



**LAO PDR - UNITED NATIONS**  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION FRAMEWORK 2022-2026



## Joint Statement



Under the reformed United Nations development system (UNDS) adopted by United Nations General Assembly Res. 72/279 in 2018, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF or Cooperation Framework) is the most important instrument for planning and implementation of United Nations (UN) development activities at country level. It transforms the way that the UN will work with Lao PDR, building a functional platform for greater coordination, coherence, and effectiveness.

The formulation process for the 2022-2026 Lao PDR – UN Cooperation Framework was evidence-based, drawing upon the UN's independent analysis of the development context in the Common Country Analysis (CCA), the evaluation of the 2017-2021 Lao PDR-UN Partnership Framework (UNPF), while ensuring alignment with the 9<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2021-2025 (NSED). Inclusive and participatory, under the overall leadership and coordination of the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC), 25 UN entities collaborated with the Government of Lao PDR throughout the process, which included broad-based consultations with other development partners, the private sector, and civil society in determining four transformational strategic development priorities. The UNSDCF explains how the UN will work in partnership with the Government and other stakeholders toward the realisation of these priorities and the 2030 Agenda.

The United Nations country team (UNCT) is grateful for its partnership with the Government of Lao PDR and expresses its appreciation to all who participated in the development of the UNSDCF and their collective desire to enable Lao PDR, underpinned by key strategic investments, to become a modern middle income country in which people will live more prosperous and fulfilling lives, supported by a shift towards a low carbon and sustainable climate-resilient economic development path, undergirded by robust institutions, resilient social services, and respected human rights.

*(to be signed at official signing event as approved by  
the Prime Minister's Office, dated 31 August 2021)*

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**Ms. Sara Sekkenes Tollefsen**  
UN Resident Coordinator

*(to be signed at official signing event as approved by  
the Prime Minister's Office, dated 31 August 2021)*

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Minister of Foreign Affairs

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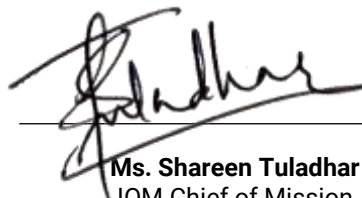
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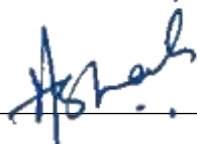
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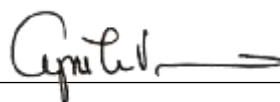
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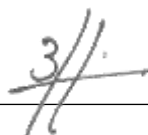
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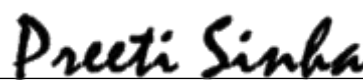
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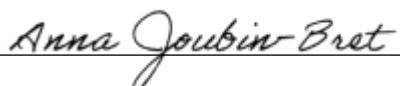
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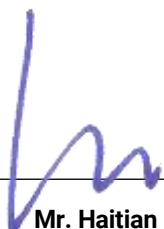
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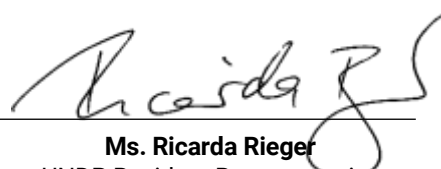
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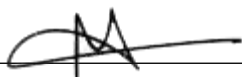
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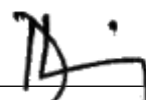
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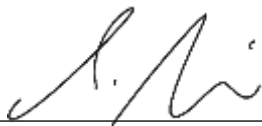
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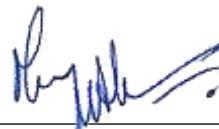
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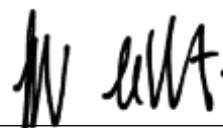
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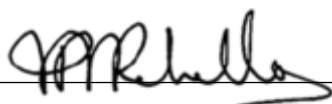
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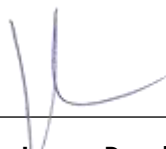
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## Acronyms

<b>AFP</b>	Agencies, Funds and Programmes
<b>ART</b>	Anti-Retroviral drug Therapy
<b>APEC</b>	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association for Southeast Asian Nations
<b>BOS</b>	Business Operations Strategy of the UNSDCF
<b>CBO</b>	Common Back Office
<b>CCA</b>	Common Country Analysis
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus disease
<b>CPD</b>	Country Programme Documents
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FACE</b>	Fund Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures
<b>FAO</b>	UN Food and Agriculture Organisation
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GFC</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>GGGI</b>	Global Green Growth Institute
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>HRBA</b>	Human Rights Based Approach to development programming
<b>HRuF</b>	Human Rights up Front
<b>ICSC</b>	International Civil Service Commission
<b>IEA</b>	International Energy Agency
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IFI</b>	International Financial Institutions
<b>IFPRI</b>	International Food Policy Research Institute
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>INFF</b>	Integrated National Financing Framework
<b>IOM</b>	International Organisation for Migration
<b>ITC</b>	International Trade Centre of the UN – WTO
<b>JJCC</b>	Juvenile Justice Coordination Committee
<b>JSC</b>	Lao PDR – UN Joint Steering Committee
<b>JWP</b>	Joint Work Plans
<b>Lao PDR</b>	Lao People's Democratic Republic
<b>LDC</b>	Least Developed Country
<b>LFND</b>	Lao Front for National Development (former Lao Front for National Construction)
<b>LFTU</b>	Lao Federation of Trade Unions
<b>LGBTIQA+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual
<b>LNCCI</b>	Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry

<b>LNC SEZ</b>	Lao National Committee for Special Economic Zones
<b>LNOB</b>	Leave No One Behind - commitment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)
<b>LSIS</b>	Lao Social Indicator Survey I, II, (III forthcoming)
<b>LWU</b>	Lao Women's Union
<b>LYU</b>	Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union
<b>MAF</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
<b>MAF</b>	Management and Accountability Framework of the UN Resident Coordinator System
<b>MEL</b>	UNCT Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
<b>MoES</b>	Ministry of Education and Sports
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MoFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MoHA</b>	Ministry of Home Affairs
<b>MoIC</b>	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
<b>MoICT</b>	Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism
<b>MoJ</b>	Ministry of Justice
<b>MoLSW</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
<b>MoNRE</b>	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
<b>MoPS</b>	Ministry of Public Security
<b>MoPWT</b>	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
<b>MoTC</b>	Ministry of Technology and Communication
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MPI</b>	Ministry of Planning and Investment
<b>MPTF</b>	Multi Partner Trust Fund
<b>MRC</b>	Mekong River Commission
<b>MSME</b>	Micro-, Small- and Medium sized Enterprises
<b>NCAWMC</b>	National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children
<b>NDC</b>	Nationally Determined Contributions
<b>NDMO</b>	National Disaster Management Office
<b>NEET</b>	Not in education, employment or training
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NHRC</b>	National Human Rights Committee (former National Steering Committee for Human Rights)
<b>NMRF</b>	National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up of UPR
<b>NPA</b>	Non-Profit Association
<b>NRA</b>	National Regulatory Authority of UXO
<b>NSEDP</b>	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
<b>NSPS</b>	National Social Protection System
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance



<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>OMT</b>	UNCT Operations Management Team
<b>PLHIV</b>	Persons living with HIV
<b>POG</b>	UNCT Programme Oversight Group
<b>PSEA</b>	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>QCPR</b>	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review by the UN General Assembly
<b>RCO</b>	Resident Coordinator's Office
<b>RGs</b>	UNSDCF Outcome Results Groups
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal(s) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)
<b>SEA</b>	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>SRMNCAH</b>	Sexual and Reproductive and Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent Health
<b>TOC</b>	Transnational Organised Crime
<b>TVET</b>	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
<b>UNAIDS</b>	UN Programme on HIV/AIDS
<b>UNCDF</b>	UN Capital Development Fund
<b>UNCG</b>	UN Communications Group
<b>UNCT</b>	UN country team
<b>UNCTAD</b>	UN Conference on Trade and Development
<b>UN DCO</b>	UN Development Coordination Office
<b>UN DESA</b>	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UNDP</b>	UN Development Programme
<b>UNDRR</b>	UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>UNDS</b>	UN development system
<b>UNEG</b>	UN Evaluation Group
<b>UNEP</b>	UN Environment Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNFPA</b>	UN Population Fund
<b>UN-Habitat</b>	UN Human Settlement Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	UN Children's Emergency Fund
<b>UNIDO</b>	UN Industrial Development Organisation
<b>UN INFO</b>	UNSDG's main data systems digitize the UNCTs' SDCF
<b>UNODC</b>	UN Office for Drugs and Crime
<b>UNOPS</b>	UN Office for Project Services
<b>UNPF</b>	UN Partnership Framework 2017-2021
<b>UNRC</b>	UN Resident Coordinator
<b>UNSDG</b>	UN Sustainable Development Group
<b>UNSDCF</b>	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework or Cooperation Framework

<b>UNV</b>	UN Volunteers
<b>UNWTO</b>	UN World Tourism Organisation
<b>UPR</b>	Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights
<b>UXO</b>	Unexploded ordnance
<b>VAC</b>	Violence Against Children
<b>VAW</b>	Violence Against Women
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organisation

## Executive Summary

Lao PDR faces both great opportunities, and important challenges. Entering the Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for which the world, and the Asia Pacific region in particular, was already off-track, the COVID-19 pandemic has made progress harder and, in many areas, sent it into reverse.

Recovery from the impact of COVID-19 is therefore an urgent priority and could provide an opportunity to shift the national development trajectory toward one that is more sustainable, and more inclusive. As across the region, trends including increasing air pollution, unsustainable food production, clean water scarcity, hazardous waste generation, reduction of forests and biodiversity due to unsustainable natural resource management and high vulnerability to climate change are challenging progress. Strengthening environmental protections and the means of implementing the Goals under SDG 17 with expanded and reinvigorated partnerships can play an important role in addressing many of these.

The policies put in place over the coming years will have consequences that will far outlive both the 9<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2021-2025 (NSED) and the Lao PDR – United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 (UNSDCF or Cooperation Framework). It will be necessary to deliver more inclusive and sustainable development, promoting increased and equal access to quality services. Graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, expected in 2026, could act as a springboard to a stronger position in the world reflecting Lao PDR's achievements, but will require special efforts to maximize the benefits and manage a smooth and sustainable transition. Lao PDR's coming demographic transition can provide conditions to fast-track progress toward sustainable development but requires urgent strategic investments in human capital and supportive policies to be put in place. A transformational shift in Lao PDR's development pathway, which has so far heavily focused on natural resources extraction, is required: adapting to and mitigating the impacts of the triple planetary crisis will be critical to ensure that future generations have prosperous and fulfilling lives. Ensuring the sustainability of results will also require finding solutions to current development finance constraints and unlocking new sources of SDG finance in this critical Decade of Action.

These challenges are reflected in Lao PDR's 9<sup>th</sup> NSED, which aims to turn a corner in the country's growth direction. Aligned with the SDGs, as well as the Green Growth Strategy, this sets out ambitious national priorities for the coming five years. Significantly, the 9<sup>th</sup> NSED emphasizes a strategic shift in the national development trajectory to one that is high-quality, green, sustainable, and focused.

The 2022-2026 Lao PDR-UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework explains how the United Nations (UN) will work in partnership with the Government and other stakeholders toward the realisation of these priorities and the 2030 Agenda. Under the reformed UN development system (UNDS), the Cooperation Framework is the most important instrument for planning and implementation of UN development activities at country level. It transforms the way that the UN will work with Lao PDR, building a functional platform for greater coordination, coherence, and effectiveness.

The formulation process for the Cooperation Framework was evidence-based, drawing upon the UN's independent analysis of the development context in Lao PDR in the Common Country Analysis (CCA), the evaluation of the 2017-2021 Lao PDR-UN Partnership Framework (UNPF), while ensuring alignment with the 9<sup>th</sup> NSED. It was also inclusive and participatory, under the overall leadership and coordination of the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC), the 25 UN entities that form the UN country team (UNCT) under this Cooperation Framework collaborated with the Government of Lao PDR throughout the process, which included broad-based consultations with other development partners, the private sector, and civil society to help determine four transformational strategic development priorities.

The Cooperation Framework will be implemented through four transformational strategic priorities and corresponding outcomes, which anticipate that, by 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, ...

... will have *more equitable and inclusive access to and will benefit from better quality health, nutrition, food, shelter, protection, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and education and learning, including during emergencies.*

... will benefit from *more inclusive, resilient, transformative, and sustainable socio-economic and demographic opportunities to reduce poverty and inequalities.*

...are *better served by public institutions at all levels in a transparent and inclusive manner, able to exercise their rights and obligations and the institutions shall be strengthened and more accountable while the rule of law and international human rights commitments made by Lao PDR are upheld.*

... and institutions will be *better able to sustainably access, manage, preserve, and benefit from natural resources and promote green growth that is risk-informed, disaster and climate-resilient.*

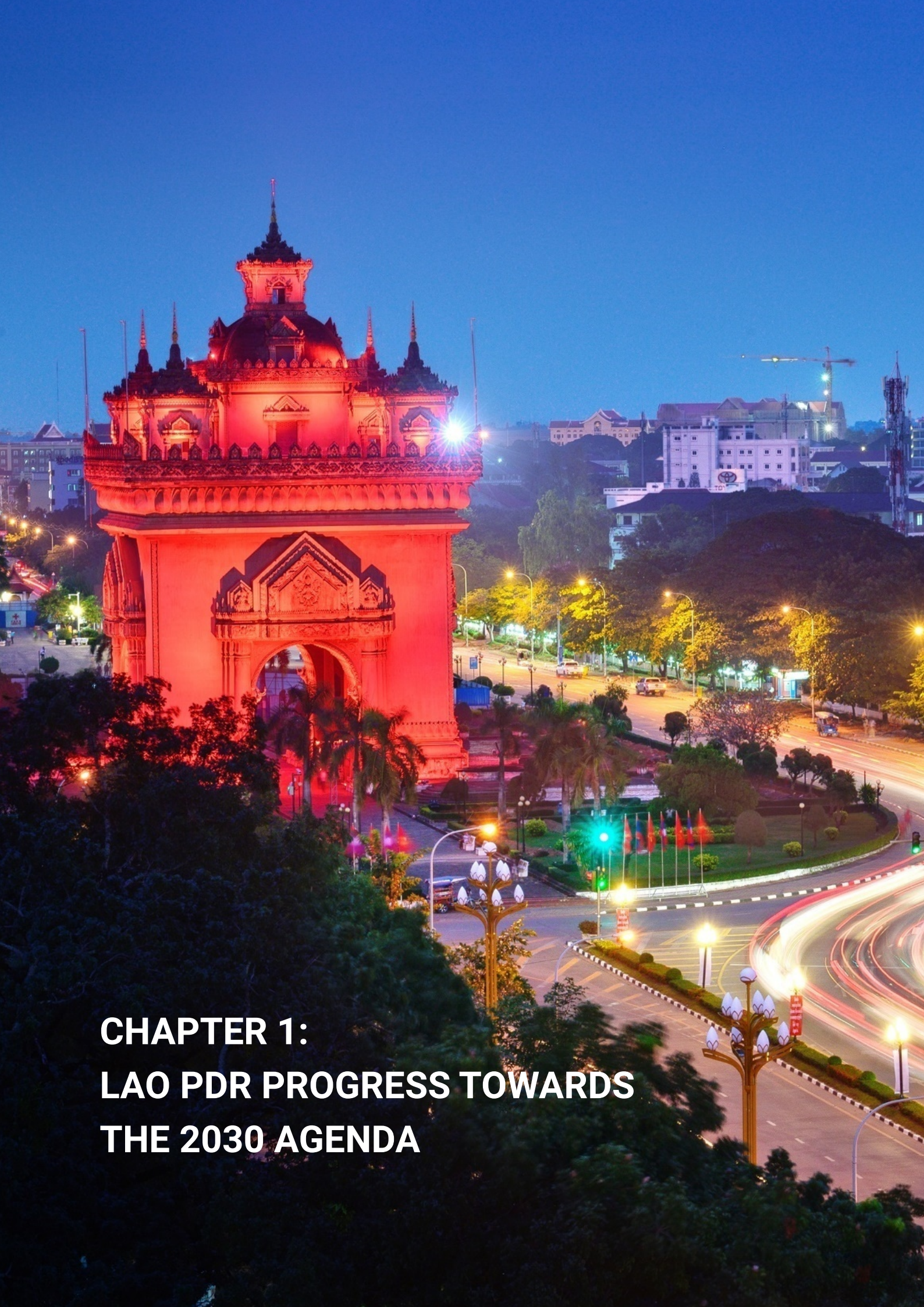
The strategic priorities are people-centred, multi-sectoral, and positioned at a transformational level, ensuring partnerships between all relevant stakeholders. Taken together, they form the basis of the overarching theory of change of the Cooperation Framework, which posits that with key strategic investments in human capital, including in the early years of life, people will live more prosperous and fulfilling lives, supported by a shift towards a low-carbon and sustainable climate-resilient economic development path, and underpinned by robust institutions, resilient social services, and respected human rights.

Across all programming, the Cooperation Framework upholds the guiding principles of the Human Rights-Based Approach, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Resilience, Sustainability, and Accountability, and works to address the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups and ensure that no one is left behind. Safeguarding adherence to these critical guiding principles will be institutionalized in the UN's management structures and processes.

To support the implementation of the Cooperation Framework between 25 agencies and ensure Government ownership, the UN will change how it works. Under the overall oversight, of the UN – Lao PDR Joint Steering Committee (JSC), coordination structures will be strengthened to facilitate more effective joint planning at the outcome level. The technical capacities of regional and global headquarters of Agencies, Funds, and Programmes (AFPs) not resident in Lao PDR, will be built into joint workplans (JWPs) and coordination structures from the outset, including in leadership roles. In the context of development finance constraints, cost-effective joint programming drawing on the diverse expertise and mandates of UN entities will be encouraged. Different UN operational groups will support the various programmatic bodies of the UN to ensure coordinated programming, and appropriate monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Partnerships with key stakeholders will be further developed, notably on financing for development issues, to catalyse progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

Through this, the UNDS will work to support Lao PDR to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities that will enable Lao PDR to maximize this Decade of Action, and for all people, including future generations, to realise their full potential and human rights.





**CHAPTER 1:**  
**LAO PDR PROGRESS TOWARDS**  
**THE 2030 AGENDA**



## 1.1 9<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan

The 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP of Lao PDR sets out national development priorities and strategies for 2021-2025. These were developed with help from the UN through thorough consultations with provinces, civil society, and development partners. These are structured around six outcomes:

- (1) Continuous quality, stable, and sustainable economic growth achieved;
- (2) Improved quality of human resources to meet development, research capacity, science and technology needs;
- (3) Enhanced wellbeing of the people;
- (4) Environmental protection enhanced and disaster risks reduced;
- (5) Engagement in region and international cooperation and integration is enhanced with robust infrastructure and effective utilization of national potentials and geographical advantages; and
- (6) Public governance and administration improved, and society protected by effective rule of law.

Across all 6 outcomes, the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP aims to guide national development that is quality, focused, green, and sustainable.”

## 1.2 Common Country Analysis Summary

Despite progress on many fronts, no country in the Asia Pacific region is on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030<sup>1</sup>. To guide the development of the Cooperation Framework, an in-depth CCA, which is the collective and independent UNCT assessment and analysis of the Lao PDR's development context was conducted. This is a forward-looking analytical exercise, projecting development challenges and opportunities to 2030 and beyond. Through this, the following broad

priorities for the acceleration of progress toward the SDGs were identified:

**First**, making development progress more inclusive, diversified, competitive and resilient. These shortcomings are key development challenges facing the country and will require continued effort to address barriers to social and economic participation, including for identified vulnerable and marginalised groups, so that all can benefit from and contribute to Lao PDR's development;

**Second**, investment in human capital including health (including sexual and reproductive health), education, protection and nutrition, along with challenging discriminatory norms and practices – particularly against vulnerable and marginalised groups, is imperative to enable people to realise their full potential. This would require urgent and increased investment, opportunities, and protection of human rights across the life cycle to promote the development of required skills to fuel growth and reap a demographic dividend, including addressing the specific needs of women, youth and children, developing safety nets, and strengthening the connections between education and life opportunities.

**Third**, macroeconomic stabilization and efforts to ensure efficient use of available development resources will therefore be a crucial determinant of capacity to fund development progress. A better integration of planning and financing, public financial management reforms, and efforts towards an Integrated National Financing Framework, will be vital to ensure development priorities are financed and implemented.

