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ទម្រង់នៃការរើសអើងលើស្ត្រីភេទ
Cambodian NGO Committee on CEDAW
NGO CEDAW

Annual Activity Report 2009



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I. Introduction

The Cambodian NGO Committee on CEDAW (NGO-CEDAW) established in 1995 and chaired by Licadho since May 2008, is a coalition of 68 local organizations working to advance the condition of women in Cambodia. NGO-CEDAW focuses on monitoring the implementation of CEDAW by the government. The work of NGO-CEDAW also includes research; advocacy and lobbying; awareness raising and capacity building; and information exchange between its members. Until mid 2009, it was an informal coalition with limited activities, especially the last two years. Since then, NGO-CEDAW activities gained momentum and we have witnessed of noticeable progress.

The Cambodian Government ratified the CEDAW in 1992. This convention provides a comprehensive framework for the promotion, protection and fulfillment of women's human rights. It is almost universally ratified with more than 185 countries as State Parties, hence reflecting the global consensus of States on the need to take up concrete obligations to eradicate discrimination against women. The Government was required to submit a report on CEDAW



in 1993 and every four years thereafter. The first three reports were submitted as a single document in October 2003. Following this report, on January 19, 2006, the UN Committee on CEDAW invited Cambodian government representatives in New York for a meeting to discuss it. Following this meeting, the UN issued 42 points of "Concluding Comments" (February 2006), which are in fact recommendations. The implementation of these comments by the Royal Government however has been delayed.

For a second time, a new report is being drafted by the Ministry of Women Affairs. NGO-CEDAW also proposes to write a new shadow report to be reviewed along with the official report.

After 14 years of non-official existence, plagued by a lack of financial and human resources, structural deficiencies (prior to adoption of statutes and internal rules) and limited strategy plan, since 2009, NGO-CEDAW entered a new phase of structural consolidation. The newly elected steering committee took steps towards official recognition by the government and the recruitment of a new Secretary-General. Networking activities between member organizations and outside organizations were also improved.

This reform started following a detailed mid-term review by a consulting firm funded by DCA. This reform included a public awareness program including radio broadcasts and drama presentation. NGO-CEDAW also started information gathering from NGO-CEDAW members to be processed into the Shadow Report.

Advocacy activities by NGO-CEDAW prompted the government to finally ratify the "CEDAW optional protocol".

In order to improve the situation of women in Cambodia, and properly implement CEDAW, it will be necessary to promote more efficient strategies from the MOWA, handicapped by poor human and financial resources. Above all, NGO CEDAW must do its best to correct the most traditional

tendencies of the Cambodian society, which still pose huge obstacles to a sizable proportion of women, unable to fight against domestic violence, along with the consequences of poor education, miserable job perspectives and inadequate healthcare. In order to address these challenges, crucial to achieve a more harmonious economic, social and human development, NGO CEDAW will need a strong support in finance and human resources.

II. Mid Term Review

In view of the prevailing disorganization of the NGO-CEDAW, the newly elected chair and vice-chairpersons (May 2008) requested an independent midterm review by external consultant. This review, generously funded by DCA, focused on helping to establishing a future direction for NGO-CEDAW. The final report was presented in a general assembly meeting on February 6, 2009.



The report pointed out some strengths, weaknesses and proposed several recommendations:

Strengths

- A membership consisting of many large organisations and networks, with extensive reach throughout Cambodia
- Involvement of many key figures in the NGO community with wide experience in lobbying and advocacy, and excellent understanding of the issues facing women in Cambodian society
- A clear and well thought out strategic plan for 2007-2010
- Some good quality research carried out on Marriage and Family Law, Law on Domestic Violence and Anti-Trafficking Law and its implementation. Clear recommendations from this research presented to senior government ministers. [by the Cambodian Committee for Women, CAMBOW]
- Good access to and use of the media in awareness raising and advocacy.
- Meetings that bring together a wide range of organisations and have contributed to a shared agenda and more effective partnership

Weaknesses

- High turnover of staff and problems with sufficient staff capacity to carry out plans effectively
- Incomplete or absent internal rules/policy both at steering committee level and staff level, leading to a lack of clarity in roles and management

- Lack of detailed planning by staff needed to implement strategy, and insufficient follow up of actions to ensure continued and consistent impact
- Insufficient communication, information and other benefits provided to members, leading to reduced involvement and commitment to the network
- Monitoring tools and framework not developed either for CEDAW or for the programmes own activities, weakening information available to write the shadow report
- Formal registration with the government not pursued, and legal, financial and program sustainability not adequately planned for.¹

Recommendations

Immediately address weaknesses in management and policy by appointing someone to address these issues and help the transition to a new secretary general.

