

The Disability Mainstreaming Advisory Service (DMAS) participation in the 15th Session of the Conference of the State Parties (CoSP) 2022



Photo 1: DMAS as OPD representatives in a meeting with the Lao Ambassador to the UN - Photo credit: DMAS

From 14-16 June, 2022, the Disability Mainstreaming Advisory Service (DMAS) participated in the 15th Session of the Conference of the State Parties (CoSP) 2022, with support from the USAID Okard project implemented by World Education, Inc., in partnership with Humanity and Inclusion. DMAS provides advisory services on disability inclusion and accessibility, as well as providing technical expertise and coaching to private and public businesses, institutions, and public and private service providers.

DMAS commenced their visit with a successful meeting with His Excellency, Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of the Lao PDR to the United Nations (UN). DMAS represented the voice of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) from Laos by sharing the key activities of the OPD network in Laos and emphasized the need for development partners to proactively engage with the OPD representatives in promoting disability inclusive development. In line with the Annual Disability Policy Dialogue 2022, which was led by the National Committee of Disabled and Elderly (NCDE) and OPDs in Laos, DMAS appealed to the Permanent Mission Office to support the Lao government by mainstreaming disability in their respective policies and programs.

During the discussion, DMAS also advocated for support from the Permanent Mission Office for one of the Lao OPD members to be elected as a Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Committee member in 2023.



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Photo series 2: DMAS participated in the 15th Session of the Conference of the State Parties (CoSP) 2022
- Photo credit: DMAS

Ms. Metta Thippawong, co-founder of DMAS, was selected as one of the speakers to represent the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in the opening session of the General Debate. Metta's statement focused on economic empowerment and entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities, in which she emphasized the importance of developing a disaggregated national database on the employment of persons with disabilities and public-private partnership in creating decent and full employment for persons with disabilities. She also emphasized the importance of reasonable accommodations, digital access, and access to assistive technology.

In addition, Metta skillfully highlighted the importance of 'legal empowerment' as a prerequisite for 'economic empowerment,' so that persons with disabilities, who are mostly employed in informal sectors, have access to legal rights, property rights, and justice.

Last but not least, the Lao representatives also attended some of the key side events related to inclusive employment and this very first participation of the OPDs in the conference of the state parties to the CRPD was a huge success in raising the OPDs profile from Laos internationally and in drawing the attention of the disability stakeholders on the rights of persons with disabilities in Laos.



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