**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT MISSION OF SINGAPORE AT THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) OF THE LAO PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC AT THE 35TH UPR WORKING GROUP, 21 JANUARY 2020**

Singapore warmly welcomes the Lao delegation and acknowledges the government’s efforts since its last review to promote and protect the rights of its people.

We commend the Lao PDR’s sustained efforts to provide for the education of children, in particular efforts to improve educational infrastructure in rural areas and to allocate 17% of its annual GDP to the Education Sector. Singapore **recommends** that to address the teacher shortage, the government consider working, where appropriate, with bilateral partners and relevant UN agencies such as UNICEF to attract and train volunteer teachers.

 We also commend the Government’s ongoing poverty reduction efforts, including the Poverty Reduction Fund Phase III, which has decreased poverty in villages by 16.97%. Singapore **recommends** that the Government continue to develop policies and legislation for inclusive growth and poverty reduction.

 Finally, Singapore remains concerned about the disappearance of Mr. Sombath Somphone since 2012 and urges the Lao government to seriously investigate and resolve the case in an expeditious manner and bring much needed relief to Sombath’s family.

Singapore supports the Lao PDR’s development goals and is committed to continuing our strong technical cooperation. As a close neighbour and fellow ASEAN member, Singapore wishes the Lao PDR every success in its efforts to achieve its Vision 2030 and graduate from LDC status in 2024.

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