Status: Transition work (revised action plan, revised budget, drafting of NGO-CEDAW's statutes, writing semi-annual and annual reports, job descriptions and announcements etc.) was done by members of the steering committee.

Urgently recruit a secretary general using a rigorous interview process.

Status: Secretary General hired in January 2010.

Redesign the steering committee to a smaller membership and elect all members using a fair and transparent process.

Status: New steering committee of only seven members elected on February 16, 2009

Review the membership making a clear agreement of commitments and benefits involved.

Status: Members involvement has been researched through a detailed questionnaire. Result of the research will be included in a soon to be released directory of members, their vision/mission and activities. Six sub-committees were created to collect and exchange information between members and the steering committee. This data is to be included into the shadow report.

Agree on an action plan for the shadow report and other activities, ensuring detailed work plans are created and resources clearly identified.

Status: Implemented through the six sub-committees following the Action Plan.

Review progress in implementing the 42 Concluding Comments of the UN CEDAW Committee, and complete the work on monitoring tools and advocacy strategy

Status: The shadow report is to address these issues. Monitoring and advocacy strategies will be developed after completion of the Shadow Report.

¹ Opportunity for Gender Equality, A Mid-term Review of NGO-CEDAW by Tony Posnett

III. Strengthening NGO-CEDAW Structure and Statutes

NGO-CEDAW Action Plan for 2009-2010

Pending the hiring of a Secretary-General, a tentative NGO-CEDAW Action Plan for 2009 – 2010 was drafted in April 2009 by NGO-CEDAW staff (training officer). Unfortunately, this task was not within her capacities and had to be completely redone by the chairperson. NGO-CEDAW steering committee and members (40 participants), in a meeting held on May 7, 2009, eventually approved this overhauled action plan.²

The NGO-CEDAW Action Plan consists of:

- Obtain legal status
- Strengthen NGO CEDAW
- Strengthen co-ordination and capacity among members
- Develop, draft and produce NGO Shadow report
- Disseminate content of NGO Shadow report
- Conduct advocacy and lobbying at national and international levels
- Monitor and follow up implementation of CEDAW

Official Recognition

After several month of red tape, all steps towards official recognition of NGO-CEDAW by the Ministry of Interior have been completed. On October 21, 2009, the government officially registered NGO-CEDAW.³

However, it is to be noted that on the registration letter addressed to the chairperson and signed by the minister of interior himself, it is specified that all registration procedures were to be done again when the planned NGO law will be adopted.

Election of a New Steering Committee

Following a recommendation from the Mid-term Review, members elected a new steering committee. Seven members were elected on February 16, 2009:

1. Hang Puthear, NICFEC (26 votes),
2. Ya Navuth, CARAM (26 votes),
3. Chim Manavy, Open Institute (23 votes),
4. Tuon Vichet, COSECAM (23 votes),
5. Ki Nimol, NGO-Forum (20 votes),

² See annex

³ See Annex

6. Soy Sarawatthany, CWCC (19 votes),
7. Pueng Yokhiep, LAC (17 votes). Now replaced by M. RUN Saray.

Members in a general assembly elected the Chairperson, Pung Chhiv Kek, LICADHO and the vice-chairperson, Sok Sam Oeun, CDP, in May 2008. In May 2009, Sok Sam Oeun resigned because of lack of time due to his other activities. Ya Navuth became the new vice-chairperson after Sok Sam Oeun departure.

In order to present his candidacy to be Secretary-General, Hang Puthea resigned from the steering committee, leaving the steering committee with a membership of seven.

Hiring a Secretary-General

A first job announcement was published in the press in September 2009. Forty-nine candidates sent their resumes. After a first round of candidacy review by the steering committee, the level of postulants was deemed too low and no candidate was shortlisted for interview. A second round of newspaper advertisement was published in November and December. Fifty-seven candidates sent their resumes and four candidates were shortlisted for interviews held on January 23, 2010. After two meetings, the seven members of the steering committee unanimously nominated a new Secretary General, M. HANG Puthea.