**Fourth**, valuing ecosystems, adopting circular economy principles, combating climate change, including building the resilience of the most vulnerable to climate shocks, by strengthening emergency preparedness and disaster risk

<sup>1</sup> Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2019, ESCAP 2019. The report also holds that whether the region builds up global partnerships and the means of implementing the Goals will make or break their ability to achieve any of them. This includes in

areas of tax revenue, debt sustainability, sound policy, technology, favorable trade conditions and international cooperation.

management, and making judicious use of environmental resources would be vital for future sustainable growth;

**Fifth**, promoting a more active and inclusive human rights discourse, as well as more transparent, evidence-based and participatory policymaking over time, strengthening implementation, as well as rights holders' engagement, participation, empowerment, and agency;

**Sixth**, addressing gaps in governance institutions to support the implementation of existing laws and commitments, increasing involvement of right-holders as active transformers crucial for achieving the development goals, as well as strengthening coherence and coordination; and

**Seventh**, achieving this will require improved availability and use of data, including data disaggregated by age, sex, gender, disability, and geographic location, as well as strengthening partnerships between different development actors, including the private sector, civil society, and regional organisations.

These priorities both identify drivers of exclusion, and priorities for accelerated progress toward the achievement of the SDGs.

### 1.3 Human Rights and international norms and commitments

Lao PDR has ratified seven out of nine core human rights treaties. The country has also acceded to most International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions, the Paris Agreement on climate change, various UNESCO conventions and multilateral environmental as well as disarmament agreements.

The country is also cooperating with human rights mechanisms and bodies, accepting 160 of 226 recommendations made during the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2020. Responding to the recommendation on setting up an independent human rights mechanism, Lao PDR stated that it will

continue to maintain its existing domestic mechanism, namely the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), as the overarching human rights mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level.

Whilst many recommendations related to social, economic and cultural rights are accepted, some others remain partially accepted.

Despite progress, the overall human rights situation in some areas can be further improved. Examples of aspects raised and suggested by Member States' recommendations in the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle include a review of domestic laws against international human rights instruments, which Lao PDR is party to, and media freedom referred to as an important principle to promote transparency and accountability. The Government of Lao PDR has also underlined the challenge of fake news and fabricated information, and introduced measures to tackle this.

**7** core human rights treaties ratified by the Government of Lao PDR

**Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment** (1984) ratified 26 September 2012.

**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (1966) ratified 25 September 2009.

**Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (1979) ratified 14 August 1981.

**International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** (1965) ratified 22 February 1974.

**International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (1966) ratified 13 February 2007

**Convention on the Rights of the Child** (1989) ratified 8 May 1991.

**Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (2006) ratified 25 September 2009.



## 1.4 Leave No One Behind

Derived from the commitment made in 2015 by Member States to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, “Leave No One Behind” (LNOB) is a key UN programming principle grounded in normative standards and human rights.

To identify vulnerable and marginalised groups, the CCA used a five-factor framework considering: vulnerability to shocks, governance, socio-economic status, geography, and discrimination. Through this analysis, the CCA identified eleven vulnerable and marginalised groups which specific programming must appropriately consider, to ensure that no one is left behind. Those with intersecting deprivations compounded across multiple dimensions are even more at risk.

### Children, adolescents, and youth

Lao PDR has a young population, with one-third below 15 years old and half below 24 years old. The country has made significant progress in protecting and promoting child rights. However, children, adolescents, and youth, especially those with overlapping and intersecting deprivations, are still vulnerable. Stunting, violence against children (VAC), limited access to health, clean water and child-friendly services, early marriages, adolescent pregnancies, school drop-outs, limited learning – throughout life starting from early childhood – and economic opportunities are issues that need to be addressed to meet children’s holistic development and wellbeing needs. If addressed, they would support realisation of the benefits of the demographic dividend.

### Women and girls

Though gender differences in educational attainments are narrowing at the primary level and women’s share

of seats in the National Assembly in 2015 was above the global average, key vulnerabilities remain. Women’s employment remains precarious, with few women in leadership positions and women taking on five times more unpaid domestic and care work than men on average, discriminatory gender norms remain, continuing high rates of maternal mortalities and adolescent pregnancies, gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against women (VAW) remains prevalent, while access to essential and quality sexual and reproductive health services and legal aid is limited. Women with intersecting deprivations are more likely to be left behind.

### Older persons

The share of older persons (65+ years) in the total population is around 4.2 percent. While family members and community function as a safety net, there is no state-funded coherent and multifaceted response to the problems faced by older persons, who are more vulnerable, for example to COVID-19. Therefore, whilst dependency ratio is expected to decline, rising migration of younger persons from rural areas may worsen the situation of older persons in the absence of social protection.

### Ethnic groups

Lao PDR has 50 recognised ethnic groups living in many culturally and linguistically distinct communities across the country. Compared with the larger Lao-Tai group, many smaller ethnic groups often live in mountainous, remote, and harder-to-reach areas. They are therefore more likely to have inadequate access to job opportunities and social services, making them on average poorer or more at risk of falling into or back into poverty, more food-insecure, less educated, displaced by development projects, or exposed to disasters.





### **Persons at risk of Statelessness**

Lao PDR has many people without documentation to prove their nationality. One third of children under five do not have a birth registration and, only one in ten mothers know how to register births with authorities. Undocumented children, many from upland ethnic groups, will face difficulties in accessing social services or proving their legitimacy if something happens to their families, such as during a disaster.

### **Internally displaced persons**

Lao PDR is vulnerable to disasters and population displacements. Disasters in 2018 including flooding and dam collapse affected more than 600,000 people and 2,300 villages. Large-scale displacement is also taking place as a result of large infrastructure projects, such as hydropower, railways, and mining, which also lead to deforestation and environmental degradation.

### **Populations in informal settlements and urban sprawl**

There are vulnerable clusters of unplanned and informal settlements and high-density urban areas, where people face vulnerable environments and living conditions with limited public services and safety nets and are often engaged in informal, low-paid, physical labour-based work. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated their risks because of the dense and often unsanitary living conditions.

### **Migrants**

Lao PDR is a large source country of workers abroad, mainly to Thailand. Poverty, and social norms coupled with lack of employment opportunities in Lao PDR and the pull of better life elsewhere drive demand for migration. Irregular migration in Southeast Asia is a

major concern not just from a crime control perspective but also the rights of the migrants and their wellbeing. Women migrants are particularly at higher risk due to their lower levels of education and their concentration in low-paid low-skilled occupations.

### **LGBTIQA+**

While the general public is increasingly tolerant of LGBTIQA+, these orientations have no recognition in law. Within the LGBTIQA+ group, the transgender population is a more vulnerable sub-group.

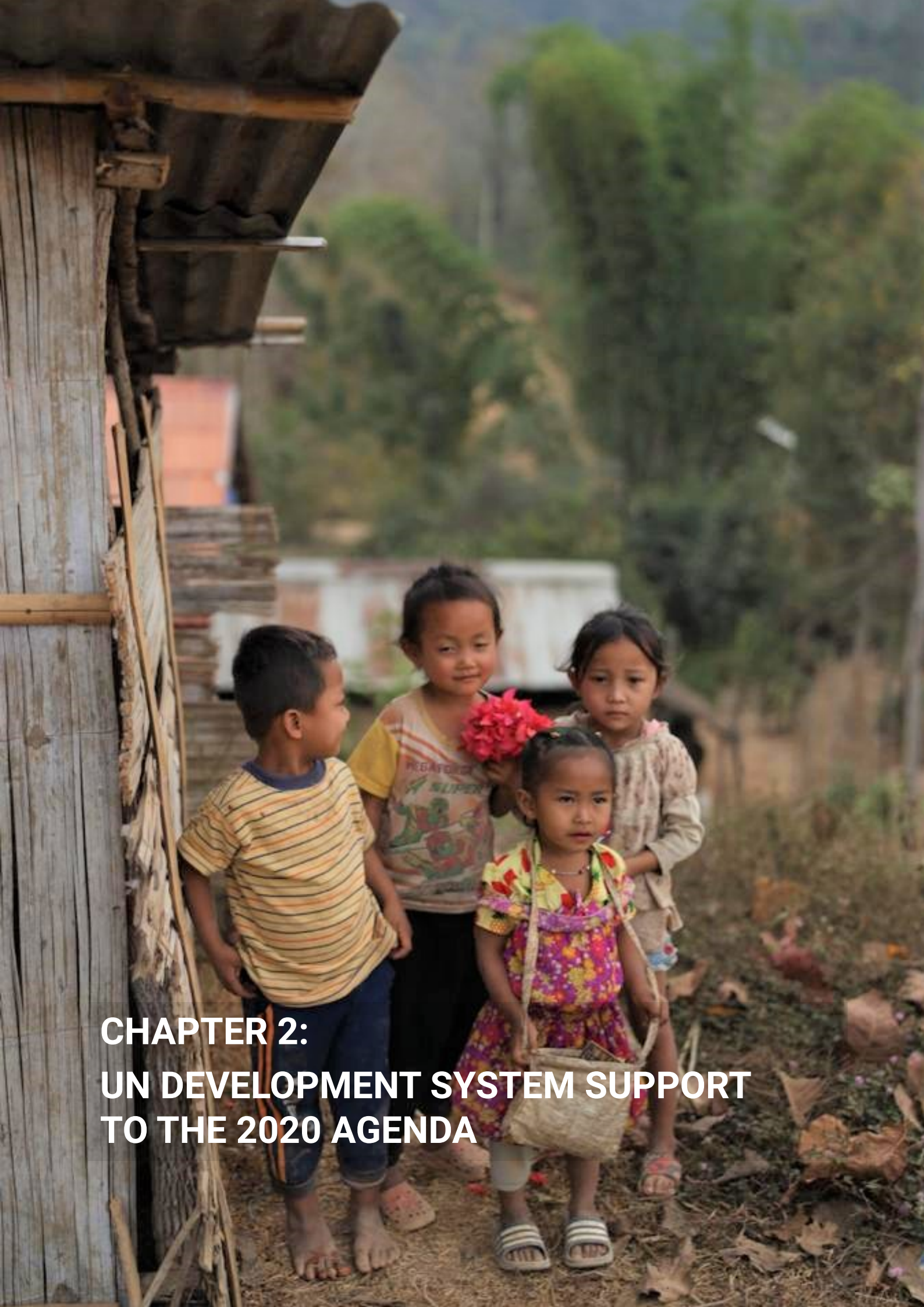
### **Persons Living with HIV**

It is estimated that in 2019 there were 13,000 persons living with HIV in Lao PDR (PLHIV) of which 5,500 women. Only a little more than half were covered by antiretroviral therapy (ART). Stigma and discrimination, particularly in the healthcare setting, is a matter of concern and major factor behind PLHIV not accessing early services.

### **Persons with Disabilities**

Up to 14 percent of the population live with varying degrees of disabilities, many of them being survivors of accidents involving unexploded ordnances (UXOs). Barriers in accessing services, seizing economic opportunities and skills development trainings are widespread. Women and girls with disabilities are doubly disadvantaged and stigmatized. A predominantly charity-based and medical approach to disability assessment has led to an underestimation of the number of people living with a disability and inadequate policy interventions.





**CHAPTER 2:**  
**UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT**  
**TO THE 2020 AGENDA**

## 2.1 Cooperation Framework background and process

The development of the Cooperation Framework began with the agreement reached between the Government of Lao PDR and the UN in August 2020, to create a structured roadmap. This was immediately followed by the development of the CCA. The draft resulted from a thorough multi-stakeholder, evidence-based process, including frequent exchanges between the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and the UN AFPs, key stakeholder interviews, and an internal validation workshop at the end of November 2020. The advanced draft was shared with the Government of Lao PDR at the beginning of 2021 and presented at the JSC in late February 2021, alongside the independent evaluation of the UNPF 2017-2021, initiated in October 2020.

Based on the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and an advanced CCA draft, the UNCT launched a process of internal consultation between AFPs<sup>2</sup> for the identification and definition of the strategic priorities of the next five years, which began with two brainstorming workshops in mid-January and early-February 2021. It was agreed that the UN Cooperation Framework strategic priorities should:

- (1) be aligned with the outcome areas, or pillars, of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, whose development was extensively supported by the UN through the Multi-Stakeholder Task Force on the recalibration of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP to COVID-19 in September 2020; the finalization of the national policy priorities and their presentation at a High-Level Consultation with Development Partners; and the ongoing support to its implementation arrangements including a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, a High-Level Financing Strategy, and the Costing Estimates of the policy priorities;
- (2) translate the development challenges of Lao PDR as expressed in the CCA;
- (3) reflect relevant regional frameworks, including the UN-Association of South East Asian

Nations (ASEAN) Plan of Action (2021-2025), which provides an agreed regional framework for UN-Member States development policy priorities in the region;

- (4) be informed by the independent evaluation of the UNPF (2017-2021) and the requirements of the UN Reform, with ambitions to deliver more integrated programming for better, more efficient and sustainable development results;
- (5) include extensive consultations with the Government of Lao PDR, to ensure the jointness and shared accountability of the Cooperation Framework, and with stakeholders, to fully reflect sensitivities from all partners supporting Lao PDR's ambition to meet the 2030 Agenda;
- (6) reflect the mandates of the UN AFPs that will be part of the Cooperation Framework, and the UN's comparative advantage in contributing to development in Lao PDR;
- (7) while upholding the Guiding Principles<sup>3</sup> of the UNSDCF as defined by the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG).

The UNCT appointed an Inter-Agency Task Team, composed of around 70 technical specialists from 25 AFPs to lead the internal technical development of the Cooperation Framework, under the strategic coordination of the RCO.

The definition of the **four strategic priorities** – *People's Wellbeing; Inclusive Prosperity; Governance and the Rule of Law; and Environment, Climate Change, and Resilience* – their **outcome statements**, and respective **theory of change** went through an exhaustive consultative process. This involved, series of weekly work meetings for each outcome area group, bi-monthly Inter-Agency Task Team meetings, and monthly UNCT meetings. This was designed to facilitate information and expertise-sharing, synergies, and consensus-building between all 25 AFPs, throughout February and March 2021, as a first step towards more integrated UN programming.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout, attention was paid to ensure the inclusion of both resident and non-resident Agencies, Funds, and Programmes, which hold specific technical expertise that will be an integral part of the UN-wide solutions to the development challenges of Lao PDR.

<sup>3</sup> These are: Leaving No One Behind (LNOB); Human Rights-Based Approach to Development (HRBA); Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment; Resilience; Sustainability; and Accountability.

The four strategic priorities, outcome statements and theories of change were agreed during a technical meeting of the Government - UN JSC in February 2021. They were presented in four stakeholder consultations, chaired by the UNRC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), to both resident and non-resident development partners, the private sector and civil society organisations in mid-March 2021. This allowed the UNCT to collect valuable feedback and was an initial and crucial step towards the ambition of the Cooperation Framework to build transformational partnerships with all relevant development stakeholders.

In line with the UNSDG guidance for the development of the new generation of UNSDCF, the definition of the UN's direct contribution to the four identified strategic priorities - the joint outputs - followed the same internal process as for the outcome-level of the Cooperation Framework, through late March and April 2021. Following agreement between UN AFPs, the joint outputs were presented to the Government in April. The extensive feedback provided by Government counterparts was reflected in a first draft of the Cooperation Framework.

The Cooperation Framework was agreed at a technical meeting of the Joint Steering Committee and endorsed by a High-Level Joint Steering Committee meeting on 13 July 2021.

## 2.2 Strategic Priorities

Lao PDR has made considerable development progress, leading to a recommendation for graduation from LDC status in 2021<sup>4</sup>. This has been seen in broad improvements in health, nutrition, and education outcomes, and increasing economic opportunities. However, significant development challenges remain, and the COVID-19 pandemic has made overcoming many of them both more urgent and more difficult.

Whilst Lao PDR has sustained impressive growth over a long period of time, which helped the country reduce poverty, increase access to infrastructure, and paved the way towards graduation from LDC status, the

largely foreign financed growth was not sufficiently inclusive and led to environmental degradation and over-exploitation of resources. Economic diversification has been limited, with much of the population remaining primarily engaged in low-productivity agricultural activities.

For sustainable development, it will be necessary to deliver more inclusive development, promoting increased and equal access to quality services to achieve good health, education, protection, and economic opportunities for the most vulnerable, while challenging discriminatory norms and practices. Investment in human capital is crucial for the realisation of economic and human development opportunities from Lao PDR's demographic transition, with regards to the individual, the community, and the country.

A major obstacle to progress lies in the current financial challenges facing the country, with, in particular, an increasingly reduced fiscal space for investments in social sectors and green growth and increasing debt repayment obligations. The mobilisation of private sector resources to support national development priorities is ongoing but will require regulatory improvements and financial incentives. ODA has been a strong contributor to national development, but resources are on a downward trend globally as traditional donors grapple with the economic consequences of COVID-19.

Whilst there has been significant progress towards public sector reform, there are still difficulties in delivering quality efficient, transparent, and accountable services, and decentralization remains an unfinished business. The human rights agenda is progressing, with NHRC set up to protect and promote human rights, and a plan being developed for the implementation of accepted recommendations from the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of the UPR.

Lao PDR is endowed with vast natural resources and has taken advantage of them to generate the high levels of growth of the past decade. However, natural resources extraction driven growth, alongside climate change, has generated increased vulnerability and

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<sup>4</sup> With a 5-year preparatory period, meaning graduation would take place in 2026.



frequency of hazards, with a relatively limited coping capacity. The necessity to shift the development pathway of the country implies redirecting investments towards green sectors, which is made difficult by limited fiscal space and constraints in terms of institutional capacity to manage natural resources.

Based on this analysis, and subsequent consultations, four strategic priorities for the Cooperation Framework

were identified. The priorities are predicated on the unifying idea of addressing exclusion and inequities while building sustainability and resilience and promoting people-centred and rights-based development.

To ensure that programmatic work adheres, and is responsive to LNOB principles, the UN will strive to increase availability and use of disaggregated data for improved policy planning, implementation, and monitoring.

### **People's wellbeing** (aligned with 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Outcomes 2 and 3)

Integrating related efforts to build human capital through investments in education and skills, protection, health, WASH, food security, nutrition, and shelter.



### **Inclusive prosperity** (aligned with 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Outcomes 1, 3, and 5)

Integrating work to strengthen the macroeconomic framework, economic policymaking relating to the labour market, social protection and MSME development, and regional integration as means to improved livelihoods.



### **Governance and rule of law** (aligned with 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Outcome 6)

Integrating efforts to strengthen the efficiency, transparency and accountability and effectiveness of institutions, including through better quality data and more effective decentralization, and advancing the human rights agenda.



### **Environment, climate change, and resilience** (aligned with 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Outcome 4)

Integrating work to tackle environmental degradation, climate change, and reduce and manage risks from increasingly frequent natural disasters in a holistic and transformative way, linking mitigation with adaptation and resilience.



## **2.3 Overarching Theory of Change**

Through this Decade of Action and over the next 20 years, Lao PDR will move through a number of critical transitions that need to be successfully managed to move the country forward and translate into resilient development results.

Irreversible trends including domestic and international migration, rapid urbanization, and the imminent change in the population age structure will

transform the country's profile. In this early stage of the demographic transition, increased human capital investments starting from before birth, can yield long-term, sustainable returns through the realisation of a demographic dividend.

With the 5-year preparatory phase recommended in 2021, graduation from LDC status is now expected to take place in 2026. This initiates a process that will see

the end of special support measures associated with LDC status, whilst the country transitions to a stronger position in terms of international economic and political engagement.

Situated strategically along the Mekong River, in the centre of Southeast Asia, the country shares vital assets with its neighbours, and regional inter-dependence will become yet more pronounced as climate change, economic integration, and digitalization accelerate.

Climate change and disaster-related risks are increasing, becoming one of the most significant threats to development progress.

And at the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the realisation of the SDGs, destabilising progress on poverty eradication, health, and education, and creating a national, regional, and global economic fallout with consequences that will be felt for years. The speed, sustainability, and inclusiveness of the recovery from the pandemic will be determined by the policies implemented now.

Managed effectively, these transitions could present valuable human and economic development opportunities, but these will require strategic vision and prioritization to prevent increased tension,

reduced quality and access to crucial services, and environmental and disaster risks.

Reflecting these challenges and opportunities, and building on the UN's position as a reliable development partner with strong technical expertise, the Lao PDR – UNSDCF 2022-2026, will work to support the positioning of the country to capitalize on these shifts and reap the dividends that can be realised to reduce inequalities and accelerate development.

This will be done by supporting the implementation of the national vision set out in the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP for a development path that is high-quality, well-prioritized, sustainable, and green - ensuring that no one is left behind. The 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP provides a clear vision of the country's development trajectory to be built upon towards the achievement of the nationalized SDGs.

This will require a more inclusive and sustainable development course that takes into account the uniqueness of Lao PDR, including a diverse and largely young and rural population and distinct geography that make up the human and natural resources of the country. To support this, the Cooperation Framework will need to take on and harness these critical transitions to shape a progressive, equitable and human-centred development pathway through the four strategic priorities.



