



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

**The Fourth-Five Year National Plan of
Action on Gender Equality
(2021-2025)**

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Foreword

The 10-Year National Strategy Plan on Gender Equality (2016-2025) and the Third National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2016-2020) were adopted and promulgated through Decree No.79/GoL (dated 28 March 2016). These two documents stemmed from the Resolution of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party 10th Congress and the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan, which provided the frameworks for the promotion of women's advancement, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women to drive national sustainable development and poverty reduction efforts in Lao PDR.

This Fourth National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025) builds on the plan from the Third National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2016-2020) aimed at integrating the 2030 Vision as well as the 10-Year National Strategic Plan on Gender Equality (2016-2025) and the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021-2025), National Policy on Population and Development (2019-2030), Law on Gender Equality, and the United Nation's recommendations for the 8th and 9th National Report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – in particular Goal 5: achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, implementation of international and regional declarations and conventions relevant to promotion on women's advancement and gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

This fourth National Plan of Action is comprised of two directions and five targets as follows:

Directions of the Fourth National Plan of Action:

- 1) Further elaborating from the Resolution of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party 11th Congress, 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021-2025), 10-Year National Strategy Plan on Gender Equality (2016-2025) and the National Policy on Population and Development (2019-2030).
- 2) Upholding Lao PDR's obligations as a Party State of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the concluding observations on the combined 8th and 9th National Periodic Reports of Lao PDR under CEDAW and further elaborating on results of the review under the Beijing Declaration and Platforms for Action+25, ICPD, SDGs and other international instruments related to gender equality.

Goals of the Fourth National Plan of Action:

- 1) Improvement of data systems, creating a database and statistical data-gathering on gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women at central, national and local levels.
- 2) Create an enabling environment and promote access to information on gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women at all sectors of government, State enterprises, private sector, development partners, civil society and the general public.

¹ Concluding observations of the CEDAW Committee of the United Nations

² Beijing Declaration and Platform For Action+25 (BPFA+25)

- 3) Strengthen the organizational structures and personnel responsible for gender equality through the five methods as provided in Article 20, the Law on Gender Equality, as follows:
 - Awareness raising on gender equality
 - Non-discrimination based on gender
 - Promote gender equality
 - Guarantee of gender equality
 - Use of disaggregated statistics for gender equality.
- 4) Promote the use of Information Technology (IT) to enhance the management, coordination, and monitoring of all central and local sectors for the systematic strengthening of gender equality across the country.

Women in leadership and decision-making positions in government and mass organizations must increase to 25-30 per cent on average.

Female members to comprise at least 30 per cent of National Assembly and Provincial People's Assemblies members.

Provide enhanced living conditions for women and girls to escape poverty and live safely through economic empowerment, increase access to quality education, healthcare and social welfare services, access to justice, prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, reduce risks from natural disasters and climate change.

Implement at least 50 per cent of the concluding observations from the combined 8th and 9th National Reports of Lao PDR under CEDAW.

Progress Report on implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platforms for Action in the Lao PDR, regional and international disseminated by at least 60 per cent of sectoral staff who have a role to implement such instruments.

At least 80 per cent of Commissions for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children (CAWMC) to have integrated and implemented the Fourth National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025).

Promote and increase cooperation with the international community and development partners on gender equality.

The Fourth National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025) consists of three parts and four work plans as follows:

- Part I: Summary Report of the Third National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2016-2020)
- Part II: Fourth National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025)
- Part III: Implementation Measures and Mechanisms

Work Plan 1: Dissemination, awareness raising and database system development, **Work Plan 2:** Promote and establish gender equality, **Work Plan 3:** Make, review and amend policy and legislation, and implementation of regional and international obligations under treaties and declarations to which Lao PDR is a party and **Work Plan 4:** Strengthen the organizational structures and personnel responsible for gender equality.

List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CAW	Commission for the Advancement of Women
CAWMC	Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DHIS	Disease Surveillance and Health Information Systems
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LSIS	Lao Social Indicator Survey
NCAWMC	National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SESDP	Secondary Education Sector Development Programme
SME	Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

Part I: Summary Report of Third National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2016-2020)

I. Global, regional and domestic context

1. Global and regional context

Gender equality is a necessary fundamental for women's advancement to flourish and towards realizing total elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, as well contributing to poverty reduction. Many countries around the world and in the region attach great importance to the advancement of women, promoting gender equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women as well as the empowerment of women and girls by focusing on implementing respective concluding observations from the CEDAW Committee, as well as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In the ASEAN frameworks, member states have adopted the Plan of Action on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, which consists of 16 work plans to carry out the ASEAN community's commitments, social inclusion and responsibility, to promote equitable access and opportunities for all. In parallel, ASEAN member states have taken it upon themselves to implement international conventions, declarations and legislation in areas relating to the rights and interests of women, such as the elimination of violence against women and anti-trafficking in persons – especially of women and children, amongst others. This is to ensure that the promotion and protection of the rights and interests are equal between women and men.

Despite governments in numerous countries attaching such importance to the advancement of women, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, challenges are still encountered. Such impediments include aspects of existing laws and regulations remaining discriminatory, the percentage of women in high-ranking positions being still lower than for men, one-in-five women aged 15–49 years who have been or are married experiencing physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner or within the past 12 months with higher rates among the least development countries (24.3 per cent). The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in dimensions of gender inequality – between women and men, girls and boys in all aspects – such as in health and economy, security and social protection. For example, the rate of unpaid women caretakers has increased due to school closures and increased demands from the elderly, while 60 per cent of women work in the informal economic sector with unsafe conditions and at high risk of falling into poverty, according to research by UN Women.

2. Domestic context

The Third National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2016-2020) was implemented in the midst of challenging economic conditions with lower-than-expected growth as well as a period that witnessed heavy floods, droughts, and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Government of Lao PDR actively championed gender equality as demonstrated through

³ References to “women” throughout this report implicitly include girls.

⁴ Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee of the United Nations

⁵ Report of the Secretary-General E/CN.6/2020/3

establishment of national mechanisms, laws, policy, strategies, and national action plans to push this agenda. Through implementation, in 2019 the Gender Equality Index increased to 0.927, the Gender Inequality Index fell to 0.459 and the women's development index climbed to 0.589. Along with these achievements, some challenges still require remedies – especially the numbers of women in decision-making positions, women's employment, economic empowerment, access to education and health services in rural areas, access to financial resources and land for production and equal access to justice. These challenges are intertwined with the limited allocation of State budget and human resources for development and promotion of women's advancement, gender equality, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

II. Achievements from the Third National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2016-2020)

1. Work Plan 1: Develop information, gender-disaggregated statistics, and conduct research studies

The National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children (NCAWMC), as the government's advisory agency in promotion and protection of the rights of women and children, changed its seal for official use by the NCAWMC and CAWMCs at each level.

Many sectors improved their databases, for instance, improved health information forms by adopting gender-disaggregated statistics to assess the status of women, and to create policy, legislation and strategies to increase gender equality. NCAWMC conducted studies on gender roles in their respective sectors, such as on the public health sector's promotion of women's advancement and contributions to the medical profession, research on gender roles in the production and service sectors which highlighted relations between commerce and gender in the industry and commerce sector, research on gender mainstreaming in the agriculture sector which revealed women received lower incomes in agricultural production, the demand for gender mainstreaming within agriculture and ASEAN's gender mainstreaming in agriculture as well as research on government officials' opinions on promotion of gender roles in the labour and social welfare sector.

2. Work Plan 2: Social awareness-raising campaigns

Dissemination tools: NCAWMC completed a training manual on integrating gender equality into organizations and sub-sectors, drafted a training manual on CEDAW, drafted a manual on advocacy for preventing and combating violence against women, printed the law book on preventing and combating of violence against women and children (1,000 copies), completed a manual on gender mainstreaming into State work plans and budget plans, printed the law book on gender equality handbook (4,000 copies), printed concluding observations on the combined 8th and 9th National Reports of the Lao PDR under CEDAW (500 copies), printed brochures on the terms of reference of NCAWMC (1,000 copies), and posters and calendars promoting NCAWMC's activities.

Brochures and posters were also produced to promote the rights and obligations of joining the Social Insurance Fund with gender mainstreaming content, as well as a poster to assist migrant workers, especially women domestic and cross-border ones.

Trainers:

- Conducted trainings on gender roles for the home affairs, public works and transportation, as well as energy and mining sectors, with a total of 121 trainers (76 women and 45 men).
- Conducted trainings on gender mainstreaming into work plans and budget plans, with a total of six trainers (women) and provided training for financial planning officials, and staff of CAWMC finance divisions from line ministries and local authorities, with a total of 103 participants (77 women and 26 men).

Advertisements on radio, television, magazines and newspapers: Raised awareness of gender equality, advancement of women and combating violence against women through radio spots such as the FM radio programme “development of women’s advancement”, as well as through magazines and newspapers of central and provincial levels.

Awareness-raising campaign: Conducted meetings and seminars for CAWMCs, government officials, students and Lao ethnic minority women on the 2030 Vision, National Strategy for Gender Equality (2016-2025), Third National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2016-2020), CEDAW, concluding observations on the combined 8th and 9th National Reports of the Lao PDR under CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Platforms of Action, SDGs, and other topics relating to gender equality.

3. Work Plan 3: Promote gender equality in decision-making positions, access to education, public health and social welfare, and women's economic empowerment

3.1 Legislation and strategy

Legislation: Completed the Law on Gender Equality, No.77/NA (28 November 2019), which consists of seven parts, four chapters, and 47 articles to provide principles, rules and measures on the management and monitoring of gender equality. This law prescribes gender equality in 11 areas: 1) politics and governance, 2) economics, 3) culture, 4) education and sports, 5) public health, 6) labour and social welfare, 7) science, information, technology, and environment, 8) national defense and security, 9) foreign affairs, 10) family relations and 11) complaints. This is to ensure effective implementation of the law to uphold gender roles, ensure true equality between women and men with equal conditions and opportunities, respond to women and men's development needs, eliminate of all forms of discrimination against women and join gender equality-related regional and international frameworks.

Further to this, other legal instruments have a number of provisions relevant to gender equality, including the Law on State Budget (amended), No. 71/NA (16 December 2016) which provided in Article 6, No.11, Article 33 and 34, Law on Land (amended), No.70/NA (21 June 2019) which provided in Part IV, Chapter 2, Article 100, Civil Code, No.55/NA (26 December 2018) which provided in Part VIII (Inheritance), Chapter 1 (Inheritance principles), Article 574 (inheritors by law), No.2 the surviving spouse of the inheritors.

Further legislation was created to extend the reach of the Law on Labour, Article 126 on medical examinations for employees to facilitate medical check-ups for women and men in the country's work force at least annually as stipulated in Article 24 of the Decree on Labour Safety and Health, No.22/G (5 February 2019).

Strategies and action plans: Finalized the 2030 Vision, National Strategy for Gender Equality (2016-2025) and third National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2016-2020) adopted through Decree No.79/G (28 March 2016) and issued an official notice to CAWMC focal points of respective sectors to integrate the national plan into respective strategic plans. This step encompassed 18 ministries, 16 organizations and 17 provinces and the capital as well as created specific strategic plans for six ministries. (Ministries of Education and Sports, Home Affairs, Agriculture and Forestry, Public Works and Transportation, Labour and Social Welfare and of Public Security), and for local authorities in six provinces.

Mainstreaming gender roles into workplans and activities: Developed a training handbook on how to mainstream gender roles into work plans and budget plans of relevant sectors and local authorities. Furthermore, six trainers (women) were upskilled, who then trained officials responsible for planning, finance and CAWMC departments and divisions across sectors and local authorities with 103 participants (77 women and 26 men). Topics covered in the training workshops were: 1) policy and mechanisms for promoting gender mainstreaming at national, regional, and international levels, 2) gender mainstreaming across sectors, 3) budget planning with gender mainstreaming, 4) budget planning with gender mainstreaming for the National Socio-Economic Development Plan, 5) analyzing tools for budget planning with gender mainstreaming, 6) monitoring and evaluation of budget planning with gender mainstreaming.

3.2 Women in leadership and decision-making positions

At the 8th National Assembly Election in 2016, the National Assembly as well as the government, central and local government organizations, especially the Lao Women's Union, encouraged all the Lao ethnic minority people to consider gender balance when exercising their voting rights. Following the election, 27.52 per cent of elected members were women (2.48 per cent lower than targeted), when compared to the results of the 7th Legislature it is an increase of 2.9 per cent for female representatives. Some 31.94 per cent of elected People's Provincial Assemblies members were women (1.94 per cent higher than targeted). The 9th National Assembly Legislature had 36 elected women (21.95 per cent, which was 5.55 per cent lower than the 8th Legislature). For People's Provincial Assemblies members (area II), 30.48 per cent of members were women (a 0.9 per cent fall).

The Party and government facilitated and provided conditions for women to participate in all sectors by focusing on enhancing the levels of technical expertise, political and governance trainings, as well as other conditions to promote women to assume leadership and management positions, reflected in the numbers of women in central level leadership positions. Women at ministerial and equivalent positions represented 23.20 per cent, women in management positions type 1-8 totalled 36.04 per cent, while at provincial level 32.25 per cent were women. At district level, 33.02 per cent were women and at village level, 9.21 per cent were women.

