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Excellency,

I wish to inform you that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered, at its 69<sup>th</sup> session held from 31 July to 18 August 2006, the additional report submitted by the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, pursuant to rule 65 (1) of the rules of procedure of the Committee (CERD/C/LAO/CO/15/Add.1).

The Committee welcomed the timely submission of the responses to its request to receive information within one year on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 10, 21 and 22 of the concluding observations (CERD/C/LAO/CO/15, 9 March 2005), adopted following the consideration of the sixth to fifteenth periodic reports of the State party. The Committee particularly appreciated the willingness thereby demonstrated by the State party to pursue the constructive dialogue renewed with the Committee in 2005 after a lapse of twenty years.

In this spirit, the Committee would like to draw the State party's attention to the following issues regarding which it would welcome comments and responses of the State party in its 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> periodic reports, to be submitted in a single document on 24 March 2007.

- **Paragraph 10 of the Concluding observations.** The Committee noted with satisfaction the revision of article 176 of the penal code, criminalizing acts of discrimination based on ethnicity. It encourages the State party to take further steps to ensure that all elements of the definition of racial discrimination provided by article 1 of the Convention, in particular the elements of race, colour, descent, and national origin, are expressly included in the prohibition of racial discrimination. The Committee would also like to be informed about the definition of racial discrimination used in areas of law other than penal law.

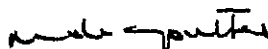
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- Paragraph 21 of the Concluding observations. The Committee took note of the State party's information, but remains concerned that it did not receive any clear response in relation to its recommendation that the State party establish a dialogue with members of the Hmong minority who have taken refuge in the jungle or the mountainous areas of its territory since 1975 and that United Nations agencies be granted access to them. The Committee notes with concern receipt of updated information alleging that acts of violence are committed against this group of people and that the situation still requires urgent attention. It therefore recommends that the State party extend an invitation to the United Nations independent expert on minority issues for a visit to the areas in which members of the Hmong minority have taken refuge.
- Paragraph 22 of the Concluding observations. The Committee noted the explanation provided by the State party, and wishes to draw the attention of the State party to its General Recommendation 31 (2005) on the prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system. It further stresses that investigations into allegations of acts of violence against members of ethnic minorities by law enforcement officials should be carried out by independent bodies, including when no complaint has been formally lodged by the alleged victims.
- The Committee also welcomed the additional information provided by the State party on issues of economic and social development. In this regard, the Committee would welcome the inclusion in the next report of more detailed data on the specific economic and social situation of ethnic minorities.

The Committee takes this opportunity to stress that it would be grateful if it could also be informed about the follow-up given by the State party's authorities to the Committee's letter dated 11 March 2005, relating to the detention of Mr. Tho Moua, Mr. Thoua Cha Yang and Mr. Pa Phue Khang, three Lao citizens who accompanied foreign journalists on their visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic in June 2003.

Allow me, Excellency, to reiterate the wish of the Committee to pursue the constructive dialogue opened with your Government in 2005, and to underline that the Committee's observations and request for further information are made with a view to assisting your Government in the effective implementation of the Convention.

Yours sincerely,



Régis de Gouttes  
Chairman of the Committee for the  
Elimination of Racial Discrimination