



# 35<sup>th</sup> Pre-Session of the UPR LAO PDR

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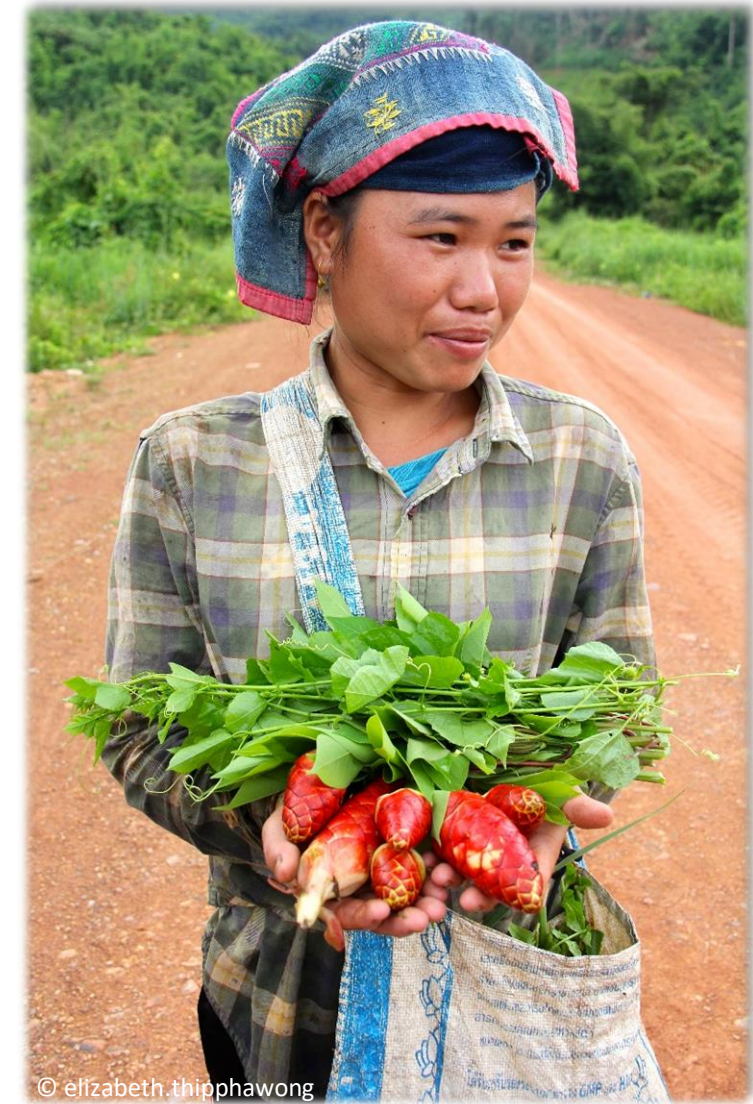
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# ISSUE

## Unpaid & Informal Women Workers

*“A large proportion of women are unpaid family workers, partly due to the influence of traditional norms and discriminatory stereotypes regarding gender roles, and the relatively low level of educational attainment among women”.* (CEDAW COB 8 & 9, para. 37(e))

- **Formal Labour Force Participation Rate** → **Women: 36.5%** , **Men: 45.2%** (Lao Statistics Bureau, 2018)
  - **Women make up 63.4%** of the population outside the labour force (Lao Statistics Bureau, 2018)
    - 20.7% note family responsibility as the reason for not working
    - 30.4% note a family member said to stay home
  - **Contributing family workers** account for the biggest share of employment, **45.6%** of which are **women** (ILO DWCP, 2017)
  - **Among women in the labour force, 61%** are **unpaid family workers** (ILO DWCP, 2017)
- With limited **knowledge** or **access** to labour protection, social benefits, or remuneration, women are vulnerable to extreme poverty, poor health, and lower quality of life
- Social norms that prioritize women’s role to household and family care increases dependence on male family members and can enable conditions for **gender-based violence**