In the foreign affairs sector, during 2016-2019, the average percentage of women in diplomatic positions (ambassador, minister counselor and first, second and third secretaries or attachés) was 19.3 per cent.

3.3 Access to education

Created and disseminated Vision 2030, the 10-Year Strategy for Gender Equality and Mothers and Children in the Education and Sports Sector (2016-2025), Third Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Mothers and Children in the Education and Sports Sector (2016-2020).

Enhanced and disseminated a handbook on sex education for vocational education, formal and informal education systems also tested at Savannakhet Polytechnic College and the Luangnamtha Technical and Vocational School, especially for prioritized profession areas such as construction and mechanics, with 10 per cent of participants women, and reached workplaces where 60 per cent of participants were women. Disseminated at a learning centre in Xepon district, Savannakhet province, conducted twice with 40 women participants, and disseminated twice in Pha Oudom district, Bokeo province with 40 women participants. It is now being rolled out to Namok district, Oudomxay province. Such training activities shall continue to cover all vocational education facilities nationwide.

Published a gender equality handbook for high school students to prevent violence against women and conducted training for technical officials of education sector/units/principals and teachers at high schools in all 17 provinces and the capital, with two districts per province, and two schools per district during 2015-2018.

Enhanced the curriculum and teaching-learning materials for kindergartens with integration of gender equality and child rights into the curriculum – plan textbooks, Lao language, maths and general knowledge exercise books – for eight teaching units and improved the primary level curriculum (Lao language, maths, science and environment, manners, music, arts and craft).

Accomplished integration of life skills, sex education and reproductive health into the primary educational curriculum for the manners subject in primary levels 1 and 2. Improved the integration of gender equality into developing curricula and textbooks, designing pictures for textbooks with gender perspectives, strengthening capacity on gender equality by conducting workshops for UNESCO's Associated Schools Project Networks (ASPnet) and non-ASPnet schools four times, conducted a short-story competition on gender equality for students, a Secondary Education Sector Development Project (SESDP) supported by ADB, improved and developed secondary education to increase opportunities for the poor, ethnic minority and disadvantaged children in rural areas, especially girls.

Improved education facilities and environments to be safer and gender equality responsive, such as construction of 30 new school buildings with dormitories and separate bathrooms for both genders, and 30 gender-separated dormitories with capacity for 25 girls and 25 boys each. Issued Minister of Education and Sport Decision No. 8338/MoES (16 November 2016) on dormitory management for secondary school students to avoid abandoning education and prevention of sexual harassment. Built two dormitories with

kitchens, toilets and bathrooms safe for female students at a school in Bokeo province, provided learning materials and clothes for girls in poverty in Oudomxay and Salavan provinces benefitting 1,334 girls. Conducted workshops on gender equality, life skills, decision-making, problem-solving, introduction to various professions and extra tutorials for girl students. Moreover, there was a programme to monitor and support girl students to apply for higher education.

The Ministry of Education and Sport and the NGO Room to Read Laos jointly implemented two key workplans: 1) promote literacy and 2) promote girls' education at six targeted provinces (Vientiane Capital, Champasak, Oudomxay, Savannakhet, Salavan and Xayabouly).

Improved the pedagogical handbook on sex education for secondary and high school levels during 2018-2019 with support from UNFPA to enhance students' life skills, equality, safety and happiness in vulnerable communities, especially to offer protection from early marriage and unintended pregnancy. This handbook will help students learn their rights to gender equality, family planning, pregnancy prevention and its impacts, causes of sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) - including HIV and protection as well as how to safely use online social media.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education and Sport and UNESCO trained 15 gender equality trainers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education (STEM Education) at SEAMEO RECSAM in Malaysia, conducted training of trainers at ministry, education college, and provincial secondary school levels for 42 trainers and trained 962 secondary teachers (450 math, 469 natural science and 43 technology teachers) from 2019 on how to teach STEM Education subjects with a gender equality focus.

Under Vocational Education Laos or VELA Project, vocational curriculum level 1 and 2, which covers 19 curriculums was created and used to train 9,615 disadvantaged youths. Under the SSTVET project, scholarships for disadvantaged students in poverty - especially female students, to access C1-C2-C3 level education reached 1,801 students, including 953 females.

Provided allowances for 1,740 secondary school students, of whom 53.05 per cent were girls and for 1,200 high school students, of whom 78.33 per cent were girls, provided financial education support for 1,495 poor and disadvantaged secondary school students, of whom 54.71 per cent were girls, provided government-funded allowances to 1,000 poor and disadvantaged secondary school students, delivered scholarships to 60 secondary schools and 15 high schools in 30 districts, across 15 provinces.

Provided allowances for poor students in prioritized vocational areas, such as construction and mechanics, with 10 per cent women participants, and basic businesses with 60 per cent women participants. Conducted training for disadvantaged students in rural areas at levels 1-2 for 563 students, of whom 68.74 per cent were girls, at level 3 for 351 students - with 37.61 per cent girls. In conclusion, under SSTVET projects, 914 students (56.78 per cent) were girls. Provided equipment and materials for learning-teaching, conducted a dissemination workshop on prevention and remedy of sexual harassment-threats at educational institutions.

Under the SSHEP II project, women's leadership skills were enhanced, among administrators and those in decision-making positions at university level, upgraded the professional expertise of female teachers, and increased enrolment rates of female students to STEM Education subjects, to be at least equal to male students as targeted.

Through the implementation in the educational and sport sector, it is observed that there is a gender disparity in the rate of access to education such as:

- The gender equality index for enrollment at kindergarten level is 1.00, Gender Equality Index for primary school enrollment is 0.98. In 2020, the net Gender Equality Index in primary school is 0.99.

- The enrollment rates in early education for children under-five, in primary schools and rates of educational attainment have increased. Moreover, the rate of educational abandonment at primary school level has reduced, the secondary school enrollment rate has risen, but the rate of educational abandonment at secondary school level has trended up. While the overall enrollment rate of upper secondary school reduced due to high dropout rates, however the rate of new enrolments has increased. These rates demonstrate that the higher the grade, the higher the drop out rate.

- The number of students in vocational institutions jumped from 30,241 (40.81 per cent female) to 35,661 students (40.71 per cent female) during 2015-2016. In 2019, data shown that the Gender Equality Index was 0.68.

- In 2018, nationwide, the total number of higher education students in public and private education amounted to 65,472, with 41,892 students in public schools (25 per cent female) and 23,580 students were in private schools (53 per cent female). In the four universities under the Ministry of Education and Sport, there were 34,736 students (46 per cent female). There was also an increase in the ratio of women enrolled at undergraduate level, with women representing 38 per cent of 9,975 of graduated students.

- Education for poor and disadvantaged students in rural areas across 15 provinces was upgraded from graduate to primary level, especially for targeted students aged 6-14 years totaling 4,819 students (44.2 per cent girls).

3.4 Access to health services

NCAWMC has:

- Mainstreamed gender equality into the Nutrition Strategy, National Strategy and Work Plans for services with integration of reproduction health, and those of mothers, newborns and young children during 2016-2025.
- Created a strategy for gender equality and mother, children's affairs for the Public Health sector (2019-2025).
- Conducted trainings on mainstreaming gender equality into public health affairs across the country with total participants of 106 persons (64.15 per cent women), conducted in Luang Prabang province, with participants from Borkeo, Huaphan, Luang Prabang, Oudomxay, Phongsaly, Xayabouly and Xiang Khouang provinces.

In order to prevent premature pregnancy for youth mothers, a pedagogical text book was created for youth-friendly health services. Also, a national handbook on providing youth-friendly services, a handbook for management personnel to deliver youth-focussed health services, handbooks on pre-birth check-ups, on safe abortion, on responses to maternal mortality and on comprehensive family planning and youth counselling training were created.

Disseminated information on gender equality and mothers, children's affairs for the public health sector 2019-2025 for the coordinators of advancement of women, mothers and children nationwide with participation of 191 persons (120 women). Upskilled 29 trainers (20 women) on implementation of the Strategy for Gender Equality and Mothers-Children in the Public Health Sector for 2019-2025. Disseminated the CEDAW, Convention on the Rights of the Child and related legislation to coordinators for promotion of Advancement for Women and Mothers-Children in the Public Health Sector, with total participation of 308 persons (199 women).

Treatment and care for the health of mothers and children was enhanced with a policy on free-of-charge childbirth and treatment of children aged 5 and below at all State health service providers. Girls and women were able to access health education, especially on reproductive health, which could help reduce the rate of premature childbirth. For example, in remote areas among youth aged 15-19, in the education year of 2016-2017 was 83 per 1,000 persons, compared to 2011-2012 decreased to 11/1000 (LSIS 2017), the mortality rate of mothers decreased from 206 per 100,000 in 2015 to 160 per 100,000 in 2020, life expectancy increased in 2020 with women at 75 years and men at 71, compared to 67 for women and 64 for men in 2016.

The Health Insurance Fund was created and covered 94 per cent nationwide, with the remaining 6 per cent in Vientiane Capital. All women were able to access health insurance.

Public health services facilities in communities were able to provide childbirth services, with 892 health centres having midwives and able to facilitate child-delivery services. Eleven houses were designated to facilitate childbirth with specialized medical personnel.

3.5 Employment

The government was committed to realizing higher-quality labour skills development to meet National Socio-Economic Development Plan demands, such as:

- In the labour and social welfare sector, there was collaboration with relevant sectors (government agencies, private sector and development projects) to provide vocational trainings to 184,556 women (44.1 per cent) out of a total of 419,264 persons.

- Created five national labour skills standard tests with issuance of certificates to 3,147 women (32.84 per cent) from 9,528 recipients (12,500 persons targeted), 76.66 per cent of the target. Sponsored a female skilled labourer from the textile skills development centre to participate in an international labour skills competition under the One Belt Road Initiative, in Chongqing city, China. There, she received a labour skills certificate with a score of 700 as a standard, among 13 participants from 13 countries.

According to labour survey in 2017, it is found that employment of Lao citizens in the age group of 25-64 there were a total of 1,251,709 employed persons, 569,728 or 45.52 per cent were women, 681,980 or 54.47 per cent were men.

Promote employment for women in rural areas through implementation of a national strategy on providing employment in two districts of Xekong province and expanded to two more districts in Savannakhet province, where training for 296 persons (71 women or 23.98 per cent) was conducted. In 2019-2020, the labour and social welfare sector focused on short-term vocational training for women in rural areas and provided employment options to make higher income for women in rural areas, such as for 14,711 young women and women who were heads of households (2,271 in the industrial, 4,767 in agriculture and 7,673 in service sectors).

Assisted citizens to access social protection, such as:

- Rate of social insurance system coverage from registered recipients and contributors from the State sector, private enterprises and voluntarily amounted to 312,175 persons (143,815 or 46 per cent women), excluding personnel from the Ministry of Public and Security and Ministry of National Defense.

- Implemented unemployed allowances for 326 labour units affected by COVID-19, with 13,270 female and 7,389 male recipients worth 18.93 billion Kip.

Focused on management and protection of rights and interests of Lao labourers, especially those who were migrant workers abroad and returning home, such as:

- Changed the status of 113,906 workers migrant workers (25,958 women), out of 307,559 total migrant workers abroad (160,154 women).

- Coordinated with relevant authorities from central and local levels to compile data on labourers returning from neighbouring countries and unemployed due to temporary or permanent closing of businesses and labour units nationwide, which saw 1.58 per cent more women than men laid-off (32,000 or 50.79 per cent women) from a total of 62,999 laid-off workers.

3.6 Economic empowerment

In the agriculture and forestry sector, a Vision for 2030 was developed, along with the Gender Equality Strategy of the Agriculture-Forestry and Rural Development (2016-2025) and the third Five-Year Gender Equality Work Plan of the agriculture-forestry and rural development sector for 2016-2020 disseminated to all officials from central to local levels at 36 events, with 1,787,870 participants (49 per cent women).

Promoted participation of women in rural areas graduating from poverty through trainings on crops-livestock farming techniques covering plantations of tamarind, tea, coffee, corn, tapioca, raising of chickens, pigs, goats, cows and fish. From the total of 11,540 groups

⁶ Lao labourers who did not go through employment agencies, migrated illegally without work permits from Thai authorities were able to notify the Lao Embassy in Thailand which processed the approval from Thai authorities for their permits to remain in Thailand for a maximum of two years while filing for the work permit card or registrations for legal status to work in Thailand legally.

and 853,075 participants, 49 per cent were women. Some 1,856,329 disadvantaged and poverty-hit farmers were able to access crop-livestock farming (837,521 or 45 per cent women), while 1,072,351 families accessed funding for such farming (1,597,981 or 38 per cent women). Some 283,257 families or 1,415,917 persons accessed funding for farming and micro-businesses (495,571 or 35 per cent women).

The labour and social welfare emphasized development and improvement of people's livelihoods in poverty-hit and rural areas, through promotion of education, public health, hygiene, vocational training and irrigation with production tools, seeds and cash for work provided, complemented by promotion of small businesses. The programmes were valued at USD 8,158,329, with 109,610 beneficiaries (45.38 per cent women).

