**Permanent Mission of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

**35th Session of the UPR Working Group**

**Statement at the 3rd UPR of Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

**January 21, 2020**

**Mr. Vice-President**,

Afghanistan warmly welcomes the distinguished delegation of Lao PDR and thanks them for the presentation of their national report.

We acknowledge the progress made in strengthening the legal and policy framework in support of the Human Rights and the significant progress in decreasing illiteracy and gender disparity.

However, concern remains on issues such as pressure over the media and limitations on the practice of the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

With the aim to further strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights in the country, we wish to make the following recommendations:

1. Consider establishing a national human rights institution fully compliant with the Paris Principles.
2. Redouble its efforts to reduce maternal mortality and implement programs aimed at reducing child mortality and morbidity rates.
3. Ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers are protected, and any attacks on them are subject to prompt, thorough and independent investigation.

Finally, Afghanistan wishes Laos every success in the current cycle of the UPR.

**Thank you Mr. Vice-President**