



**LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY**

Government

Vientiane Capital, 22 October 2021

**Decree
On
Village Mediation Committee**

- Pursuant to Law on Government No 04/NA dated 6 November 2016
- With reference to the Proposal Letter from the Ministry of Justice No 1152/MoJ dated 15 September 2016

The Government issues the Decree

**Section I
General Provisions**

Article 1: Purpose

The present Decree sets out the principles, regulations, and measures in relation to the management and oversight of village dispute mediation to ensure its effective and uniform management and oversight across the country, aiming at enhancing the solidarity of the ethnic people within the village and thus contributing to preserving public security, social order and social justice.

Article 2: Village Dispute Mediation

Village dispute mediation refers to a dispute settlement by Village Mediation Committees by educating, assisting and advising the concerned parties to reach a compromise and jointly agree to settle the dispute.

Article 3: Definitions of terms

The terms used in this Decree shall have the following meaning:

1. **Dispute** refers to a conflict, non-understanding or disagreement occurring between individuals, or individuals and organizations, in relation to civil, commercial, family, work

and environmental matters, as well as other disputes defined in the law including violation of criminal law for which mediation is authorized;

2. **Education** refers to the provision of legal knowledge and information about fine traditions of the nation and warning to the parties;
3. **Compromise** refers to amicable settlement, tolerance and mutual forgiveness;
4. **Children** refers to individuals under 18 years of age;
5. **Clan** refers to a community characterized by same blood paternity relationship.

Article 4: State's policy on Village Dispute Mediation

The State encourages and promotes village dispute mediation by creating enabling conditions and facilities to ensure effective mediation.

The State promotes individuals, legal entities or organizations in dispute to settle their dispute at the village level, enhancing the role of the Lao Front for National Development, senior or respected people, ethnic representatives or clans to participate in the mediation.

The State encourages individuals, legal entities or organizations to provide support and cooperation to village dispute mediation.

Article 5: Scope

This Decree applies to individuals, legal entities and organizations involved in village dispute mediation in Lao PDR.

Section II

Principles for Village Dispute Mediation

Article 6. Guiding Principles

Village dispute mediation shall observe the following principles:

1. Equality and good faith of the parties;
2. Compliance with policies, the Constitution, laws and fine traditions of the nation;
3. Independence of the mediators;
4. Face-to-face approaches;
5. Education and compromise;
6. Respect of the rights and legitimate interests of the parties;
7. Recusal and rejection of mediators;
8. Confidentiality.

Article 7: Equality and Good Faith of the Parties

Village dispute mediation shall be conducted based on the principle of equality of Lao citizens, aliens or stateless persons residing in Lao PDR without discrimination on the grounds of e.g., race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, language, education level, occupation, belief or residence.

Village dispute mediation is conducted on the basis of the principle of “good faith” of the parties expressed in the submission of claims or proposals, and explanations or clarifications by each party.

Village Mediation Committees shall create favorable conditions and facilities for Lao citizens, foreigners, aliens and stateless persons, particularly the parties concerned, to enjoy their freedom on the basis of the good faith of each party.

Article 8: Compliance with policies, the Constitution, laws and fine traditions of the Nation

The organization and activities of village dispute mediation shall follow the Party’s directives, policy, the Constitution, laws and relevant regulations.

Article 9: Independence of the Mediators

In performing their mediation duties, the mediators shall be independent and play their role and perform their duties without being under supervision, force or threat by external people.

Article 10: Face-to-face approaches

Every dispute mediation shall be conducted in the presence of the parties.

The expressions of views or comments of the mediator, parties and participants shall be public.

Article 11: Education and Compromise

Village dispute mediations shall be conducted in the form of education and compromise between the parties only.

The mediators shall provide assistance, instructions and support to the parties for appropriate solutions.

Article 12: Respect of the Rights and Legitimate Interests of the Parties

The mediators shall create conditions and facilitate the parties to enjoy their rights and fulfil their obligations by proposing their views, evidence/information including on the dispute requirement, and expressing concerns.

Article 13: Recusal or rejection of Mediators

The mediator has the right to recuse himself/herself from a mediation if they note that they are family members, relatives, or have interests, conflicts with or are unable to educate the parties.