Importantly, progress in each of the strategic priorities is contingent on progress in the others. Investments in nutrition, health, and education to build human capital are essential for the generation of productive opportunities and inclusive prosperity. Effective management of environmental degradation and control of pollution has important implications for health and people's wellbeing. Strengthening the capacity of the state to deliver public services, and broadening engagement in decision-making processes is crucial to delivering across all priority areas - strong institutions, for example, are essential for effective national responses to disasters. Diversification of the economy to non-resource sectors and valuing ecosystems can conserve the country's rich natural resources and not jeopardize the prospects for future growth.

Therefore, by building effective coordination mechanisms at the right levels, the Cooperation Framework will serve to accelerate progress across the four strategic priorities. Efforts will be integrated within strategic priorities to bring together capacities and resources to improve efficiency. This will facilitate the deployment of UN AFPs' expertise in strategic, long-term initiatives tangibly linked to the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. Efforts will also be integrated between strategic priorities, to reflect complementarities and address trade-offs amongst objectives and facilitate coherent and efficient decision-making.

By expanding and deepening partnerships with new partners, civil society, and the private sector, the Cooperation Framework will mobilize more support for the national development vision. Official, public sector resources available to support development will fall far short of those needed to fully implement the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, especially given the financial implications of COVID-19.

The realisation of national development goals, and the 2030 Agenda, can only be achieved with the support of all development stakeholders. As the UN is only one contributor to the realisation of the outcomes, work will be closely coordinated with other stakeholders to minimise overlaps and maximise synergies. Efforts will also be made to facilitate broad engagement in the development of policies through the partnerships built. Specific activities to build partnerships will be set out as part of the Joint Workplans to implement the Cooperation Framework.

By further strengthening links with UN capacities in relevant areas, and with regional organisations such as the ASEAN, the Cooperation Framework will be better placed to address the important trans-boundary dimensions of many development challenges and opportunities. This is expected to both facilitate improved understanding and information-sharing on regional issues, and better link regional initiatives and policies to the pursuit of national priorities.

By working to enhance the collection and use of disaggregated data to better understand how different groups are progressing across all four strategic priorities, the Cooperation Framework will support better targeting of policies and initiatives to ensure that no one is left behind from development progress. Strengthened disaggregated and accessible data systems will support both duty-bearers and the rights-holders in the fulfilment of human rights for vulnerable groups, thus promoting the LNOB principle.

The UNDS is collectively well placed to support the four priority areas identified. The UN is a long standing and trusted partner of the Government of Lao PDR. The UN has actively supported the formulation of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and co-organised broad consultations on the strategic national priorities in light of COVID-19.

The core value proposition of the UN in Lao PDR lies in its ability to convene broad groups of stakeholders, as a provider of technical expertise and knowledge, and as a trusted non-partisan partner. Development partners also recognize the UN for its normative mandate and as a strong player in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and country's international obligations on human, labour, and environmental rights. The UN will leverage the work of other development partners, such as in the area of prudent fiscal management with support from international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), or forging stronger links between infrastructure projects and SDGs, to achieve collective transformative results.

Based on its convening role, comparative advantage and value proposition, the UN in Lao PDR will work through strategic interventions such as technical assistance, capacity building, leveraging partnerships and resources, advocacy, building public support, and piloting and scaling up innovations.



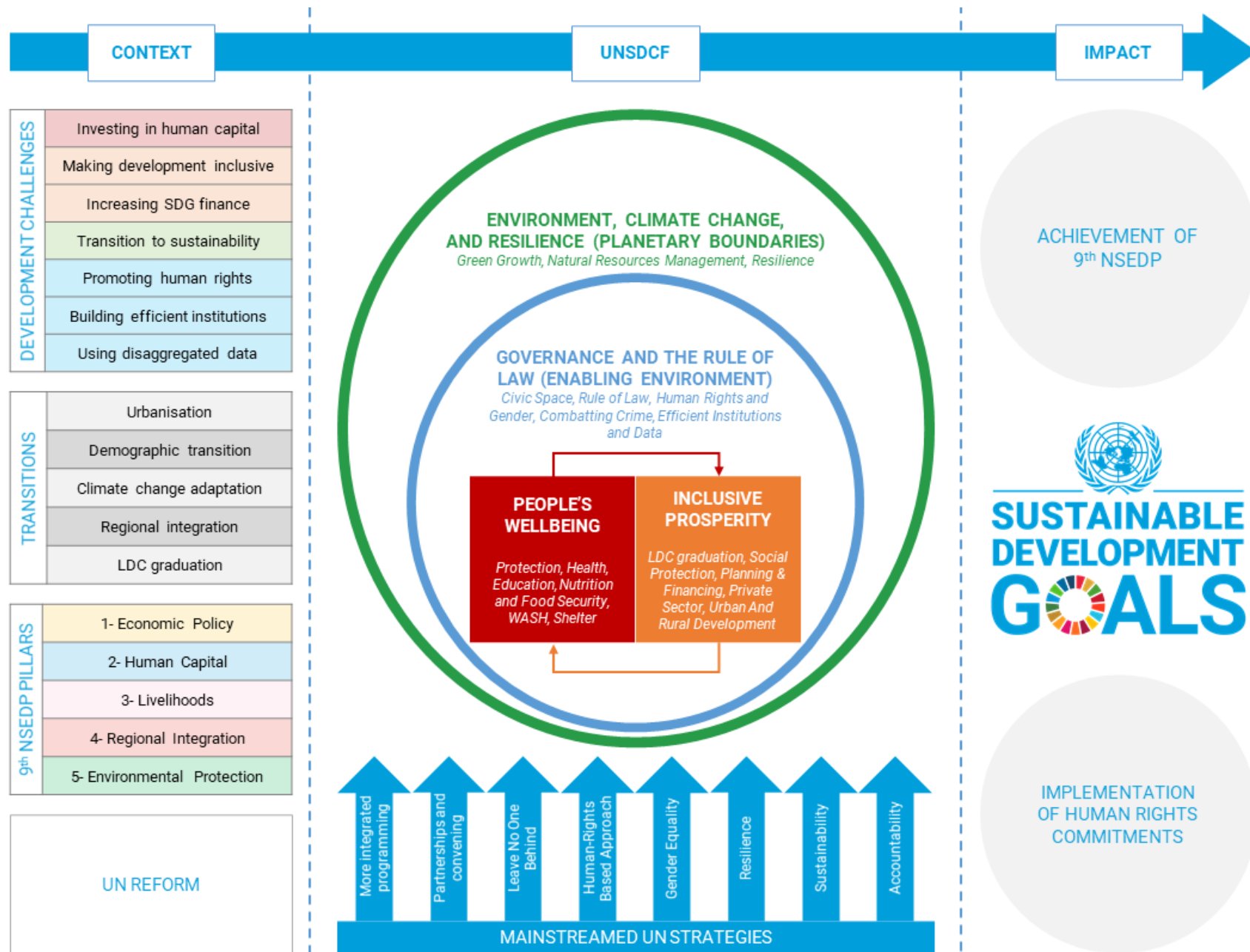


Figure 1: UNSDCF - Context and Impact

## 2.4 Synergies between Cooperation Framework Outcomes

The UN in Lao PDR has identified four integrated strategic priorities and four associated anticipated outcomes, to which the UN will contribute through 21 joint outputs. With success criteria fulfilled, the UN will have contributed to transformational change and supported the country's achievement of national priorities and the SDGs.

There are considerable interlinkages and synergies between the strategic priorities and outputs.

The strategic priority on People's Wellbeing addresses the necessary investments in health, education, nutrition, protection, and housing, which are required for people to live empowered and fulfilling lives - the core ambition of the Inclusive Prosperity outcome. Adequate investments in social services rely on adequate development finance, to which the UN will contribute under the Inclusive Prosperity area, supporting better integration of planning and financing and a diversification of development finance sources. Social protection, a core output under Inclusive Prosperity, supports improved capacity for people to cope with the challenges of life and opportunities to pursue their aspirations. Wellbeing outcomes also rely on the fulfilment of people's economic, social, and cultural rights, whose institutional, legal, and regulatory aspects are covered under the Governance and Rule of Law strategic priority. Relationships between People's Wellbeing and the Environment, Climate Change, and Resilience outcome occur on increasingly critical environmental health issues such as prevention of diseases, air pollution, WASH infrastructure and practices, and waste management.

Inclusive Prosperity and Environment, Climate Change, and Resilience have a specific binding connection. Sustainable and inclusive economic development can

only occur with a radical shift away from the capital-intensive, extractive and infrastructure-driven development, towards green growth, and a more circular, low-carbon, and climate-resilient development pathway. Progress towards the Environment, Climate Change, and Resilience outcome will, across the Cooperation Framework, provide the checks and balances for Lao PDR to tackle the triple planetary crisis ahead of us: climate change, environmental degradation, and pollution. Such systemic change will require targeted investments, through closer alignment of all financial flows to the 2030 Agenda, and improved planning, legislation, regulations and governance, which UN programming will support under both Inclusive Prosperity and Governance and the Rule of Law.

Governance and the Rule of Law has a focus on ensuring that all can be consulted and participate in decision-making, that all can expect accountable institutions, and all can live their lives with due respect for their human rights. Progress towards this outcome will enable progress towards of all other outcomes. More efficient and capable institutions, and respected human rights, will ensure sustainable results across the Cooperation Framework, for instance, supporting better health systems, more opportunities for decent jobs, and enhanced respect of environmental laws and regulations.

These interdependencies must be reflected both in UN programming and coordination mechanisms. The creation of a Programme Oversight Group (POG) – see Chapter 3 – for technical oversight of the development results in all four outcome areas answers that need, aiming to ensure progress towards the 2030 Agenda in, and with respect for all six guiding principles: LNOB, Human Rights mainstreaming, Gender Equality, Accountability, Sustainability, and Resilience.

## 2.5 Outcomes and Outputs

For each strategic priority, an **outcome statement**, summarizing the desired end result of the combined efforts of all relevant stakeholders, has been defined

by the UNCT and the Government of Lao PDR, and presented to civil society, the private sector and other development partners.

The Lao PDR-United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026 aims that, **by 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, ...**

### People's wellbeing (aligned with 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Outcomes 2 and 3)

...will have *more* equitable and inclusive access to and will benefit from better quality health, nutrition, food, shelter, protection, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and education and learning, including during emergencies.



### Inclusive prosperity (aligned with 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Outcomes 1-3-5)

... will benefit from *more* inclusive, resilient, transformative, and sustainable socio-economic and demographic opportunities to reduce poverty and inequalities.



### Governance and rule of law (aligned with 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Outcome 6)

Will be *better* served by public institutions at all levels in a transparent and inclusive manner, ab exercise their rights and obligations and the institutions shall be strengthened and more accountable while the rule of law and international human rights commitments made by Lao PDR



### Environment, climate change, and resilience (aligned with 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Outcome 4)

... and institutions will be *better* able to sustainably access, manage, preserve, and benefit from natural resources and promote green growth that is risk-informed, disaster and climate-resilient.



Four **theories of change**, which link the **outcome statement** to all the solutions and changes required to achieve them, have also been developed and presented to civil society, the private sector and other development partners. Particular attention has been given to:

- *major risks*, which could derail progress towards the desired outcome, and *assumptions*, which are the preconditions required for the achievement of the desired outcome;
- as per the UN pledge to LNOB, the list of the most *vulnerable groups*;
- the required *partnerships* the UN will engage in, under each strategic priority, to build coalitions in support of financing and achieving the SDGs; to drive transformative changes at all levels; to

address structural barriers and drivers of vulnerability and marginalisation; and to ensure more integrated and coordinated development results;

- *regional dimensions*, for each outcome area, considering the geographical location of Lao PDR, and the regional challenges and opportunities to achieve each desired outcome;
- *sustainability*, and the necessary solutions to ensure long-lasting transformational change and build capacity locally, beyond the duration of the Cooperation Framework and towards the 2030 horizon;
- *synergies* between Cooperation Framework outcomes, presenting how outcomes align with national Government priorities, how they interact



with one another, and how the programming delivered under each outcome area – the outputs – is interlinked.

Under each strategic priority, **joint outputs** are the direct contributions of the UNDS, for which AFPs are directly responsible and accountable. The definition of

joint outputs, aggregating joint programmes and individual contributions, answers the necessity to bring AFPs closer together, in line with the reform of the UNDS, to ensure better coordination, more efficiency, and more transformational results in the delivery of programming. Synergies between joint outputs are identified and articulated.







# LAO PDR – UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FRAMEWORK 2022-2026



Figure 2: Lao PDR - United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-2026



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 – PEOPLE'S WELLBEING

**By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, will have more equitable and inclusive access to and will benefit from better quality health, nutrition, food, shelter, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and education and learning, including during emergencies.**



*SDGs supported by this Outcome*

### Theory of Change

Through the combined efforts of all relevant stakeholders, it is expected that:

**IF** human and technical capacities and financial resources of the Government of Lao PDR and other duty bearers in planning, coordination, referral pathways, management and enforcement, both at the national and subnational levels, are strengthened, for the equitable provision of quality social services, in both urban and rural areas, and including during emergencies;

**IF** the education system provides equitable access to inclusive, quality and relevant education and lifelong learning opportunities in safe, hygienic schools with provision of health and nutrition, with well-trained teachers, that leads to improved learning outcomes and equips the people of Lao DPR with skills needed for work, civic engagement, and resilience to thrive in Lao society;

**IF** there are improvements in resilience to shocks, in the availability, affordability and sustainable access to, and utilisation of, safe, nutritious, and sufficient food and nutrition services for the detection, prevention and treatment of all forms of malnutrition, safe water, and there are improved sanitation facilities, and positive hygiene practices are adopted, across the rural-urban continuum, including during emergencies;

**IF** the national health system is strengthened and sustainably financed, with increased inclusive access to quality essential health services, through improved

health infrastructure, human resources, national and subnational governance, and public financial management;

**IF** the right to housing is safeguarded, enabling people, including vulnerable and displaced populations and those residing in remote areas, to have equitable access to shelter that is adequate, affordable and disaster resilient;

**IF** people are aware of their rights and obligations, are appropriately informed, and are able to access quality social services and participate in the planning, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes, ensuring the accountability of duty-bearers and social responsibility of private investors;

**IF** children, families, and communities have better access to and use quality preventive and responsive services and promote positive social norms and adopt behaviours that reduces violence, abuse, and harmful practices against children;

**IF** people, in particular the youth, have knowledge and skills and have access to and the ability to make informed decisions about their reproductive health, free from discrimination, and victims and survivors of gender-based violence and harmful practices have access to essential services;

**IF** discriminatory norms and practices, including gender-based violence (GBV) and early marriage, are eliminated and challenged through behaviour change interventions;

**IF** duty bearers have better access to quality disaggregated data for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation purposes;

**THEN**, by 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, will have more equitable and inclusive access to and will benefit from better quality health, nutrition, food, shelter, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and education and learning, including during emergencies.

The strengthening and increased resilience of duty-bearers' systems, across all sectors, will ensure the more efficient, timely and quality provision of services, across all areas, including the most remote, including when disasters and shocks hit.

### Leave No One Behind

The solutions and changes required to achieve the **People's Wellbeing** outcome statement by 2026 should address all people, with specific attention to

Simultaneously, empowerment and increased awareness of rights holders, especially of women, children, and the youth, will ensure that services are accessible and used appropriately. Improved cross-sectoral cooperation between social and economic sectors and cross-border and regional cooperation, will additionally ensure enhanced environmental health results.

Improvements in the wellbeing of adequately fed, protected, healthy and sheltered people capable of coping with crises will lay the foundations for Lao PDR to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend and for people to live prosperous and fulfilling lives (see Inclusive Prosperity outcome).

people belonging to one or multiple vulnerable groups<sup>5</sup>, who face more constraints to access and benefit from social services and quality health, nutrition, food, shelter, protection, WASH and education and learning:

<div>Children, adolescents, and youth</div> <div>Women and girls</div> <div>Internal migrants</div>	<div>Displaced populations</div> <div>Ethnic groups, especially those geographically isolated</div>	<div>Persons living with HIV</div> <div>Persons with disabilities</div> <div>Persons living in poverty</div>			
ASSUMPTIONS			RISKS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Government of Lao PDR continues to prioritize increasing investments in social sectors and food security;</li><li>• Institutions have the absorptive capacity for increased investments in social sectors;</li><li>• Increasing frequency of hazards and natural disasters;</li><li>• Frequency of non-communicable diseases increases with changing lifestyles; and</li><li>• Availability of official development assistance (ODA) resources and other official flows for technical assistance.</li></ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Insufficient fiscal space available for priority budget allocations;</li><li>• Public Financial Management reforms are delayed;</li><li>• Public governance reforms, including in Public Financial Management are delayed;</li><li>• International travel restrictions are not eased in the short-term;</li><li>• COVID-19 spreads uncontrollably in the country overwhelming the health system and causing widespread socio-economic damage before a significant portion of the population is vaccinated;</li><li>• Constraints in human capacity of duty-bearers;</li><li>• Constraints in multi-stakeholder engagement and efficient coordination between relevant stakeholders for systemic changes; and</li><li>• Regional geopolitical tensions disruptively spill over to Lao PDR.</li></ul>		

<sup>5</sup> As per identified LNOB groups in the CCA: (1) Non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups, (2) Women, (3) Children, adolescents, and youth, (4) Migrants, (5) Internally displaced persons, (6) Persons at risk of Statelessness, (7) LGBTQIA+, (8) Persons with Disabilities, (9)

People Living with HIV, (10) Older persons, (11) Population in informal settlements and camps.





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 – PEOPLE'S WELLBEING

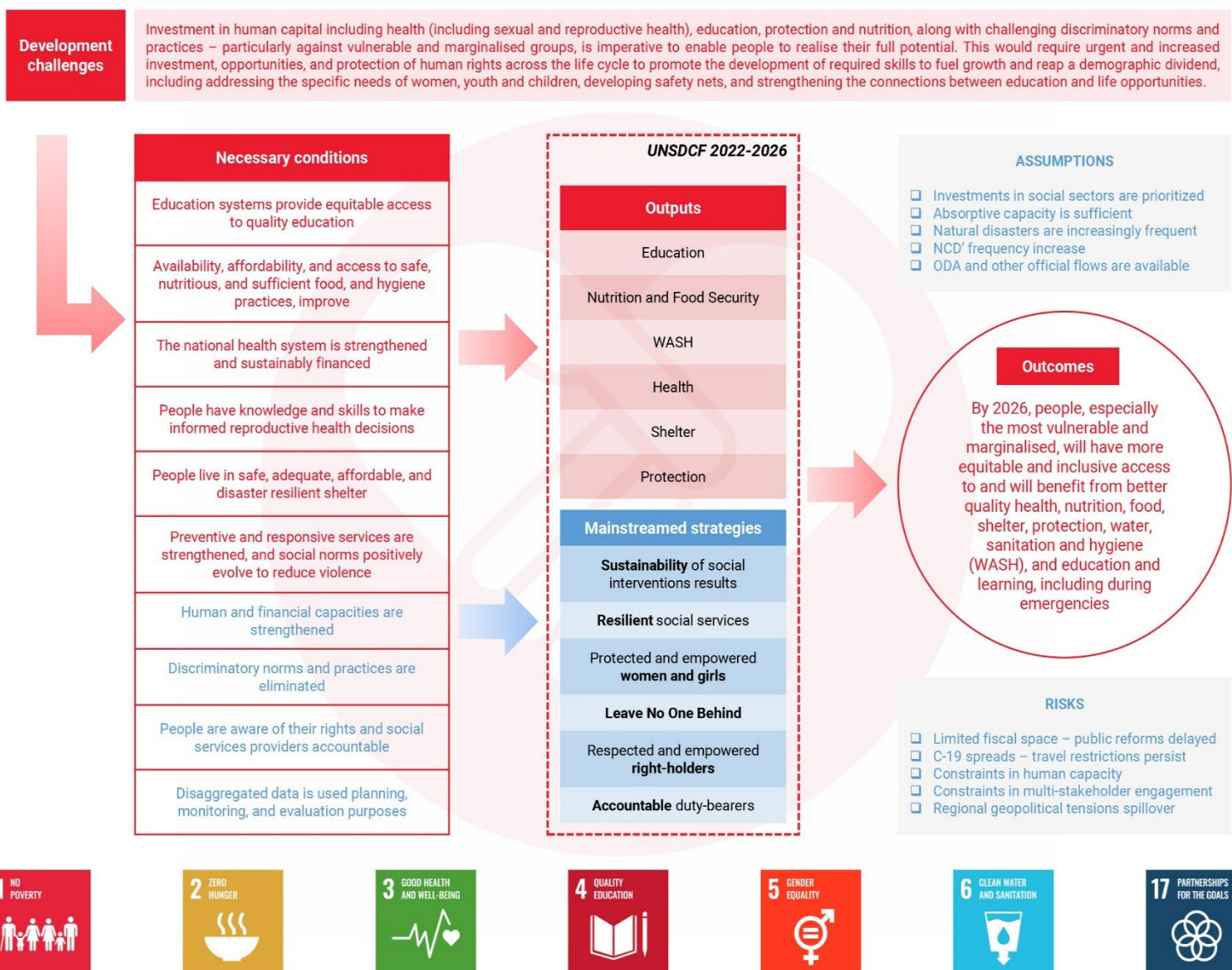


Figure 3: Strategic Priority 1 - People's Wellbeing

### Ministries, including their subnational entities

Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Education and Sports (MoES), Finance (MoF), Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Health (MoH), Home Affairs (MoHA), Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT), Justice (MoJ), Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Planning and Investment (MPI), Technology and Communication (MTC), Public Security (MoPS), Public Works and Transport (MoPWT)

### National institutions

National Assembly, Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor, People's Supreme Court, People's Provincial Assemblies, Lao Women's Union (LWU), Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union (LYU), National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers, and Children (NCAWMC), Lao National Committee for Special Economic Zones, National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)

### Development partners

All bilateral partners, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), European Union (EU), international financial institutions (IFIs), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, COVAX

### Civil society organisations and private sector

International and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), non-profit associations (NPAs), business associations, mass organisations and media, social services providers, unions, multinationals, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), informal businesses, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and vocational training centres

## Regional issues

The global nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the regional dimensions of its impacts, and the transboundary nature of environmental health issues are among the key reasons that will lead the UN to also apply regional approach to programming under People's Wellbeing. Increasingly frequent interactions with relevant regional stakeholders – neighbouring countries, and ASEAN (notably its socio-cultural community bodies) as well as neighbouring UNCTs –

will be required. This outcome area aligns with the 3<sup>rd</sup> pillar of the UN-ASEAN Plan of Action, and in particular its 3<sup>rd</sup> (Culture, Education and Sports), 4<sup>th</sup> (Social Welfare and Development), 5<sup>th</sup> (Public Health) and 6<sup>th</sup> (Gender Mainstreaming) priorities, and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, in particular, the Strategies 1 on Enhancing Health Systems and 2 on Strengthening Human Security (social welfare, food security, human capital development, and gender mainstreaming).



