**35th SESSION OF THE UPR WORKING GROUP**

**REVIEW OF LAO PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

**21 January 2020**

**Statement of Croatia**

Madam President,

Croatia welcomes the delegation of Laos and wishes to thank them for the presentation of their report.

We commend the progress made regarding the harmonisation of the national legislation in line with international standards and positive steps taken towards establishing a rule of law. However, more efforts are needed to address the issues of ensuring the enjoyment of equal human rights to all segments of society.

We are troubled by reports showing abuses and violations of fundamental rights, practices of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and torture. The death penalty is applicable even for a range of non-lethal crimes, including trading in and possession of narcotics.

Furthermore, we regret to see that incidents of torture continue to be reported, including through severe beatings and electric shocks.

Therefore, we have two recommendations:

1. **Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty and enact legislation abolishing the death penalty for all crimes and in all circumstances;**
2. **Ratify and implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and establish an independent, efficient and well-resourced National Preventive Mechanism with powers to conduct unimpeded visits to all places of detention.**

Croatia commends Laos for the progress achieved so far and wishes them a successful review session.

I thank you.