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**Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations  
Human Rights Council – 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Universal Periodical Review  
Geneva, 20 January 2015  
LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

Mr. President,

The Holy See welcomes the Delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on the occasion of the presentation of the second National Report to the Universal Periodic Review.

My Delegation commends the steps implemented by the Lao PDR Government to reduce poverty, to improve health care, especially to reduce the rate of infant mortality, and to provide greater access to education. The ratification of the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) is also a positive sign of commitment to the defence of human rights.

While a number of undesirable factors, including the extensive prevalence of Unexploded Ordnances, are a hindrance to a more rapid and effective compliance with international human rights instruments, some situations require urgent attention.

My Delegation wishes to present the following recommendations:

- To continue implementing the legislation against all forms of trafficking, and to formulate a specific legislation to combat human trafficking, especially of women and children.
- To continue carrying out the principles contained in the CAT, with a specific focus on the elimination of arbitrary detention, especially of minors, and of violence occurring at the hands of law enforcement personnel.
- To reinforce respect for the rights to freedom of religion, freedom of conscience and free association.

Thank you Mr. President.