



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND  
www.ohchr.org • TEL: +41 22 917 9000 • FAX: +41 22 917 9008 • E-MAIL: [registry@ohchr.org](mailto:registry@ohchr.org) – [cedaw@ohchr.org](mailto:cedaw@ohchr.org)

REFERENCE: BJ/follow-up/LaoPeople'sDemocraticRepublic/78

5 March 2021

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur on follow-up on concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), I have the honour to refer to the examination of the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, at the Committee's seventy-first session, held in October 2018. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9](#)) were transmitted to your Permanent Mission. You may recall that in paragraph 59 on follow-up to the concluding observations, the Committee requested Lao People's Democratic Republic to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 36 (b), 40 (e) and 46 (a) of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report received in October 2020 ([CEDAW/C/LAO/FCO/8-9](#)) under the CEDAW follow-up procedure. At its seventy-eighth session, held remotely due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in February 2021, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 36 (b)** of the concluding observations, urging the State party to “**eliminate discriminatory stereotypes that impede access for girls to education and raise awareness among parents and community leaders of the importance of education for women**”:

The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party on the adopted legislative and policy measures to ensure the access to education, such as waiving school fee and providing vocational training for girls belonging to ethnic communities, enhancing education and sports in remote districts, and revising the curriculum for primary schools with the aim to emphasize gender equality, as well as providing allowances for students living in poverty and improving school infrastructure and facilities. The Committee also notes the trainings on promoting gender equality for teachers and students and the introduction of extracurricular activities for students such as short story contests on gender equality and providing posters, stickers and books in schools. The Committee further notes the information on organizing training sessions for ethnic communities, with the participation of community leaders and elders, and for the staff of the Lao Front for National Development in different villages, districts and provinces to promote access of children to education. While acknowledging these measures and the challenges arising from the global pandemic, the Committee considers that the State party should continue the efforts to ensure the access of girls to education. The Committee considers that the State party has provided evidence that it has taken substantial action towards the implementation of the recommendation, but that this action fails to respond fully to the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation has been **substantially implemented**.

His Excellency Mr. Kham-Inh Khitchadeth  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative  
Permanent Mission of Lao People's Democratic Republic  
to the United Nations Office at Geneva  
Email: [laomission\\_geneva@bluewin.ch](mailto:laomission_geneva@bluewin.ch)



The Committee notes that the information provided by the State party is thorough and extensive, and that it relates directly to the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 36 (b)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

**Continue and strengthen efforts to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes that impede access for girls to education and raise awareness among community leaders, and particularly parents, of the importance of education for women.**

In relation to the recommendation made in **paragraph 40 (e)** of the concluding observations, urging the State party to “**collect data, disaggregated by age and region, on unsafe abortion and the impact on women’s health, including maternal mortality, and on other health issues affecting women, such as mental health, to assess the status of women’s health and improve relevant services.**”:

The Committee notes the information by the State party regarding the limited capacities of the national health data collection system, which negatively affect the implementation of the recommendation, and the challenges to access quality sexual and reproductive health-care services and information. The Committee is alarmed that the State party mentioned that it will enforce medical laws to strictly prohibit abortion as one of the measures to prevent unsafe abortion, in contrary to the Committee’s recommendation to legalize abortion in cases of risk to the health of the pregnant woman, rape, incest or severe fetal impairment and decriminalize it in all other cases. The Committee regrets the lack of information on unsafe abortion, its impacts women’s health and other health issues affecting women. The Committee considers that the State party has taken no action to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation has been **not implemented**.

The Committee notes that the information provided by the State party is vague and incomplete, and that it fails to address the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **unsatisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 40 (e)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

1. **Develop an indicator system on gender-related issues to improve the collection of data disaggregated by age and region, on unsafe abortion and the impact on women’s health, including maternal mortality, and on other health issues affecting women, such as mental health, to assess the status of women’s health and improve relevant services;**
2. **Legalize abortion in cases of risk to the health of the pregnant woman, rape, incest or severe fetal impairment and decriminalize it in all other cases.**
3. **Make gender expertise and all necessary changes in the national legislation for the preparation gender statistic data and protect health rights of women and girls.**

With regard to the recommendation made in **paragraph 46 (a)** of the concluding observations, urging the State party to “**implement measures, including temporary special measures, to increase access for rural women to education, health, competitive markets and income-generating activities, including by integrating a provision into the national rural employment strategy for support to young rural women, women heads of household and women with disabilities**”:

The Committee notes the information provided by the State party on the legal and policy measures to implement this recommendation such as the decree to ensure access to education and continuous learning, the decree to support small and medium business, the integration of women's rights in the national rural employment strategy, the policy to provide free-of-charge childbirth and medical treatment for children under the age of five years old, and the law to ensure the access of ethnic communities to housing and employment. The Committee takes note of the information that school enrolment rate has increased across poor districts and that women living in poverty, women with disabilities and women heads of household received educational support to combat illiteracy and vocational training in the industrial, agriculture and service sectors. The Committee notes that the data provided by the State party reflect that women are a smaller segment of the beneficiaries of these programmes, since the majority of these programmes do not specifically target women, but the whole rural communities. The Committee considers that the State party took some steps to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation has been **partially implemented**.

The Committee notes that the information provided by the State party is thorough and extensive, and that it relates directly to the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 46 (a)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

**Adopt and implement targeted measures, including temporary special measures, to increase access for rural women to education, health, competitive markets and income-generating activities, and ensure the implementation of the national rural employment strategy for support to young rural women, women heads of household and women with disabilities.**

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

Yours sincerely,



Louiza Chalal  
Rapporteur on follow-up  
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women