Statutes and Internal Rules

Sok Sam Oeun, a lawyer from CDP, member of NGO-CEDAW steering committee, drafted the first "Constitution and Bylaws" of the NGO-CEDAW. This document consists of 24 articles⁴. The steering committee reviewed and approved every article in meetings held on March 23, April 1, September 1 and September 28, 2009. The members in General Assembly adopted the final document on November 11, 2009. Due to lack of competent staff, we had to hire a temporary staff to record the minutes of the meeting.

The steering committee drafted a set of internal rules but they still need to be reviewed by members and to be approved by the General Assembly.

⁴ See annex

IV. Listing and Identification of Members Activities

Survey

In order to identify NGO-CEDAW member activities, the steering committee decided to launch a survey. The steering committee sent all its members a survey form⁵ in February 2009. The chairperson prepared the questionnaire and it was approved by the steering committee.

The survey gathered information on members such as type of vision, mission, activities, sectors of activity, programs goals, objectives and expectations, budget etc.



Directory

Data from the survey will be included in the NGO-CEDAW directory. Almost all members replied the survey but in the absence of a Secretary-General and competent supporting staff, the task of compiling and processing the data has been delayed. A member of the steering committee had to process all the data. Three quotes have been requested from printers and printing of the Khmer version is already in process. The English version will follow soon.

Capacity Building

- On February 11, NGO-CEDAW members participated to a one-day training on justice and legal assistance to women and victims, organized by LAC, member of steering committee.
- On March 31, NGO-CEDAW members joined a seminar on the evaluation of CEDAW organized by UNIFEM.
- On June 10, NGO-CEDAW members joined a seminar on gender violence and assistance to victims organized by three members of NGO-CEDAW: CDP, CWCC and ADHOC.
- On October 6 and 7, NGO-CEDAW members attended a seminar on gender-based violence hosted by DCA.
- On November 24-25, the steering committee organized a two-day seminar to discuss the content and meaning of CEDAW and the Concluding Comments. Discussions were especially oriented on direct and indirect discrimination and the temporary special measures but all the topics of CEDAW were also raised. Thirty-seven NGO-CEDAW members were present at this participatory meeting.

The talks were also focused on the “UN Concluding Comments”. NGO-CEDAW members showed great commitment; many questions were asked and comments exchanged concerning implementation of CEDAW, UN Concluding Comments and progress shown by the government.

Because the Secretary General was not hired yet, the minutes were taken by a temporary staff.

⁵ See annex

Impact:

The two-day meeting showed the interest of members to discuss the situation of women. Participants would like to have the chance to see some reforms for the sake of Cambodian women. They understand the big challenge that NGO-CEDAW has to face in order to lobby the government for better implementation of CEDAW and the Concluding Comments. Eliminate discrimination against women is crucial to get social stability and peace, one of the necessary condition for equitable development of Cambodia.

Beside, writing together the shadow report, NGO-CEDAW should organize such meetings with all members at least 4 times a year to discuss the situation of women in Cambodia and have a competent person taking the minutes that reflect the important points of the discussion.

On November 30, NGO-CEDAW members attended a session organized by the Ministry of Justice where the discussion investigated means of taking in consideration gender issues in every aspects of its 2009-2013 action plan.

V. Other NGO-CEDAW Activities

Advocacy

On March 8, the International Women's Day, NGO-CEDAW visited several Phnom Penh and Provincial prisons to make a symbolic distribution of food supplements and other items. These visits focused on informing prison staff and inmates of NGO-CEDAW presence and support to all women.

On April 27, NGO-CEDAW and other organizations issued a statement to protest the lifting of parliamentary immunity of an opposition female Member of Parliament.

On June 11, several members of NGO-CEDAW joined other organizations in front of the National Assembly to hand the president of the National Assembly a letter of support to the same female Member of Parliament.



For the 16 Day Campaign Against Gender Violence from November 25 to December 10, NGO-CEDAW ran an advocacy campaign in Kandal Province. On 25th November 2009, NGO-CEDAW presented a concert and an educational drama series to raise awareness on domestic violence, rape and human trafficking; especially of women and children.

