

CSO Joint Statement to the 19th GDCC

Cambodia Civil Society (CSO) have published "NGO Position Papers on Cambodia's Development in 2010-2012" put together by more than 500 organizations for action by Royal Government of Cambodia on issues ranging from land reform to child rights.

The position papers were launched at a National Workshop on "**Cambodia's Development Issues in 2010-2012**" in Phnom Penh on September 25, 2012. CSO leaders will present the NGO Position Papers to the 19th meeting of the Government Development Partner Coordinating Committee (GDCC) on 26 September.

The workshop was organized by leading CSO associations: NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGO Forum), the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), MEDiCAM, Cambodians for Resource Revenue Transparency (CRRT) and the NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (NGOCRC).

The participation of NGO leaders in the GDCC is recognition of civil society's vital role in Cambodia. A report, published earlier this year by the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia, estimates that 1,350 national and international NGOs accounted for \$550 million in economic activity in 2011 and employed almost 55,000 people. More significantly, NGO programs and efforts had a positive impact on the lives of between 2.8 million and 4.5 million people, including many of the most poor and vulnerable members of society.

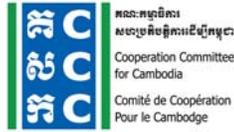
NGOs also work with government and other Development Partners (DPs) to monitor the performance of a wide range of development programs. They participate in 16 of the 19 Technical Working Groups (TWG) that are organized by government ministries and that set and periodically revise Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMIs), the agreed measures of program effectiveness. In this capacity, NGOs in each sector issue Position Papers that stand as an independent report on the progress or shortfalls of development outcomes.

The Position Papers acknowledge and commend a substantial list of accomplishments by the government. These include progress and areas for improvement in public financial management reform, especially budget transparency and credibility; significant reductions in infant and maternal mortality; strengthened and rehabilitated irrigation systems; a gradual increase in student promotion rates in education; development of a regulatory framework for oil-and-gas reserves.

However, every economic and social sector faces urgent, unresolved problems. The CSO community calls on the RGC and the DPs to take action on the following "key asks":

On Good Governance: Transparency & Accountability

1. early passage of the draft Law on Access to Information with clear rules and time frames;
2. a timely and systematic release of budget documents, such as the audit reports and the draft Budget Law; a greater disaggregation of figures by line ministry in the monthly, six-monthly and annual TOFE; and the speedy finalization of the



Debt Bulletins and the procurement website; more transparency of aid information and condition of concessional loans released by the government and DPs;

3. an increased public consultation over draft laws and regulations on oil, gas & mining, a release of disaggregate figures on extractive industry revenues; and adoption of EITI membership/principles;

On Democracy, Legal and Judicial Reform

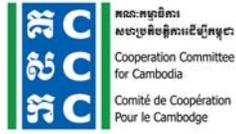
1. a reform of the National Election Commission; upgrading the voter list and registration process; press freedom and equal access to media across political parties; an increase in the number of woman candidates, & parliamentary seats for provinces experiencing population growth; mixed election system, and the simplification of the electoral legal framework;
2. early passage of the Law on Court Organization and Prosecution; the Statute on Judges and Prosecutors; Law on the Amendment of the Organization and Functioning of the Supreme Council of the Magistracy;

On Rural Development and the Economy

1. support for farmer associations through rice productivity improvement projects, small- and medium-scaled irrigation systems, and market access; establishment of rural vocational training schools for rural youth and farmers wishing to take a career in farming business; allocation of funds for exchange visit/study with each other; and law enforcement on promoting non-pesticide, and chemical fertilizer management;
2. better integration of sub-national fisheries with the priorities of communes and districts as fragmented management and enforcement measures are threats to sustainability;
3. provision of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports two weeks in advance of hearing dates; and new measures be required to monitor the impact of climate change;
4. adoption of international best practices to compensate communities negatively affected by hydropower dams; and resolution of trans-boundary conflicts to protect the interests of Cambodian communities;

On Land & Natural Resource Management

1. transparent and comprehensive demarcation of state land with data to be publicly displayed; adoption and implementation of a national resettlement policy and legal procedures consistent with international standards; and measures to ease and expedite communal land registration for indigenous communities, while providing effective protective measure in the interim; strengthened independent & impartial land dispute resolution mechanism;
2. the definition of “forests” to be limited to “natural forest” and exclude plantations; an increase in the allowable size of community forests and speed up the granting of communal forestry; meaningful participation by local communities and civil



society actors in the implementation of internationally agreed measures and incentives to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD).

On Human Development

1. improvement of quality of education and service delivery;
2. Removal of financial barriers to increase access to health care services, especially the poor, the vulnerable, the hard-to-reach population; quality of care in both public and private sectors needs to be further improved, making sure that both sectors are working together complimentarily; the public administration reform must be expedited to address salary issues for civil servants including health and education.

All in all, civil society in Cambodia is committed to work as a development partner for the good of all our people. The participants in today’s workshop trust that the Royal Government of Cambodia and DPs respond to our Key Asks in a similar spirit of partnership. We are confident that the collaborative mechanism established by the CRDB/CDC is the surest way to advance the interests of all parts of Cambodian society and to reach our shared goals including CMDGs.

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