The Permanent Mission of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honor to respond to Note Verbale No. AK/ST/cc, dated 4 November 2011, regarding the consultation on the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the rights and identity of indigenous peoples and questionnaire on the best practices in relation to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People as the follow details: the population of Lao PDR is composed of 49 ethnic groups, none of the groups can claim to be indigenous because it will not be in compliance with the Constitution and Laws.

Article 22 of the Constitution stipulates that Lao citizens, irrespective of their social status, education, faith and ethnic group, are all equal before the Law. This fundamental principle guarantees strict equality of rights to every citizen and considers every ethnic group special and therefore no one is more special than any of the group. Thanks to this, the Lao multi-ethnic people had always live in peace and harmony and enjoy solidarity and equal rights before the law.

Furthermore, article 75 of the Constitution stipulates: Lao language and script are the official language and dialect of the Lao PDR. In the day-to-day life, each ethnic group is free to preserve its dialect and uses it in family, community and for the preservation of its culture and tradition.

The Permanent Mission of the Lao PDR to the United Nations and Other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurance of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 21 February 2012