**Intervention by the Republic of Cyprus**

**Tuesday, 21 January 2020, 14.30-18.00**

**UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

**35th Session**

**Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

Mr. President,

Cyprus welcomes the participation of the Delegation from the Lao People’s Democratic Republic at today’s UPR, as well as the presentation of its Report.

Cyprus notes the progress made by Laos since its last review, including the adoption of the Strategic Development Plan for 2016-2025, the integration of the SDGs into the country’s planning framework, as well as reduction in illiteracy.

Cyprus would like to recommend:

1. Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture
2. Issue a standing invitation to all Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council
3. Ensure the right to freedom of expression.
4. Take steps with the view of prohibiting early and forced marriage
5. Take immediate actions to criminalise the sexual exploitation, abuse and sale of children

Thank you.