## People's Wellbeing Joint outputs

The UNCT in Lao PDR plans to contribute to the achievement of the People's Wellbeing outcome statement, corresponding to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> pillar of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP on Human Capital, through programming under the following joint outputs<sup>6</sup>:

**Protection:** Strengthened multi-stakeholder capacities to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women (VAW) and girls, children, migrant workers, and other vulnerable groups, across the development and humanitarian continuum.

ILO, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO

**Health:** The government has increased health system capacity to provide affordable, resilient, sustainable, accessible, equitable and quality healthcare services, including immunization, Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (SRMNCAH), and prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases, and to respond to public health emergencies, and people are equipped with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to make informed choices about their health and participate in building healthy communities.

UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS, WHO

**Education:** Government and key stakeholders at national and sub-national levels and communities have enhanced capacities, knowledge, and resources to ensure children, youth and adults have access to and complete inclusive, equitable and quality teaching-learning and skills development programmes.

FAO, ILO, IOM, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP

**Nutrition and food security:** Government has strengthened capacity to plan, deliver and monitor sufficient and equitable quality nutrition-specific and sensitive interventions and services across sectors, and communities are supported and have the knowledge and skills to meet their food security needs and practice optimal dietary, care and service seeking practices and behaviours.

FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO

**Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH):** Government has strengthened capacity to deliver and improve coverage and quality of WASH services, and people have increased knowledge and skills on their WASH practices.

UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNOPS, WFP, WHO

**Shelter:** Government institutions at the national and sub-national levels have strengthened capacity to provide access to appropriate, safe, serviced, and affordable shelter to all people, including the most vulnerable (such as internal migrants, internally displaced, and disabled).

IOM, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNOPS

<sup>6</sup> Capacity is defined as "the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully" by the UNDG. This covers:

- Individual—improving individual skills, knowledge and performance through training, experiences, motivation and incentives; •
- Organizational—improving organizational performance through strategies, plans, rules and regulations, partnerships, leadership, organizational politics and power structures, and strengthening organizational systems, processes, and roles and responsibilities •
- Enabling environment—improving policy framework to address economic, political, environmental and social factors including economic growth, financing, labour markets, political context, policy and legislative environment, class structures, and cultural aspects in a coherent and mutually reinforcing fashion.

- (UNDG, 2017, based on the 2009 definition formulated by the UNDG, and also referenced in the report on capacity development prepared by the UN ECOSOC for the 2016 QC





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 – INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY

By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, will benefit from more inclusive, and resilient, transformative, and sustainable socio-economic opportunities to reduce poverty and inequalities.



SDGs supported by this Outcome

### Theory of Change

Through the combined efforts of all relevant stakeholders, it is expected that:

**IF** there are enhanced human and institutional capacities and policies for prudent and shock-responsive macro-fiscal management, with increased fiscal space for inclusive and durable COVID-19 recovery, quality social services provision, including in health, education, and social protection, and green growth;

**IF** there are enhanced human and institutional capacities towards a more inclusive, gender and shock-responsive, and rights-based social protection systems in line with the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS);

**IF** governments at the national and subnational levels prioritize measurement, social policies and strategies

to address poverty in all its dimensions, especially among children;

**IF** there are improved harmonized labour standards, and effective migration management mechanisms through enhanced regulatory excellence and compliance with laws;

**IF** labour, trade, and inclusive and sustainable industrial development policies are better designed, synthesized and accompanied, based on efficient partnerships between the public and the private sector, for poverty reduction, equal opportunity, better linkages between the supply and demand of labour, jobs creation and income generation, population and migration dynamics, skills and productivities improvement, and lifelong learning (with specific attention to the youth, women, volunteers, informal, unpaid and migrant workers);

**IF** people, in particular women, youth, rural populations and internal and international migrants and their families, have better access to the labour market, safe, orderly and regular migration pathways, inclusive finance, remittances, social protection systems, and lifelong learning opportunities;

**IF** evidence-based national, sectoral, and sub-national planning policies reflect territorial approaches, considering the challenges and opportunities of urban, rural, remote, and UXO-affected areas;

**IF** there is improved public sector financial management, a more conducive, transparent, and predictable policy, legal, regulatory, and business and investment environment, aligned with the 2030 Agenda, and there are specific incentives and policies to support a regionally integrated private sector, enhanced export competitiveness, sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture, financial inclusion, digital transformation, fair trade practices, and safe e-commerce transactions;

**IF** food systems are economically and environmentally sustainable, agricultural production is optimised, including with reduced food losses and waste, there are more green economic opportunities in rural areas and the digital gap between rural and urban areas is bridged;

**THEN**, by 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, will benefit from more inclusive,

resilient, transformative, and sustainable socio-economic and demographic opportunities to reduce poverty and inequalities.

Through improved macro-fiscal management, evidence-based and territorial development planning, the prioritization of public investments in social and green sectors that have the highest returns, especially in medium-long term, the country will shift to a more inclusive and more environmentally responsible and climate resilient development pathway.

Better alignment of the private sector to the 2030 Agenda, enhanced regional integration, simplification of procedures for MSMEs, and diversification of growth towards dynamic sectors through the developments of e-commerce, will ensure economic opportunities for all, across the rural-urban continuum.

Resilient and gender-responsive social protection systems will protect people from falling back into poverty and ensure long-lasting development progress, even if disasters and shocks hit.

Eventually, an improved labour market, made more inclusive through appropriate regulatory and legal changes, and better linked with the education system, ASEAN skills standards, economic and sectoral policies, will lead to the creation of decent and fulfilling jobs. This way, Lao PDR will realise opportunities for inclusive prosperity for all and reap the benefits of the demographic dividend.

## Leave No One Behind

The solutions and changes required to achieve the **Inclusive Prosperity** outcome statement by 2026 should address all people, with specific attention to people belonging to one or multiple vulnerable

groups<sup>7</sup>, who face difficulties in accessing social protection services, economic opportunities and necessary skills development:

### Children

Youth not in Education,  
Employment or Training  
(NEET)

Women and girls

### Regular and irregular migrants

Ethnic groups, especially  
those geographically  
isolated

### Informal workers

Persons with disabilities  
Persons living in poverty

<sup>7</sup> As per identified LNOB groups in the CCA: (1) Non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups, (2) Women, (3) Children, adolescents, and youth, (4) Migrants, (5) Internally displaced persons, (6) Persons at risk of Statelessness, (7) LGBTQIA+, (8) Persons with Disabilities, (9)

People Living with HIV, (10) Older persons, (11) Population in informal settlements and camps.

## ASSUMPTIONS

- Political capital to considerably shift fiscal and economic policymaking, including on debt management and tax reform;
- The demographic window of opportunity and overcoming intersecting inequalities are prioritized by the Government;
- Smooth transition strategy for LDC graduation developed and implemented;
- Absorption of returnee migrant workers into the local economy;
- Access to higher productivity employment and other economic opportunities within the region continues to improve;
- World and Lao PDR economies recover from COVID-19 within the timeframe of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP;
- Increasing frequency of hazards and disasters; and
- Availability of ODA resources and other official flows for technical assistance.

## RISKS

- Public governance reforms, including in Public Financial Management, are delayed;
- Insufficient fiscal space available for priority budget allocations and repayment of debt obligations;
- Constraints in multi-stakeholder engagement and efficient coordination between relevant stakeholders for systemic changes;
- International travel restrictions are not eased in the short-term;
- COVID-19 spreads uncontrollably in the country; limiting economic activity, or the recovery from past disruptions;
- Economic shocks from elsewhere in the region spill over to Lao PDR; and
- Regional geopolitical tensions disruptively spill over to Lao PDR.







## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 – INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY

### Development challenges

(1) Making development progress more inclusive, diversified, competitive and resilient. These shortcomings are key development challenges facing the country and will require continued effort to address barriers to social and economic participation, including for identified vulnerable and marginalised groups, so that all can benefit from and contribute to Lao PDR's development. (2) Macroeconomic stabilization and efforts to ensure efficient use of available development resources will therefore be a crucial determinant of capacity to fund development progress.

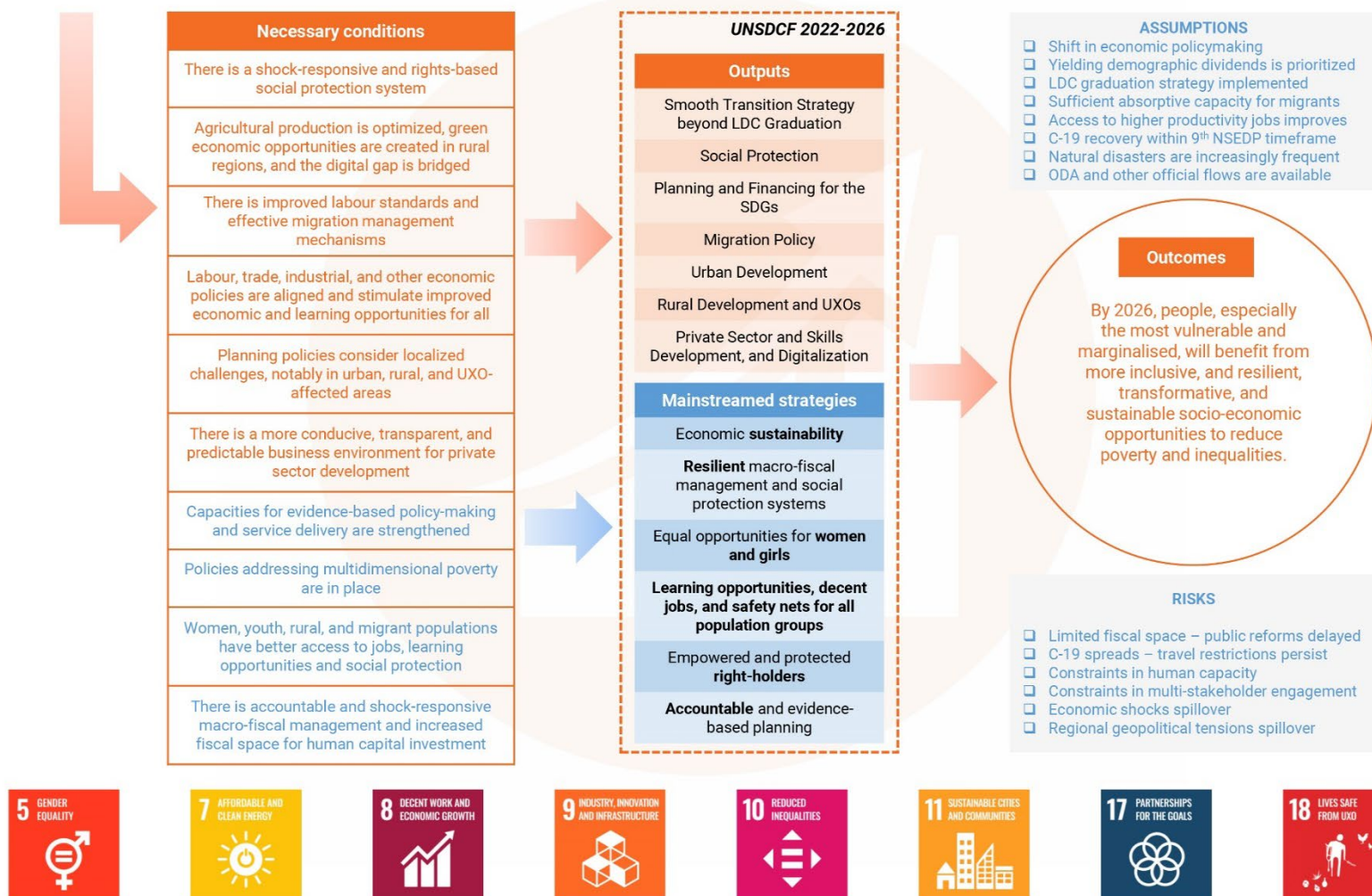


Figure 4: Strategic Priority 2 – Inclusive Prosperity



### Ministries, including their subnational entities

Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Finance (MoF), Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Health (MoH), Industry and Commerce (MoIC), Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT), Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW), including National Regulatory Agency (NRA) and UXO Lao, Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Planning and Investment (MPI)

### National institutions

National Assembly, Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor, People's Provincial Assemblies, Lao Women's Union (LWU), Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union (LYU), National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers, and Children (NCAWMC), Lao National Committee for Special Economic Zones, National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU), Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI)

### Development partners

All bilateral partners, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN, European Union (EU), World Bank, Green Climate Fund (GCF), international financial institutions (IFIs), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), World Trade Organisation (WTO) Enhanced Integrated Framework

### Civil society organisations and private sector

International and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), non-profit associations (NPAs), business associations, mass organisations and media, service providers, unions, multinationals, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), informal businesses, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and vocational training centres

## Regional issues

COVID-19's regional economic and trade impacts, the cross-border nature of migration dynamics, and Lao PDR's regional integration policy priorities, call also for a regional approach to programming under Inclusive Prosperity. Working to support efforts to ensure that the opportunities from regional integration contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and Leaves No One Behind will be a key concern of the programming and advocacy of the UN. Increasingly frequent interactions with relevant stakeholders – international financial

institutions, the private sector, neighbouring countries, regional and international frameworks such as APEC and the RCEP, or the Global Compact on Migration, as well as the ASEAN (notably its economic bodies) and neighbouring UN Country Teams – will be required. This outcome area aligns with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> pillars of the UN-ASEAN Plan of Action on Economic Cooperation and Cross-Sectoral Cooperation, as well as with the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, in particular the Strategies 3 on Economic Integration and 4 on Inclusive Digital Transformation.

## Inclusive Prosperity Joint outputs

The UNCT in Lao PDR plans to contribute to the achievement of the Inclusive Prosperity outcome

statement, corresponding to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> pillar of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP on Macro-Fiscal Management, on Livelihoods, and on Regional Integration, through programming under the following **joint outputs**:

**Smooth transition beyond LDC Graduation:** Lao PDR develops, implements, and monitors a strategy ensuring a smooth transition from the LDC category, with defined graduation support from the UN system and the country's other development and trading partners.

ILO, ITC, UNCDF, UNCITRAL, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNDP, UNIDO

**Planning and Financing for the SDGs:** Government, at the national and subnational levels, and the private sector, progress towards an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) and have improved technical and fiscal capacity dedicated to finance and localization of the SDGs, through fiscal space creation, enhanced collaboration between the planning and financing functions of government, resulting in more evidence-based costing and financing of priority development interventions, greater fiscal accountability, and better alignment of different sources of development finance to the 2030 Agenda.

IFAD, UNCDF, UNDESA, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, WHO

**Social Protection:** Government at the national and subnational levels have increased capacity and infrastructure to deliver, throughout the life cycle, welfare inclusive, gender-sensitive, shock-responsive, and sustainable social protection systems.

ILO, IOM, UNCDF, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO

**Migration Policy:** Strengthened multi-stakeholder capacity to protect migrants' rights create a conducive environment for safe, orderly, and regular migration through advocacy and enhanced regulatory and law compliance.

ILO, IOM

**Rural Development and UXOs:** Government at the national and sub-national levels have enhanced capacity to facilitate new and inclusive opportunities in rural areas through integrated rural development planning and prioritization, identification, survey and clearance of UXO-affected areas for productive use, conduct mine risk education, especially for children, and address the consequences for UXO victims and survivors.

FAO, IFAD, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF

**Urban Development:** Enhanced local and national government and multi-stakeholder capacities, awareness, and legal frameworks to improve spatial planning, connectivity, mobility, investments and financing for growth, and livelihoods along the economic corridors and developing urban areas, thereby alleviating poverty and reducing inequality, while co-creating safer and more inclusive urban areas.

FAO, IOM, UNCDF, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNIDO, UNOPS

**Private Sector and Skills Development, and Digitalization:** Enhanced multi-stakeholder capacity and improved policy and harmonized regulatory environment for a resilient, productive, competitive, and innovative private sector, seizing opportunities from trade, the digital transformation and e-commerce development, integrated with regional and global value chains, and supported by targeted and demand-driven skills and entrepreneurship development, especially for women and youth.

FAO, ILO, IOM, ITC, UNCDF, UNCITRAL, UNCTAD, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIDO, WFP



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 – GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW



By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, are better served by public institutions at all levels in a transparent and inclusive manner, able to exercise their rights and obligations and the institutions shall be strengthened and more accountable while the rule of law and international human rights commitments made by Lao PDR are upheld.



### Theory of Change

Through the combined efforts of all relevant stakeholders, it is expected that:

**IF** public institutions at all levels, including the National Assembly and the People's Provincial Assemblies, operate in an effective, transparent, inclusive, accountable, responsive, coordinated and evidence-based manner, including through e-governance solutions and in a corruption-free environment, and decision and policy-making and services and delivery are appropriately decentralised to subnational levels;

**IF** people, including vulnerable populations and those in remote areas, have more opportunities to access public information, provide feedback on public services (leading to quality improvement) and participate in decision and policy-making through public consultations, and women and youth have equal opportunities for leadership and decision-making roles in political and public life at all levels as provided for by national law in compliance with international commitments agreed by Lao PDR;

**IF** adoption, enforcement, and implementation of national legislation are fully compliant with Lao PDR's international human rights obligations, policies, and regulations and guarantee the effective exercise of fundamental freedoms as provided for by national law

in compliance with international commitments agreed by Lao PDR without discrimination on any ground, including in the private sphere; and legal and human rights awareness is raised amongst the public and businesses, and understanding of human rights standards and principles is increased amongst civil servants and law enforcement personnel;

**IF** all forms of organised crime, illicit financial and drug flows, violence, abuse, exploitation, and trafficking in persons are reduced, including through regional and bilateral cooperation, improved prevention, investigation and prosecution, and improved gender and child-sensitive treatment, healthcare and reintegration for survivors;

**IF** the quality, efficiency, and independence of the judiciary are enhanced and equal access to justice, legal aid and interpretation services where necessary for ethnic groups and vulnerable communities is expanded and effectively coordinated with other services through referral pathways, with a specific focus on vulnerable populations and remote areas, and the principles of legality, proportionality and legal certainty are strictly observed in any decisions restricting the right to liberty and security;

**IF** an enabling and supportive environment for civil society and community-based organisations is

developed and all groups where applicable and in accordance with relevant laws and regulations, in compliance with international commitments agreed by Lao PDR, can participate in a meaningful way in policy and decision-making, central and local planning and monitoring processes;

**IF** availability and inclusion of quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data, including by age, gender, disability, ethnicity, migratory status, geographic location and income, in policy planning, implementation and evaluation and statistics is improved through better systems and capacities of relevant stakeholders; data collection and distribution principles of participation, self-identification, transparency, privacy, and accountability are ensured; and if the importance of vital events registration is raised and civil registration processes are simplified and more accessible, especially of populations living in remote areas;

**THEN**, by 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, will be better served by

### Leave No One Behind

The solutions and changes required to achieve the **Governance and the Rule of Law** outcome statement by 2026 should address all people, with specific attention to people belonging to one or multiple

public institutions at all levels in a transparent and inclusive manner, able to exercise their rights and obligations and the institutions shall be strengthened and more accountable while the rule of law and international human rights commitments made by Lao PDR are upheld.