Many sectors facilitated those in poverty or disadvantaged to access credit loans from commercial banks, micro-financial institutions and collective funds to start and operate enterprises, micro-enterprises and SMEs with women comprising 22.21 per cent, while in the industrial sector women accounted for 5 per cent, construction sector (8.98 per cent women), technical material assemblies sector (0.75 per cent women), craft sector (0.18 per cent women), trade sector (1.07 per cent women), agriculture-forestry sector (5.95 per cent women), post and transportation sector (1.07 per cent women), service sector (14.20 per cent women) and other sectors (2.92 per cent women). This underlines women's rate of access is especially low in the industrial sector.

3.7 Disaster Risk Reduction

The government intensified efforts to reduce risks faced by women from climate-driven natural disasters through providing relief for those affected by disasters, in poverty and disadvantaged with rice, dry food, water, household necessities, bedding, clothes and cash for work. Such disadvantaged beneficiaries totaled 1,386,794 recipients (537,096 women), while a disaster management fund was created in one district to enable 799 families to keep 1,106 goats as emergency food, provided early warning equipment to 12 villages, three irrigation systems were built for 22.6 hectares of farm land, bringing benefits to 56,115 people (22,740 women).

Support was delivered to 247 people (147 women) hit by disasters in Sanamxay district, Attapeu province with vocational training spanning seven professions and other activities to restore livelihoods. Preparation for future disasters and reviews of disaster risk reduction plans at village level were conducted, along with a pilot project to create an early warning system through telecommunications, with 485 women and 1,042 men participating.

4. Work Plan 4: Combatting and preventing violence against women

A dissemination campaign on results from the National Survey on Violence Against Women targeted policy-makers, legislation and strategies of CAWs at each sector. The first topic of survey was “health and life experiences of women” in Lao PDR in 2014, which revealed violence against women from spouses or intimate partners comprised of physical violence (11.6 per cent), sexual violence (7.2 per cent), violence among youth aged 15-19 (12.9 per cent), the rate of psychological violence was 26.2 per cent, physical and sexual violence (15.3 per cent), violence committed by partners from the age of 15 was physical (4.2 per cent) and sexual (5.3 per cent). The survey results of the second topic “estimation of necessary costs of providing assistance to women victims of violence in Lao PDR”, found that some USD 669,942 or 0.25 per cent of GDP during 2015-2017 was invested in a 24-hour hotline, a one-stop assistance centre (health), emergency homes and counselling services.

At the same time, awareness campaigns across society to heighten awareness of violence against women as an act of discrimination, a violation of women’s human rights and fundamental freedoms were launched, for instance:

- At educational institutions: created training manual on gender equality for youth at junior high-school level and conducted trainings for heads of education units and student representatives from Luang Prabang, Oudomxay, Xieng Khouang and Xayabouly provinces.
- At communities: created a manual for community involvement in prevention and remedies on violence against women and children, together with conducting training for women and men village representatives to heighten awareness and advocate for prevention and aiding groups of vulnerable and victims of violence.
- Enhanced capacity of Lao Press Association members with knowledge and content creation for advertising and urging society to combat violence against women. The activity involved participants from television stations, national radio broadcasts and newspapers with a total of 60 participants. Conducted training on gender equality and combating violence for information, culture and tourism department officials, especially those responsible for producing community programmes in southern Attapeu, Salavan and Xekong provinces.
- Disseminate the Law on Combatting and Preventing Violence Against Women and Children for judicial officials, police, prosecutors and court chambers for a deeper understanding to apply the law in mediation, investigations and consideration of cases involving violence against women and children.

Created a movement to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November to raise societal awareness. The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister released statements through television, radio, newspaper and village radio speakers. Ceremonies were held to disseminate documents relating to combatting violence against women and children, with activities such as marching, dancing and cycling, short video competitions, advertisements and short essays on combating gender-based violence amid the pandemic. Commandment awards were handed to NCAWMC, international organizations and CSOs for outstanding work to combat violence against women and children through 120 events and 32,250 attendees (22,575 women and 9,675 men). Videos, printouts and bags with anti-violence against women messages were released.

Created a movement to increase gender equality in families, villages and districts through, child development and fighting violence against women and children campaigns, with these factors mainstreamed into the Decree on Development and Poverty Graduation Standards (2016-2020). Through four years of implementation, this programme reached 95.22 per cent of families, 89.05 per cent of villages and 66.89 per cent of districts.

Provided remedies for violence against women through access health services by creating an agency to assist victims of violence at seven central hospitals (Mahosod, Mittaparb, Sethathilath, Mothers and New-Born Children, 103 Hospital (Ministry of National Defense), and 5 April Hospital (Ministry of Public Security)). In providing access to social services in terms of counselling through telephone and in person, there are now 166 venues in 17 provinces and the capital across 148 districts and the “1382” hotline. There are also two temporary government shelters: the Counselling Centre for Women and Children and the Temporary Shelter of Luang Namtha province. In addition, three centres were established by international organizations: Village Focus International centre in Champasak province and Vientiane Capital, and the SENGSAVANG centre in Savannakhet province. These facilities provided assistance and care for children of victims as well as vocational trainings and safe returns of victims to society.

The Five-year National Plan of Action for Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children II (2021-2025): was successfully drafted by the National Commission for Advancement of Women, Mothers-Children together with CAWMCs at sectorial and local levels, Mass Organizations, Development Partners, CSOs and relevant sectors. The said national plan of action was adopted in principle by the Government in August 2021. The Five-year National Plan of Action for Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children II (2021-2025) evaluated and summarized accomplishments from implementation of the Five-year National Plan of Action for Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children I (2014-2020), as well as the remaining challenges and lessons learned from the period. Furthermore, it set future directions for activities to be implemented in 2021-2025, divided into two key agendas as observed through 2014-2020, as follows:

- The Five-year National Plan of Action for Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women II (2021-2025): three main work plans to protect the rights and interests of women and children in Lao PDR through ending violence against women and girls, upholding their roles and dignity within society, communities and families to implement gender equality and fight gender-based violence, contributing to social order and national development goals.

- The Five-year National Plan of Action for Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Children II (2021-2025): four main work plans focused on reducing violence against girls and boys through coordination among sectors achieved through outreach in schools and online social media platforms.

5. Work Plan 5: Human resource development for advancement of women

Organizational structure: In 2016, to streamline the structure of organizations responsible for gender equality and child rights in accordance with government policy, the National Commission for Advancement of Women and the National Commission for Mothers and Children were merged, and Secretariat was relocated from the Prime Minister's Office to the Lao Women's Union office. This organizational shift was completed from central to local levels:

- At central level: NCAWMC is a non-standing government organization with the Deputy Prime Minister as its Chair, President of the Lao Women's Union as Vice Chair and standing member and with the Secretariat to the NCAWMC as its executive agency. The NCAWMC Secretariat office is located at the Lao Women's Union.
- At ministry/organization level: CAWMC of the respective ministry/organization, with vice minister/vice president as Chair and an advisory agency under its commission called CAWMC Division, stationed at the respective Cabinet office. At the moment, 18 ministries and 16 organizations have established such organs (CAWMC at 16 ministry cabinet offices and 15 organizations, two ministries placed it under their organization and Personnel Department as did two organizations).
- At provincial level: CAWMC of the respective province, with the vice governor as its chair and an advisory agency named CAWMC Provincial Departments stationed at the respective provincial Lao Women's Union. Currently, 16 provinces and the Capital have established such organs (Xaysomboun province has yet do).
- At district level: CAWMC of the respective district, with the vice district governor as chair and an advisory agency called CAWMC District Divisions stationed at respective District Lao Women's Union. Now, 145 districts and three cities have established such organs. At village level, one of the village committees serves as coordinator for advancement of women and mothers-children affairs.

Personnel: The number of people working in the advancement of women and mother-children nationwide stands at 3,460 (1,133 women), with ministry CAWMCs having 3,107 (2,823 women). CAWMC provincial departments/district divisions/village units have 297 (284 women), with 4,834 village coordinators .

Capacity building: To enhance the performance of organs from central to local levels, the NCAWMC, CAWMCs at ministry, organizations, province/capital and district levels organized plenary meetings annually to review their work and lay out future directions to enhance gender equality, advancement of women and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in accordance with respective socio-economic development plans in each period. Enhancing capacity levels for officials responsible for planning, financing and CAWMCs of ministries, organizations and local authorities was conducted with participation of 170 persons (105 women). Through the training, participants better understood how to formulate gender equality plans and allocate budgets to utilize acquired skills. Trainings included how to implement the 2030 Vision, National Strategic Plan and

Work Plans for Gender Equality. Also, there were trainings on how to use the manual, conduct monitoring and evaluation of the Five-year National Work Plans for Gender Equality III (2016-2020) for CAWMCs at all levels nationwide. The CEDAW and its committee's concluding observations to Lao PDR's 8th and 9th Periodic Report were also disseminated to CAWMCs at ministry, organization and provincial levels.

6. Work Plan 6: Enhancing regional and international cooperation

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the United Nations on 18 December 1979 during its General Assembly 34/180, and came into force on 3 September 1981. This convention to protect the rights of women calls for countries to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in government and private sectors, as well as in personal spheres in terms of political, economic, social and cultural aspects. After ratification, CEDAW becomes legally binding for member states, with obligations as stipulated in articles of the convention, based on three principles: (1) equality, (2) non-discrimination and (3) State Parties' obligations.

The Lao Government acceded to CEDAW in 1981 and has upheld its obligations in implementing them as reflected in three reports to the CEDAW Committee of the United Nations. The 8th and 9th National Periodic Reports on implementation of CEDAW in Lao PDR was adopted and promulgated by Decree No.55/Gov (18 February 2016) and submitted to the CEDAW Committee on 3 August 2017. The government subsequently:

- Received the list of issues on 12-16 March 2018 with a total of 20 questions. The government, specifically through NCAWMC, responded submitted its response to the United Nations on 19 June 2018.

- Through NCAWMC attended the review session on its 8th and 9th National Periodic Reports on implementation of CEDAW in Lao PDR, during the 71st session of the United Nations, between 22 October-9 November 2018 (2 November 2018), at Geneva, Switzerland.

- Received concluding observation of the CEDAW Committee of the United Nations in 61 paragraphs on 14 November 2018.

- Completed the follow-up report on the concluding observations, particularly on three topics of: women's education, women's health and women in rural areas, which was then submitted to the CEDAW Committee at the end of 2020, considered and adopted on 8 December 2020.

After completing its review process of the 8th and 9th National Periodic Reports in late 2018, the NCAWMC, CAWMCs of each sector and local authorities, together with the development partners and CSOs began implementing: Government Notice No.475/PMO (18 March 2019) which notifies all sectors to expedite implementation of respective priorities in relation to CEDAW Committee's concluding observations. Translation of these observations

⁷ Data from 2020.

from English into Lao, published the 8th and 9th National Periodic Reports under the CEDAW, together with its concluding observation in English and Lao languages in the same book, organized dissemination and guidance campaigns on implementation under these observations in parallel with disseminating the CEDAW itself to line ministries, organizations, provinces/Capital, and development partners. CAWMCs of respective sectors integrated the recommendations into their respective plans, especially five-year development and annual plans, projects and activity plans in each period.

Attended the Commission of the Status of Women of each period with respective prioritized themes for discussion, for example in the 60th session: Women's Empowerment and the link to Sustainable Development , 61st session: Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing of Work , 62nd session: Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls , 63rd session: Social Protection, Public Services, Infrastructure for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls . This participation was in the form of progress reporting and joint discussions on future plans for each year of the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action at regional and global levels. At the same time, guidance was provided on how to implement the resolutions of such meetings and integrate them into Lao PDR's plans and those of relevant sectors.

Implement to match SDGs indicators, especially Goal 5: Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and the outcomes of the Roundtable Meeting each year in areas related to gender equality, by integrating them into NCAWMC work plans, while also providing guidance and motivation to relevant sectors in carrying out respective roles.

⁸ The First Report (combines five periods): National Periodic Report numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 on the implementation of CEDAW in Lao PDR.
Second Report (combines two periods): National Periodic Reports numbers 6 and 7 on implementation of CEDAW in Lao PDR.
Third Report (combines two periods): National Periodic Reports numbers 8 and 9 on implementation of CEDAW in Lao PDR.

⁹ Follow-up concluding observations procedure.

¹⁰ CSW60: Women's Empowerment and the link to Sustainable Development, 2016

III. Evaluation of the positives, remaining issues and lessons learned

1. Positives

- 1) The Government of Lao PDR has a consistent policy to promote advancement of women, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. This is stated in the Party Congress' Resolution and National Socio-Economic Development Plans of each period, in parallel with the Constitution, laws and legislations as the legal reference for the NCAWMC and CAWMCs at each level to carry out duties accordingly.
- 2) Received close attention from the assigned Deputy Prime Minister and Chair of the NCAWMC, who led and guided the organization together with the President of the Lao Women's Union as Standing Vice Chair of the NCAWMC, as well as the other commission members in NCAWMC. These efforts guided work plans, projects, activities and budgets for advancement of women, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in a correct and suitable manner, resulting in tangible improvements in work and its implementation.
- 3) Emphasizing active dissemination and raising awareness across all organizations from central to local levels, including mass media to acknowledge and understand the work plans, international treaties, legislation relating to advancement of women, promotion of gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- 4) CAWMCs at all levels collaborate with the executive authority in their respective jurisdiction to actively strive for implementation of gender equality in their ranks.
- 5) NCAWMC secretariat has actively carried out its duty as an executive agency of the NCAWMC with a strong sense of ownership and responsibility. It overcame difficulties and challenges which enabled activities and work to progress towards success. At the same time, it received support from sectors and local authorities, as well as development partners, international organizations, CSOs and NGOs that provided technical and financial support for development and promotion of advancement of women, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

2. Remaining issues

- 1) Improving the organization and personnel assisting the work of NCAWMC and CAWMCs at various levels has yet to be realized. This affects the activities and promotion of advancement of women, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Hence, gender equality levels in their respective sectors have yet to be clearly evaluated.

