

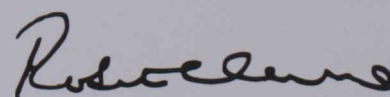
## foreword

Ending violence against women is one of the thematic priorities of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). UN Women supports states and civil society organizations to advocate, formulate and implement laws, policies and programmes which prevent, protect and punish all forms of violence against women.

With support of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) this work has been pursued in South East Asia through the Regional Programme on Improving Women's Human Rights in South East Asia. The project aims to increase knowledge and skills to apply CEDAW compliance in the development and monitoring of new and revised legislative frameworks; increase awareness among formal, semi-formal and informal justice system actors of CEDAW commitment and strengthen the monitoring accountability mechanisms for implementation of CEDAW commitment. This publication is intended to be used to guide policy makers to effectively address violence against women and the adaptation of a zero tolerance policy towards VAW. Legislative approaches adopted should be comprehensive and contextually relevant to ensure effective implementation.

On behalf of UN Women, I wish to express our appreciation to the Government of Canada for its support to UN Women's work to accelerate the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Though progress has been made in 2013 with the launch of the Three Year Cooperation Agreement with the Ministry of Justice on GBV/DV Law development and improving access to justice for women in Lao PDR among government authorities, National Assembly, UN agencies, INGOs and CSOs, and the long term agreement which aims to align UN Women's work in the legal and judicial areas with the legal Sector Master Plan (LSMP) 2020 to help ensure that Lao PDR fully performs its basic obligations. We must continue to develop plans of action which focuses on strengthening justice systems, promoting cultures of peace and respect for human rights of women and which looks at home where boys and girls are socialised. Addressing violence against women will require the allocation of necessary resources for training, for shelters, for social work and for curriculum reform within the education system; while bring changes to the administration of the law, with better trained judges, more sensitive to the social and economic realities of the people that are served by the justice system; with greater efficiency in policing and court processes, with better access to justice all of which is necessary for the maintenance of the rule of law; and finally people must understand the intent and purpose of legal change, think and act in the language of respect for the common humanity and human rights for all.



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