Collaboration between people and public institutions will be improved, public institutions will be better able to address the diverse needs of people, all people will have greater access to efficient, transparent, and quality public information and public services at all levels.

Public institutions at all levels will be strengthened to implement the rule of law and the justice sector is strengthened and able to provide legal resolution and bring those accountable to justice in compliance with the Constitution, the law, and international human rights obligations under the instruments that Lao PDR is a party to, supporting an inclusive national development process that will maintain a stable, peaceful, harmonious, democratic, just, and cohesive society.

vulnerable groups<sup>9</sup>, whose access to policy and decision-making roles and to justice are limited and whose human rights and safety are at risk:

Women and girls  
Children, adolescents and youth  
Persons with disabilities

Ethnic Groups, especially geographically isolated ones  
Non-dominant religious groups  
LGBTIQA+

Migrants  
Stateless persons, or at risk of statelessness  
Persons deprived of their liberty

<sup>9</sup> As per identified LNOB groups in the CCA: (1) Non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups, (2) Women, (3) Children, adolescents, and youth, (4) Migrants, (5) Internally displaced persons, (6) Persons at risk of Statelessness, (7) LGBTIQA+, (8) Persons with Disabilities, (9)

People Living with HIV, (10) Older persons, (11) Population in informal settlements and camps.



## ASSUMPTIONS

- Government prioritizes the anti-corruption reform, decentralization, civil registration, and legal sector reform;
- Implementation of existing international obligations;
- Increasing frequency of hazards and disasters; and
- Availability of ODA resources and other official flows for technical assistance.

## RISKS

- Public governance reforms, including in Public Financial Management are delayed;
- Insufficient fiscal space available for priority budget allocations; in particular, governance, legal sectors, and decentralization;
- Increased regional integration leads to increased transnational organised crime (TOC) risks;
- Prosecution remains low as serious crimes, such as trafficking, continue to be mediated at village levels;
- Limited use of the role of the human rights-based approach to achieving national development goals and the 2030 Agenda;
- Constraints in multi-stakeholder engagement and efficient coordination between relevant stakeholders for systemic changes;
- International travel restrictions are not eased in the short-term;
- COVID-19 spreads uncontrollably in the country; and
- Regional geopolitical tensions disruptively spill over to Lao PDR.







## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 – GOVERNANCE AND RULE OF LAW

### Development challenges

(1) Promoting a more active and inclusive human rights discourse, as well as more transparent, evidence-based and participatory policymaking over time, strengthening implementation, as well as rights holders' engagement, participation, empowerment, and agency; (2) Addressing gaps in governance institutions to support the implementation of existing laws and commitments, increasing involvement of right-holders as active transformers crucial for achieving the development goals, as well as strengthening coherence and coordination; (3) Achieving this will require improved availability and use of data, including data disaggregated by age, sex, gender, disability, and geographic location, as well as strengthening partnerships between different development actors, including the private sector, civil society, and regional organisations.

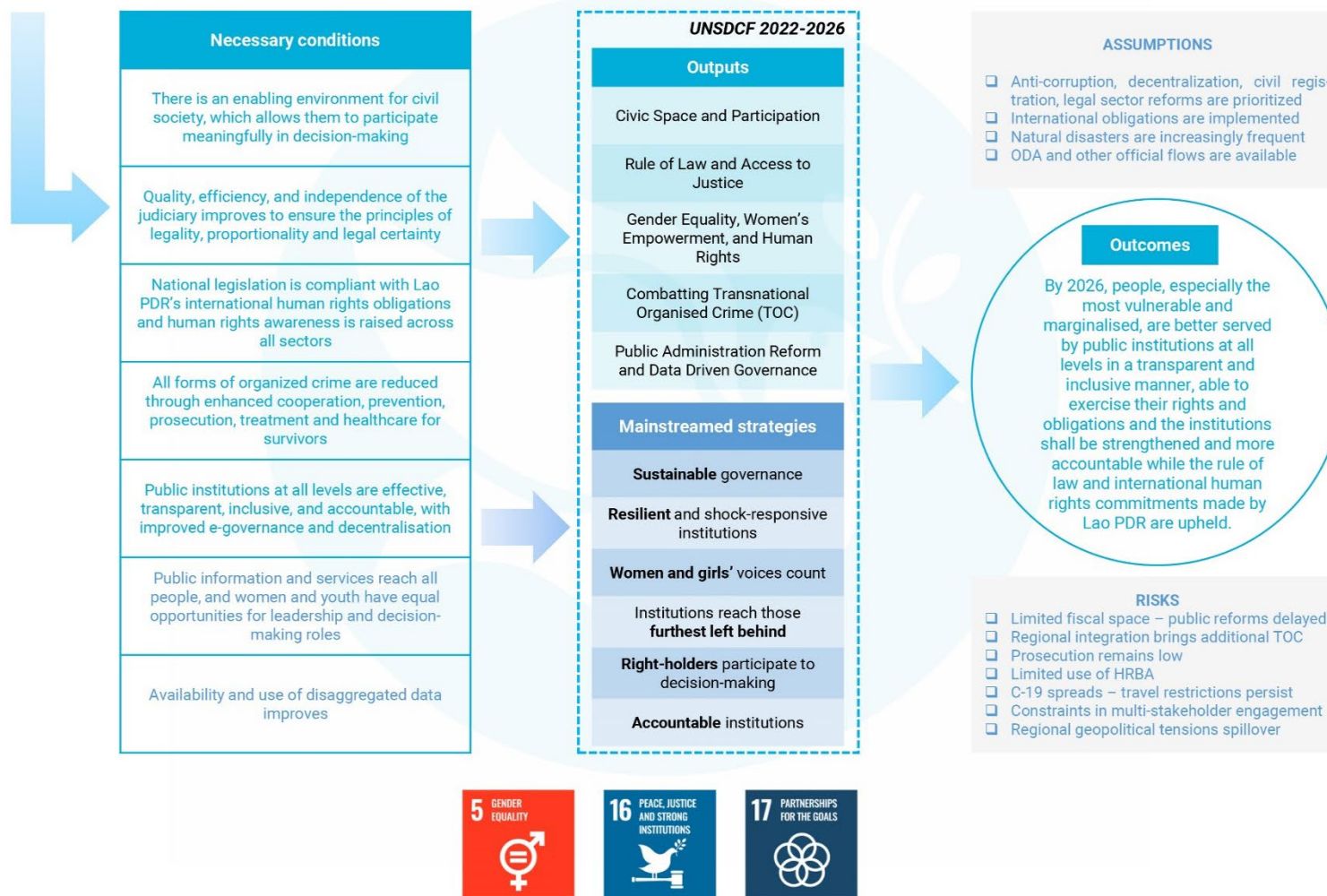


Figure 5: Strategic Priority 3- Governance and Rule of Law

#### Ministries, including their subnational entities

Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Education and Sports (MoES), Finance (MoF), Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Health (MoH), Home Affairs (MoHA), Industry and Commerce (MoIC), Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT), Justice (MoJ), Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW), Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Planning and Investment (MPI), Technology and Communication (MTC), Public Security (MoPS), Public Works and Transport (MoPWT)

#### National institutions

National Assembly, Supreme People's Court, Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor, People's Provincial Assemblies, Lao Women's Union (LWU), Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union (LYU), Lao Bar Association, National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers, and Children (NCAWMC), Secretariat for the Juvenile Justice Coordination Committee (JJCC), Anti-Trafficking Department, National Human Rights Committee

#### Development partners

Bilateral partners, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), European Union (EU), international financial institutions (IFIs)

#### Civil society organisations and private sector

International and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), non-profit associations (NPAs), business associations, mass organisations and media, service providers, unions, multinationals, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), informal businesses; technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and vocational training centres.

## Regional issues

Regional geopolitical and governance dynamics, the universality of human rights, and the transnational nature of organised crime are among the key reasons that will lead the UN to also have a regional approach to programming under Governance and the Rule of Law. Countering risks of transnational organised crime, including drug, human, wildlife trafficking and financial crimes, will be central to UN programming and advocacy. Increasingly frequent interactions with relevant stakeholders – neighbouring countries and

the ASEAN (notably its political and security bodies) as well as neighbouring UNCTs – will be required. This outcome area aligns with the 1<sup>st</sup> pillar of the UN-ASEAN Plan of Action on Political-Security Cooperation, especially its second priority on the promotion of good governance, human rights, and democracy. It also aligns with the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, in particular the 2<sup>nd</sup> Strategy on Strengthening Human Security, which aims at mainstreaming human rights in the process of post-pandemic recovery.



## Governance and the Rule of Law Joint outputs

The UNDS in Lao PDR plans to contribute to the achievement of the Governance and Rule of Law outcome statement, corresponding to the 6<sup>th</sup> pillar of

**Civic Space and Participation:** Understanding of the role of people and civil society participation in sustainable development; mechanisms for dialogue between people, CSOs, government, elected representatives, international organisations and others are fostered; and empowered people and increased capacities of CSOs to contribute through consultation and as provided by national law, in accordance with international obligations agreed by Lao PDR to sustainable development processes, in particular vulnerable and marginalised groups.

OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNV

**Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, and Human Rights:** Multi-stakeholder capacity to mainstream gender equality and international human rights, including the elimination of all forms of discrimination, in the design, implementation and monitoring of legal and policy frameworks, and operations is enhanced; national capacity to harmonize the domestic legislation and implement accepted recommendations emanating from international human rights mechanisms is increased.

FAO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF

**Rule of Law and Access to Justice:** Enhanced capacity of key justice agencies and legal professionals to ensure rule of law, access to justice, in particular, for marginalised and vulnerable groups to demand and contribute to access to justice, in line with relevant international human rights obligations and laws that Lao PDR is a party to.

ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, UNODC

the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP on Governance, through programming under the following **joint outputs**:

**Transnational Organised Crime (TOC):** National capacity to address challenges linked to crime and illicit trafficking in all their dimensions, including the drug problem, is enhanced to reduce all forms of violence and exploitation, especially against women and girls, and to improve the population's safety, well-being, and human rights.

IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNODC, UNOPS

**Public Administration Reform and Data Driven Governance:** Government at the national and local levels have enhanced capacities for more transparent, inclusive, and evidence-based law and policy, through improved disaggregated data generation and use, strengthened monitoring and evaluation frameworks, effective decentralization, improved digitalization of the public sector and services, civil service reform, and optimal budgeting and public investment management.

UNCDF, UNDESA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 – ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND RESILIENCE

By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, and institutions will be *better* able to sustainably access, manage, preserve, and benefit from natural resources and promote green growth that is risk-informed, disaster and climate-resilient.



*SDGs supported by this Outcome*

### Theory of Change

Through the combined efforts of all relevant stakeholders, it is expected that:

**IF** there is more sustainable, reliably financed and evidence-based integrated management of natural resources – water, fisheries, land, forests, biodiversity – and ecosystems, through better governance, coordination of stakeholders, and data;

**IF** people and institutions, including the private sector, adopt a green growth model of development, including behavioural change, and there are incentives for climate finance and investment in the circular economy, climate-resilient, low carbon, and environmentally responsible sectors;

**IF** institutional, technical, financial, and human capacity to prevent, mitigate, adapt, anticipate, and prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate change impacts and disasters improve;

**IF** there is enhanced risk-informed spatial planning, considerate of urban and rural contexts' specificities, and environmental safeguards are established, consolidated, and implemented to limit the environmental and social impacts of economic activity;

**IF** there are improved data, monitoring and evaluation systems and capacities for planning and integrated resources management, pollution control and waste management, and disaster risk management;

**IF** the Government implements commitments made under relevant multilateral environmental, climate and biodiversity agreements, such as the Paris agreement or the Sendai Framework and other international instruments for biodiversity protection;

**IF** there is increased collaboration and cooperation between stakeholders on transboundary resources management;

**IF** there is accelerated adoption and scaling up of a sustainable, climate resilient, and inclusive food

systems, including through green agriculture solutions;

**IF** there are improved policies and practices to tackle waste and pollution and to incentivise sustainable consumption and production practices;

**IF** people can prepare for, mitigate and adapt to shocks and disasters through increased awareness, localised nature and ecosystem-based adaptation solutions and the use of risk data;

**THEN**, by 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised, and institutions will be better able to sustainably access, manage, preserve, and benefit from natural resources and promote green growth that is risk-informed, disaster and climate-resilient.

### Leave No One Behind

The solutions and changes required to achieve the **Environment, Climate Change, and Resilience** outcome statement by 2026 should address all people, with specific attention to people belonging to one or

The Government will be better able to implement and conduct a successful, low-carbon and socially inclusive green growth strategy, with sustainable food systems, at all levels across urban and rural areas.

As a result, current and future environmental harm would be reduced, the impact of economic activity on the environment would be better managed, and natural resources would be managed more sustainably and for the benefit of future generations.

Communities and institutional climate and disaster resilience will be strengthened to cope with and recover from climate change and disaster impacts.

multiple vulnerable groups<sup>10</sup>, who face difficulties in accessing social protection services, economic opportunities and necessary skills development:

Rural people living in poverty, especially farmers, living in resource-rich and disaster-prone areas	Urban people living in poverty, living in disaster-prone areas  Ethnic groups, especially those in remote areas  Women	Children, adolescents, and youth  Environmental and climate migrants  Persons with disabilities
--	--	---

ASSUMPTIONS	RISKS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lao PDR follows international commitments on Disaster Risk Reduction, the environment, notably Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC);</li><li>Availability of green and climate finance globally continues to increase;</li><li>Global efforts to limit the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation continue to increase;</li><li>Availability of ODA resources (including through GCF accreditation) and other official flows for technical assistance; and</li><li>Increasing frequency of hazards and disasters.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Public governance reforms, including in Public Financial Management are delayed;</li><li>Insufficient fiscal space available for priority budget allocations; limiting investments in green growth;</li><li>Constraints in multi-stakeholder engagement and efficient coordination between relevant stakeholders for systemic changes;</li><li>International travel restrictions are not eased in the short-term;</li><li>COVID-19 spreads uncontrollably in the country;</li><li>Neighbouring countries do not cooperate on transboundary resources management; and</li><li>Regional geopolitical tensions disruptively spill over to Lao PDR.</li></ul>

<sup>10</sup> As per identified LNOB groups in the CCA: (1) Non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups, (2) Women, (3) Children, adolescents, and youth, (4) Migrants, (5) Internally displaced persons, (6) Persons at risk of Statelessness, (7) LGBTIQ+, (8) Persons with Disabilities, (9)

People Living with HIV, (10) Older persons, (11) Population in informal settlements and camp



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 – ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND RESILIENCE

### Development challenges

Valuing ecosystems, adopting circular economy principles, combating climate change, including building the resilience of the most vulnerable to climate shocks, by strengthening emergency preparedness and disaster risk management, and making judicious use of environmental resources would be vital for future sustainable growth.

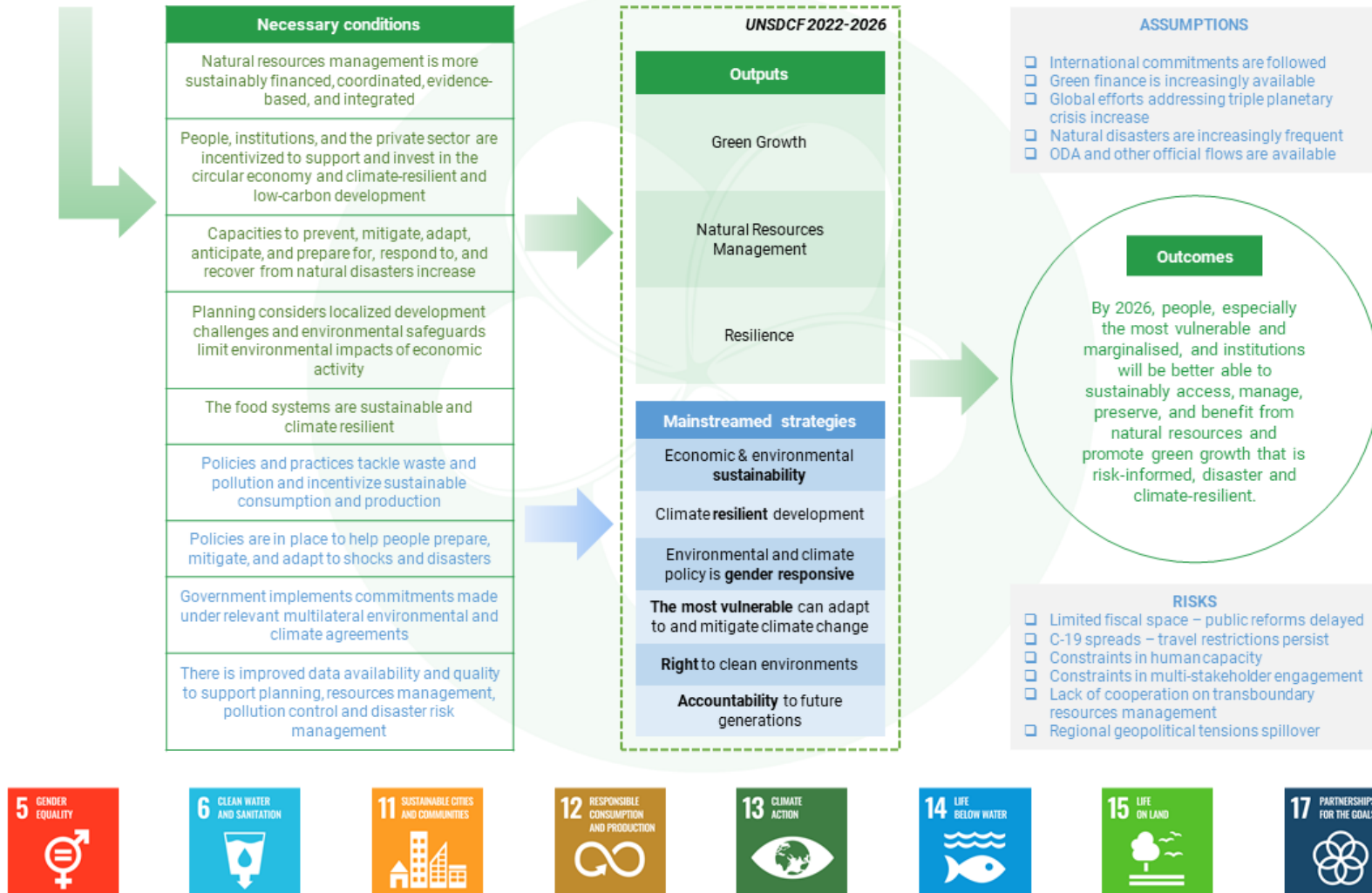


Figure 6: Strategic Priority 4 - Environment, Climate Change, and Resilience

Ministries, including their subnational entities	Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Energy and Mines (MoEM), Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Industry and Commerce (MoIC), Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW), Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Planning and Investment (MPI), Public Works and Transport (MPWT)
National institutions	National Assembly; Office of the Supreme People's Prosecutor; People's Provincial Assemblies; Lao Women's Union (LWU), Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union (LYU); National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers, and Children (NCAWMC)
Development partners	Bilateral partners, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), European Union (EU), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Global Environment Facility (GEF), international financial institutions (IFIs), Mekong River Commission (MRC), Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), agricultural research organisations (e.g., IFPRI), International Energy Agency (IEA)
Civil society organisations and private sector	International and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), non-profit associations (NPAs), business associations, mass organisations and media, service providers, unions, multinationals, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), informal businesses, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and vocational training centres.

## Regional issues

The transboundary nature of natural resources, the cross-border dimensions of air, water, and soil pollution, and the global implications of climate change are among the key reasons that the UN will also apply a regional approach to programming under Environment, Climate Change, and Resilience. Transboundary haze pollution, Mekong river governance, and illegal transboundary wildlife trade all have important implications for the realization the environment, climate change, and resilience outcome area. Ensuring the sustainable and resilient integrated management of regional resources and the transition towards a low-carbon development pathway takes place at the regional level will be central to UN programming and advocacy. Increasingly frequent interactions with relevant stakeholders – neighbouring

countries, the private sector, regional governance bodies such as the Mekong River Commission, neighbouring UNCT and the ASEAN (notably its economic and socio-cultural bodies) – will be required. This outcome area aligns with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> pillars of the UN-ASEAN Plan of Action, notably its priorities on Food, Agriculture and Forestry, Energy, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Environment and Climate Action. It also aligns with the ASEAN Disaster Management Framework and the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, in particular the 4<sup>th</sup> Strategy on Advancing towards a More Sustainable and Resilient Future, which prioritizes the green growth agenda, climate finance, and integrated and sustainable natural resources management.