¹¹ CSW61: Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing of Work, 2017

¹² CSW62: Challenges and Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women and Girls, 2018

¹³ Social Protection, Public Services, Infrastructure 11-22 March 2019

- 2) Leaders in some areas need to intensify promotion of advancement of women, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- 3) The awareness and understanding of CAWMCs at some sectors responsible for monitoring, motivating, assessment and reporting on implementation of the National Plan of Action lacked a common understanding, were unable to research and comprehend government policy, work plans, projects and activities surrounding this work.
- 4) As a country facing financial and fiscal stability challenges, natural disasters and COVID-19, Lao PDR's implementation of the National Plan of Action was impacted with some targets delayed and others deemed unachievable.
- 5) The coordination and exchange of lessons learned among NCAWMC and CAWMCs at various levels remained unsystematic and inconsistent.
- 6) In conducting grassroots activities, NCAWMC and its secretariat have yet to be active in motivating, inspecting actual implementation at various levels.

3. Lessons learned

- 1) Fully understanding and grasping the respective roles and duties of CAWMCs at various levels is crucial to the advancement of women, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women at each sector and within society.
- 2) Grassroots activities and awareness campaigns of the government, enterprises, businesses, private sector and all individuals in society must be achieved through multiple forms, methodologies and levels to promote the advancement of women, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- 3) Setting clear focal activities and providing appropriate funding, as well as emphasizing guiding, motivating, monitoring, evaluating, reporting and drawing lessons learned from implementation on a regular basis will help accomplish set goals and targets.
- 4) Capacity strengthening for officials responsible for gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women by gaining a full grasp of government policy is a priority. At the same time, there is a need to revise and enhance technical aspects in relation to leadership, awareness of legal and relevant international treaties and how to manage gender equality based on principles of mainstreaming gender equality, non-discrimination and upholding State members' obligations.
- 5) Strengthening the sense of ownership of the NCAWMC secretariat and CAWMC officials at all levels on gathering support from other nations and development partners to promote the advancement of women, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- 6) In accordance with Lao PDR's foreign policy, attract technical assistance, investments and expertise from strategic partners, countries, development partners, international organizations, domestic and foreign NGOs and CSOs to elevate advancement of women, gender

Part II: Five-year National Plan of Action on Gender Equality IV (2021-2025)

I. International, regional and domestic context

1. International and regional context

The report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action+25 is reviewed annually and quinquennially by the Commission on the Status of Women. Through summarizing the national, regional and international reports, which reaffirmed progress made through implementation, the accomplishments, challenges and factors that are priorities of countries in regionally and globally will be appraised for future implementation. Gender equality remains highly relevant to everyone: women, men, girls and boys with an awareness to fully realize their fundamental rights, to live equally and with dignity within society, communities and families.

During the World Economic Forum 2021, the Global Gender Gap Report 2021 was disseminated. It ranked countries in terms of gender equality in 2021, with Lao PDR 37th globally and 2nd in ASEAN. These rankings clearly underlined Lao PDR's commitment to the advancement of women, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Especially, in upholding its obligations under CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action+25 and other international treaties as well as the SDGs, particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and empowerment of women.

2. Domestic context

Gender equality is a national agenda that the Party and Government of Lao PDR have embraced with consistent and impactful policies. Lao Women's Union and the NCAWMC are two national mechanisms driving and implementing this work to enable the country to realize gender equality breakthroughs in politics, economics, social aspects for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children. For example, it created the Law on Gender Equality adopted by the National Assembly Resolution No.32/NA (28 November 2019) and promulgated through Presidential Ordinance No.029/POL (09 January 2020), its support for activities to accelerate realization of 2030 Vision, National Strategy for Gender Equality (2016-2025), Strategy for Mothers and Children (2016-2025), including the National Plan of Action for Preventing and Eliminating Violence against Women and Violence against Children. The limitations are primarily caused by women's limited participation in decision-making and management at all levels to provide an enabling environment and lifetime opportunities for women and girls to access education, healthcare, equal employment and economic empowerment. This is especially the case for women and girls in remote areas to access capital and land for production to contribute and reap full benefits from socio-economic development in safe working, learning and living environments without sexual violation, harassment or violence. At the same time, there is a need for increased access to justice, responding to COVID-19 and preparation for disasters and climate change.

¹⁴ Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

¹⁵ World Economic Forum 2021

¹⁶ Global Gender Gap Report 2021.

II. Overall goal and work plans of the Five-year National Plan of Action for Gender Equality IV (2021-2025)

1. Overall goal, indicators and work plans

1.1 Overall goal

Guarantee the rights and development of gender equality, including the ending of all forms of violence against women in all areas, ensuring that women can fully participate in activities of politics, economics, socio-cultural aspects and family affairs.

1.2 General directives

- 1) Implement Party Congress XI Resolution, the Five-year Socio-economic Development Plan XI (2021-2025) and 10-year National Strategy for Gender Equality (2016-2025), National Policy on Population and Development (2019-2030).
- 2) Uphold the obligations as a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations on the 8th and 9th Period National Reports of the Lao PDR under CEDAW, implement the outcomes of the review under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action+25, the International Conference on Population and Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and other treaties related to women's rights.

1.3 Expected outcomes

- 1) Improve the data system, create a database and statistics on gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women at national, sectoral and local levels.
- 2) Provide enabling conditions to promote access to information on gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women for all organizations of the government, State enterprises, private enterprises, development partners, international organizations and the general public.
- 3) Emphasize the strengthening of organizational structures and personnel responsible for gender equality based on the five methodologies stated in the Law on Gender Equality as follows:
 - Plant awareness on gender equality
 - Prohibit discrimination against gender
 - Promote gender equality
 - Guarantee gender equality
 - Common use of gender disaggregated statistics.

¹⁷ Concluding observations of the CEDAW Committee of the United Nations

¹⁸ Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA+25)

- 4) Promote the use of IT to expand management, coordination and monitoring of the respective sectors and at provincial and district levels to enhance gender equality affairs systematically and nationwide.
- 5) Increase the rate of women in decision-making and management positions in government and mass organizations by an average of 25-30 per cent
- 6) Proportion of women members of the National Assembly and People's Provincial Assemblies to reach at least 30 per cent.
- 7) Improve the livelihoods of women and girls to graduate from poverty and live securely through economic empowerment. Increase their access to quality services in terms of education, public health and social welfare, equal access to justice, prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, disaster and climate change risk reductions.
- 8) Implement at least 50 per cent of the CEDAW Committee's concluding observations towards the 10th periodic National Report of Lao PDR under CEDAW.
- 9) Disseminate at least 60 per cent of the Lao PDR, Regional and International Progress Reports of implementation under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action+25.
- 10) CAWMCs implement the Five-year National Plan of Action for Gender Equality IV (2021-2025) and achieve at least 80 per cent of all CAWMCs.
- 11) Promote and expand cooperation with countries and development partners in the area of gender equality.

1.4 Indicators

- 1) Gender Equality Development Index increased to 0.984
- 2) Gender Gap Index decreased to 0.430
- 3) Women's Development Index increased to 0.675
- 3) Attitudes and values towards gender equality increase to 50 per cent of those interviewed

1.5 Work Plans

In order to realize the expected outcomes stated above, the Five-year National Plan of Action for Gender Equality IV (2021-2025) thus provides four work plans as follows:

- 1) Work Plan 1: Disseminate, raise awareness and develop the database system.
- 2) Work Plan 2: Promote and develop gender equality.
- 3) Work Plan 3: Processes to review, amend and create policies, legislation and implementation of obligations under international and regional treaties and declarations on women's rights, to which Lao PDR is a party.
- 4) Work Plan 4: Strengthen the State organizations and personnel in areas of gender equality.

2. Focal work plan, targets and activities under respective work plans

2.1 Programme 1:Dissemination, awareness raising and database development

2.1.1. Output 1.1:Dissemination, information provision and awareness-raising throughout society to ensure in-depth understanding and placing importance on participation in implementation of gender equality

● Targets and indicators

- 80 per cent of government leaders from central to local levels, lawyers (who work in connection with gender equality), community leaders and local authorities at each level shall acknowledge and understand gender equality, gender equality operation principles and strengthening activities, responsibilities for promoting and managing as well as monitoring gender equality activities and apply such knowledge into the implementation of their duties and responsibilities.
- 80 per cent of National Assembly and Provincial People’s Council members shall recognize and understand gender equality, its operation principles, strengthen gender equality activities, their promotion, monitoring and inspecting.
- 70 per cent of personnel of each sector shall understand the meaning and importance of gender equality, including relevant national and international legislation.
- Increasing the contributions and responsibilities of men to promote gender equality.
- 60 per cent of ethnic minority people at community level shall receive information and be educated, especially men, to correctly understand issues related to gender equality.
- Complete the following legislation: draft decrees on Culture-Family Building, on Dressing, on Culture Management at Public Places, and on Cultural Ritual Management.

● Key activities

- Encourage sectors and localities to produce media about gender equality, such as posters, brochures, spot advertising, articles, movies and music via the radio, television, newspapers and other online media.
- Encourage sectors and localities to reflect the resolution of the 11th Party Congress, the 9th Five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021-2025) related to promotion of advancement of women, gender equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, the 10-year National Strategy on Gender Equality (2016-2025), Law on Gender Equality, 4th Five-year National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025) as well as regional and international legislation related to women’s rights.

- The sector and local CAWMCs shall coordinate with the NCAWMC Office of the Secretariat in collaboration with the Department of Information, Lao Women's Union in creating news, interviews, "Viek Dee Khon Den" articles (good performance and outstanding persons) and other articles as well as periodically gathering gender equality activities and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women at their levels to disseminate via newspapers, magazines, radio, television and Lao women's voices quarterly.
- The NCAWMC Office of the Secretariat, in collaboration with relevant sectoral CAWMC and development partners, to organize joint discussion forums/lectures or seminars with National Assembly and Provincial People's Council members at least annually to disseminate domestic legislation, including exchanges of information, lessons learnt and experiences regarding the advancement of women, gender equality, and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- Encourage the mobilization of qualified people and those with significant roles in society, mass organizations, and governing authorities into gender equality activities and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and prevention of violence against women and girls.
- Propagation information at community level and raise men's awareness of proper behaviour towards promotion of advancement of women, gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- Coordinate with the CAWMC of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism and all stakeholders to encourage the drafting and issuance of decrees on Culture-Family Building, on National Costumes, on Culture Management at Public Places and on Cultural Ritual Management.

2.1.2. Output 1.2: Developing data systems and databases regarding gender equality

Qualitative gender equality data segregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity and place of residence are necessary standards for measuring gender equality progress during each period. Specifying standard gender equality data in a comprehensive manner shall realize clear and accurate data collection, resulting in formulation of appropriate, consistent and implementable policies.

- **Targets and indicators**

- 80 per cent of sectors follow instructions regarding collection of statistical data segregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, place of residence and socio-economic status in data gathering and databases.

- **Key activities**

- Enhancing the quality of collection of gender equality data:
 - + NCAWMC shall coordinate with the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the National Statistics Bureau to develop national instructions regarding the

collection of statistical data segregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, place of residence and socio-economic status along with strengthening sectors and localities using such data.

- + Reinforcing each sector to analyze gender equality status
- Improving access to gender equality data:
- + Upgrading the NCAWMC website and creating a NCAWMC Facebook site as sources for disseminating information on gender equality in Lao PDR.
- Improving the provision of gender equality data.
- Establishing gender equality data systems:
 - + Identifying gender equality indicators in Lao PDR
 - + Developing a national gender equality database
 - + Improving, creating forms and gathering gender equality data in each area, encompassing labour and social welfare, education, health, women's economic empowerment, justice, and the use of information from the registration of mobile numbers.
- Increasing in-depth analysis of gender equality data:
 - + Studying the rights and status of women as well as advantages and disadvantages in accessing services.

2.2 Programme 2: Promoting and creating gender equality

2.2.1. Output 2.1: Women and girls' equal access to education as men and boys to close equality index gaps in education and enable women and girls to receive knowledge development

● Targets and indicators

- The Gender Equality Index of school enrolment of students aged 5 is between 0.97 and 1.03.
- The Gender Equality Index of school enrolment of Year-1 students who pass early childhood education reaches 1.00.
- The Gender Equality Index of the overall re-enrolment rate of Year-5 students nationwide is 0.97-1.03.
- 54 per cent of women graduate from primary equivalency programmes, 49 per cent of women graduate from lower secondary equivalency programmes, 40 per cent of women graduate from upper secondary equivalency programmes, and 40 per cent of women train in basic professional skills.
- Total students enrolled in vocational education amount to 80,000 with good study results according to the curricula of agriculture, industry and service sectors.

Among those who graduate from vocational education, 35 per cent are women.

