

UN WOMEN IN LAO PDR



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) is the United Nations agency working to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that these standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls universally. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas:

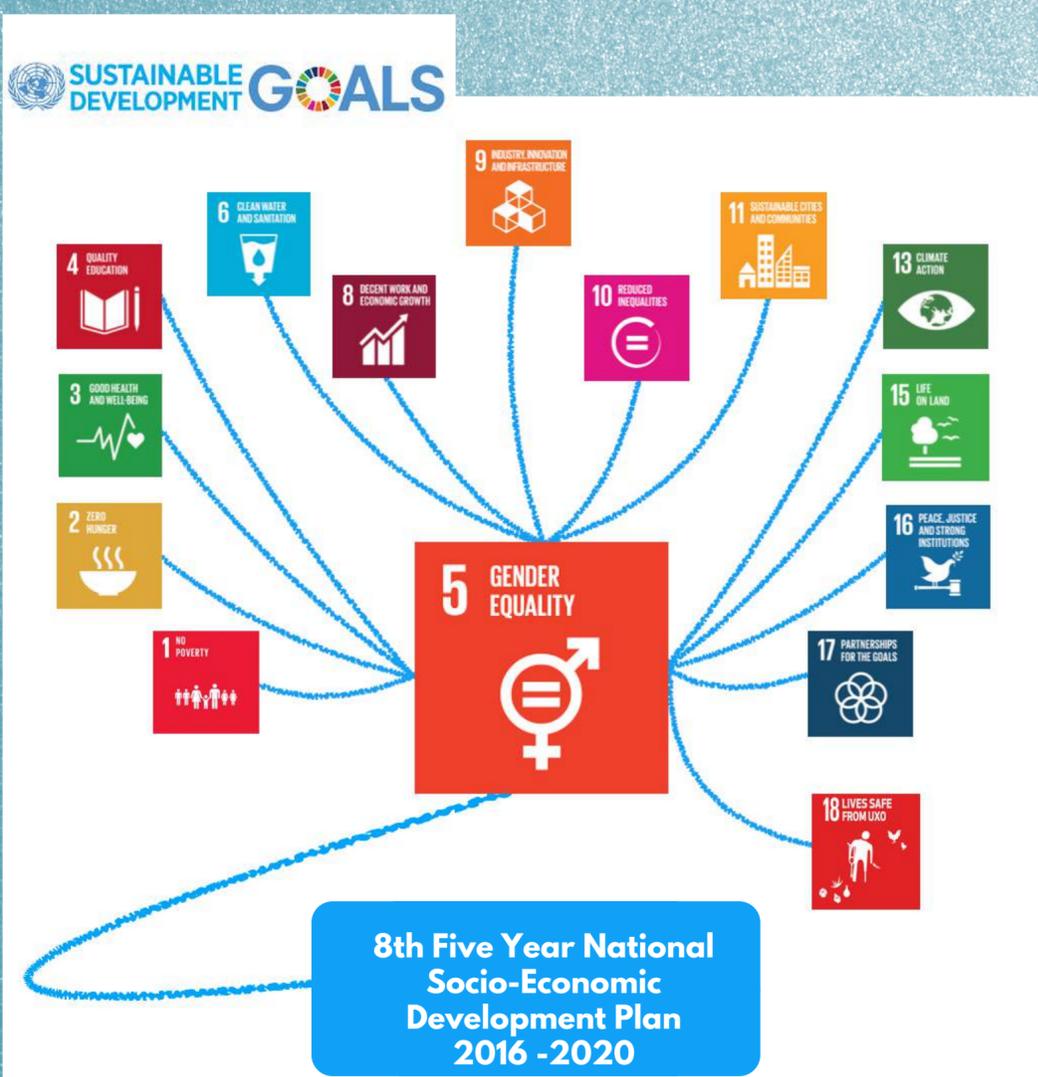
- increasing women's leadership and participation;
- ending violence against women;
- engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes;
- enhancing women's economic empowerment;
- and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting.