## Environment, Climate Change, and Resilience Joint outputs

The UNCT in Lao PDR plans to contribute to the achievement of the Environment, Climate Change, and Resilience outcome statement, corresponding to the 4<sup>th</sup> pillar of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP on Environmental Protection, through programming under the following **joint outputs**:

**Green Growth:** Institutional, private sector and community capacities are strengthened to formulate and implement 'green' growth policies, mobilize green climate finance, reduce green house gas (GHG) emissions and pollution, optimize infrastructures across the rural-urban continuum, and promote responsible and sustainable production and consumption, mainstreaming climate change mitigation and adaptation into policies and plans at all levels.

FAO, IFAD, ITC, UNCDF, UNDESA, UNDP, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNIDO, UNOPS, WHO, WFP

**Resilience:** Government at the national and sub-national levels, vulnerable communities, private sector, and institutions have strengthened capacity to anticipate and recover from shocks, reduce risks, and address the climate change challenges through greater awareness, strengthened vulnerability assessment tools, improved hazard and disaster risk data, improved early warning systems, strengthened disaster risk reduction planning and national adaptation planning strategies.

FAO, IFAD, IOM, UNDP, UNDRR, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNOPS, WFP, WHO

**Natural Resources Management:** National and subnational capacities are in place to formulate and implement natural resources and environmental management plans and to enable sustainable and equitable access to resources (water, forests, and land), including land use plans and land tenure, enabled by regulatory frameworks, integrated management, community participation and better quality data generation and use.

FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UN-HABITAT, UNOPS, WFP



## 2.6 Sustainability

The overarching vision of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP is that of quality, green, sustainable, and focused development. The UN is committed to ensure the delivery of sustainable and impactful results, building capacity of national and local institutions, and ensuring adequate transfers of knowledge and expertise, within a co-owned Cooperation Framework contributing to the national priorities of the country and the achievement of the SDGs.

As the main coordinating development partner, the UN supported the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) in the development of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP over 2020 and 2021, through the policy formulation phase, including in recalibrating policies against the COVID-19 fallout and the development of implementation arrangements including a monitoring and evaluation framework, development of costing estimates for policy priorities, and elaboration of a high-level financing strategy. As a trusted partner, it co-convened a multi-stakeholder taskforce to study the impact of COVID-19 and support a determination of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, and later supported the integration of technical inputs to the strategic document, thereby increasing ownership of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP across the development partner community. The UN Development System, through UNICEF and UNDP and with support from other agencies, funds and programmes, supports the development of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP implementation arrangements, namely a high-level financing strategy, to ensure that policy priorities are well funded and that all sources of finance are appropriately mobilised, and a monitoring and evaluation framework, to measure progress and keep track of the sustainability of development results.

This support to the development of a coherent, comprehensive, and far-reaching 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP allowed for close alignment of the Cooperation Framework's strategic priorities, outcomes, and outputs to the six pillars of the NSEDP. The Cooperation Framework was co-designed with the Government of Lao PDR, which provided regular technical inputs, and co-chaired consultations with a broad group of stakeholders. The coordination mechanisms, governance structures and accountability framework – see chapter 3 – are co-owned, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) acting as the primary national

coordinating body and representative of the Government of Lao PDR.

The UN will specifically aim to support the sustainability of development results in Lao PDR, with technical expertise and capacity-building provided to relevant institutions and stakeholders, through a threefold approach focusing on:

Strategic investments in building human capital, starting from before birth and the very early years, and considering a life-cycle approach, to ensure that all, including those most at risk of being left behind, can contribute to the sustainable development of Lao PDR. Ensuring adequate fiscal space, private sector contributions, and efficient use of ODA for investments in human capital will be core objectives of the UN's support to planning and financing for development, anchored in the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) approach.

Addressing the triple planetary crisis' root causes and mitigation options, to ensure future generations' wellbeing and prosperity;

Critical cross-cutting projects to improve policymaking and tackle important obstacles to development progress, such as support to national, urban, and rural planning, to national legislation, to statistical capacity, to social protection systems, and legislation and regulation across all sectors. Sustainability of development results will also depend on ensuring financial sustainability of Lao PDR and unlocking new sources of finance contributing to the 2030 Agenda, to which the INFF approach will contribute.

The UN will develop strategic partnerships with all relevant stakeholders – see partnerships under each strategic priority – and more synergies, for more cost-efficient, more coordinated, and more sustainable development results. It will engage in Government-led development coordination mechanisms, including the Sector Working Groups (SWG) under the National Roundtable Process, and support the Government to engage in global platforms and conferences. The UN will also work to facilitate opportunities to realise the benefits of South-South and Triangular Cooperation through programming, recognizing the potential benefits from greater cooperation with peers and neighbour.

## 2.7 UN Comparative Advantages and UN Country Team Configuration

The UN in Lao PDR, composed of 25<sup>11</sup> AFPs and the RCO, is a longstanding and trusted partner of the Government of Lao PDR. In the independent evaluation of the 2017-2021 UN Partnership Framework, outside of the Government, the UN was reported by other stakeholders to be the most relevant and capable development agent to bring about systemic and transformational change in country. The value proposition of the UN in Lao PDR lies in several key comparative advantages, which mark its uniqueness as a development partner:

- The relevance of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda, which serves as a key reference for both the Government and most of Lao PDR's development partners.
- The capacity of its 25 AFPs operating in Lao PDR, and the wide range of technical expertise and experience that its national and international staff hold.
- The reform of the UNDS, with a stronger, more cohesive and integrated approach, which the Cooperation Framework will advance, aims to strengthen capacity to mobilize targeted resources over a wide span of development challenges in line with national priorities.
- Its specialization in providing policy advice for critical policy frameworks (such as national development plans and important legislation), and in building the capacity of national institutions.
- Its ability to act as a convener of both national and international stakeholders when required, coordinate partners and donors, and offer a

neutral space for all to contribute to development policy and programming.

- Its normative role in promoting the human-rights based approach to development, gender equality and women's empowerment, on ensuring that no one is left behind, and on climate and environmental challenges. The UN is the custodian of international treaties and conventions and is well-placed to support Lao PDR in fulfilling and reporting its international obligations.
- The networks of the UNDS across the globe, and its ability to mobilize global practice and knowledge, experience, lessons, and innovative approaches across contexts, and tackle regional challenges.

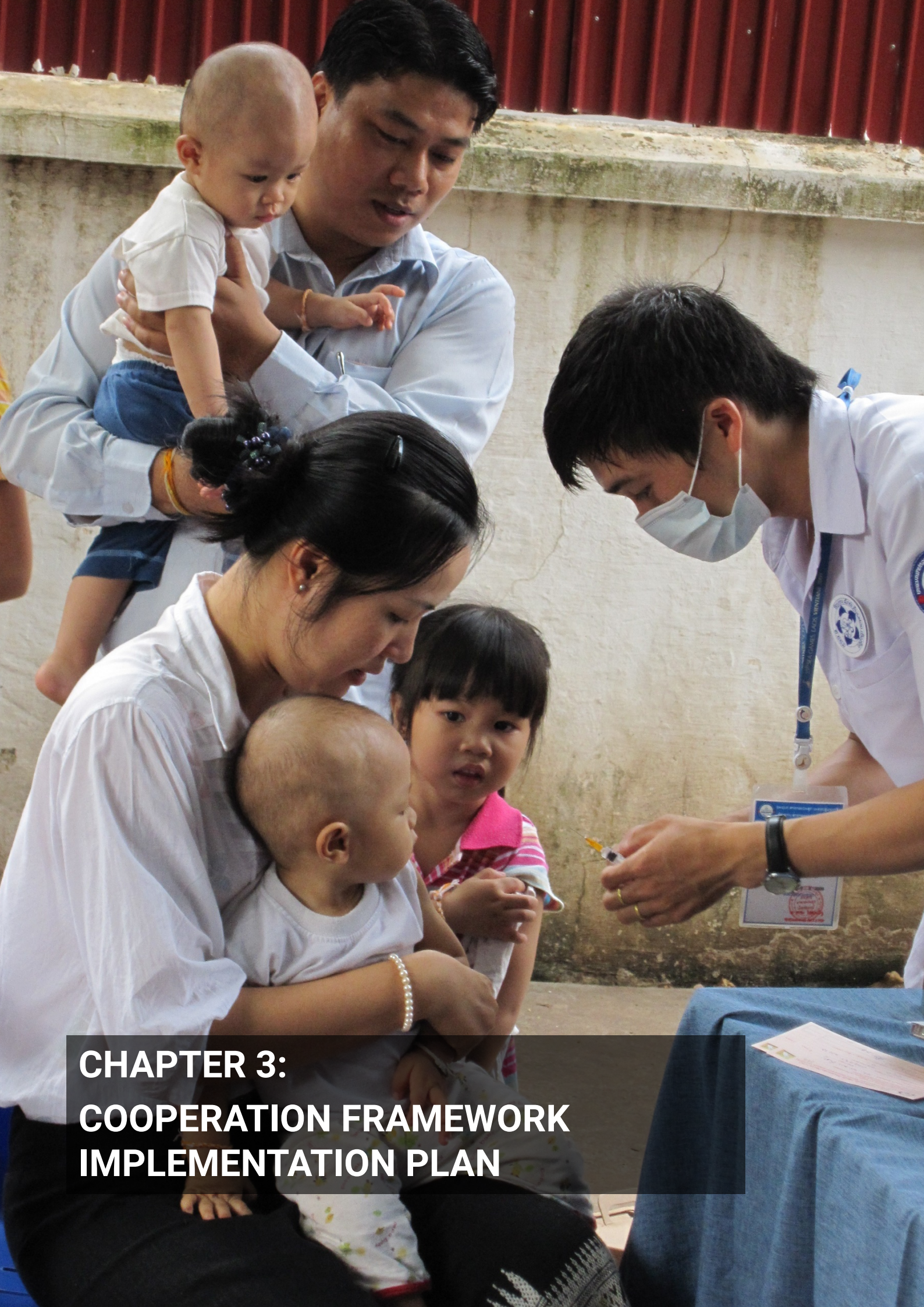
As part of the design process for the Cooperation Framework, resident and non-resident UN entities supporting Lao PDR conducted a thorough process to map anticipated contributions as part of efforts to ensure that the UNCT is appropriately configured to deliver on the commitments being made. This included the completion of detailed capacity assessments by entities, followed by a series of internal conversations between each agency, sometimes accompanied by regional offices, and the UNRC, to evaluate if changes were needed to business models, resources, and staff capacity to meet the requirements under the commitments made in the new Cooperation Framework. The process culminated in an internal workshop to highlight and address gaps and overlaps, agree contributions and roles of agencies by output, as well as critical shifts in capacity necessary amongst agencies to be able to deliver the Cooperation Framework. These shifts will be built into JWPs.

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<sup>11</sup> Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN Secretariat (DESA); the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO); International Labour Organisation (ILO); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); International Organisation for Migration (IOM); International Trade Centre (ITC); Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR); Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF); United Nations Commission On International Trade Law (UNCITRAL); UN Convention on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); UN Development Programme (UNDP); UN Office for Disaster Risk

Reduction (UNDRR); UN Environment Programme (UNEP); UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO); UN Population Fund (UNFPA); UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); UN Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF); UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO); UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS); UN Volunteers (UNV); World Food Programme (WFP); World Health Organisation (WHO).





## **CHAPTER 3: COOPERATION FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**



The programme will be nationally executed under the overall coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Government coordinating authorities for specific UN system agency programmes are noted in Annex 3. Government Ministries, NGOs, INGOs and UN system agencies will implement programme activities. The Cooperation Framework will be made operational through the development of JWPs and project documents as necessary, which describe the specific results to be achieved and will form an agreement between the UN system agencies and each implementing partner as necessary for the use of resources. To the extent possible the UN system agencies and partners will use the minimum documents necessary, namely the signed Cooperation Framework and signed JWPs and project documents to implement programmatic initiatives. However, as necessary and appropriate, project documents can be prepared using, inter alia, the relevant text from the Cooperation Framework and JWPs and project documents.

### 3.1 Cooperation Framework Governance

The Government of Lao PDR-UN JSC is the apex governing body for the Cooperation Framework. The JSC ensures national ownership and alignment of Cooperation Framework with the national priorities.

The JSC is responsible for:

- providing oversight of the development and endorsement of the Cooperation Framework; reviewing and providing feedback on annual progress in the implementation of the Cooperation Framework; and
- providing oversight on and guidance to the independent evaluation of the Cooperation Framework. The JSC may decide on any course-corrections required during the implementation of the Cooperation Framework.

The JSC is co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and the UNRC. Core membership is made up of the chairs and co-chairs of the Results

Groups under the Cooperation Framework. Additional members of the UNCT and those representing Lao PDR's key development partners are included as observers. Both resident and non-resident UN entities are included as both core members and observers in the JSC.

The JSC will ordinarily meet twice per year: one technical-level meeting and one high-level meeting.<sup>12</sup>

### 3.2 Cooperation Framework Management Structure

Within the UNDS, the UNCT is the highest interagency body in the country for coordination and decision-making. The UNCT is chaired by the UNRC and is collectively responsible for the progress and performance under the Cooperation Framework and all UN coordination issues in the country. The UNCT in Lao PDR consists of 25 UN AFPs of which 17 are resident. Non-resident UN entities participate remotely through online platforms and in-person missions as necessary.

Under the dual accountability system delineated in the UN Management and Accountability Framework (MAF), UNCT members remain fully accountable to their respective entities on individual mandates, while periodically with dual reporting lines, reporting to the UNRC on their individual activities and on their respective contributions to the results of the UNDS towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda at the country level on the basis of the Cooperation Framework<sup>13</sup>.

As part of the development of the Cooperation Framework, a UNCT configuration exercise was conducted to identify shifts in UN capacity and business models required to deliver planned commitments. This process mapped planned UNCT contributions to the Cooperation Framework's joint outcomes and outputs, as well as technical, financial, and operational capacities. The process also addressed planned changes in UN entities' business models, capacity gaps, overlaps and synergies, and further strengthening non-resident agencies' engagement with Cooperation Framework

<sup>12</sup> Full terms of reference for the JSC, including membership, are included in the Cooperation Framework Annexes.

<sup>13</sup> Management and Accountability Framework of the UN Development and Resident Coordinator System, 2019

implementation. Where necessary, UN entities' plans, resource mobilization, and recruitment strategies have been reviewed to ensure alignment with Cooperation Framework objectives.

The UNCT will be advised by an internal **UN Programme Oversight Group (POG)**, which will be responsible for programmatic-level coordination, oversight of cross-outcome priorities and ensuring adherence to the Guiding Principles of the Cooperation Framework. The group will be responsible for ensuring that the Guiding Principles are at the centre of the UNCT's policy and programmatic advice and operational support to the Government in its efforts to achieve the national goals of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and implement the 2030 Agenda. The POG will establish an 'early warning system' within the CCA and Cooperation Framework to identify emerging issues against selected indicators and how they may affect identified vulnerable groups. The POG has an advisory role to the Results Groups and reports the UNCT, to support improved programming effectiveness and efficiency.

Deputy representatives or senior technical staff, and staff with expertise in human rights, gender equality, non-discrimination, and safeguards of entities signing the Cooperation Framework are members of the POG. Reporting directly to the UNCT, it should at a minimum, meet quarterly, with ad-hoc sessions as required.

**Joint Outcome Results Groups (RGs):** Four joint RGs, aligned to the four strategic priorities, are the coordination mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring and reporting of outcomes under the Cooperation Framework. The RGs will be co-chaired by two UNCT members on a rotational basis, along with two Government focal points from relevant ministries or institutions. The RCO acts as secretariat and facilitates strategic coordination.

The RGs serve to improve coordination and support a strategic approach to analysis, planning, implementation, and monitoring in relation to the relevant outcome. They promote complementarity and synergies and reduce overlaps and gaps within outcome areas and provide assurance to the JSC. By frequent monitoring of results and risks, they are well-placed to recommend course corrections to the

Cooperation Framework. The RGs will periodically communicate with the SWG under the Round Table Process for exchange of information for synergy and mutual benefit.<sup>14</sup>

**Output coordination:** In line with the reform of the UNDS's emphasis on improving coordination and coherence of efforts, all UN contributions to the realisation of outputs have been organised into 21 joint outputs. These internal groups, working on closely related initiatives under the oversight of the more strategic RGs, will facilitate ongoing, practical, and programmatically focused exchanges of information, work planning, and development of joint initiatives amongst UN entities. One lead is appointed for each Joint Output group, which, with support from the RCO, will inform relevant RGs leads on quarterly results.

Implementation of the Cooperation Framework will be supported by three operational groups:

**UN Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Group (MEL):** Composed of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) focal points from UN entities, the MEL is tasked with the development and monitoring of the Cooperation Framework Results Framework, working closely with the RGs in the preparation of periodic progress reports and ensuring compliance with results-based management best practices. The MEL works closely with the POG, on deriving conclusions on progress across outcomes, and on specific disaggregated data and indicators concerned with vulnerable groups. As appropriate, the MEL group will provide technical support to the National Steering Committee for SDG Implementation, the broad-based institutional mechanism to monitor, mainstream and coordinate SDGs, including in the preparation of Voluntary National Reviews.<sup>15</sup>

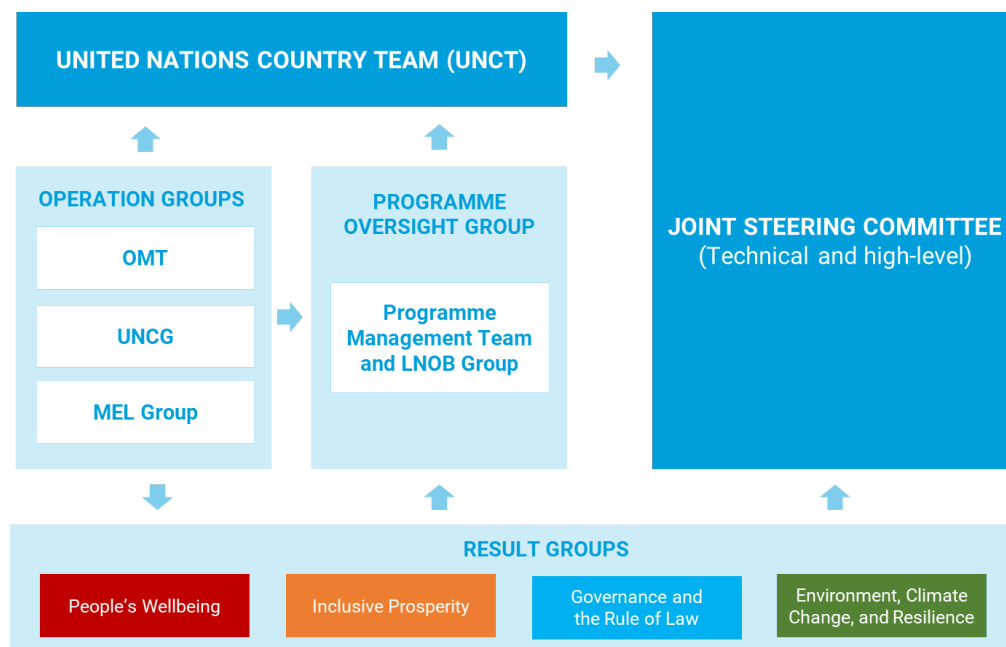
**Operations Management Team (OMT).** The OMT provides support and advice to the UNCT to improve efficiency in operations by harmonizing business operations. Significant priorities over the course of the Cooperation Framework will include the development and implementation of the next Business Operations Strategy to support UN in Lao PDR priorities (See section 3.6); progressing towards the development of a Common Back Office for shared operational

<sup>14</sup> Full terms of reference for the Results Groups are included in the Cooperation Framework Annexes.

<sup>15</sup> Full terms of reference for the MEL Group are included in the Cooperation Framework Annexes.

capacities across the UN; and facilitating exploration of second UN Common Premises in Vientiane, which with reference to the timetable provided by the UNSDG coincides with the time span of the Lao PDR UNSDCF 2022-2026<sup>16</sup>.

**The UN Communications Group (UNCG):** the UNCG supports the implementation of the Cooperation Framework through the facilitation of joint and integrated communication of UN initiatives, events, and campaigns, and advocates for development change in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 7: Coordination mechanisms – UNSCDF 2022-2026**

### 3.3 Resourcing the Cooperation Framework

Financing the realisation of national development priorities is a key challenge for Lao PDR with already limited fiscal space further constrained by the impact of COVID-19. The UN is working closely with the MPI on the development of a financing strategy for the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP to support optimized resource mobilization and allocation toward national priorities in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and foster the adoption of an INFF.