In case the mediator does not recuse himself/herself, one of the parties has also the right to reject the mediator from the mediation.

Article 14: Confidentiality

The mediators and those who participate in the mediation shall keep confidential all the information that they knew and saw. Those who disclose or disseminate confidential information shall assume legal liabilities.

Section III

Disputes Subject to Mediation

Article 15: Categories of disputes

The following categories of disputes can be mediated at the village:

1. Civil disputes;
2. Commercial disputes;
3. Family disputes;
4. Environmental disputes;
5. Labor disputes;
6. Criminal offences;
7. Juvenile offences.

Article 16: Civil Disputes

Civil disputes are the following:

1. Property over domestic animals;
2. Inheritance;
3. Request for access to move across land;
4. Land use right disputes;
5. Breaching non-commercial contracts;
6. Disputes in administrative matters within the village's area of responsibilities;
7. Other civil disputes as prescribed by law.

Article 17: Commercial Disputes

Commercial disputes refer to minor, light or non-complicated commercial disputes.

Commercial disputes with high values can be subject to mediation if the parties agree to mediate and allow the Village Mediation Committee to mediate.

Article 18: Family Disputes

Family disputes include the following:

1. Disputes amongst family members with the exception of divorce in compliance with the Civil Code;
2. Assets belonging to spouse such as initial (pre-marriage) assets and matrimonial assets;
3. Debts of the spouses;
4. Request for care of husband, wife or children;
5. Parents' custody and care;
6. Recognition of relative relationships;
7. Adoption or recognition of fatherhood status;
8. Request for a child to be under the management or care of the husband, wife or relatives;
9. Interests of the children such as choice of their first name, family names and nationality;
10. Nomination of guardians;
11. Nomination of administrators of children's assets;
12. Violation of engagement;
13. Pre-marriage sexual intercourse;
14. ~~Harmless~~ non-invasive domestic violence such as libeling, slander, indecent behavior, obstruction of social activities, non-assistance in living, or non-participation in children's education;
15. Other family disputes as prescribed by law.

Article 19: Environmental Disputes

Environmental disputes refer to the disputes causing minor, i.e., not serious, socio-environmental and natural impact with no significant damages, e.g., animals releasing unpleasant smells to communities, rubbish burning, and dispersing of used water in the streets.

Article 20 Labor Disputes

Labor disputes refer to the disputes occurring within the informal labor unit and disputes relating to domestic workers.

For labor dispute mediation, the Labor Units and village social welfare services shall coordinate with the Village Mediation Committee to conduct the mediation as defined in the Decree on Labor Dispute Settlement. In case of the unavailability of such a structure, the Village Mediation Committee shall proceed with the mediation.

Article 21 Criminal Offences

The criminal offences subject to mediation are the following:

1. Offences with damages to assets of less than 1.000.000 (one million) LAK except snatching, robbery, occupational crimes, or recidivism;
2. Offences for which the claimant does not lodge the claim for prosecution but requests for mediation at the village level, such as:
 - battery between close relatives with no injuries or invalidity, with the exception of assault against women and children, elderly people aged 60 and above, and people with disability, or in relation to occupational crimes or recidivism;
 - libeling, slander, denigration of a corpse or reputation of the deceased person;
 - adultery;
 - offences against private property of relatives;
 - violation of residence and privacy.

Article 22: Juvenile Offences

Juvenile offences that are subject to mediation are the following:

1. Serious offences or occupational crimes; committed by children under 15 years of age on their own, or as an organized group;
2. Minor or major offences committed by children above 15 but under 18 years of age for which the law prescribes the deprivation of liberty of less than 3 years;
3. Offences committed by children above 15 years but under 18 years causing damages amounting to less than 1.000.000 (one million) LAK, with the exception of robbery, recidivism or occupational crimes.

Section IV

Participant in Mediation

Article 23 : Participants

The participants in the mediation are the following:

1. Parties to the dispute;
2. Third-party persons;
3. Family members or relatives of the parties;
4. Invited participants.

Article 24: Parties

The parties are the claimant and the defendant.

