

# **Promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at the national and local levels**

## **Capacity Development Workshop**

24-27 October 2023

S Vang Vieng Boutique Hotel, Vang Vieng, Lao PDR

## **Aide Memoire**

### **A. Introduction**

1. The Capacity Development Workshop is being organized under the project “Building capacities for promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at national and local levels.” The project is funded by the Government of Italy and implemented by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Lao PDR and the Ministry of Home Affairs, Lao PDR.
2. The project intends to contribute to the call by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (Goal 5) based on the importance of “women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.” Commitments to the equal participation of women and men in public life, decision-making and policy development were also included in many international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and in many regional and national documents such as Constitutions and legislation.
3. The project aims to enhance the presence and leadership of women in public institutions at national and local levels in Bhutan, Lao PDR, Mauritius and Senegal. To this end, the project will support the development of an action plan in each project country that prioritizes gender equality and promotes women’s career progression toward leadership positions in the public sector.
4. Since the inception of the project in 2022, key activities have included the completion of a global review of laws, policies and good practices on gender equality in the public sector. At the country level, the project has supported the assessment by each of the four countries of measures for promoting the presence and leadership of women in public administration at the national and local levels.
5. Women in Lao PDR play a critical role in public administration, and they account for a relatively high percentage of total civil servants: 45% in 2017, 48% in 2021 and 47% in 2022. When examining administrative levels, the proportion of female civil servants stood at 46%, 44% and 49% at national, provincial and district levels respectively. However, the proportion of women in leadership and management positions is only about 18%, indicating that men occupy more than 80% of leadership positions in the public sector.

6. This workshop aims to provide guidance on enhancing women's leadership within public institutions and addressing gaps identified in the national assessment.

## **B. Objectives**

7. The objectives of the capacity development workshop are to:
  - Build participants' capacity to apply gender-responsive strategies, measures and actions to promote gender equality by increasing the presence and leadership of women at the national and subnational levels of public administration.
  - Sensitize national stakeholders and engage non-state actors, at the national and subnational levels, as partners in the design, implementation and monitoring of action planning that prioritizes gender equality in the public sector.
  - Discuss baseline information gathered from the initial gap assessment and prioritize additional capacity needs in preparation for a study tour scheduled as part of the project's activities in early 2024.

## **C. Thematic Focus and Structure**

8. To achieve the objectives outlined in section B and leverage the self-paced capacity development provided by the completion of online training modules developed by the project, the four-day workshop will primarily focus on the following themes:
  - Reviewing the status of gender equality within the civil service at both national and subnational levels.
  - Assessing gender equality policies, strategies and implementation mechanisms in public administration.
  - Discussing the gaps identified in the assessment report.
  - Exploring ways to enhance policies, practices and initiatives that foster women's career advancement towards leadership roles in the public sector.
  - Analyzing and discussing additional capacity needs in preparation for a project-organized study tour scheduled for early 2024.
  - Exploring current best practices for promoting women in leadership positions in the public sector.
  - Exploring and discussing with key women's institutions and selected ministries the potential and practical implications of an implementation plan for 2024-2025 and beyond.

9. The workshop will be structured around key plenary sessions and working group discussions. It will include question and answer sessions after experts' presentations to allow for a broader understanding of the above themes. Under the guidance of facilitators, each working group will convene to discuss specific pre-selected issues and report back to the plenary on the results of deliberations.

## **D. Participants and Resource Persons**

10. The workshop will target government decision-makers - senior and mid-level government officials from various key relevant institutions at the national and sub-national levels, including the Government Cabinet Office, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Planning

Commissioners, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Technology and Communications, and the National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children (NCAWMC), Lao Women's Union, Lao Youth Union, and the National Assembly. Other potential participants include civil society organizations in Lao PDR. Relevant officials from the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and UN Country team may also be invited to attend.

11. An international expert along with a national counterpart, will co-facilitate the workshop. Officials from UN DESA and UNDP will also serve as resource persons.

12. Attendance at the workshop will be per invitation only.

### **E. Outcomes and Outputs**

13. The workshop is expected to have the following outcomes:

- Increased awareness of existing gaps in gender equality in public administration in Lao PDR.
- Increased understanding of government officials and decision-makers of the requirements and priorities for advancing gender equality in public administration in Lao PDR.

14. The expected outputs include:

- Workshop report summarizing deliberations, conclusions and recommendations. The draft report will be circulated for comment among participants before being finalized.
- Inputs for the elaboration of an action plan that prioritizes gender equality and promotes women's career progression toward leadership positions in the public sector.
- List of key priority actions for 2024-2025 and beyond (in line with Agenda 2030).
- List of topics of priority related to gender equality in public administration for further capacity development in preparation for the study tour.

15. The results of the workshop will be used for the preparation of the draft national action plan on gender equality in the public sector.

### **F. Venue and Dates**

16. The four-day workshop is scheduled to take place from 24 to 27 October 2023 at the S Vang Vieng Boutique Hotel in Vang Vieng, Vientiane Province, Lao PDR.

### **G. Organization**

17. UNDP, in partnership with the Ministry of Home Affairs is organizing this workshop in Lao PDR as a pivotal component of project implementation.

18. The workshop will be conducted in English with Lao-English interpretation.

**For further information please contact:**

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