**Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic**

**Statement by the Republic of Poland**

*21st January 2020, Geneva*

Mr. President,

Poland would like to thank the delegation of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic for its national report and for active participation in the UPR process.

Poland observes with appreciation the efforts to implement the recommendations made during the second UPR cycle, including efforts to improve and develop national laws and legislations in line with the UN human rights standards.

However, we are concerned about the situation of the human rights defenders in Laos, including detentions and enforced disappearances such as the case of disappearance of Sombath Somphone seven years ago. We also note with concern the forced relocation of a number of local communities as a result of large development projects and investments.

Therefore, Poland recommends to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic :

• to conduct thorough, independent and impartial investigations to clarify all unexplained enforced disappearances of human rights defenders in Laos;

• to ensure that population relocations as a result of land concessions to development projects are carried out in accordance with relevant international standards, in particular the principle of non-discrimination, and with adequate consultation and compensation;

• to adopt legal provisions to criminalize all forms of sexual exploitation of children in compliance with international legal standards, specifically on sexual exploitation of children in prostitution, online child sexual exploitation in order to afford substantive protection to all children including those belonging to ethnic minorities.

Thank you.