The claimant refers to individuals, legal entities or organizations who lodge the claims or proposals to the Village Mediation Committee in relation to the violation or rejection of their rights and interests.

The defendant refers to individuals, legal entities or organizations subject to the claim for violation or rejection of other parties' rights and interests.

In case the parties are foreigners, aliens or stateless persons who do not know the Lao language, interpreters can participate in the mediation and the party concerned shall bear the cost of the interpreter.

The parties have the following rights:

1. To submit the claims, explanations or clarifications in relation to the dispute;
2. To request to see, read, take note or make copies of the content of important documents in the dispute case file;
3. To ask questions, negotiate, and reach a compromise with the opposite party, other individuals linked to the dispute;
4. To propose to recuse the mediators with appropriate and credible justification;
5. To accept or not accept the results of the mediation;
6. To claim for enforcement of mediation results;
7. To exercise other rights as prescribed in the Law.

The parties have the following obligations:

1. To participate in the mediation upon the invitation or call from the Village Mediation Committee;
2. To provide information and evidence to certify the incidents considered by the parties as references for the claims or proposals, explanations or clarification on the dispute;
3. To bear mediation expenses by dividing the costs by half;
4. To respect and follow mediation rules;
5. To execute the results of the mediation;
6. To fulfill other obligations as prescribed by law.

Article 25: Third-party Persons

The third-party persons refer to individuals, legal entities or organizations who participate in the mediation to protect their rights and interests in relation to the dispute.

The third-party person enjoys the same rights and obligations as the parties except for the mediation costs.

Article 26: Family Members or Relatives of the Parties

Family members or relatives of the parties can participate in the mediation to acknowledge, provide information, evidence, instructions or comments during the dispute mediation.

Article 27: Invited Participants

The invited participants are those who are invited to participate in the dispute mediation. They could be the representatives from the Lao Front for National Development, Women's Union, Youth Union, a senior or respected person, representatives of ethnic group or clans, head of unit or head of relevant village units, representatives from relevant organizations and other participants.

If needed, the Village Mediation Committee may invite those persons mentioned above to participate in the mediation.

The invited participants have the following rights and obligations:

1. To participate in the mediation upon invitation;
2. To assist the Village Mediation Committee to educate and instruct the parties;
3. To periodically receive technical trainings to uphold their knowledge and competencies;
4. To exercise other rights and fulfill other obligations as prescribed by law.

Section V

Mediation Procedures and Termination

Article 28: Procedures for Mediation

The village mediation shall follow the following procedures:

1. Submission of the claim;
2. Acceptance of the claim;
3. Examination of the claim;
4. Preparation for the mediation;
5. Proceeding of the mediation.

Article 29: Submission of the Claim

When the disputes occurs and the parties cannot settle the dispute by other means, one of the parties that notes that their rights have been violated or rejected, has the right to submit a claim to the Village Mediation Committee of their residence or location of the dispute.

Parties who cannot submit written claims can also do so verbally.

Article 30: Acceptance of the Claim

The Village Mediation Committee shall accept the claim of the parties by recording it in the ledger for incoming claims and prepare documents for the claimant to facilitate the follow-up.

For verbal claims, the Village Mediation Committee shall take note of the content of the claim and read it out to the claimant with signature and/or fingerprints on the memo as evidence.

After accepting the claim, the Village Mediation Committee shall notify the parties within 3 days for further explanation and/or clarifications of the issues, and the defendant shall send these to the Village Mediation Committee within 4 days from the date of receipt of the notification.

The acceptance of the explanations or clarifications of the defendant shall comply with paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article.

Article 31: Examination of the claim

The Village Mediation Committee shall examine the claim of the parties within 3 days from the date of receipt of the claim in order to have a better understanding of the dispute subject to the mediation.

If deemed necessary, the dispute shall be reported to the village Head for guidance or to the District Office of Justice and other relevant authorities for their technical input.

After examination, if the mediation seems to be ready, the Village Mediation Committee shall prepare the mediation and notify the parties.

Article 32: Preparation for the mediation

The Village Mediation Committee shall prepare its personnel, content, date and venue of the mediation and issue the invitation letter to relevant parties to participate in the mediation.