Funding the Cooperation Framework, as the UN's contribution to the realisation of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, is part of the overall financing of the SDGs. The UNCT will attempt to diversify the financial flows contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, as per the Addis-Ababa Action Agenda. UNCT strategies to mobilize

resources in support of development goals will vary by outcome and output but should include efforts to:

- structure the necessary UN resource mobilization through the development a multi-year Funding Framework to support the implementation of the Cooperation Framework,
- developing joint programmes to increase the cost-effectiveness and quality of UN programming, offering visible platforms for resource mobilization, and making use of the complementary expertise and skills available across the UN entities,
- strengthen partnerships and facilitate dialogues with the private sector and address specific challenges to accessing private investment capital, and

<sup>16</sup> Full terms of reference for the OMT are included in the Cooperation Framework Annexes.

<sup>17</sup> Full terms of reference for the UNCG are included in the Cooperation Framework Annexes.

- support the Government in identifying new sources of SDG financing, starting with the development of assessments of the financing landscape, the formulation of a high-level financing strategy for the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, development of monitoring systems to track expenditures against policy priorities and the SDGs, all through numerous stages of structured dialogues to ensure that all relevant financial stakeholders are consulted and informed.

The UNDS agencies will provide support to the development and implementation of activities within the Cooperation Framework, which may include technical support, cash assistance, supplies, commodities and equipment, procurement services, transport, funds for advocacy, research and studies, consultancies, programme development, monitoring and evaluation, training activities and staff support. In mutual agreement with the Government, part of the UNDS entities' support may be provided to non-governmental organisations as agreed within the framework of the individual workplans and project documents, and in accordance with approval procedures as required under Prime Minister Decree No. 013 on INGOs and Decree No. 238 on NPAs.

Additional support may include access to UN organisation-managed global information systems, the network of the UN agencies' country offices and specialized information systems, including rosters of consultants and providers of development services, and access to the support provided by the network of UN specialized AFPs. The UNDS agencies shall appoint staff and consultants for programme development, programme support, technical assistance, as well as monitoring and evaluation activities.

Subject to annual reviews and progress in the implementation of the programme, the UNDS agencies funds are distributed by calendar year and in accordance with the Cooperation Framework. These budgets will be reviewed and further detailed in the workplans and project documents. By mutual consent between the Government and the UN, funds not earmarked by donors to UNDS agencies for specific activities may be re-allocated to other programmatically equally worthwhile activities.

Cash assistance for travel, stipends, honoraria and other costs shall be set at rates commensurate with those applied in country, but not higher than those applicable to the UN system (as stated in the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) circulars).

### 3.4 Derivation of UN entity country programming instruments from the Cooperation Framework

Operationalization of the strategic directions and commitments of the UNCT under the outcome areas will take place through the implementation of UN entity-specific country programme documents (often referred to as CPDs) and plans. These are outlined by AFPs in collaboration with relevant line ministries and other national counterparts and implementing partners in accordance with their individual mandates and capacities.

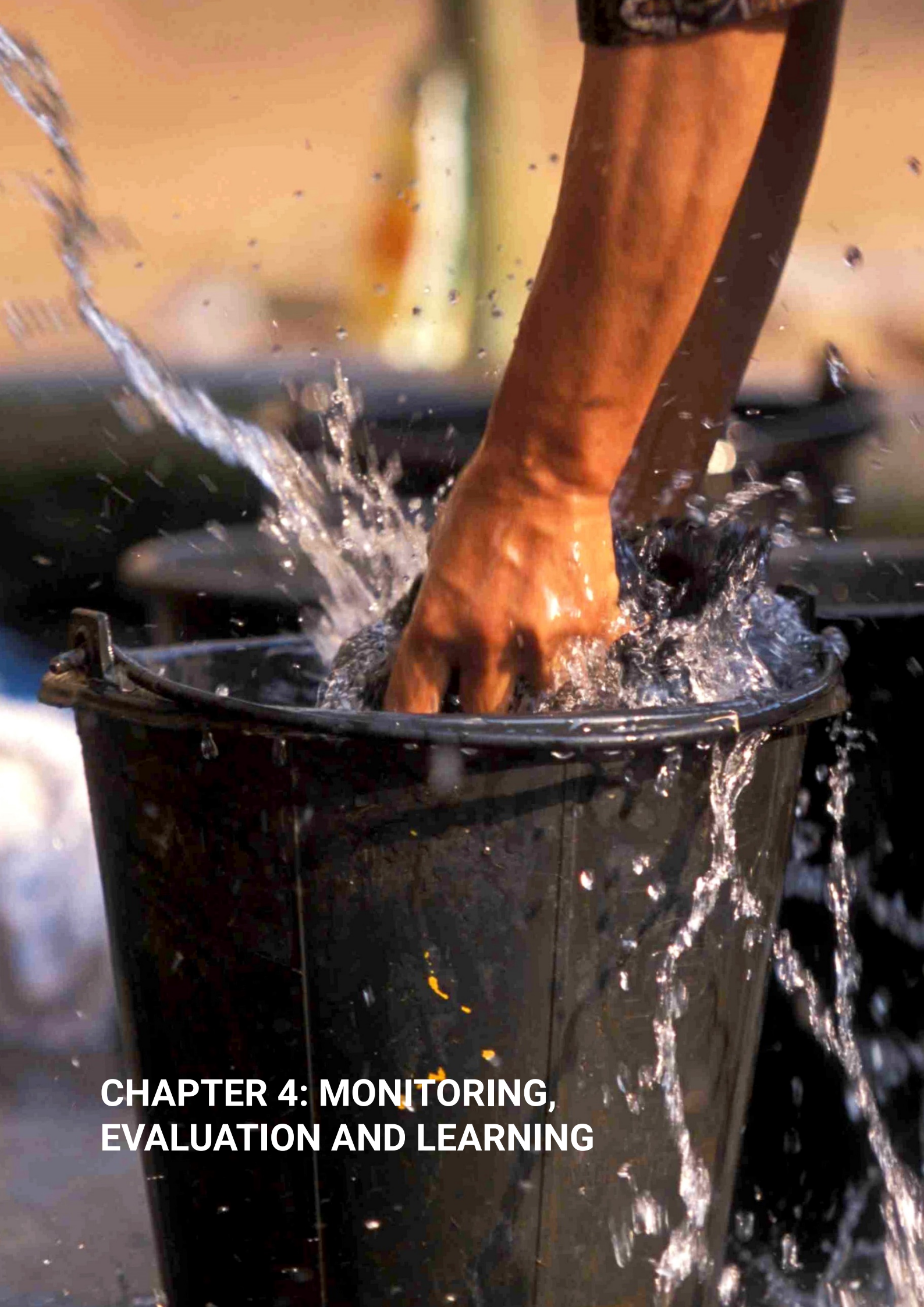
### 3.5 Joint Work Plans

The Cooperation Framework will be implemented through JWPs. The JWPs will contain planned interventions and resource contributions from the UN entities towards the achievement of joint outputs and outcomes.

The JWPs at the outcome-level are critical instruments to avoid duplication and fragmented approaches and to ensure UN-wide coherence in collective programming for the country. Individual entity contributions in the JWPs will be consistent with the theory of change of the Cooperation Framework and directly contribute to the Cooperation Framework outputs and outcomes. JWPs are prepared by outcome leads with the support of the RCO and from all contributing agencies under each outcome.

The JWPs also form the basis for preparing the Annual Performance Review and Annual Country Results Report from January 2022 to December 2026. These are drafted by the RGs, with secretariat support from the RCO. JWPs will be endorsed by the UNCT and JSC with the Annual Performance Review and Annual Country Results Report submitted by 31 March to the UN Development Coordination Office (UN DCO) through the UNRC.





## **CHAPTER 4: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING**

## 4.1 CCA Update

The CCA that informed the design of the Cooperation Framework will be updated periodically over its duration, to inform efforts to adapt programming to achieve intended results despite changing context. This process of rolling updates will be formalized through the POG, which will review shifts and emerging risks for identified vulnerable and marginalised populations on a quarterly basis. Logs of shifts identified over the preceding four quarters of the year will be reviewed on an annual basis and used to develop an annual CCA Update note.

The POG will make recommendations to the UNCT for any shifts in programming considered appropriate in light of the updated CCA analysis. The UNCT may choose to then submit recommendations to the JSC, which, if agreed, will be implemented by the RGs.

## 4.2 Risk Management

Key risks include:

- Limited availability of resources to be invested in the realisation of national development priorities. This is considered both a high likelihood and high impact.
- Constraints in multi-stakeholder engagement and efficient coordination between relevant stakeholders. This is considered moderate likelihood, but potentially high impact.
- COVID-19 spreading uncontrollably in the country, with implications for people's wellbeing, socio-economic activity, and the implementation of the Cooperation Framework. This is considered moderate likelihood, but potentially high impact.
- Regional geopolitical tensions disruptively spilling over into Lao PDR. This is considered moderate likelihood, but potentially high impact.
- Climate change and disaster-related threats increase in frequency and/or intensity. This is considered high likelihood and high impact.
- Limited national absorption capacity, delayed reforms, and high turnover of staff leading to lack of national ownership and sustainability. This is considered moderate likelihood and impact.

These risks will be mitigated by:

- Developing a risk management system through the Joint Workplans and strategic programme oversight groups;
- Closely aligning the Cooperation Framework with the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP;
- Prioritising the development of new partnerships to broaden the coalition of stakeholders working towards the realisation of national development priorities;
- Pursuing innovative funding and financing options where possible;
- Supporting the development of a national strategy for the financing of priorities set out in the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, in line with the Integrated National Financing Framework approach;
- Regularly reviewing the changing context through the CCA update process, and recommending adjustments to Cooperation Framework implementation as appropriate;
- Mainstreaming climate change and disaster risk reduction across all programming;
- Undertaking careful analysis of national capacity building needs as part of programming decisions.

## 4.3 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning for Joint Work Plans

The Cooperation Framework Results Matrix is the main tool against which progress will be measured. The Cooperation Framework Results Framework has been designed to track progress on key elements of the theory of change at the outcome level, and UN contributions to this progress at the output level. The Results Framework is managed by the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Group (MEL), composed of M&E focal points across UN entities and coordinated by the RCO (see 3.2).

To the extent possible, the Results Framework has been aligned to key national frameworks. At the outcome level, 71 percent (39/58) of indicators are aligned to the national SDG indicator framework, and 45 percent (26/58) are aligned to indicators of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. 78 percent (45/58) are at least aligned to one



of these two national frameworks. Additional indicators have been included to track progress in areas considered crucial to the realisation of anticipated outcomes, but not reflected in the national SDG or NSEDP indicator frameworks.

The Results Framework was developed through a consensus-based process with all 25 UN entities signing the Cooperation Framework. All 58 indicators have a custodian agency, charged with tracking indicator progress on a regular basis, under the strategic coordination of the RCO.

The MEL will support the development of JWPs, providing technical advice on the choice of output indicators.

Supporting national statistical capacity has been identified as a priority across all outcomes, particularly with regards to collecting additional and more disaggregated data. During the Cooperation Framework implementation period, the UN in Lao PDR will provide support to the rollout of key national surveys including the 2025 Population Census, the Lao Social Indicator Survey III, and the Labour Force Survey; these will inform the monitoring of both the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and national sectoral strategies, as well as the Cooperation Framework.

Implementing Partners (IPs) agree to cooperate with the UN entities in monitoring of all activities supported by cash transfers and will facilitate access to relevant financial records and personnel responsible for the administration of cash provided by the UN entities. To that effect, IPs agree to the following:

Periodic on-site reviews and spot checks of their financial records by the UN system agencies or their representatives, as appropriate, and as described in specific clauses of their engagement documents/contracts with the UN entities;

Programmatic monitoring of activities following the UN entities' standards and guidance for site visits and field monitoring;

Special or scheduled audits: Each UN entity, in collaboration with other UN entities (where so desired and in consultation with the respective coordinating ministry), will establish an annual audit plan, giving priority to audits of IPs to which UN entities provide

large amounts of cash assistance, and those whose financial management capacity needs strengthening; and zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse and violations of human rights.

## 4.4 Annual Performance Review and Country Results Reporting

The UNCT, drawing on the POG, the RGs, and the MEL will undertake an annual review of the implementation of the Cooperation Framework. This will track progress towards anticipated results, monitor risks, and identify emerging opportunities and challenges. CCA updates will inform the Cooperation Framework Progress Report.

The annual Progress Report will be presented to the JSC and inform decisions on course corrections of the implementation of the Cooperation Framework through the RGs and JWPs. After the approval of the Progress Report by the JSC, the report will be disseminated to key stakeholders and published online.

The UN INFO online platform will provide a transparent, publicly available record of UN support to Lao PDR, presented in alignment with the SDGs as well as the outcomes and joint outputs of the Cooperation Framework and funding/financing sources.

## 4.5 Evaluation Plan

An independent final evaluation of the Cooperation Framework will be carried out in the penultimate year of the Cooperation Framework cycle. As far as possible, the UN agencies' own programme evaluations and those of joint programmes will be sequenced in such a way that these reports are available to inform the Cooperation Framework evaluation. An evaluation workplan will ensure that the multiple evaluation processes are linked and mutually reinforcing and do not duplicate efforts. Agency evaluations and the Cooperation Framework evaluation can also run together to minimize evaluation costs and processes by combining stakeholder consultations, for example. The Cooperation Framework evaluation is the main



instrument that holds the UN system accountable to its beneficiaries, the Government, to donors and within the system.

The evaluation of the Cooperation Framework will be guided by the norms and standards of the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG). The UNCT and the Government will establish a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan that will consist of all the evaluations planned by the UN system and individual

agencies over the programme cycle, including the associated costs. The evaluation of the Cooperation Framework will be carried out with full engagement of the Government and other national partners. It will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Cooperation Framework. It will also comment on the partnerships and cross-cutting themes. While the impact may be difficult to judge in the penultimate year of the Cooperation Framework, tentative impact directions will be assessed.

## Results Framework

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 - PEOPLE'S WELLBEING

#### Impact

National development priorities: Outcome 2 of the 9th NSEDP

SDGs and SDG targets: SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 17

By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, will have more equitable and inclusive access to and will benefit from better quality health, nutrition, food, shelter, protection, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), and education and learning, including during emergencies.

	Indicators	Unit	Baseline Value	Base year	Provisional Target	Target year	Custodian**	Data source	Alignment	
									National SDGi	9th NSEDP M&E framework
1	Completion rate (primary)	%	92.6	2020	96	2026	UNICEF	EMIS	yes	yes
2	Completion rate (lower secondary)	%	54 (M/F: 53.75/51.4)	2017	>74%	2026	UNICEF	UNESCO Institute for Statistics	yes	yes
3	Proportion of children and young people achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics (male/female) according to national student performance assessments: (a) at the end of primary; education (grade 5) (b) at the end of lower secondary education (grade 9)	%	(a) Lao language 2% / Math 8% (b) Lao language 28.2 %/ Math 0.9%	2019	(a) Lao language 20% / Mathematics 40% (b) Lao language 40% / Mathematics 20%	2026	UNICEF	(b) SEA-PLM 2019: regional learning assessment (c) ASLO Grade 9 national learning assessment	yes	yes
4	Dropout rate for grade 1	%	6.4	2020	4%	2026	UNICEF	EMIS	no	yes
5	Number of participants (15-30) in the lower secondary education equivalency programme	Number	30065 (14362 female)	2018	140,000 in total over the five years	2026	UNESCO	MOES	no	yes
6	Prevalence of stunting (low height-for-age) in children under 5	%	33 (M/F: 34/32)	2017	25	2025	WFP	LSIS	yes	no
7	Prevalence of wasting (low weight-for-height) in children under 5	%	9 (M/F: 9.4/8.6)	2017	<5	2025	WFP	LSIS	yes	no
8	Prevalence of overweight (high weight-for-height) in children under 5	%	3.5 (M/F: 3.9/3.1)	2017	≤2	2025	WFP	LSIS	yes	no
9	Coverage of skilled birth attendance	%	79.8	2020	90%	2026	WHO	HMIS, Ministry of Health	yes	no
10	DPT3/Pentavalent immunization coverage	%	90.1	2020	100%	2026	WHO	HMIS, Ministry of Health	yes	yes

11	TB Treatment success rate	%	89	2019	90%	2026	WHO	National TB Control Programme	yes	no
12	Percentage of people living with HIV currently receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART)	%	54	2019	95%	2026	WHO OR UNAIDS	National Center for HIV, AIDS and STIs	yes	no
13	% of key populations (MSM, FSW and PWID) at risk of HIV infection have access to comprehensive HIV prevention services.	%	2020: MSM = 7 % FSW = 67% PWID = 0%	2020	95	2026	UNAIDS	GAM Report	no	no
14	Medical doctors per 1,000 population	Rate	0.62	2018	0.72	2026	WHO	Dept. of Health Personnel, Ministry of Health	yes	no
15	Percentage of girls aged 15-19 years currently married or in union	%	23.5	2017	7.2	2026	UNFPA	CRVS (MoHA) / LSIS III	yes	yes
16	Adolescent birth rate	Rate per 1000	83	2017	63.2	2026	UNFPA	LSIS II , CRVS (MoHA)	yes	no
17	Maternal mortality ratio	per 100,000 live births	185	2019	<70	2026	UNFPA	MoH	yes	yes
18	Modern contraceptive prevalence rate	%	49	2017	67	2026	UNFPA	LSIS	yes	no
19	Children whose birth are registered in that year	%	51	2019	70%	2026	UNICEF	MOHA	yes	yes
20	Use of basic Sanitation Services	%	71	2017	85%	2026	UNICEF	LSIS/JMP/Census	yes	yes
21	Use of basic water supplies	%	78.1	2017	95%	2026	UNICEF	LSIS/JMP/Census	yes	yes
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 - INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY										
<b>Impact</b> <b>National development priorities:</b> Outcomes 1, 3, and 5 of the 9th NSEDP <b>SDGs and SDG targets:</b> SDGs 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 18  By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, will benefit from more inclusive, resilient, transformative, and sustainable socio-economic and demographic opportunities to reduce poverty and inequalities.										
	Indicators	Unit	Baseline Value	Base year	Provisional Target	Target year	Custodian*	Data source	Alignment	
									National SDGi	9th NSEDP M&E framework
22	Proportion of population living below national poverty line	%	18.60%	2020	13.90%	2026	UNICEF	LECS- UNICEF	yes	yes
23	Proportion of children who are multidimensionally deprived according to national definitions	%	50.40%	2018	NSEDP 35% / localised SDGi 25%	2026	UNICEF	LSIS	yes	yes



24	Share of population that is covered by the National Social Security System	%	4.4 (312,175 insured persons, female: 145,815)	2019	7% (469,675 insured persons) Target 2% additional persons (157,500)	2025	ILO	MoLSW	no	yes
25	Households who have received social transfers (cash and in-kind) in the last three months.	%	12.4	2017	20%	2026	UNICEF	LSIS	no	no
26	Unemployment rate (% of total labor force)	%	Government estimation 2020 20%	2017	15%	2026	ILO	ILOSTAT database	yes	yes
27	Youth unemployment	%	18.2 Female: 20.8 Male: 15.5	2017	15%	2025	ILO	ILOSTAT database	no	yes
28	Adult literacy rate (15 and above)	%	84.66 (M/F:89.96/79.39)	2015	M 94%/F 88% for 15-24 (Education and Sports Sector Development Plan 2021-2025)	2026	UNESCO	UNESCO	yes	no
29	Total revenue as a % of GDP	%	12.1	2020	20%	2026	UNCDF	MoF/ IMF	yes	yes
30	Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)	%	13, 6, 3	2021	tbd	tbd	UNCDF	Official Gazette	yes	no
31	Remittance contribution to the GDP	%	1.49	2017	tbd	tbd	IOM	World Bank	yes	no
32	Ratio of export over GDP (disaggregated merchandise and services)	%	29.5 5.1	2018	tbd	tbd	ITC	ITC/UNCTAD/WTO	yes	no
33	Exports (disaggregated by World/ASEAN/other major trading partners and goods/services)	bn US constant	6.23; 921.4 3.09; NA 2.16; NA	2018/19	tbd	tbd	ITC	ITC/UNCTAD	no	no
34	Export diversification index (markets and products)	0-1	0.68 0.90	2018	tbd	tbd	ITC	ITC/UNCTAD/WTO	yes	no
35	B2C e-commerce index	0-100	40.6 (Rank 101)	2020	45	2026	UNCTAD	UNCTAD Technical Notes on ICT for Development	yes	no
36	Competitive Industrial Performance Index	Ranking	109	2018	tbd	tbd	UNIDO	UNIDO	no	no
37	FDI inflows	% of GDP	7.8	2018	tbd	tbd	UNCDF	IMF	yes	yes
38	Manufacturing in total value added	%	8.3	2018	9.10%	2026	UNIDO	UNIDO	yes	no
39	Percentage of high priority hazardous areas remaining to be cleared (disaggregated by village poverty levels)	%	99.25	2019	98.78	2026	UNDP	MLSW	yes	no
40	Number of reported UXO casualties	%	33	2020	<15	2026	UNDP	MLSW	yes	yes

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 - GOVERNANCE AND THE RULE OF LAW

#### Impact

**National development priorities:** Outcome 6 of the 9th NSEDP

**SDGs and SDG targets:** SDGs 16, 17

By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, will be better served by public institutions at all levels in a transparent and inclusive manner, able to exercise their rights and obligations and the institutions shall be strengthened and more accountable while the rule of law and international human rights commitments made by Lao PDR are upheld.