- Total students enrolled in higher education amount to 59,000 and 49 per cent of graduates are women.
- More than 4,000 students graduate from university with a major in natural science, engineering and technology and 35 per cent are women.

- **Key activities**

- Government committees, mass organizations, women and youth shall take charge of campaigning and educating the women's workforce to be active in performing their tasks, researching and studying to enhance their academic levels.
- Raising awareness of parents, community leaders, educators, teachers and education administrators to realize and support the education of women and girls.
- Provide gender equality training for teachers and professors of all educational institutions and organize teaching and learning for kindergarten, primary education, secondary education, vocational education and university students regarding gender equality and reproductive health knowledge in accordance with appropriate ages.
- Continue to arrange teaching and learning for people aged 15-24 years and those aged above 25 in a universal manner.
- Provide scholarships, career training and dormitories for the poor and disadvantaged women and funding for women and girls, who drop out of school, to receive career training.
- Encourage, monitor, assess and reflect lessons learnt from teaching-learning processes, teaching approaches that take into account gender equality for science, technology, engineering and mathematics teachers at secondary schools and higher education.
- Improve educational institutions with safe environments upholding gender equality.
- Modify the curriculum for illiteracy elimination and primary equivalency courses at levels 1, 2 and 3.
- Modify and develop vocational training curriculum to be varied.
- Equally promote women and men to receive vocational education in agriculture, industry and services.

2.2.2. Output 2.2: Women and girls' universal access to quality health services

● Targets and indicators

- 70 per cent of citizens above 15 years old obtain reproductive health knowledge (reports using sex-segregated statistics).
- 80 per cent of citizens aged 15-24, 50 per cent women, shall obtain accurate knowledge of HIV prevention.
- HIV/AIDS infection rates:
 - By 2025, 80 per cent of male-female youth groups with participants aged 15-24, shall attain precise knowledge of HIV prevention (reports using sex-segregated statistics). With this accurate knowledge on HIV prevention, infection rates should decrease.
- The maternal mortality rate shall decrease from 197 per 100,000 to 100 per 100,000 people.
- By 2025, the birth delivery rate with skilled birth attendants of the target population groups is 85 per cent.
- By 2025, the rate of the total population covered by health insurance shall rise from 94 per cent (2020) to 96 per cent.
- By 2025, the fertility/teenagers' childbirth rate shall decline from 70 per cent (2020) to 65 per cent.
- Rate of people accessing family planning information rises from 54.1 per cent in 2017 to 65 per cent in 2025.
- Contraception (all methods) rate of fertility-aged women reaches 70 per cent and the rate of demand for modern-method contraceptive services, but not using the services is 15 per cent.
- Rate of contraception by modern approaches (women aged 15-24 with or without marriage) climbs to 35 per cent.
- Rate of those without family planning (women aged 15-49 with or without marriage) falls to 10 per cent.
- Rate of contraception by modern approaches (women aged 15-19 with or without marriage) reaches 45 per cent.

● Key activities

- Create databases on cases of breast cancer, cervical cancer, first-time mothers aged 15-19 and women victims of violence receiving medical assistance.

¹⁹ Safety means having separate toilets, dormitories for females and males, sufficient water supply with security protection, adequate lights and places and activities outside school hours that pay attention to gender equality.

- Continue to provide general health treatments for the population, especially women and collect information on provision of health care services segregated by sex, ethnicity, age and disability.
- Train midwives, nurses, obstetricians in assisting birth delivery, particularly at health centres.
- Universally propagate knowledge of reproductive health for people aged above 15 years and the health effects of having children at an early age. Increase family planning knowledge and provide family planning services and accurate knowledge of HIV prevention for people aged 15-24 in a universal manner.
- Continue raising awareness of women to have breast cancer examinations, along with improvements in places and materials enabling breast cancer examination services at provincial and district hospitals.
- Develop a health sector data collection system segregated by sex, ethnicity, age, place of residence and mental health information.
- Advocate policies for free antenatal care and childbirth, especially for poor women living in remote areas as well as implement policies on free birth delivery and child treatment nationwide, particularly for poor women in remote areas.
- Produce targeted advertising media on mother-child health care, vaccinations, family planning, preventing early age pregnancy and sexual infections.
- Integrate HIV prevention and gender concepts into the teaching and learning system of schools, universities, and other health sector educational institutions.
- Consider amendment or development of a law or legislation on abortion and victims of sexual assault.
- Focus on implementation of a national strategy and plan of action for integration services on reproductive health, motherhood, newborn babies, children and a nutrition strategy with data into the system (DHIS2).

2.2.3. Output 2.3: Developing women's workforce and professions to be qualitative and generate stable income and have dignity

● Targets and indicators

- Rate of working-age female and male workers aged above 15 with access to short-term vocational training (urban and rural reports):
 - Agriculture sector (34 per cent are women and 66 per cent are men).
 - Industry sector (29 per cent are women and 71 per cent are men).
 - Service sector (56 per cent are women and 44 per cent are men).

- Rate of qualitative female and male labourers aged above 15 passing tests and obtaining skilled labour certificates in accordance with national skilled labour standards:
 - Agriculture sector (36.8 per cent are women and 66 per cent are men).
 - Industry sector (6.5 per cent are women and 93.5 per cent are men).
 - Service sector (67 per cent are women and 44 per cent are men).
- Recruitment rate of female and male workers aged above 15 in economic activities (urban and rural reports):
 - Agriculture sector (35 per cent are women and 65 per cent are men).
 - Industry sector (33 per cent are women and 67 per cent are men).
 - Service sector (37 per cent are women and 63 per cent of men).
- Develop a comprehensive policy on migrant workers, which pays attention to gender roles, to protect Lao migrant workers overseas.
- Improve labour dispute resolution mechanisms, paying attention to gender roles, youth labourers, disadvantaged and disability groups to be effective.

- **Key activities**

- Promote women and men to equally obtain vocational training in the agriculture, industry and service sectors.
- Monitor, inspect and evaluate implementation of policies, laws ensuring that women and men in the same positions and responsibilities are equally paid and promote gender equality employment.
- Provide vocational training and financial support for illegal women migrant workers and workers at risk and in disadvantaged groups to have secure employment.
- Promote equal division of responsibilities between women and men within families and organizations.
- Consider, amend and develop appropriate basic infrastructure to ensure participation of children, women, disadvantaged and disability groups in urban development plans to create employment opportunities, reduce numbers of women working at home without pay. This should encompass all stakeholders, including the elderly.
- Ensure gender equality when repatriating women migrant workers and to return to normalcy. Provide vocational training and funding for those at risk and disadvantaged to have secure jobs and income.
- Review and amend policies and legislation on use of women workers and migrant workers to protect their rights and interests from exploitation in accordance with laws and provide assistance and rehabilitation in cases of violence against women employees.

- Improve the labour dispute resolution system and protect the rights and interests of employees, especially women, youth, people disadvantaged and with disabilities.

2.2.4. Output 2.4: Women's economic empowerment

● Targets and indicators

- Registration rate of private sector SMEs owned or managed by women in the following sectors:
 - There are 25 per cent in the agriculture sector, of which 15 per cent are operated by women and 10 per cent are operated by men
 - There are 25 per cent in the industry sector, of which 10 per cent are operated by women and 15 per cent are operated by men.
 - There are 25 per cent in the service sector, of which 15 per cent are operated by women and 10 per cent are operated by men.
- The average income of women is 5.6 million Kip/person/year.
- Rate of female farmers receiving technical cultivation trainings from government agriculture officials will increase by 100 per cent, with women making up 50 per cent of those receiving training.
- Rate of female farmers receiving technical livestock training will increase by 100 per cent, with women making up 45 per cent of those receiving training.
- Number of those receiving training on financial service, taxation and business laws and regulations is 1,000 people, of whom 550 are women.
- Rate of women from poor families with access to land for livelihoods is up to half of all those who acquire land for livelihoods.
- Rate of women receiving rights to use and manage the construction and production land is at least half of all those who receive the rights to use and manage land.

● Key activities

- Formulate policies to access women's sources of funding to fund businesses.
- Upgrade database and statistics systems on access to women's financial services, such as deposits (dividing deposit types, age under and above 18) and lending (dividing lending types and sectors) to engage in microeconomics and SMEs.
- Training on agricultural production techniques for women.
- Training on handicraft techniques for women.
- Training on agricultural product processing techniques for women.
- Training on financial services, business operations, taxes, and business laws and regulations for women.

- Promote and empower women to operate businesses by providing technical assistance, consulting and training on entrepreneurial development and management.
- Provide land for livelihood and funds for women from poor families.
- Gender equality awareness-raising in relation to rights to use and manage construction and production land and the right to inherit.
- Develop policies and regulations to encourage and create conditions to overcome women's barriers to access credit in accordance with each type of financial institution by employing targeted measures to increase the number of women accessing financial services, such as low-interest credit and saving systems.
- Research, improve, and build appropriate basic infrastructure to ensure participation of children, women, disadvantaged groups and people with disabilities in urban development planning to create job opportunities.

2.2.5. Output 2.5: Empowering women in sectors/at the community level through IT skills development and leadership training

● **Targets and indicators**

- Ratio of women participating in IT skills training and leadership skills education at sector/community levels increases.
- Ratio of women at community level receiving training/educating on leadership skills, gender equality, promotion of advancement of women and prevention of violence against women increases.
- Ratio of women included in governing authority committees at sector/community levels increases.

● **Key activities**

- Ratio of women participating in IT skills training and leadership skills education at sector/community levels increases.
- Ratio of women at community level receiving training/educating on leadership skills, gender equality, promotion of advancement of women and prevention of violence against women increases.
- Ratio of women included in governing authority committees at sector/community levels increases.

2.2.6. Output 2.6: Reduce climate change and disaster risks for women, men, girls and boys

● Targets and indicators

- Rate of women engaging in formulation and implementation of national policies and action plans on climate change, disaster responses and disaster reduction accounts for 30 per cent of all participants.
- Women's rate in national and local committees on prevention and control of natural and man-made disasters, such as forest fires, accounts for 30 per cent of all leaders' positions.
- Rate of women receiving training on prevention and response to natural and man-made disasters occupies 40 per cent of all participants.
- Rate of women receiving training on energy-saving and sustainable agricultural technology accounts for 50 per cent of all participants.
- Ratio of women and teenage girls affected by natural disasters access assistance in daily basic needs for survival (essential relief kits).

● Key activities

- Rate of women engaging in formulation and implementation of national policies and action plans on climate change, disaster responses and disaster reduction accounts for 30 per cent of all participants.
- Women's rate in national and local committees on prevention and control of natural and man-made disasters, such as forest fires, accounts for 30 per cent of all leaders' positions.
- Rate of women receiving training on prevention and response to natural and man-made disasters occupies 40 per cent of all participants.
- Rate of women receiving training on energy-saving and sustainable agricultural technology accounts for 50 per cent of all participants.
- Ratio of women and teenage girls affected by natural disasters access assistance in daily basic needs for survival (essential relief kits).

2.2.7. Output 2.7: Increase the number of women in management and leadership positions at each level

Capacity-building and awareness-raising for all parties to promote and empower women to participate in leadership-management and decision-making positions at each level is greatly important. Therefore, capacity development of all sectors in relation to integration of National Action Plan on Gender Equality targets and indicators into female personnel-building plans of each sector and locality for implementation is a key component contributing to achievement of this output.

- **Targets and indicators**

- Encourage and create conditions for women to be included in management and leadership positions at all levels:
 - More than 30 per cent of women occupy National Assembly and Provincial People's Council seats.
 - Percentage of women leaders at central level is more than 30 per cent.
 - Percentage of women leaders at provincial level is more than 20 per cent.
 - Percentage of women leaders at district level is more than 20 per cent.
 - Percentage of women leaders at village level is more than 10 per cent.
- Among those trained on gender-related laws, 30 per cent are women.
- Of civil servants who upgrade professional roles through short-term training, 40 per cent are women (domestic and foreign segregation).
- Female personnel will represent 15-20 per cent of those who upgrade political theories at various levels.

- **Key activities**

- Encourage each sector and locality to review and amend measures, together with issuing appropriate measures to ensure women's engagement and move towards leadership and decision-making positions, such as developing provisional special measures for quotas on women's leadership positions at each level.
- Strengthen female personnel in management and leadership plans of each sector and locality, on professionalism, political theories and administrative levels.
- Relevant sectors shall develop training handbooks on "women in management and leadership positions" used for training and guiding personnel responsible for personnel-building at central/sector and local levels.
- Develop gender equality policies for civil servants in the administrative sector.
- Coordinate between organizations responsible for promoting advancement of women and organs responsible for personnel-building for disseminating government policies and information related to gender equality. Promote full participation of women for more opportunities in decision-making positions at each level.
- Raise awareness of governing authorities at all levels and the general public on gender equality and the full participation of women in all areas of work.

2.2.8. Output 2.8: Gender equality and access to justice

Increase the coordination, information exchanges and monitoring of gender equality work in the justice, law enforcement and legislative sectors at all levels to promote implementation and enforcement of the Law on Gender Equality and monitor implementation of the National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025) in an effective manner.