Article 33: Mediation Proceedings

The mediation proceeding shall take the following steps:

1. Opening of the mediation
 - 1.1 to announce the purpose of the meeting;
 - 1.2 to inform of the following:
 - first name and family names of the mediators, parties and relevant participants
 - the dispute subject to mediation;
 - the significance and benefits of the mediation;
 - the role and duties of the mediators;
 - the rights and obligations of the parties, third party persons and other participants;
 - the rights of the parties to recuse the mediators.

In case the recusal is justified, the mediator who has been recused shall withdraw himself/herself from the mediation. The remaining mediators shall coordinate with invited participants to pursue the mediation and ask the parties about their readiness and inform them of the mediation rules for compliance with the rules.

2. Comments from the parties

After the mediation meeting has been called, the mediator proposes to the claimant to share his/her comments first, after which the mediator invites the defendant to provide concise, summarized comments that are easy to understand by stressing the background

information of the incident, the cause of the dispute and their needs with careful listening to understand the issues.

3. Views from the third-party participant and other participants

After the parties finish their comments, the mediator proposes to the third-party persons (if any), family member or relatives to provide their comments and then allows other participants to share their views.

4. Education and compromise

After the parties, third-party persons (if any), family members or relatives provide their comments, the mediator proposes the invited participants to express their views. Then, the mediator continues and takes turn to educate the parties by providing explanations, clarifications, raising justification, and outlining the advantages, disadvantages and benefits of the mediation, for the parties to reach a compromise and amicable agreement.

After educating the parties, the mediator shall ask the parties whether an agreement or a compromise can be reached. If they still cannot reach an agreement or a compromise, further utmost efforts shall be exerted to further educate them.

Following one of the reasons indicated in Article 35 of this Decree, the mediation might be suspended or postponed.

5. Conclusion and closure of the mediation

After educating the parties, no matter what the outcomes are, the mediator shall prepare a memo and read the memo in the presence of the parties and participants. If the content of the memo is correct, then it shall be signed and/or with their fingerprints as evidence.

The mediation memo shall be prepared in Lao language to be kept in the mediation files, and copies of it shall be made available to the parties. Then, the lead mediator shares his/her views and declares the closure of the mediation

Article 34: Mediation of Juvenile Offences.

For the mediation of juvenile offences, in addition to mediation proceedings as defined in Articles 29 to 33 of this Decree, the following principles, approaches and measures shall be taken:

1. Evidence

- To ensure strong, solid and complete evidence;
- To obtain the admission of wrongdoing of the child and the consent of the parties to the mediation;
- To ensure the participation of the child, his/her parents or other guardians;
- To take appropriate measures in compliance with laws, ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of the child.

2. Approaches

- To identify background information, including behavior and living conditions of the child;
- To identify the causes of the offences and whether intentional or unintentional;
- To use polite, soft and proper language that is easy to understand;
- To educate the parties to acknowledge and understand the incident and reach a compromise;
- The mediation of juvenile offences shall not exceed three times and the intervals between each mediation shall not be more than 10 days.

3. Measures

- To educate children to understand their wrongdoings;
- To incite children to seek for pardon/forgiveness from the damaged party as deemed appropriate;
- To pay civil compensation to the parents or responsible guardians;
- To request the parents or relevant organizations to warn, educate and closely monitor;
- To request the children to be present before relevant organizations at the scheduled time and venue;
- To take appropriate measures such as social work in accordance with the appropriate ages of the children.

The measures imposed on children may not constitute any a form of intimidation against them, including heavy or dirty work that may harm the child's health, and the Labor Law shall not be violated.

Article 35: Suspension or Postponement of the Mediation

During a village dispute mediation, the mediation can be suspended or postponed in the following cases:

- Violent or tense arguments from the parties;
- In case one or both of the parties requests a suspension or postponement;
- Occurrence of natural disasters such as flood, storm, landslide or other reasons that prevent the mediation from being conducted.

Article 36: Termination of the Mediation

The village dispute mediation is terminated in one of the following cases:

1. One or all of the parties do not participate in the mediation;
2. The parties reach an agreement;
3. No agreement can be reached by the parties;
4. Withdrawal of the claim;
5. One of the parties dies without heirs.