Three educational dramas were performed in the presence of vice governor of Kandal province, Takhmao governor, commune and city chiefs, members of NGO-CEDAW, more than a thousand local citizens and key persons from all departments throughout the province.

According to a survey done during performance, over 80% of participants including authorities, understood the purpose of the 16-day campaign and learned new ways to deal with gender violence issues. When raising questions, most of them provided correct answers.



The opening speech was made by Kandal province vice governor, HE SOUS SARAM and the opening ceremony was hosted by Dr. Hang Puthea, member of the Steering Committee. The performances have been filmed and recorded in view of future broadcasts in villages or more remote areas.

Impact (16 Day Campaign)

Our program raises awareness of potential victims, insists on the legal aspects of the victim situation, and focuses on the basic reactions to seek help from the neighbors and authorities in charge.

Promotion

Publications

As recommended in the UN Concluding Comments, NGO-CEDAW proceeded to publish 10,000 bilingual copies of CEDAW (in Khmer and English) and 5,000 bilingual copies of the UN Concluding Comments. These publications have been made available in regular format and in pocket size. These publications will be distributed to NGO-CEDAW members, students, authorities in Phnom Penh, and to commune and village chiefs in the provinces.

Radio Broadcasts



From January to the end of October 2009, members of NGO-CEDAW participated to 30 radio talk shows organized by two members of NGO-CEDAW (LICADHO and CAMBOW).

During November and December, every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 to 11 am NGO-CEDAW broadcasted on FM 105 a live talk show where auditors could call to ask questions or discuss CEDAW, the 42 points of the UN Concluding Comments, domestic violence, rape, human trafficking (women and children) and other women's rights issues (26 radio broadcasts).

During the 16-Day Campaign Against Gender Violence from November 25 to December 10, these programs were re-broadcast from 6 to 6:30 pm every day (16 radio broadcasts).

Topics often returning from callers:

- Complaints about:
 - How to have the authorities in charge enforce the laws on domestic violence ?
 - Undue pressure from authorities for victims to accept out of court settlements, leading to impunity for perpetrators;
 - Undue pressure from authorities for victims to withdraw complaints;
 - Tribunals not being independent or free of corruption;
 - Lack of structures to assist victims of domestic violence, rape and human trafficking;
 - Absence of shelters;
 - Lack of female doctors to establish free medical certificates;
 - Lack of skill training programs to facilitate reinsertion of victims;
 - Lack of psychologists to support rehabilitation of victims, including children;



- Information difficult to get in more remote areas;
- Lack of work and poverty leads to vulnerability to human traffickers (prostitution, migrant workers, abusive marriages with foreigners).

Impact

Radio broadcasts are among the most efficient and cheapest sources of information. To listeners, there is no need to be literate or even to have spare time to listen to a radio program.

Public awareness of CEDAW and other women issues initiated a reflection that prompted auditors (general public and authorities too) to ask questions on live radio and to think of implications brought by the respect or non respect of women's rights. This is a continuing process as people exchange points of view between themselves before voicing them to friends and relatives as well as to authorities.

"Authorities in charge" would be more cautious and less indifferent after listening to the programs and auditors comments.

VI. Strengthening networking

National

The chairperson and vice chairperson decided to invite members to a workshop on February 6. The external consultant who prepared the mid-term review was a speaker. A question and answer period followed. After this meeting, the first general assembly was decided to be held on February 16.



During this meeting, NGO-CEDAW members proceeded to the election of the seven members of the steering committee.

On May 7, the steering committee and forty NGO-CEDAW members met again. Members discussed and adopted the action plan and decided to create six sub-committees in order to write the shadow report. The steering committee and the donor gave their approval.

On June 9, twenty-seven members met again to further discuss the preparation of the shadow report.

On September 2 and 3, the Cambodian Council for Women organized a two-day seminar to discuss their 5-year plan (2010-2015) with a Spanish NGO called “Paz Y Desarrollo” (Peace and Development).

On September 28, NGO-CEDAW steering committee and Paz Y Desarrollo representatives agreed on bilateral cooperation. This agreement aimed to enhance work to implement CEDAW and women issues. NGO-CEDAW steering committee decided to run an announcement (October 12) to hire a Secretary General.