● Targets and indicators

- The numbers of annual and six-monthly meetings held with all stakeholders to monitor implementation and enforcement of the Law on Gender Equality, as well monitor implementation of the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025).
- Review and modify laws and regulations on advancement of women, gender equality, elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in the justice, law enforcement and legislative sectors to increase effectiveness and completeness of legislation.
- Encourage, promote and create conditions for increasing the number of women included in leadership and management positions at all levels in the justice, law enforcement and legislative sectors.
- Develop guidelines and manuals regarding enforcement of the Law on Gender Equality and strengthen gender equality in the justice arena.

● Key activities

- Organize an annual national meeting to monitor implementation and enforcement of the Law on Gender Equality and implementation of the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) with participation of provinces, relevant parties and CSOs.
- Organize meetings with national and local partners to disseminate the Law on Gender Equality and 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025), especially outputs related to their roles, duties and responsibilities in implementing and monitoring the National Plan of Action.
- Develop gender equality programmes in the justice, law enforcement and legislative sectors, and encourage gender equality to be integrated into planning and budget plans of these sectors.
- Review and revise existing measures, including issuing appropriate measures to ensure women's participation to move towards decision-making and leadership positions at all levels.
- Coordinate with the justice, law enforcement and legislative sectors to develop report forms regarding integration of gender concepts, including defining, designing and applying assessment frameworks to collect information on implementation and enforcement of the Law on Gender Equality and National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025).

- Strengthen police officers, prosecutors, judges, juries at all levels in implementing and enforcing the Law on Gender Equality and monitoring implementation of the National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025).related to their sectors.
- Strengthen civil servants of the National Assembly and local People’s Council in monitoring and inspecting implementation of the 4th Five-year National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025).

2.3. Programme 3: Reviewing, amending, developing legislation and implementing obligations under treaties, regional and international declarations regarding women's rights to which the Lao PDR is a party

2.3.1. Output 3.1: Policy framework and legislation related to gender equality

● Targets and indicators

- Sectors shall integrate 80 per cent of the gender equality National Action Plan into five-year development sectoral plans or create standalone gender equality work plans, then 60 per cent of the integrated gender equality work shall be implemented.
- Localities shall integrate 40 per cent of the gender equality National Action Plan into five-year socio-economic development plans or create standalone gender equality work plans, then 60 per cent of integrated gender equality work shall be implemented.
- National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025).shall be implemented by up to 80 per cent of set indicators.

● Key activities

- Organize training for sectors and localities on integration of gender concepts into planning and budget plans with attention to gender roles.
- Create frameworks for monitoring, evaluating and reporting implementation of the National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025).
- Review and improve existing measures, including issuing appropriate measures to ensure women’s participation to move towards decision-making and leadership positions at all levels, especially at village level.
- Review and improve documents regarding establishment of family, village and districts implementing gender equality rights, promoting child development without violence against women and children in connection with the patriotic and development movement.
- Review relevant laws, regulations, decrees that are in line with international instruments, as well as assessing those legal frameworks that have impacts on gender equality and using such results/findings from the assessments to improve regulations.

2.3.2. Output 3.2: Implementing obligations under regional and international treaties

● Targets and indicators

- Recommendations of the UN's CEDAW Committee shall be disseminated and implemented by sectors and localities up to 60 per cent of CEDAW recommendations will be disseminated and implemented by sectors and sub-national sectors at central, provincial and district levels over two years.
 - Increase the number of activities and handbooks for raising awareness and understanding CEDAW at national, sectoral and local levels.
 - Increase the number of activities and manuals for raising awareness and understanding CEDAW of the courts, prosecutors, justice sector, security officers and private business sector.
- The 10th National Periodic Report on implementation of CEDAW in Lao PDR shall be completed and submitted to the UN on time.
- The agreement of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on implementation of Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action shall be integrated and implemented up to 60 per cent of CEDAW recommendations will be disseminated and implemented by sectors and sub-national sectors at central, provincial and district levels over two years.
 - Increase the number of activities and handbooks for raising awareness and understanding about Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action at national, sectoral and local levels.
 - Increase the number of activities and manuals for raising awareness and understanding about Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action of the courts, prosecutors, justice sector, security officers, and the private business sector.
- The national report on implementation of Beijing+30 Declaration and Platform for Action shall be completed and submitted to the UN agency on time.

● Key activities

- **Dissemination**
 - Develop manuals/documents/define methods and develop trainers or advocates to support disseminating and instructing methods to implement CEDAW, including recommendations at each period for the sector and local CAWMCs to integrate such recommendations into implementation of their programmes.
 - Raise awareness and build capacity to disseminate the CEDAW and concluding comments as well as the Beijing+25 Declaration and Action Plan for CAWMCs at each level.
 - Establish events to commemorate and celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Government of Lao PDR signing, ratifying and implementing the CEDAW in

1981. Organize activities and develop documents to disseminate the achievements at national, sectoral and local levels in accordance with the conditions, potentials and capacities of each sector and locality.

- Disseminate, increase awareness and understanding in a systematic manner regarding CEDAW and gender equality for all stakeholders, civil servants, members of the National Assembly, law enforcement officers, technical legal officers, village mediation units and organizations of the Lao Women's Union to strengthen application of CEDAW to improve and implement all legislation, policies and programmes towards gender equality.

- **Integration**

- Integrate UN recommendations on the 8th-9th National Periodic Reports on implementation of CEDAW and the agreement of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on implementation of the Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action into the National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025).and prevention of violence against women in each period.
- Integrate and implement the ASEAN, regional and international declarations, action plans related to women's rights by enhancing bilateral or multilateral cooperation with countries within ASEAN and regionally.

- **Developing reports**

- Establish data collection and report systems regarding implementation of CEDAW in Lao PDR on a periodic basis.
- Train and guide the formulation of the report on implementation of the CEDAW at sector and local levels for incorporation into national reports.
- Train, disseminate and guide work plans and drafting process of the 10th national report on implementation of CEDAW in Lao PDR.
- Draft the 10th national report on implementation of CEDAW in Lao PDR and submit it to the UN on time.
- Encourage and monitor stakeholders in implementing treaties, conventions, and other declarations, including SDGs related to women's rights.

2.3.3. Output 3.3: Strengthening regional and international cooperation

● Targets and indicators

- Increase the number of committees of NCAWMC, sectoral, provincial and district CAWMC personnel at each level, as well as civil servants at the Office of the NCAWMC Secretariat capable of training, disseminating, encouraging and monitoring implementation of CEDAW and Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action.
- Increase the number of policy-makers and decision-makers in sectors/localities with increased awareness and understanding to encourage and monitor implementation of commitments (CEDAW, Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action and SDGs).
- Increase the number of role models performing work related to CEDAW, Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action, and SDGs within sectors and localities, including development partners, international organizations and CSOs.

● Key activities

- Create documents and manuals on outstanding issues, priority topics and regional programme frameworks, especially for Lao PDR, to be used in training.
- Organize seminars/training to disseminate content of CEDAW and concluding comments, Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action, the regional programme framework for promotion of women's rights, gender equality and strengthening NCAWMC committees, CAWMC personnel at each level, as well as Office of the NCAWMC Secretariat civil servants.
- Propagate rules, principles, and obligations under regional and international cooperation regarding promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment for central and local sectors.
- Promote capital mobilization of sectors from central to local levels through regional and international cooperation.
- Provide training for sectors from central to local levels on implementation, monitoring and reporting on projects and activities on gender equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women that receive grants from the UN, CSOs, NGOs, financial institutions, embassies to enhance their quality and effectiveness.
- Encourage all sectors from central to local levels to increase mutual support, including coordination with the UN, CSOs, NGOs, financial institutions and embassies to Lao PDR to promote gender equality and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.
- Sectoral and local CAWMC shall collect information, including summarizing outstanding performances by individuals and organizations in implementing CEDAW, Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action, and SDGs to congratulate and commemorate the 40th anniversary of implementation of CEDAW in Lao PDR and other significant days.

2.4. Programme 4: Strengthen organizations and personnel managing gender equality

2.4.1. Output 4.1: Strengthen organizations and personnel responsible for gender equality

● Targets and indicators

- 80 per cent of CAWMC members and assistant staff at sectoral and local levels have an in-depth understanding of their roles.
- 80 per cent of CAWMC assistant staff at sectoral level are able to create and integrate gender equality into international and domestic policies, strategies, legislation, as well as sectoral and local legislation, strategies, programmes, projects, and activities.
- 80 per cent of CAWMC members and assistant staff at sectoral and local levels have the ability to write reports on implementation of treaties, conventions and declarations at their level.
- 80 per cent of CAWMC members and assistant staff at sectoral and local levels are able to report implementation of policies, legislation, action plans, programmes, projects and activities related to gender equality in their sector.
- The number of personnel being role models with expertise in implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) in sectors and localities is up to 12 sectors and localities.

● Key activities

- Gather more information regarding sectoral and local plans, into which information on gender equality is integrated.
 - Gather more information regarding sectoral and local personnel trained on integration of gender equality into plans.
 - Gather information on tools/methods used in integration of each sector and locality.
 - Review sectoral and local plans and National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) to assess integration of information on gender roles and gender equality to guide implementation methods.
 - Training on integration of gender roles and gender equality for sectoral and local CAWMCs (during training, instructions/manuals on integration of gender equality into development plans shall be prepared).
- + Prepare/create instructions/manuals on integration of gender equality into development plans, especially for CAWMC members and personnel in charge of planning in sectors and localities.

- + Prepare to create instructions/manuals for monitoring, encouraging implementation, evaluation and summary reports of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025).
- + Prepare to create instructions/manuals for monitoring and encouraging implementation, evaluation, and summary reports of CEDAW in accordance with the framework of the 8th and 9th final comment paper, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and SDGs, particularly SDG5: monitoring, assessment and report.
- + Prepare instructions and manuals on dissemination of the Law on Gender Equality.
- + Review existing manuals on formulation of planning, budget plans that pay attention to gender roles to ensure appropriateness and consistency for use in training.
- Define criteria and conditions of role models in implementation of the National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2021-2025) in sectors and localities.

2.4.2. Output 4.2: Improve coordinating mechanisms, regulations to be uniform and timely between gender-equality working mechanisms

In the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, people have adapted to a new way of life – the New Normal. Various forms of electronic communication technology have been broadly used, especially with quarantining and working from home necessary to ensure life can proceed with a degree of normality.

● Targets and indicators

- 80 per cent use of IT systems in coordinating mechanisms of the NCAWMC, sectoral and local CAWMCs, and Office of NCAWMC Secretariat.
- 90 per cent of Office of NCAWMC Secretariat personnel with upgraded knowledge of IT systems necessary for coordination and operation of gender equality.
- 60 per cent of sectoral and local CAWMC personnel with strengthened use of IT systems essential for work coordination and operations.
- The number of professionals and role models using IT in development of gender equality and promotion of women’s advancement is increased.
- The amount of budget used for communicating, coordinating and reporting is properly allocated by government.
- Quarterly/six-monthly meetings between sectoral CAWMC and Office of NCAWMC Secretariat are organized.
- Quarterly/six-monthly meetings between local CAWMC and Office of NCAWMC Secretariat organized at northern, central and southern parts of the country.

- **Key activities**

- Establish systems and tools for monitoring, inspecting and evaluating the National Action Plan on Gender Equality by using IT in a comprehensive and systematic manner, along with disseminating and training on approaches.
- Research and define an appropriate IT system for coordinating mechanisms between NCAWMC, CAWMC and assistant personnel at each level in a modern and timely manner.
- Provide training on the use of IT systems in communications, coordination and reporting between CAWMC at each level and the Office of NCAWMC Secretariat. Develop an estimated budget plan for IT systems to be used in communicating, coordinating and reporting by NCAWMC.
- Organize quarterly and six-monthly meetings between sectoral CAWMCs divided into different fields, such as politics, economics and socio-cultural.
- Organize joint meetings with local CAWMCs, divided across three regions of the country.

Part III: Implementation Measures and Mechanisms

I. Implementation measures

1. Gender equality

Gender equality represents equality and obtained values with respect to the rights, interests, responsibilities, decision-making and opportunities to develop in all areas of society and family life.⁴²

2. Principles of gender equality

⁴³Gender equality-related activities shall be conducted based on the following principles:

- 1) In accordance with policies, the Constitution, laws, the national socio-economic development plan and strategy for gender equality in each period.
- 2) To centrally and uniformly administer across the nation.
- 3) To coordinate and ensure participation of sectors, local authorities and all stakeholders in developing and promoting gender equality.
- 4) To ensure integration of gender concepts into all areas of work.
- 5) In accordance with international declarations, treaties and international agreements related to gender equality to which Lao PDR is a party.

3. Gender equality integration

⁴⁴The integration of gender equality necessitates the inclusion of gender roles/gender equality indicators in policy planning, legislation, strategies, action plans, projects and activities, including implementation and summary reports to create opportunities for women to gain equal development opportunities as men.

4. Strengthening gender equality

⁴⁵Strengthening gender equality shall include:

- 1) Raising awareness of gender equality
- 2) Non-discrimination on gender equality
- 3) Promoting gender equality
- 4) Ensuring gender equality
- 5) Using sex-segregated statistics.

⁴² Article 3, Law on Gender Equality

⁴³ Article 5, Law on Gender Equality

⁴⁴ Article 3, item 4, Law on Gender Equality

⁴⁵ Article 20, Law on Gender Equality.