Section VI

Result of the Mediation and its Implementation

Article 37: Result of the Mediation

The result of the mediation refers to the agreement or non-agreement of the parties that shall be recorded in the mediation memo.

The agreed results of the mediation shall not contradict the laws.

Article 38: Implementation

The result of the mediation is implemented as follows:

1. For the result of the mediation that is agreed upon by the parties, the Village Mediation Committee continues to support the fulfilment of mutual obligations as per the agreement in the mediation memo;
2. For the result of the mediation that is agreed upon by the parties but cannot be implemented or is partly implemented, the Village Mediation Committee shall provide written views in the mediation memo along with the instructions for the parties to exercise their rights to settle the dispute;
3. If the result of the mediation cannot be implemented the parties, the Village Mediation Committee shall instruct the parties to exercise their rights to settle the dispute.

Section VII

Mediation fees

Article 39: Fees

The fees of the mediation refer to all necessary expenses for the mediation.

The collection of the fees shall not exceed 200.000 (two hundred thousand) LAK per dispute and the parties shall bear the costs equally.

Those fees might be periodically modified. The Ministry of Justice is mandated to coordinate with relevant authorities to examine and submit the matter to the Government for consideration.

Article 40: Cost exemption

In case both or one of the parties are unable to cover the costs as defined in article 39 of this Decree for the reason of poverty or lack of resources with certification from village authorities, they will be exempted from those charges.

Section VIII

Village Mediation Committee

Article 41: Position, Role

The Village Mediation Committee is a non-permanent village organization elected by the villagers and approved by the Chief of District, Chief of Municipality, or the Mayor of City upon the proposal from the District Office of Justice. It has the role to conduct mediation of disputes that occur at the village level and is under the supervision, inspection and technical guidance of the District Office of Justice.

Article 42: Rights and Duties of the Village Mediation Committee

The Village Mediation Committee has the following rights and duties:

1. To receive the claims and examine the issues related to the dispute;
2. To conduct mediation in relation to civil, commercial, family matters and other disputes upon the proposal from the claimant in compliance with laws and regulations;
3. To mediate criminal offences and juvenile offences as prescribed in the Penal Code and the Law on Juvenile Justice;
4. To educate and instruct the parties;
5. To monitor and support the parties to execute the agreed result of the mediation;
6. To receive technical trainings to uphold their knowledge and competencies;
7. To collect fees for dispute mediation and use those charges for their activities;
8. To coordinate and participate in the dissemination of legislation;
9. To assist and cooperate in law enforcement and justice matters;
10. To regularly report on their activities to village authorities and District Office of Justice;
11. To exercise other rights and perform other duties as defined by law.

Article 43: Staffing

The Village Mediation Committee comprises of 5 mediators with one Lead Mediator, one Deputy Chief and 3 members.

If deemed necessary, assistants may support the mediation proceedings.

Article 44: Standards and Criteria for the Mediator

The standards and criteria for a Village Mediator are the following:

1. Being Lao national with permanent residence in the village;
2. Aged 25 years and above, healthy with no mental disorder;
3. No criminal record;
4. A certain level of legal knowledge;

5. Being a good livelihood model, respected and trusted by the villagers;
6. Having the capability to enhance solidarity, with a talent in educating and instructing people on dispute settlement;
7. Not holding positions of civil servants, military or police officers.

Article 45: Ethics of the Mediators

The mediator shall observe the following ethics:

1. Being neutral;
2. Avoiding negative perceptions;
3. Having good behavior, positioning himself/herself in accordance with his/her role and duties;
4. Self-control, patience during the mediation;
5. Keep the information about the parties confidential.

Article 46: Termination of the Mediation

The mediator terminates his/her duties in one of the following cases:

1. Resignation;
2. Relocation;
3. Dismissal;
4. Death.

In case the mediator terminates his/her duties, the villagers shall elect another person to replace them.