On October 22, twenty-eight members met to discuss the hiring of a Secretary-general. The steering committee updated the recruitment of a Secretary General. There were many candidates but the steering committee did not find a single candidate for the interview. The members decided to run another announcement (October 28). Members also described their activities and shared their experiences of the last six months. A volunteer external consultant donated his time to write the semi-annual report.

On November 11, another meeting took place. During this reunion, members adopted the official statutes of NGO-CEDAW. Members also socialized to get to know each other more. Members decided to run the announcement for a Secretary General for a third time (November 11).

The steering committee also met regularly (6 times a year according to the action plan).

- February 2, they discussed the Mid-term review;
- March 23, the draft of the Action plan 2009-2010 was presented to all members of steering committee. The shadow report and the statutes were also discussed.
- April 1, Sok Sam Oeun, CDP, presented the Statutes of NGO-CEDAW.

- September 1, resignation of a steering committee member, Sok Sam Oeun, and job announcement for a Secretary General was approved. It was posted on Bong Thom (www.bongthom.com) web site for 1 month.
- September 28, the Job description of the steering committee and nomination of Sok Sam Oeun's replacement were approved.
- December 9, they decided to continue the announcement to find a Secretary General and to extend the job application deadline to December 31.

The minutes of steering committee meetings have been emailed to every NGO-CEDAW member.

Regional

On December 1, during the UN Universal Periodic Review for Cambodia in Geneva, NGO-CEDAW chairperson met a Forum Asia representative based in Bangkok and initiated bilateral cooperation talks.

International

From November 17 to 21, NGO-CEDAW cooperated with the International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT). The Association held a conference and several NGO_CEDAW members participated and were guest speakers.

In December, NGO-CEDAW chairperson met with International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) representatives. FIDH decided to open an office in Bangkok dedicated to women issues, especially migrant workers and to work closely with NGO-CEDAW.

VII. Shadow Report

Since its creation in 1995, NGO-CEDAW published two shadow reports, one in 2001 and one in 2005. The purpose of the shadow reports is to offer a counterweight to the government's report on CEDAW. The shadow report informs on the same issue than the government report but the figures are compiled using confirmed data coming from NGO-CEDAW members.



The shadow report is used by the UN committee on CEDAW to moderate the government's report and initiate dialogue in a meeting held in New York.

The Cambodian Government ratified the CEDAW in 1992 with no reservation. It was required to submit a report on CEDAW in 1993 and every four year thereafter. The first three reports were submitted as a single document in October 2003. Following this report, on January

19, 2006, the UN Committee on CEDAW composed of twenty-three members, invited Cambodian government representatives led by the minister of women affairs to come to New York for a meeting to discuss it. Six members of NGO-CEDAW were also present during the meeting and they met all members of the UN committee on CEDAW to discuss the situation of women in Cambodia.

During the dialogue with the Cambodian delegation , the UN committee on CEDAW echoed the concerns stated by NGO-CEDAW members and widely used the shadow report as a source of information to diplomatically ask questions to the Cambodian officials. On February 3, the UN committee on CEDAW sent the Cambodian government through its ambassador in New York the 42 Concluding Comments⁶. The first 8 points were polite acknowledgements. From point 9 to 42, were thirty-four recommendations concerning women in all sectors of society.

Point 9 stipulates that: "the Convention takes precedence over domestic law, the Committee is nevertheless concerned that the provisions of the Convention are not self-executing and are not directly applicable in court proceedings."

Point 10 stipulates that: "The Committee urges the State party to take immediate measures to ensure that the Convention becomes fully applicable in the domestic legal system, including through publication in the Official Gazette, and that its provisions are fully incorporated into national legislation, including through the introduction of sanctions, where appropriate".

It also recommends that "the State party implement measures to create awareness about the Convention among judges, prosecutors and lawyers and include the Convention in relevant curricula courses on human rights, including on women's human rights, so as to ensure that the spirit, objectives and provisions of the Convention are well, known and used in judicial processes."

The UN committee on CEDAW recommends the wide diffusion of the UN Concluding Comments to the population in general and especially to lawmakers. The UN also requested the ratification of the CEDAW Optional Protocol (Ratified on June 30, 2009) and Convention on Migrant Workers (Signed but not ratified).