5. Principles of budget allocation with paying attention to gender roles

Budget documents are key aspects of the government's planning and national socio-economic development plans to monitor budget sources and utilization. As such, budgets also determine State fundraising approaches, methods and beneficiaries. Therefore, to realize gender equality commitments, measures that incorporate gender concepts in planning, budget planning, and appropriate investment to address gender gaps are necessary.

Budget allocation cognizant of gender roles does not mean creating a separate budget for women or increasing expenditure on women-related projects. Instead, the provision of a gender equality-focussed budget ensures the collection and allocation of State resources is carried out effectively and contributes to strengthening gender equality. Not only a key step to uphold women's rights, it ensures public transparency and that economic policy reflects the interests of society.

6. Gender statistics

Gender equality statistics are necessary for measuring and monitoring the real-life circumstances of women and girls as well as men and boys. Various issues are encompassed by gender statistics, reflecting the changing roles of women and men in society, economics, families and households.

Data on gender equality not only comprises sex-segregated statistics. Gender equality statistics are the collection of data and analysis to reveal a wide range of insights with the segregation of sex, age, disability, ethnicity, place of residence, socio-economic status and use of measurable indicators to assess women's status and progression towards gender equality.

In conclusion, gender equality statistics are determined by combinations of the following characteristics:

- (1) Sex-segregated data.
- (2) Data reflecting gender equality and gender inequality issues.
- (3) Data showing the reality and diversity of women's and men's lives.
- (4) Data collection methods shall take into account the social, social-cultural factors which may lead to gender equality prejudices.

7. Sources of funding

Funding for implementation of this national plan of action will come from domestic sources and grants.

Domestic sources: The Ministry of Planning and Investment shall coordinate with the Ministry of Finance to consider and determine appropriate budgets for each sector and localities for implementing the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025). All sectors and localities shall allocate a budget for implementing respective gender equality activities through applying the principles of budget allocation while attentive to gender roles.

Grants: Cooperation with countries, international organizations, financial institutions, social organizations, individuals and legal entities within the country and abroad to attract technical assistance and funds.

II. Implementation mechanisms

1. NCAWMC

The NCAWMC is in charge of supervising and leading implementation of the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) by turning it into detailed programmes, projects and activities across the spectrum of work nationally.

The Office of the NCAWMC Secretariat is responsible for coordinating and encouraging the Advancement of Women and Mother-Child Divisions of ministries, organizations and localities. The office of the NCAWMC Secretariat shall carry out its roles in elaborating the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) under its scope of responsibility into detailed programmes, projects, and activities. Concurrently, it shall focus on finding funding sources to combine with the State budget to ensure implementation of the strategic plan to achieve set targets.

2. Sector and local CAWMCs

Sectors, organizations and localities are in charge of implementing the national action plan, while the CAWMCs of ministries, organizations, provinces/Vientiane Capital shall elaborate such plans into detailed programmes, projects and activities and budgets according to their roles and responsibilities.

Planning and investment sector and Lao Statistics Bureau: responsible for integrating the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) into the national socio-economic development plan and State investment plan to develop legislation below the level of laws or any appropriate measures to ensure sectors and localities integrate gender concepts into sector and local programmes, projects and activities. They will modify project assessments before approval and upon completion, coordinate with relevant sectors in gathering data and developing a statistical database related to the status and gender equality trends with segregation of sex, age, age group, disability, place of residence and socio-economic status as well as publishing and distributing data to society and stakeholders to use as references to define policies, strategies, legislation in response to violence against women and girls.

Financial sector: responsible for allocating and providing appropriate levels of State budget to ensure the accomplishment of implementation of the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025), developing legislation lower than the level of laws or any appropriate measures to enforce sectors and localities integrating gender concepts into the allocation, implementation and reporting of the budget with a focus on gender roles in Lao PDR.

Health sector: works to deliver health care services, offer free prenatal care and childbirth services, provide knowledge on nutrition and family planning to reduce maternal and child mortality, enhance health sector data collection with segregation of sex, age, ethnicity and place of residence to encompass key issues such as unsafe abortion, mothers mortality rate, breast and cervical cancer. It also focuses on health impact monitoring mechanisms, encourages rural women to work and volunteer in villages and health centres, develops legislation related to surrogacy and legal abortion, integrates gender equality concepts into curricula of schools, universities and other health educational institutions.

Education and sports sector: responsible for developing children and women's education through ensuring optimal conditions for women and girls to attend all levels of education along with men and boys, including accessing pre-school, compulsory primary and secondary education to pursue vocational education. It provides inputs into laws, champions national traditions and customs for students in and out of school, undertakes policies on scholarship provision for women and girls, sponsors vocational training, provides financial support for women and girls who drop out of school to gain scholarships and vocational training, especially disadvantaged women and girls in remote areas. It also provides gender equality education and knowledge for kindergarten, primary, secondary, vocational and university students, enhances educational institutions and provides secure environments to ensure gender equality.

Labour and social welfare sector and Lao Federation of Trade Unions: focus on promoting women to obtain education and vocational training in agriculture, commerce and services, provide vocational training and financial support for women migrant workers without documents and those at risk and in disadvantaged groups to have stable employment, monitor and evaluate implementation of policies and laws to ensure women and men with the same positions and responsibilities are equally paid, consider amendment of Article 86, the Law on Labour to include the definition of sexual harassment and application of punitive measures as well as develop legislation on employing women workers and migrant labourers.

Public works and transport sector: considers, improves and builds appropriate basic infrastructure through ensuring participation of children, women, disadvantaged groups, and disabled persons in city-development planning to create employment opportunities and ensure accessibility for all groups.

Agriculture and forestry sector: trains and provides financial support for women in rural and remote areas to operate cultivation and animal husbandry and agricultural production linked to the processing industry. It also strengthens production groups to move towards cooperative/unions, resettles and provides secure occupations for ethnic minorities – especially disadvantaged women, distributes agricultural land to enable farming-animal husbandry, integrates gender equality into national policies related to the agriculture sector and ensures women in agriculture groups – the main targets of economic benefits – can generate income for themselves and families, particularly those disadvantaged or in poverty.

Industry and commerce sector: responsible for promoting women to operate businesses through providing technical assistance. Such advice and training covers handicrafts, processing industry, financial services, business operations, business-related laws and regulations and creating favourable conditions for entrepreneurs to improve their

businesses, specifically micro-enterprises and SMEs to compete in the ASEAN economic integration era. In particular, vocational and marketing training is provided to strengthen the processing industry and handicraft groups.

Banking sector: promotes women in business by developing policies and regulations to encourage and create conditions for women, consistent with each type of financial institution, to overcome barriers preventing them from accessing credit, improves the database system and statistics regarding access to financial services.

Natural resources and environment sector: integrates gender equality into strategic policies, climate change action plans, organizes training on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation to diminish climate change and disaster risks.

Home affairs sector: responsible for developing legislation and special provisional measures to create conditions for women to obtain management and leadership positions at each level. It strengthens civil servants specified in management and leadership on professional and political-administrative theory, develops gender equality policy for civil servants in the administrative sector as well as raises awareness of gender equality and women's full participation to politicians, chief of villages and society.

Information, culture and tourism sector: responsible for drafting the Decree on Culture Families Building, Decree on National Costumes, Decree on Culture Management in Public Places, Decree on Cultural Ritual Management as well as advocating and disseminating directions and policies, State law and regulations, national and Lao women's cultural heritage. It upholds treaties related to women's rights and gender equality, develops and propagates gender equality articles through the media, periodically monitors and evaluates access to information and gender equality knowledge of people, including persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and rural communities.

Post and telecommunications sector: secures women's access to information, including developing information and communications technology related to gender equality, prevents production and dissemination of pornography and creates conditions for integration of gender equality into curricula of educational institutions.

Justice sector: coordinates with all relevant sectors to review, develop and amend laws to reflect the reality on the ground in line with treaties related to gender equality. It widely and extensively propagates and disseminates laws, legislation at central and local levels to strengthen compliance with laws and regulations.

Justice, public security, people's prosecutor and people's court sectors: responsible for the justice system for women, improving and reinforcing village dispute resolution committees, justice staff, police officers, prosecutors, judges, juries at all levels in the implementation of Law on Gender Equality and other laws related to gender equality. They improve complaints-receiving mechanisms, monitors and inspects implementation of complaints solution with ensuring gender equality.

Lao Women's Union: prevents violation of women's rights and ensures women receive the same legitimate rights and benefits in all areas as men. It raises awareness of policies, directions and State laws, national cultural heritage, treaties related to gender equality for ethnic minority Lao women, families and communities. It provides advice and protects women and children at central, Vientiane Capital, province, district, and village levels.

Lao Front for National Development: is society's political alliance organization that educates and unifies people of all ethnic groups, especially ethnic minority people in remote areas. It is responsible for creating awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality and the eradication of harmful practices, norms and traditions that discriminate on the gender roles of community, district, tribal and religious leaders, as well as men and boys.

Lao Federation of Trade Unions and Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union: mass organizations responsible for advertising and disseminating policies and directions, State laws, treaties related to women's rights at central and local levels consistent with their administrative scope.

Other relevant sectors, local authorities, social organizations and business units within the country and overseas as well as ethnic minority Lao people shall jointly contribute to implementing the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) in accordance with their roles.

III. Monitoring, encouraging, evaluation and summary report

CAWMC at central and local levels and all sectors shall participate in monitoring, inspecting and evaluating implementation progress of the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) as follows:

1. Office of the NCAWMC Secretariat shall report to the NCAWMC on the implementation progress of the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) nationwide.
2. Develop comprehensive tools and systems for monitoring, inspecting and assessing the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) and propagating, publicizing methods used.
3. CAWMC at ministry, organization and provincial/district levels shall regularly follow-up and inspect elaboration and implementation progress of the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) with support from the Advancement of Women and Mother-Child Divisions, Sub-divisions and Units in summarizing and reporting to the NCAWMC.
4. CAWMC at all levels shall periodically organize meetings to obtain lessons learned and gather clear, systematic and comprehensive information provided to the NCAWMC Secretariat.
5. NCAWMC shall coordinate with the Ministry of Planning and Investment to ensure that gender equality and advancement of women's efforts are integrated into the national socio-economic development plan.
6. Advancement of Women and Mother-Child Divisions, Sub-divisions, and Units shall organize quarterly meetings.
7. For summary purposes, the office of the NCAWMC Secretariat shall organize meetings with the CAWMCs of ministries, organizations every three months and meetings with CAWMCs of ministries, organizations and provinces every six months.
8. NCAWMC shall organize an open meeting annually.
9. Office of the NCAWMC Secretariat shall coordinate with all relevant sectors to evaluate implementation of the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) in the mid-term (2023) and late-term (2025), including implementation of obligations under the CEDAW framework, Beijing+25 Declaration and Platform for Action and SDGs.
10. CAWMC every six months, yearly, mid-term and after five years summarize and report implementation of gender equality of sectors and levels to NCAWMC.
11. Reports from sectors and local levels shall use data segregated by sex, age, ethnicity, disability, place of residence and socio-economic status.
12. NCAWMC shall regularly summarize and report implementation of the 4th Five-year National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2021-2025) to the government.

Annex 1

Table 1: Members of the National Asse

No.	Description	VII Legislature				VIII Legislature				IX Legislature								
		Total	Women	%	Men	Total	Women	%	Men	Total	Women	%	Men					
1	Members of the National Assembly	132	33	25	99	75			149	41	27.52	108	72.48	164	36	21.95	128	78.05
2	1 st and 2 nd Provincial People's Congress								630	115	31.94	245	68.05	492	150	30.48	342	69.52

Annex 1 Source: National Assembly, 2021

Table 2: Women in managerial and leadership positions at all levels, 2011

No.	Content	Total	Women		Men	
			Number	%	Number	%
I	Central level	148	32	21,62	116	78,38
	Minister and equivalent rank	43	10	23,26	33	76,74
	Deputy Minister and equivalent rank	105	22	20,95	83	79,05

Source: The office of the Secretariat of the NCAWMC, dated 8 July 2021

Table 3: Women in managerial and leadership positions at all levels, 2020

No.	Content	Total	Women		Men	
			Number	%	Number	%
I	Central level	9.592	3.457	36,04	6.135	63,96
	Type I	47	7	14,89	40	85,11
	Type II	430	87	20,23	343	79,77
	Type III	1.232	310	25,16	922	74,84
	Type IV	2.303	740	32,13	1563	67,87
	Type V	3.563	1.421	39,88	2142	60,12
	Type VI	1.012	439	43,38	573	56,62
	Type VII	636	272	42,77	364	57,23
	Type VIII	369	181	49,05	188	50,95
II	Provincial level	13.466	4.343	32,25	9.123	67,75
	Type I	105	19	18,09	86	81,90
	Type II	228	42	18,42	186	81,58
	Type III	436	68	15,63	368	84,40
	Type IV	1.509	257	17,03	1.252	82,97
	Type V	3.355	870	25,93	2.485	74,07
	Type VI	4.807	1.690	35,16	3.117	64,84