Section IX

Prohibitions

Article 47: Prohibitions for mediators

The mediators are prohibited from committing the following acts:

1. Abuse of their duties for personal gain, or interests of their family, relatives and friends;
2. Abuse of their power to force, coerce, obstruct, or make decisions without the consent of the parties;
3. Being improperly dressed and using impolite language;
4. Holding back or destroying documents related to village dispute settlement;
5. Mediating disputes that are not listed in this Decree and not defined in the Mediation Law;
6. Restricting or violating the parties' rights;

7. Mediating disputes that have already been successfully settled by the Economic Dispute Settlement Center/Office, and cases where a final decision has been reached;
8. Deciding who is right or who is wrong;
9. Imposing fines or punishments on the parties;
10. Failing to collect data or gather evidence prior to the mediation;
11. Disclosing confidential information of the parties;
12. Exercising other behavior in violation of the law.

In addition to the above-mentioned prohibitions, for the mediation of juvenile offences, the mediation is prohibited in case of the following:

- The child does not admit to wrongdoing, and/or the child and parties do not consent to the mediation;
- Adults have committed offences against children;
- No participation of children at the first mediation.

Article 48: Prohibition for Parties

The parties are prohibited from behaving in the following ways:

1. Providing information or documents that do not reflect the reality;
2. Forcing, coercing, obstructing, or using violence against the mediators, parties, third-party persons and other participants;
3. Being improperly dressed and using impolite language;
4. Making an offer to one of the mediators;
5. Bringing weapons or dangerous items when participating in the mediation;
6. Exercising other behavior in violation of the laws.

Article 49: Prohibition for Individuals and Other Organizations

The individuals and other organizations are prohibited from behaving in the following ways:

1. Refusing to cooperate or obstruct the performance of duties of the mediators;
2. Inciting the parties not to use the services or participate in the mediation;
3. Acting as intermediate to solicitate or receive benefits from the mediation;
4. Providing incorrect information, conspire, falsify, destroy documents or evidence related to the dispute;
5. Forcing, coercing, obstructing, using violence or interfering with the performance of duties of the mediators;
6. Being improperly dressed and use impolite language;
7. Disclosing private confidential information of the parties;
8. Mediating disputes that are not under their own responsibilities;
9. Exercising other behavior in violation of the laws.

Section X

Supervision and Inspection

Article 50: Supervising and Inspection Authorities

The Ministry of Justice assumes direct responsibilities and plays a central role in coordinating with line Ministries, sectors and relevant local authorities in performing village dispute mediation.

The supervising and inspection authorities comprise the following:

1. Ministry of Justice;
2. Provincial/Vientiane Capital Departments of Justice;
3. District, Municipality, City Offices of Justice;
4. Village authorities.

Article 51: Rights and Duties of the Ministry of Justice

In managing village dispute mediation, the Ministry of Justice has the following rights and duties:

1. Translating the directives, policies, the Constitution, laws and regulations on village disputes mediation;
2. Formulating and amending legislation, strategic plans, plans and projects on village dispute mediation;
3. Propagate, disseminating policies, laws, regulations, strategic plans, plans and projects on village disputes mediation along with implementation instructions;
4. Supervising and monitoring the implementation of village dispute mediation across the country;
5. Strengthening the organizations and personnel in charge of state administration in relation to village dispute mediation;
6. Coordinating with relevant entities and local authorities in the implementation of village dispute mediation;
7. Interacting and cooperating with foreign countries and the international community on village dispute mediation;
8. Collecting statistical data, summarize and regularly reporting to the Government on the implementation and activities of village dispute mediation across the country;
9. Exercising other rights and performing other duties as defined in the laws.

Article 52: Rights and Duties of Provincial/Vientiane Capital Departments of Justice

In managing village dispute mediation, the Provincial/Vientiane Capital Departments of Justice have the following rights and duties:

1. Serving as secretariat for Provincial Governors and the Mayor of Vientiane Capital for the implementation of village dispute mediation;
2. Propagating and disseminating laws, regulations, strategic plans, plans and projects on village disputes mediation along with implementation instructions;
3. Supervising and monitoring District, Municipality and City Offices of Justice on the implementation of village dispute mediation;
4. Providing necessary documents and guidelines on village dispute mediation to District, Municipality and City Offices of Justice and other authorities;
5. Coordinating with relevant entities and local authorities on the implementation of village dispute mediation;
6. Interacting and cooperating with foreign countries and the international community on village dispute mediation as mandated;
7. Collecting statistical data, summarizing and regularly reporting to the provincial authorities and the Ministry of Justice on the implementation and activities related to village dispute mediation;
8. Exercising other rights and performing other duties as defined by law.

