

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The government should increase local investment on gender equality and create a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess government policy, laws and regulation for their effectiveness in meeting the needs of women, girls, and other marginalized groups at the grassroots level.
- 2) Increase support and collaboration with Cambodian CSOs particularly in terms of capacity development, exchange of experiences, best practices, and information sharing.
- 3) Promote a meaningful and effective engagement mechanism with civil society by : a) encouraging the government to reinforce key policies and partnerships with civil society, especially through the Government Development partner Coordination Committee, Comprehensive Development Framework, and Annual NGO and Government meetings, b) supporting the ISAF implementation and monitoring and increase the ability of citizens to monitor the performance of local service providers, and c) promoting multi-stakeholder initiatives (triangle – government, civil society and private sector).
- 4) Conduct Regular Meetings/Discussions: There should be a) a regular reflection between representatives from CSOs and UNCT/UN Agencies representatives (e.g. every six months), b) increased harmonization between traditional donors (EU, USAID, Japan, UN) and non-traditional donors (China, South Korea, etc.) in supporting civil society.
- 5) Review the Current UNDAF to reflect cohesiveness with these agendas, especially the Cambodian SDGs (CSDGs), and to reflect how the UN agencies engage citizens and CSOs in their planning, implementation and monitoring related to SDGs.
- 6) Call the Cambodian government to ensure that all stakeholders are meaningfully engaged within the process of SDG localization and implementation. More importantly, ensure that data of SDGs is available, and accountability to citizens is in place at both national and sub-national levels.
- 7) Promote the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in multi-stakeholder initiatives and in all key projects and programs involving bilateral cooperation and ensure agreement with civil society organizations.
- 8) Create and promote a clear mechanism/ framework to promote an enabling environment for civil society.
- 9) Urge the Cambodian government to fully protect and promote human rights, especially the right to freedom of expression, assembly, association, and speech and to fulfill recommendations made in the UPR.
- 10) Encourage the Cambodian government to adopt a law on law-making (legislation) that can facilitate the consistency, transparency and accountability of law drafting processes and contents.
- 11) Urge the Cambodian government to ensure that any new laws may only adopted after a transparent legislative process that meets international human rights standards and ensures meaningful consultations with all relevant stakeholders.
- 12) Support civil society organizations in terms of both capacity and finance.
- 13) Call for the Cambodian government to amend existing laws and articles which are impractical and that are not in compliance with the national institution and international standards.
- 14) Raise awareness about CSDGs and its localization in Cambodia since lack of awareness is a major challenge to achieving the SDGs. It is essential to raise public awareness in order to allow them to understand the SDGs and engage in the process of localizing and implementing the new development agenda in Cambodia.



Founded in 1997, SILAKA works primarily to promote gender equality in public governance and politics. Its goal to promote the implementation of democracy in Cambodian society for sustainable development which includes the economic development, including caring for the environment, and social justice. This research was carried out by SILAKA as part of an eight country project on Monitoring and Review of the SDGs with the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law & Development (APWLD).



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Monitoring and Review of the Sustainable Development Goals & Development Justice

Reviewed by
SILAKA

COUNTRY CONTEXT

The new Post-2015 Agenda was created following the expiration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A continuity of the MDGs, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is another global development agenda for the next 15 years adopted by the 192 United Nation Member states. It is a hugely ambitious agenda with 17 aspirational global goals and 169 targets between them. Unlike the MDGs, it aims to offer a broader sustainability agenda, address the root causes of poverty, and create development that works for all people. Since mid-2008, Cambodia has been affected by a combination of high oil and food prices as well as the global financial crisis. In recent years its economic performance has deteriorated, a fact reflected by a decrease in orders in the textile industry, a drastic drop in the number of tourists, and a massive decline in the building sector. This has contributed to a significant loss of jobs in these three sectors. The dramatic reduction of growth and foreign direct investments and the subsequent reduction of government revenues threaten past gains made toward poverty alleviation and remain major barriers in achieving the SDGs. In addition, ODA flows have not substantially changed. Though Cambodia is a low-emitting country and has contributed very little to the problem, the country is highly vulnerable to the potential impacts of climate change. Erratic weather patterns such as floods and droughts threaten agricultural production and productivity as well as the supply of vital wood used for fuel, and climate change magnifies the problem of deforestation. The country's weak institutional framework and capacity to mitigate the effects of climate change increase Cambodia's vulnerability and enhance the burdens of the climate crisis.

OVERVIEW OF SYSTEMIC & STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TOWARDS ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT JUSTICE

Since the adoption of the SDGs, there has been very little progress in implementing the new development agenda in Cambodia, and many challenges remain. One of the structural barriers in achieving development justice is that Cambodia's current political system fails to deliver democracy and uphold the rule of law. Barriers to development justice present in Cambodia's current political climate are; a limited space for citizen and CSO engagement, numerous restrictive laws and policies relating to CSOs and freedom of speech, threats against activists, attacks and murders of HRDs, the non-separation of powers, and a lack of an independent judiciary. As a result, critics of the ruling party are constantly accused of false crimes or put in jail.

