance to laws and regulations pertaining to disabled persons;
2. Implementation of works related to disabled persons by government officials;
3. Activities carried out by disabled persons' organization.

Article 80 Inspection Modalities

Disabled persons' inspection can be operated via the following 3 modalities:

1. Regular inspection refers to an inspection duty carried out on a regular basis with clear schedules;
2. Inspection with prior notice refers to an unplanned inspection duty carried out when deemed necessary. Purpose of the inspection will be notified in advance;
3. Urgent inspection refers to an inspection duty needed to be carried out immediately without prior notice.

Disabled persons' inspection shall strictly comply with applicable laws.

Part XI

Policies towards Devotees and Measures against Violators

Article 81 Policies towards Devotees

Individuals, legal entities or organizations with outstanding implementation of this law, shall be subject to compliments or other policies as stipulated by laws.

Article 82 Measures against Violators



Individuals, legal entities or organizations breaching this law shall be educated, warned, subject to disciplinary measures, fined, compensated for any damage incurred or punished by laws.

Article 83 Education

Individuals, legal entities or organizations with light violation of this law's prohibitions that is not a criminal offense, shall be warned and educated for the first time.

Article 84 Disciplinary Measures

Government officials breaching this law but not a criminal offense, shall be subject to disciplinary measures as stipulated by the Law on Civil Servants.

Article 85 Fine

Individuals, legal entities or organizations violating this law but not a criminal offense, for instance failing to comply with the educational measures as stipulated in Article 83 of this law, shall be fined on a case-by-case basis.

Fine rates are shown in a separate regulation.

Article 86 Civil Measures

Individuals, legal entities or organizations breaching this law and inflict damage upon other parties, shall be held accountable for the civil damage incurred.

Article 87 Criminal Measures

Individuals, legal entities or organizations violating this law constituting as criminal offense, shall be punished by laws based on the severity of their crime.

**Part XII
Final Provisions**

Article 88 National Day of Disabled Persons

Government considers December 3rd as the National Day of Disabled Persons.

Article 89 Implementation

Government of the Lao PDR is responsible for implementing this law.

Article 90 Effectiveness



This law shall become effective after the President of the Lao PDR issues Presidential Ordinance of Promulgation and after 15 days of its publication on Lao Official Gazette.

Any regulation and provision in conflict with this law shall be invalid.

President of the National Assembly

Signed and Sealed

Pany Yarthortou