	Indicators	Unit	Baseline Value	Base year	Provisional Target	Target year	Custodian*	Data source	Alignment	
									National SDGi	9th NSEDP M&E framework
41	Statistical Capacity Indicator	%	67.8	2017	75	2026	UNDESA	World Bank	no	no
42	Proportion of births of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with the civil registration / A proportion of children under 5 years of age are registered at different ages	%	73 (M/F: 72.8/73.1)	2017	93	2025	UNICEF	MOHA	yes	yes
43	Corruption Perception Index	Index	29 (Rank 134)	2020	>40	2026	UNDP	Transparency International	no	no
44	Number of people using legal aid services across the country	Number	1059	2019	35000	2026	UNDP	MoJ	no	no
45	Government Effectiveness Index	Index	-0.78 (Rank 153/193)	2019	<-0.5 (top 120)	2026	UNDP	World Bank	no	no
46	Voice and Accountability Index	Index	-1.8 (Rank 187/194)	2019	<-0.9 (top 140)	2026	UNDP	World Bank	no	no
47	E-government Index	Index	0.3288 (Rank 167/193)	2020	>0.55 (top 130)	2026	UNDP	UNDESA	no	no
48	Number of country visits by Special Procedures accepted by Lao PDR (subject to UPR Action Plan)	Number	0	2020	TBC	2026	OHCHR	OHCHR	no	no
49	Number of reports to Treaty Bodies submitted by Lao PDR (number of action plans developed for implementation on recommendations received by Treaty Bodies)	Number	0	2020	6	2026	OHCHR	OHCHR	no	no
50	Percentage of recommendations agreed on by Lao PDR from the Third Cycle Universal Periodic Review and issued by human rights Treaty Monitoring Bodies that have been implemented	%	0	2020	10	2026	OHCHR & UNDP	GoL UPR M&E Framework	no	yes

# STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 - ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND RESILIENCE

## Impact

National development priorities: Outcome 4 of the 9th NSEDP

SDGs and SDG targets: SDGs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17

By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, and institutions will be better able to sustainably access, manage, preserve, and benefit from natural resources and promote green growth that is risk-informed, disaster and climate-resilient.

	Indicators	Unit	Baseline Value	Base year	Provisional Target	Target year	Custodian*	Data source	Alignment	
									National SDGi	9th NSEDP M&E framework
51	Number of local governments that have adopted and implemented local disaster risk reduction strategies, disaggregated by province, district and village	Number	2 Provinces 0 district 0 village	2020	10 Prov 15 Dist 50 Village	2026	UNDRR	MoNRE	yes	yes
52	Number of functional weather stations	Number	51	2021	101	2024	FAO	MoNRE	no	yes
53	Persons per 100,000 population directly affected (dead, missing, homeless/displaced) by natural disasters	Number	738 per 100,000	2015	tbd	2026	UNDRR	International Disaster Database, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters/ MONRE	yes	yes
54	Greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (tCO2e/year)	tCO2e/year	37291634	2017/2018	30000000	2026	UN-Habitat	Biennial Update report and National Communication to the UNFCCC	yes	no
55	PM2.5 air pollution, mean annual exposure (micrograms per cubic meter)	micrograms per cm	25.11	2017	10	2026	UNEP	World Bank	no	yes
56	Environmental Performance Index (EPI)	Index	34.8	2020	tbd	2026	UN-Habitat	Yale University	no	no
57	Red List Index of species survival	Index	0.83	2020	tbd	2026	UNDP	Red List/ IUCN	yes	no
58	Forest area as a percentage of total land area	%	Government estimation 57.5	2020	70	2025	FAO	FAO	yes	no

\*Indicators have been agreed by the UNCT in Lao PDR. They are at 78% aligned with either the 9th NSEDP or the SDGi.  
 \*\*Custodian agencies are responsible and will be held accountable for the collection and reporting of the data as required.



## UN Country Team in Lao PDR

FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. FAO goal is to achieve **food security** for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. Under the Cooperation Framework, FAO will contribute to the three outcomes: People's Wellbeing through education (linked to food and nutrition safety), food and nutrition security and safer urban areas (through rural employment, digital agriculture and rural transformation); Inclusive Prosperity through economic corridors and trade and private sector development (through sustainable agricultural production, sustainable forest management among others); and Environment, climate change and resilience through green growth, natural resource management and resilience and promote climate-smart agriculture, digital agriculture, early warning systems, prevent food loss and food waste, among others).



Investing in rural people

IFAD is an international **financial institution** working in the field of poverty eradication in the rural areas of developing countries. It is a specialized United Nations agency created in 1977 engaged in providing grants and loans with low interest for allied projects. IFAD's comparative advantage in Lao PDR is rooted in smallholder agricultural technology, building resilience to climate change and developing value chains. The Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) 's goal is to build resilient livelihoods among women and men in rural Lao PDR. Under the new Cooperation Framework, IFAD will contribute to food security and nutrition, green growth, natural resource management and climate resilience. It will be achieved through the provision of financing and technical support to scale up innovative development models.

ILO is the UN agency for the **world of work**. ILO brings together governments, employers and workers to drive a human-centred approach to the future of work through employment creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue. Under the Cooperation Framework, ILO will contribute to implementation of international labour standards, tripartism promoted social dialogue, and decent work. ILO will develop the 3<sup>rd</sup> Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for Lao PDR (2022-2026) as the framework for ILO support to the tripartite constituents (government, workers' and employers' organizations) and contributing to the Cooperation Framework. The 3<sup>rd</sup> DWCP will derive from the Cooperation Framework and be contributing to its priorities. The DWCP will further specify how the priorities and outcomes in relation to decent work will be realised and the specific outputs that the ILO will deliver.



Established in 1951, the IOM is the leading intergovernmental organisation in the field of migration and is committed to the principle that humane and orderly **migration** benefits migrants and society. IOM is part of the United Nations system, as a related organisation. As a landlocked nation sharing borders with five countries, internal and cross-border human mobility is an important issue. With rapid regional and domestic infrastructure development, well-governed migration has become increasingly crucial in the country's development. IOM will contribute to maximizing the efforts for safe migration (internal and external) and to address trafficking and transboundary issues related to migration. IOM will advocate for positioning migration as a key development issue in the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP (2021-2025). IOM will contribute to People's Wellbeing through interventions in protection, health and shelter; to Inclusive Prosperity through social protection and migration policy, economic corridors and skills development; to Governance and Rule of law through interventions in transnational organised crime, access to justice, gender equality and women's empowerment and human rights.

ITC, the joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation, is mandated to provide **trade** related technical assistance. ITC is the only UN agency which is fully dedicated to supporting the internationalization of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Under the Cooperation Framework, ITC will contribute to Inclusive prosperity through private sector development, smooth transition to LDC graduation. ITC will contribute to Environment, climate change and resilience by promoting green growth.



OHCHR is the leading UN entity for **human rights** and is mandated by the UN General Assembly (resolution 48/141) to promote, protect and support the implementation of international human rights standards as part of the three interconnected pillars of the United Nations – peace and security, human rights and development. OHCHR will contribute to the results

under the Cooperation Framework by mainstreaming human rights within the UN planning, programming and advocacy efforts in support of achieving the priorities of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and implementing the 2030 Agenda; its engagement with the Government to provide advisory services, technical support and capacity-building towards development and endorsement of a comprehensive UPR Action Plan and its implementation; and engaging with and supporting CSOs and other non-governmental stakeholders;



UNAIDS leads the coordination of the Joint UN Programme on **HIV/AIDS**.

The UNAIDS also take lead in advocating for increased investment for resource mobilization to support the Lao PDR in meeting global vision "Ending AIDS by 2030". Through the Cooperation Framework, UNAIDS will contribute to People's Wellbeing by strengthening capacity of national and civil society partners to provide accessible, equitable and quality HIV services to key populations and support the global AIDS strategy to "end AIDS by 2030"; removing policy and structural barriers in accessing HIV services for key populations and creating space for CSOs/private sector to actively engage in the AIDS response, including community-led services; mobilising development partners to provide technical and financial support and ensuring country's progress toward achievement of national targets; and strengthening national and subnational systems for health with sustainable investment made in the HIV/AIDs response.

UNCDF is the specialist Agency that carries the UN General Assembly mandate for providing **capital finance solutions** and associated technical support to member states with a special focus on the least developed countries group. UNCDF has an extensive and active engagement in Lao PDR through government and financial institutions and will contribute to all the four outcome areas including interventions in de-decentralization, urban investment (and municipal finance), digitisation of services, inclusive digital finance and solutions for MSME sector development, social protection capital supply systems, smooth LDC graduation, SDG financing, and public financial management. UNCDF will also continue to support the decentralization process being implemented by the government specifically under the PAR and Data Driven Governance. UNCDF will also support MSMEs developing and scaling up of new business models that can increase access to clean energy solutions at the last mile.



Unlocking Public and Private  
Finance for the Poor

UNCITRAL, established by the General Assembly in 1966, is the core legal body of the United Nations system on **international trade and commercial law**. The UNCITRAL Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific was established



**United Nations**  
**UNCITRAL**

in 2012 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, to further the progressive harmonization and modernization of international trade and commercial law in the region and has been active in Lao PDR ever since. Under the Cooperation Framework, UNCITRAL will provide technical assistance in conducting trade law reform activities and establishing substantive private law rules governing cross-border commercial transactions, such as the international sale and transport of goods, electronic commerce, public procurement and infrastructure development, security interests, MSMEs, insolvency of enterprises, and commercial dispute settlement through arbitration and mediation, thereby promoting the rule of law in commerce aimed at achieving the SDGs.



**UNITED NATIONS**  
**UNCTAD**

UNCTAD's mandate is to maximize the **trade, investment and development** opportunities of developing countries and assist them in their efforts to integrate into the world economy on an equitable basis. As the focal point within the United Nations system for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development, UNCTAD will primarily contribute to Inclusive Prosperity and is uniquely placed to address the cross-cutting development implications of e-commerce and the digital economy. UNCTAD is well positioned to extend its technical assistance in areas like e-commerce strategy development, capacity building for legal reforms, measuring e-commerce and the digital economy and women digital entrepreneurs as part of the Cooperation Framework. UNCTAD assistance will also aim at supporting smooth transition of Lao PDR from the LDC category with tailored policy recommendations to improve the trade and investment climate in the country, including support to Government on debt management.

DESA provides analytical and policy support to the General Assembly, ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies on global economic, social, and environmental standards and norms under the DESA mandate and expertise, assisting Member States in translating the norms, standards and global policy frameworks emerging from intergovernmental deliberations into integrated, evidence-based, inclusive and well-funded national strategies and plans to implement the 2030 Agenda. DESA has



**UN DESA**

developed a series of methodologies, tools and models that can support the integration of global approaches into national sustainable development planning in the following areas of expertise: data and statistics; demographic trends and analysis; social inclusion of marginalised groups; macroeconomic analysis and forecasting; integrated policy analysis; science and technology for the SDGs, incl. science-policy interface; LDC graduation strategies and international support measures; financing for development; incl. domestic resource mobilization through taxation; sustainable forest management and financing; sustainable development issues related to water, oceans, energy and transport; institutional development; civil society engagement and public service delivery. Under the Cooperation Framework, DESA will contribute to Inclusive Prosperity through assistance in areas like smooth LDC graduation and MSME promotion.



UNDP is a leading **development** organisation in Lao PDR. Under the Inclusive Prosperity, UNDP will contribute to smooth LDC graduation, financing for SDGs, rural development, and digitalisation and skills development. It will continue to support the UXO sector, by building the capacity of National Regulatory Authority. Under Governance and rule of law, UNDP will promote public institutions that are responsive and accountable to the public; contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, capacity building for combating organised crime and transboundary issues, public administrative reform and evidence-based governance. On Environment, climate change and resilience UNDP will contribute to 'green growth' and work with State authorities, at central level and provincial/district levels in the most affected areas, to develop policies and guidelines that improve national resources management, disaster risk management and resilience to climate change.



UNDRR is the United Nations focal point for **disaster risk reduction** and oversees the implementation of the global Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030). It supports Member States in their implementation, monitoring and sharing of experiences in reducing existing disaster risk and preventing the creation of new disaster risk. The UNDRR Regional Office for Asia and Pacific based in Bangkok will work with the UNCT in Lao PDR and relevant RGs to ensure its technical DRR expertise, training workshop packages and DRR guidelines and knowledge products are integrated into the UNCT collective efforts to support implementation of the Cooperation Framework.

UNEP is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global **environmental agenda**, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. Under the new Cooperation Framework, UNEP will contribute to green growth, and natural resource management, under the outcome on Environment, Climate Change and resilience. UNEP will also work with the Government in the implementation of various multilateral environmental agreements through capacity building, and legislative and policy support.



UNESCO's mandate is to build lasting peace and promote equitable and sustainable development through advancing cooperation in **education**, the **sciences**, **culture**, communication and information. UNESCO provides institutionalized support and technical assistance, convenes stakeholders, acts as an innovation laboratory, and strengthens national capacities in Lao PDR through targeted programming and multi-sectoral engagement and cooperation that are human rights-based and that promote the key principles of inclusion, equity, and gender equality. UNESCO will contribute to People's Wellbeing, Inclusive Prosperity and Environment, Climate Change and Resilience.

UNFPA specialize in the area of **sexual and reproductive health and rights**, with programmes in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, comprehensive sexuality education and empowerment of youth, GBV, women's empowerment and Gender Equality, and Population Data. UNFPA's work under the Cooperation Framework will span across several outcome, including People's Wellbeing, Inclusive Prosperity, as well as Governance and Rule of law. UNFPA will provide strategic support on demographic transformation and human capital investment for the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP supported by technical inputs for data collection, analysis and national capacity building. UNFPA will provide platforms for and build partnerships with CSOs, INGOs, and private sector in areas such as ICPD, sexual and reproductive health, family planning, youth friendly services, GBV, adolescent pregnancies, child marriage, school dropout and comprehensive sexuality education.



UN-Habitat is mandated to support Member States to make cities and **human settlements** inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Under the Cooperation Framework, UN-Habitat will contribute to People's Wellbeing through improving shelter and WASH services. On Inclusive Prosperity, it will mainstream urbanisation through the promotion of integrated spatial planning, strengthening government capacity to engage in public-private partnerships, improvement of infrastructures and services, and emerging urban-rural challenges. Under Environment, Climate Change and Resilience, UN-Habitat will reinforce national and subnational institutions' capacity, as well as communities, to better manage natural resources and boost green growth, enhancing resilience while preventing, adapting and recovering from shocks, disruptions and disasters. UN-Habitat will therefore support risk reduction planning and awareness by improving assessment tools, data and systems, and strengthening national adaptation strategies, leveraging partnerships to better address urban issues.



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

UNHCR is mandated by the UN General Assembly to identify and **protect stateless people** and to prevent and reduce statelessness. UNHCR fulfils its mandate by working with governments, other UN agencies and civil society to address the problem. In relation to the prevention of statelessness, UNHCR is heavily invested in supporting states to strengthen civil registration practices. Throughout the Cooperation Framework UNHCR is committed to contributing to Governance and Rule of Law by supporting the efforts of Lao PDR to strengthen law and policy, and capacity building, related to civil registration and vital statistics and the application of relevant procedures in Lao PDR. Where possible, UNHCR will support Lao PDR in surveying populations, especially those that might be considered hard to reach, to ensure that they have access to legal status and civil registration and vital statistics procedures.

UNICEF is mandated to advocate for the protection of **children's rights**, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF, guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is active in Lao PDR since 1973 and has worked with the government to address children's needs and uphold their rights. Under the Cooperation Framework UNICEF will contribute to building social capital by investment in health, education, social protection, food security and nutrition, WASH, and shelter; planning and financing for SDGs; civic space and participation, gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights; and natural resource management and resilience.



UNITED NATIONS  
**INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION**

UNIDO is a specialized agency of the UN. UNIDO's mission, as described in the Lima Declaration adopted at the Fifteenth session of UNIDO General Conference in 2013, is to promote and accelerate **inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID)** in Member States addressing all three dimensions of sustainable development: social equity, economic growth, and environmental protection. UNIDO meets the industrial

development needs of its Member States through a variety of highly specialized and differentiated programmes, projects and services, and partnership that promote social inclusion, economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability, as well as cross-cutting activities in the fields of industrial statistics, research and policy, and the promotion of knowledge networks and institutional partnerships. UNIDO will actively contribute to Inclusive Prosperity and Environment in partnership with other UN agencies. UNIDO will support the Cooperation Framework through technical cooperation; Analytical and research functions and policy advisory services; normative functions and standards-related activities; and convening function and partnerships.

UNODC's mission is to contribute to global peace and security, human rights and development by making the world safer from **drugs, crime, corruption** and **terrorism**. UNODC will contribute, among others, to (a) enhanced rule of law through programming directed towards reducing all forms of transnational organised crime, drugs and illicit trafficking, money laundering, and corruption; and (b) improved health through programming directed at enhancing the availability of evidence-based treatment for people who use drugs. UNODC will also contribute to enhanced agricultural production and reduced poverty through sustainable development interventions in opium cultivating areas.



As a UN agency with a particular strength and capacity in the design and implementation of resilient infrastructure, **procurement services** and **project management**, UNOPS interacts at strategic level on planning of infrastructure and its cross-sectorial implementation with the potential of creating a backbone for future sustainable growth. UNOPS will contribute to People's Wellbeing through its on-going projects on health fund management, government capacity strengthening through provision of strategic visioning and planning, design and implementation of networked and non-networked hospital infrastructure providing transactional services, such as the procurement of COVID-19 emergency equipment, vehicles and supplies; on Governance and Rule of law through capacity building to improve border security, including interdicting contraband drugs and wildlife, human trafficking across international borders and combating transnational crime, including financial crimes and investigation; and Inclusive Prosperity and Environment through resilient infrastructure planning and mitigating the impact of future disasters or shocks. UNOPS will partner with other organisations to build national and local capacity for disaster preparedness and resilience. It also aims to strengthen coordination between humanitarian and development actors.

UNV is the UN organization that supports sustainable human development globally through the **promotion of volunteerism**, incl. by mobilising volunteers. UNV supports UN AFPs with UN Volunteers with different professional expertise and skills, and



facilitates engaging local volunteers/ volunteerism involving organizations for people-led and sustainable development solutions. UNV also provides volunteer advisory services in volunteer policy and programme formulation as well as volunteering related knowledge and evidence generation. Under the Cooperation Framework, UNV will contribute to Civic Space and Participation under Governance and the Rule of Law. UNV will bring added value for advocacy for volunteerism promotion, people participation, youth engagement, people-led community development and environmental protection as well as climate actions. UNV will continue to support the mobilisation of UN Volunteers and the integration of volunteerism in all other areas of the Cooperation Framework.



WFP is the leading humanitarian organisation saving and changing lives, delivering **food assistance** in emergencies and working with communities to improve **nutrition** and build resilience. In Lao PDR since 1975, WFP supports the Government's vision of "a prosperous country, with a healthy population, free from food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty". Under the Cooperation

Framework, WFP will contribute to People's Wellbeing and Inclusive Prosperity through providing school children in vulnerable areas improved food security, nutrition, and learning results through a sustainable National School Meals Programme (NSMP) by 2026 and through improved nutrition outcomes for the vulnerable groups, in particular women and girls of reproductive age, children under five, and school-aged children, at risk of any form of malnutrition. WFP will also contribute to Environment, Climate Change, and Resilience by enhancing food and nutrition security all year round for the vulnerable people in disaster-affected or at-risk areas and increased capacities to mitigate and manage risks associated with climate and other shocks and ensuring crisis-affected population in Lao PDR is able to meet their food, nutrition, and other essential needs during and after disasters.



WHO is a specialized UN Agency for **health** with mandates to support Member States to achieve universal health coverage and other health-related SDGs. Under the Cooperation Framework, WHO will contribute to achieving People's Wellbeing by strengthening resilience and sustainability of the health system, while improving health services;

Inclusive Prosperity through improved sustainable health financing and implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme; Governance and Rule of Law by strengthening governance and accountability to improve implementation, M&E capacity and incorporating human rights standards; and Environment, Climate Change and Resilience by improving the government's capacity for health adaptation in the context of climate change and building climate resilient health system. Based on lessons from the previous outbreaks, disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO will support improving resilient health system to respond to public health emergencies effectively and engaging with the communities to build resilience at the community level.

#### **PHOTO CREDIT**

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