Conflicts over land and resources are another major barrier to achieving development justice in Cambodia. As Cambodia is a member state of ASEAN and took part in economic integration in 2015, there is a need for the government to foster economic activities and enhance regionalization and growth. Adversely, the implementation of the 2012 Economic Land Concession policy has caused widespread land grabbing and conflicts between local people and companies. The land

CAMBODIA



Palma Ratio (Income Inequality)
1.3

UNDP Gender Inequality Rank
104

**CAMBODIA'S HEALTH BUDGET USD 424 MILLION VS
MILITARY BUDGET USD 474 MILLION**

**CAMBODIA'S MINIMUM WAGE IS USD 1,836
(PER ANNUM) VS RICHEST INDIVIDUAL NET
WORTH USD 6 BILLION**

conflicts have occurred particularly in rural areas that are rich in natural resources and which are economic developing zones. The weak justice system fails to provide an adequate land dispute resolution mechanism, and a majority of disputes (58.64%) are left unsolved. The problem negatively impacts not only the livelihoods and economic activities of the communities, but also weakens public participation in political and social development and undermines human rights. Moreover, the issue also causes environmental problems such as water pollution, deforestation, soil degradation and losses in biodiversity. Land grabbing and natural resource exploitation have also contributed to increasing both domestic and cross-border migration.

Furthermore, traditional patriarchal gender norms and customs stand as structural challenges for gender equality in Cambodia. For example, women’s mobility and participation in decision-making and politics are severely restricted. Deeply rooted gender norms prevent people from working together to advance gender justice. While women account for more than 52% of the total population, women’s participation and representation in decision-making spaces is extremely low.

In a political context, duty-bearers need to respond to citizens’ needs. In this regard, women leaders at the sub-national level face disproportionate challenges in meeting the needs of their constituencies because they have limited access to financial resources, which are dominated by their male counterparts.

ARCHITECTURE FOR SDGs IMPLEMENTATION

The Ministry of Planning is leading and facilitating implementation of the SDGs as of February 2, 2016. Many meetings and planning workshops with line ministries have taken place since August 2015. There are nineteen National Technical Working Groups that serve as the primary mechanisms for localizing the SDGs. The Ministry of each relevant thematic issue chairs these groups, two development partners serve as co-facilitators, and local NGOs and relevant ministries serve as members. One such group is the Technical Working Group on Gender (TWG-G), who must coordinate with the Ministry of Women Affairs to collect and consolidate the input from different stakeholders and partners such as UN agencies, NGOs and Development Partners. SDGs are to be endorsed by the Royal Government of Cambodia by mid-2017 for integration into the national development frameworks. To promote inclusive participation of CSOs and citizens within the SDG process, CSOs and citizens received some invitations to participate at both the national and sub-national levels through, for example, Technical Working Groups (TWGs), the Government Development partner Coordination Committee (GDCC), Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), and an Annual NGO and Government Meeting. However, these methods of engagement failed to produce strong results due to such problems as irregular meetings, an overwhelming number of participants, and a lack of monitoring and evaluation of each technical group’s performance. As a result, inputs and feedback from local NGOs have not been reflected in policy papers or reports, showing that the contributions of civil society and the public have not been properly taken into consideration by the relevant bodies.

INITIAL FINDING ON SELECTED SDGS GOALS & TARGETS

World Economic Forum Gender Gap Ranking	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
	112	109	108	104	103	102	97	104

This project is working to monitor 4 goals including Goal 5, Goal 8, Goal 13 and Goal 16.

Currently, information on the implementation of the SDGs remains unclear. In assessing the statistical capacity of the Royal Government of Cambodia in regards to monitoring SDGs indicators, it seems only 4 of 12 of the indicators for Goal 5 can be clearly measured. For this, targets 5.2 (with indicators 5.2.1/5.2.2), 5.5 (with indicator 5.5.2), target 5.6 (with indicator 5.6.1), 5.a (with indicator 5.a.1), and target 5.b. (with indicator 5.b.1) are not yet available and not yet included in the National Strategy Development Plan or the Neakry Rathanak IV (Gender National Action Plan). That assessment also showed that 12 indicators of Goal 8 require statistical capacity, 1 out 2 indicators for Goal 13 require statistical capacity, and 2 of 18 indicators for Goal 16 require statistical capacity. The need for the clear definition of indicators, the incompatibility of data sources, issues with data collection and proper updates, issues related to data analysis capacity, issues relating to coordination and organization, and a weak monitoring and evaluation framework remain the primary barriers to localizing and implementing the SDGs.

Goal 5 - On December 16th, 2016 SILAKA organized a CSO consultation workshop with 28 participants (2 males) from 20 organizations/networks to review the current progress and challenges of gender equality related to the localization of SDG Goal 5. During the discussion, the main challenge facing implementation of Goal 5, as mentioned by a member of the committee to promote women in politics, is that there are some laws and policies that restrict the equal participation of women in politics and decision making. As a result, women only comprise 20.33% of the National Assembly and 17.8% of decision-making bodies at the commune level. The government does not use a quota system so there is a need for affirmative action to amend those laws and policies in cohesion with CEDAW. Violence against women and sexual reproductive health and rights are the main concerns raised by participants, most likely due to their research and direct work with women survivors. Different data is provided by commune, health centers and police. In most cases, women do not have access to justice due to social norms that prevent them from reporting incidents or result in their complaints not being taken seriously, an unfriendly complaint system for women and girls, and a lack of support services including safety houses. Representatives from three networks stated that a lack of resources for gender-equality work at the local level is also a major challenge. As result of our workshop, the CSOs’ input for Goal 5 has been submitted to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs through the TWG-G. Another outcome of the workshop is the formation of a working group called the “Civil Society Working Group on Gender” aimed at coordinating input and responses as well as monitoring the implementation of Goal 5 and the effectiveness of TWG-G. The group will follow-up and monitor the response of the MOWA regarding the group’s input.