UN WOMEN COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

UN Women's Strategic Plan (2018-2021) shapes the strategic direction, objectives and approaches to support efforts to attain gender equality and empower all women and girls. UN Women relies on four comparative organizational advantages to implement the Strategic Plan at the worldwide level:

- UN Women's ability to link global and national policy development for gender equality and women's empowerment;
- UN Women strength in terms of expertise in and knowledge of gender equality and women's empowerment in the UN system;
- UN Women's longstanding relationship with women's organizations;
- UN Women's comprehensive and integrated support to the three pillars of the UN: peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.



GLOBAL LEVEL

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders in 2015, embody a roadmap for progress that is sustainable and leaves none behind. Gender equality is the focus of a stand-alone goal (SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) and its nine targets. Many SDGs (14 out of the 17) include specific targets addressing economic, social, political and cultural conditions that reproduce gender inequality. Gender equality is mainstreamed into Agenda 2030 through a number of gender-related targets. Agenda 2030 thus emphasizes deep connections between gender-based discrimination and economic and social inequality, a central concern of its global vision for sustainable development. UN Women acts to empower women and girls across all its programmes and advocacy including in its mandate the achievement of SDG 5.

NATIONAL LEVEL

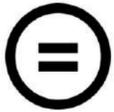
Since 2016, the Lao government has localized and integrated the SDGs into the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the Eighth NSEDP, with around **60%** of the 160 NSEDP indicators linked to the SDGs.



GENDER EQUALITY IN LAO PDR



LAO PDR HAS A POPULATION OF 6.8 MILLION PEOPLE



UN'S GLOBAL GENDER INEQUALITY INDEX, LAO PDR IS RANKED 138TH OF 188 COUNTRIES



ONE THIRD OF ALL GIRLS IN LAO PDR GETS MARRIED BEFORE THE AGE 18



PRIMARY EDUCATION ENROLMENT RATES ARE 78.7% OF GIRLS AND 80.6% OF BOYS

FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

72.5%



27.5%



Despite several achievements, gender inequality in Lao PDR is still a challenge and affects the main development areas in the country. UN Women work feeds directly into this context. Working in Lao PDR since 1993, UN Women Country Program office in Lao PDR has maintained a strategic focus on supporting Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW), Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) and Global Norms, Policies and Standards.

Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW)

Focusing on the objective of preventing and providing essential services to women experiencing violence, UN Women focuses on: i) technical support to promote a multi-sectoral response to women experiencing violence by conducting mapping of service sectors available for women seeking help, introducing Essential Service Package (joint initiative by UN Women, UNFPA and WHO) and supporting the government bodies for national action plan on EVAW; ii) Capacity building of Village Dispute Resolution Committee on applying gender-responsive and victim-centered approaches when handling VAW cases; iii) Strengthening coordination mechanism by linking Village Dispute Resolution Committee to the existing service providers available in the local and national contexts; and iv) advocacy work such as 16 days of Activism (UNiTE Campaign) to address VAW in the community.

Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)

Access to decent employment opportunities and social security are among the most effective interventions to empower women. UN Women's priority in Lao PDR is to ensure that women, especially the poorest and most excluded, are economically empowered and benefit from national development; to promote gender equality and empower women as ways to reducing any form of discrimination; to drive job creation and income generation for women from less formal, vulnerable and unprotected occupations, to formal, decent and sustainable work opportunities. UN Women in Lao PDR collaborates closely with Lao Women's Union, other government actors and many national and international development partners, in its efforts to promote WEE. It promotes the rights of women migrant workers, workers in the informal sector and women victims in Unexploded Ordnances (UXO) affected areas through enhancing access to increased income and legal information and providing trainings for women leaders in different sectors.



Global Norms, Policies & Standards

UN Women in Lao PDR is actively supporting national legal and normative work. This includes having provided technical support in drafting the National Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2016-2020) as well as for its implementation. Priority is given to policy advice and advocacy on normative UN issues in localization of the SDGs through its work with Lao Women's Union and to assist the government to implement CEDAW. UN Women is also actively supporting the government in promoting women's participation and leadership in decision-making at all levels.



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