Article 53: Rights and Duties of District, Municipality, City Offices of Justice

In managing village dispute mediation, the District, Municipality and City Offices of Justice have the following rights and duties:

1. Serving as secretariat for the Chief of District, the Chief of Municipality, and Mayor of City for the implementation of village dispute mediation;
2. Examining and proposing to the Chief of District, the Chief of Municipality and the Mayor of City the composition of the Village Mediation Committee for consideration upon the proposal from village authorities;
3. Propagating and disseminating laws, regulations, plans and projects on village disputes mediation along with implementation instructions;
4. Technically managing, supervising and overseeing the Village Mediation Committees;
5. Providing the necessary documents and guidelines to the Village Mediation Committee;
6. Organizing technical trainings for Village Mediation Committees;
7. Mediating disputes, criminal offences and juvenile offences as defined in this Decree on the basis of the claims or proposals from the parties;
8. Coordinating with village authorities and other entities for the implementation of village dispute mediation;
9. Interacting and cooperating with foreign countries and the international community on village dispute mediation as mandated;

10. Collecting statistical data, summarizing and regularly reporting to the Chief of District, Chief of Municipality and the Mayor of City on the implementation and activities of village dispute mediation.
11. Exercising other rights and perform other duties as defined by law.

Article 54: Rights and Duties of Village Authorities

In managing village dispute mediation, the village authorities have the following rights and duties:

1. Proposing the list of personnel and regulations related to village dispute mediation;
2. Propagating and disseminating laws and regulations on village disputes mediation;
3. Administering, supervising and overseeing the activities of the Village Mediation Committee;
4. Creating conditions and facilities for the parties to submit their claims or proposals to the Village Mediations Committee;
5. Support the Village Mediation Committee in collecting statistical data, summarizing and regularly reporting on dispute mediation within the village to the District, Municipality, City Offices of Justice;
6. Exercising other rights and perform other duties as defined by law.

Article 55: Content of Inspection

The inspection of village dispute mediation shall ensure the realization of the following:

1. Compliance with laws and regulations in relation to village dispute mediation;
2. Reflecting the role, rights, duties, responsibilities and working methods of relevant civil servants and Village Mediation Committee;
3. The relevant adoption and promulgation of relevant legislation by the supervising authorities for village dispute mediation at each level;
4. Formulation and execution of plans of activities on village dispute mediation.

Article 56: Forms of Inspection

Inspection may take the following three forms:

1. Regular inspection;
2. Inspection with prior notice;
3. Immediate inspection.

Regular inspection refers to regular planned inspection with clear timeframe.

Inspection with prior notice refers to unplanned inspection as deemed necessary with a prior notice of at least 24 hours to the target.

Immediate inspection refers to inspection as deemed necessary and urgent without prior notice to the target.

The inspections shall strictly comply with the law.

Section XI

Rewards for Persons with Outstanding Performance and Measures against Violators

Article 57: Rewards for Persons with Outstanding Performance

Individuals, legal entities or organizations with outstanding performance in implementing this Decree shall be awarded or receive benefits in accordance with regulations.

Article 58: Measures against violators

Individuals, legal entities or organizations who violate this Decree shall be subject to warning, education, disciplinary measures, fines, civil compensation or criminal punishment depending on the degree of the offences.

Section XII

Final Provisions

Article 59: Implementation

The Ministry of Justice takes the lead in effectively implementing this Decree in coordination with line Ministries, ministry equivalent agencies, relevant local authorities and parties.

The line Ministries, ministry equivalent agencies, relevant local authorities and parties shall acknowledge and strictly implement this Decree.

Article 60: Effectiveness

This Decree becomes effective after its signature and publication for 15 days in the Lao Official Gazette

Government of Lao PDR

Prime Minister

[Seal and Signature]

Phankham VIPHAVANH