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# Recommendation

## *Increase localized access to vocational training for rural and remote women.*

- Ensure training and learning materials are offered in **local dialects** and **multiple mediums** to reduce marginalization of non-Lao speaking communities
- Conduct training at **village level** to mitigate factors preventing women's participation i.e.: safety while travelling, domestic tasks, child & family care
- Improve **access to markets** for rural communities to ensure benefits of education are reflected in income generation

**CEDAW COB 8 & 9 (14 Nov 2018):** para. 36(e), 38(a)(e)(f), 44(d), 46(a)

**UPR 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle Recommendations (*accepted*):** 21, 32, 36, 80, 91, 103, 108

**SDG Targets:** 1.B | 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 | 5.4 | 8.3, 8.5 | 10.1, 10.4



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# ISSUE

## Women's Political Participation

*“Most targets for the representation of women, set at 20-25%, are unable to produce a critical mass for change”.* (CEDAW COB 8 & 9, para. 21)

- **87% of households are headed by males** (*Lao Statistics Bureau, 2018*)
- **National Assembly Representative → Women: 27.5%, Men: 72.5%** (*UN Women Factsheet, 2019*)
- **Women constitute only 8% of Deputy Provincial Governors, and 6% of District Mayors** (*CEDAW COB 8 & 9, para. 31*)

- Criteria for earning political affiliation intensifies intersections of women, and systematically favours traditionally privileged groups
- Patrilocal structures, capacity gaps, and disproportionate workloads, restrict women's decision-making capacity, political participation, and leadership opportunities
- Underrepresentation in all levels of governance leaves the voices of women unheard and their needs unaddressed



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# Recommendation

*Enforce a **30% quota** for women's representation in all levels of Government, especially Village Committees.*

- Ensure **gender parity quotas** are applied by District Authorities to improve **systematic accountability** at local level
- Foster **enabling environments** for women's leadership through localized gender awareness training
- Mitigate **capacity gaps** by amending political affiliation requirements, a major deterrent for women holding official political positions

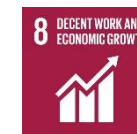


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**CEDAW COB 8 & 9 (14 Nov 2018):** para. 22(a)(b)(c), 32(a)(b)(c), 46(c)(d)

**UPR 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle Recommendations (accepted):** 32, 33, 34, 79

**SDG Targets:** 5.5 | 10.2



# ISSUE

## Child, Early & Forced Marriage

“Lao PDR has the **highest** rate of early marriage in the ASEAN region”. (UNDP)

- **1/3** of women marry before age 18 (UN Women); **1/10** marry before age 15 (UNDP)
- Family Law sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 years
  - Early marriage for individuals 15-18 years is permitted in ‘special cases’ i.e.: teen pregnancy (Article 9)
  - Required consent from parents, guardians, judges, courts, or any other authority is not specified
- The punishments for unlawful child marriage are:
  - 1-3 years imprisonment
  - Fine of 1-3 million LAK [\$110 - \$340 USD] (Law on Violence Against Women & Children, 2015)
- Early marriage is a leading factor of high female secondary school dropout rates (UN Women)

- Child marriage is especially frequent in rural/remote communities, where girls’ families are provided with labour and financial support through dowries
- Cultural acceptance, language barriers of local dialects, and lack of enforcement at the village level are significant factors which hindered the success of National Action Plan (2016-2020) initiatives



# Recommendation

*Ensure strict application and enforcement of the Family Law, and effective measures for increasing knowledge and awareness.*

- Improve legal literacy, especially on minimum age for lawful marriage **and** subsequent penalties
- Provide information on Family Law in **local dialects**
- Engage **community leaders** in raising awareness and shifting socio-cultural norms
- Take comprehensive measures to support girls' **completion** of secondary school

**CEDAW COB 8 & 9 (14 Nov 2018):** para. 36(b)(c)(d), 50(a)(b)(c)

**UPR 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle Recommendations (*accepted*):** 15, 32, 33, 46, 47, 105, 106,

**SDG Targets:** 5.3 | 16.7



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# THANK YOU

YOUR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ARE MOST WELCOME

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