	Type VII	1.555	644	41,41	911	58,58
	Type VIII	1.471	753	51,19	718	48,81
III	District level	46.424	15.330			
	Type I	6	0	0	6	100
	Type II	144	2	1,39	142	98,61
	Type III	765	99	12,94	666	87,06
	Type IV	3.352	495	14,77	2.857	85,23
	Type V	6.884	1.419	20,61	5.465	79,39
	Type VI	15.689	4.487	28,60	11.202	71,40
	Type VII	13.420	5.287	39,40	8.133	60,60
	Type VIII	6.164	3.541	57,45	2.623	42,55
IV	Village level	30.995	2.855	9,21	28.140	90,79
	Chief of village	8.448	199	2,36	8.249	97,64
	Vice Chief of village	22.547	2.656	11,78	19.891	88,2

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, March 2020

Table 4: Participation in the international platforms, 2019

No.	Content	Total	Women		Men	
	Ambassador	135	6	4,4	129	95,6
	Minister Counsellor	42	1	2,4	41	97,6
	Consulate general	46	6	13	40	87
	Counsellor	54	12	22,2	42	77,8
	First Secretary	153	26	17	127	83
	Second Secretary	205	47	22,9	158	77,1
	Third Secretary	225	68	30,2	157	69,8
		860	116	19,3%	744	80,7%

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, March 2020

Table 5: Access to education rates

No.	Content	2015			2020			Percent age
		Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	2015-2020
I	Primary school							
	5-year-old children enrolled in pre-school rate	66%			82,7%	82,5%	82,8%	+16,6%
	Net enrolment in primary school rate	97,2%			98,9%	98,7%	99%	+1,7%
	Students remained in primary school rate	78,3%			82,1%,	84,5%	79,8%	+3,8%
	Primary school dropout rate	5,8%			4,3%	3,7%	4,9%	-1,5%
II	Lower secondary school							
	Overall students enrolled in lower secondary school rate	78,1%			83,3%	81,9%	84,6%	+5,2%
	Secondary school dropout rate	7,7%			10,3%	9,7%	10,8%	+2,6%
III	Upper secondary school							
	Upper secondary school enrolment rate	93,3%	91,8%	94,8%	82,4%	79,6%	84,9%	-10,9%
	Overall students enrolled in upper secondary school rate	45,8%			54,8%	52,0%	57,5%	+9%
	Upper secondary school dropout rate	4,9%			8,8%	8,7%	8,8%	+3,9%

Source: Ministry of Education and Sports, 2020

Table 6: Women and young men and women of working age receiving vocational training 2016-2020

Sector	Labour and Social Welfare sector			Public sector, private business units, and project			Total number		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Agriculture and Forestry	859	576	283	119.638	72.567	47.071	120.497	73.143	47.354
Industry	6.634	4.350	2.284	94.409	68.969	25.440	101.043	73.319	27.724
Service	6.795	2.932	3.863	190.929	85.314	105.615	197.724	88.246	109.478
Total	14.288	7.948	6.430	404.976	178.126	184.556	419.264	234.708	184.556

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, 2021

Table 7: Domestic and overseas recruitment

Sector	Domestic recruitment			Recruitment for overseas jobs			Total number		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Agriculture and Forestry	66.787	47.257	19.530	34.728	21.185	13.543	101.515	68.442	33.073
Industry	99.336	77.498	21.838	62.140	35.834	26.306	161.476	113.332	48.144
Service	85.851	44.253	41.598	210.691	90.386	120.305	296.542	134.639	161.903
Total	251.974	188.538	63.436	307.559	147.405	160.154	559.533	316.413	243.120

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, 2021

Table 8: Employment of Lao citizens in the 25-64 age group, 2017

Sector	Employment citizens in the 24-65 age group		
	Men	Women	Total
Agriculture and Forestry	203.408	221.137	424.545
Industry	72.668	128.061	200.729
Service	293.653	332.782	626.435
Total	569.728	681.980	1.251.709

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, 2021

Table 9: Members of the National Asse

Unit: billion Kip

No.	Description	Lending value of commercial banks			Lending value of deposit-taking financial institutions			Lending value of non-deposit-taking financial institutions			Lending value of Credit unions			Total value		
		Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
	Total	75.278,86 100,00%	16.591,46 22,04%	58.687,40 77,96%	1.055,93 100,00%	300,20 28,43%	755,73 71,57%	193,39 100,00%	87,76 45,38%	105,63 54,62%	35,64 38,34%	57,32 61,66%	76.621,13 100,00%	17.015,06 22,21%	59.606,07 77,79%	
1	Industry Sector	16.594,73 100,00%	849,65 5,12%	15.745,08 94,88%	302,70 100,00%	1,12 0,37%	301,58 99,63%	88,24 100,00%	0,75 0,85%	87,49 99,15%	0,00 0,01%	45,00 99,99%	17.030,66 100,00%	851,52 5,00%	16.179,14 95,00%	
2	Construction Sector	16.585,75 100,00%	1.489,40 8,98%	15.096,35 91,02%	0,00 100,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 100,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	16.585,75 100,00%	1.489,40 8,98%	15.096,35 91,02%	
3	Assemble technical materials sector	16.570,67 100,00%	124,28 0,75%	16.446,39 99,25%	0,00 100,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 100,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	16.570,67 100,00%	124,28 0,75%	16.446,39 99,25%	
4	Handicraft sector	16.700,00 100,00%	30,06 0,18%	16.669,94 99,82%	0,00 100,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 100,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	16.700,00 100,00%	30,06 0,18%	16.669,94 99,82%	
5	Commerce sector	16.593,36 100,00%	5.095,82 30,71%	11.497,54 69,29%	300,19 100,00%	109,45 36,46%	190,74 63,54%	87,76 100,00%	41,71 47,53%	46,05 52,47%	12,80 35,91%	22,84 64,09%	17.016,95 100,00%	5.259,78 30,91%	11.757,17 69,09%	
6	Agriculture and forestry sector	16.583,42 100,00%	970,13 5,85%	15.613,29 94,15%	300,42 100,00%	14,36 4,78%	286,06 95,22%	87,78 100,00%	17,38 19,80%	70,40 80,20%	10,63 29,83%	25,01 70,17%	17.007,25 100,00%	1.012,50 5,95%	15.994,75 94,05%	
7	Postal transport sector	16.545,79 100,00%	177,04 1,07%	16.368,75 98,93%	0,00 100,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 100,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	0,00 0,00%	16.545,79 100,00%	177,04 1,07%	16.368,75 98,93%	
8	Service sector	16.589,95 100,00%	2.410,52 14,53%	14.179,43 85,47%	300,81 100,00%	3,70 1,23%	297,11 98,77%	87,71 100,00%	2,07 2,36%	85,64 97,64%	0,03 0,08%	37,47 99,92%	17.015,98 100,00%	2.416,32 14,20%	14.599,66 85,80%	
9	Others	193.070,32 100,00%	5.444,58 2,82%	187.625,74 97,18%	300,21 100,00%	171,57 57,15%	128,64 42,85%	87,78 100,00%	25,85 29,45%	61,93 70,55%	12,18 34,16%	23,48 65,84%	193.493,96 100,00%	5.654,18 2,92%	187.839,78 97,08%	

Source: Bank of the Lao PDR, 2020

The figures of the total value and the male value are self-calculated. Calculation formula: the female value multiplied by the percentage of males divided by the percentage of females

Annex 2

Strengthening Gender Equality

There are five methods²⁷ for strengthening gender equality as follows:

1. Raising awareness of gender equality.
2. Non-discrimination on gender equality.
3. Promoting gender equality.
4. Ensuring gender equality.
5. Using sex-segregated statistics.

1. Raising Awareness of Gender Equality

Gender equality awareness raising can be carried out in various forms and methods such as legal dissemination and trainings, educating and integrating gender concepts into the curriculum, producing media, advocating and raising awareness and understanding in broad and extensive manners across society and families, creating activities aiming at altering the practices, culture, norms, beliefs, and attitudes which are considered as defaming, discriminating and impeding gender equality.

2. Non-discrimination on Gender Equality

Gender equality non-discrimination shall be operated as follows:

- 1) Raising awareness and understanding of gender equality.
- 2) Creating policies, laws, and regulations to administer gender equality.
- 3) Integrating gender concept in all areas of work.
- 4) Encouraging individuals, families, and organizations to take up duties of promoting all people participating in gender equality activities.
- 5) Promoting gender roles and creating the environment for gender non-discrimination.

3. Promoting Gender Equality

Promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women by creating opportunities for women to receive education, training, development, and to participate in all social activities and family life while receiving equal interests as men in the same conditions.

²⁷ Specified in Article 20 of the Law on Gender Equality, adopted by the National Assembly in 2019 and promulgated by the Presidential Decree No.029/P, dated 9 January 2020

4. Ensuring Gender Equality

Ensuring gender equality shall include:

- 1) Prioritizing women when having the same conditions and criteria as men.
- 2) Specifying women ratio in management and leadership positions.
- 3) Educating and training women to increase women's knowledge and capacities.
- 4) Creating conditions for women receiving subsidies and other policies.

Nothing provided at this point shall be considered discrimination.

5. Using Sex-segregated Statistics.

Annex 2 Using sex-segregated statistics is the use of data, figures, and index regarding men and women, which reflects the difference, equality of the status women and men in all aspects of life, in defining policies, strategies, planning, action plans, projects, activities, advocating, monitoring, inspecting and evaluating the progress of gender equality periodically.

Annex 3

Indicators of the Gender Equality Index

(Source: Human Development Report, 2020, UNDP)

Globally, there are two sources for calculating and evaluating gender equality, namely the Human Development Report (by UNDP) and the Global Gender Gap Report (by World Economic Forum). The UNDP report does not provide a country ranking but divides the countries into five groups; the World Economic Forum report provides the country ranking as it can be seen in the social media.

For the Lao PDR, the index used in the development plan has been taken from the UNDP report and the government has adopted it according to the Population Development Policy created by the Ministry of Planning and Investment. As a result, in the 9th National Socio-economic Development Plan and this National Action Plan on Gender Equality, the index used is consistent with such policy.

1. The Calculation of the Gender Development Index (GDI)

It measures gender gaps in human development achievements by accounting for the disparities between women and men through three dimensions of human development, including health, knowledge, and living standard by using the same component indicators as in the Human Development Index (HDI).

The gender development index is the ratio of the Human Development Index calculated separately for women and men by using the same methodology as in the HDI. It is a direct measure of gender gaps showing the Human Development Index with the percentage of women and men.

When the index is at 0, it indicates the lowest level of development and if the index reaches 1, it indicates the highest level of development.

This means that the calculation of the Gender Development Index is a result of the measure of the gaps between the Human Development Index of women and men as follows:

- **Health dimension indicators:** the average life expectancy is measured by the Life Expectancy Index.
- **Knowledge dimension indicators:** the average age of schooling and the average year of completing education are measured by the Education Index.
- **Living standards dimension indicators:** Gross domestic product per capita (\$) is measured by the Gross Domestic Product Index.

2. The Calculation of the Gender Inequality Index (GII)

The Gender Inequality Index reflects the sexual disadvantages, it shows the loss in human development because of the unequal achievements between women and men in three dimensions. When the index is at 0, it shows the highest gender equality and if the index reaches 1, it indicates the highest gender inequality.

There are three main dimensions to calculate the Gender Inequality Index:

- **Health dimension indicators: measured by**
 - Female mortality rate.
 - Teenagers' childbirth rate.
- **Empowerment dimension indicators: measured by**
 - The ratio of women in the National Assembly.
 - The ratio of female and male adolescents above 25 years with at least graduate secondary school.
- **Economic status dimension indicators:** illustrate the participation in the labour market, which are measured by the participation rates of men and women workforces above 15 years of age.

3. The Calculation of the Women Development Index

The indicators and the calculation of the Women Development Index also include three dimensions similar to the calculation of the Gender Equality Index, but this section shall calculate only women's index.

4. The Empowerment of Women

There are three dimensions for measuring the empowerment of women, including reproductive health and family planning, violence against women and girls, and socio-economic empowerment, which comprise of 13 indicators as follows:

- **Dimensions of reproductive health and family planning: 4 indicators**
 - Prenatal care at least once.
 - The ratio of childbirth with skilled birth attendants.
 - The ratio of contraception (any methods).
 - Being unable to access family planning.
- **Dimensions of violence against women and girls: 4 indicators**
 - The ratio of married women by the age of 18.
 - The ratio of female genital mutilation.
 - The ratio of women experiencing violence from intimate partners.
 - The ratio of women experiencing violence from others.

- **Dimensions of socio-economic empowerment: 5 indicators**

- The proportion of women graduate the vocational education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.
- The proportion of women students who graduate the higher education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.
- The proportion of the women's employment with the high and middle administrative levels.
- Women having an account in financial institutions or providing mobile money services.
- Salary payment for women taking maternity leave.

5. Gender Gaps in Lifespan

This indicates gender gaps concerning the selection and opportunities in the lifespan of childhood and youth, adult and elderly, which includes 13 indicators in total.

- **Childhood and youth indicators: 5 indicators**

- Sex ratio at birth.
- The ratio of overall enrolment in primary school.
- The ratio of overall enrolment in lower secondary school.
- The ratio of overall enrolment in upper secondary school.
- The teenager's unemployment rates.

- **Adult indicators: 6 indicators**

- The ratio of citizens with at least graduate secondary school
- The total unemployment rates
- The ratio of women's employment in non-agriculture sectors
- The ratio of women National Assembly members
- The ratio of women civil servants in the local government
- Average time doing domestic work and caring without payment

- **Elderly indicators: 1 indicator**

- The number of retired people

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