⁶ See Annex

Since 2006, NGO-CEDAW cooperated with its two members (LICADHO and CAMBOW) to broadcast a weekly radio talk show⁷ focused on CEDAW and Concluding Comments.

Six Sub-Committees

The six Sub-Committees were created by forty NGO-CEDAW members, meeting on May 7, 2009.

1. Gender based violence and law

Including land and labor issues and migrant workers. Eleven members are part of this Sub-Committee:

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------|--------------|
| 1. ADHOC | 2. CARAM | 3. CDP |
| 4. CODO | 5. COSECAM | 6. CWCD |
| 7. LAC | 8. LICADHO | 9. NGO-Forum |
| 10. PADV | 11. Star Kampuchea | |

Coordinator: Meas Sokhom (CDP)

The sub-committee on gender based violence and law met three times on June 19, July 17 and August 7.

According to statistics compiled by NGO-CEDAW members and a research report⁸, more and more cases are reported. National statistics are not available. The government adopted several laws to remedy this situation but NGO-CEDAW members found that they were not strong enough and the level of implementation was insufficient.

Albeit an appropriate set of laws intending to curb domestic violence and violence against women promulgated in 2005, with provisions setting up mechanisms for prevention of abuses and protection of victims, the overall situation in Cambodia is still very grim. The main reasons are bad dissemination and implementation of the law, due to lack of funding, lack of proper training of police, commune and village chiefs, and the survival of cultural discrimination against women (lack of education and lack of independence). The result of this situation, where most of the local authorities in charge of curbing domestic violence at the local and provincial levels still regard domestic violence as minor, internal familial, cases. As women don't trust local authorities, because of their indifference, an important proportion of cases of gender violence remain unpunished. Indeed, the first reaction of local authorities often relates to compromises and corruption in order to settle the cases. Unfortunately this compromise-corruption strategy, applies also in cases of serious abuses like rape, human trafficking and sometimes even murder. Victims more often prefer to seek assistance from NGO's. If the government wants to reach its proposed targets of gender violence, it must develop education and training of local officials, increase the budget of MOWA, and enhance education and healthcare of women in order to challenge the most handicapping cultural traditions that undermine women. More educated women in better health are also more likely to reach economic independence.

⁷ "Voice of Women" every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10 to 11am; Radio FM 105

⁸ "Violence Against Women, How Cambodian Laws Discriminate Against Women", November 2007.

Recommendations

- The government should widely disseminate laws.
- There should be more well trained women in position of authority and decision making (Government, legal sector, police...).
- Gender violence complaints should be followed up by legal system;
- Establishment of safe shelters, vocational training and reinsertion for victims with sufficient financial resources;
- Government should cooperate with national and international NGO.

2. Health and environment

Eleven members are part of this Sub-Committee:

- | | | |
|----------|-----------------|----------|
| 1. CMH | 5. Meakeasrei | 9. PSF |
| 2. FHI | 6. MEDICAM | 10. RHAC |
| 3. IDA | 7. Mlob Baytang | 11. WDA |
| 4. KHANA | 8. NGO-Forum | |

Coordinator: Vy Rya (RHAC)

The sub-committee on health and environment met five times on June 13, July 14, August 28, September 22 and October 15.

In spite of NGO's and government's efforts to improve the general health system in Cambodia (creation of hospitals for children by private donors, along with health centers and health stations in the countryside, distribution of modern equipments in some hospitals, providing free healthcare for pregnant women...), women health is still fragile. The rate of women death during childbirth is still catastrophic. Maternal mortality has increased from 437 per 100,000 in 2003 to 461 per 100,000 in 2008. Major causes are the lack of trained mid-wives, cost of transportation and the basic cost of a delivery. Women represent more than 50% of the 51,200 HIV carriers.

More work should be done to improve awareness and education of health assistants, midwives and public to enhance health security of women, still at risk during pregnancy and/or sexual intercourse with their HIV or STD infected partners. Awareness and education radio and TV programs should be free or sponsored by the government instead of being charged at the same rate as advertisements.

Along with education and training, the main efforts should be done to improve countryside health stations and health centers density, along with their basic equipment, in order to better react to health emergency during pregnancy and childbirth.

Implementation of existing laws and awareness rising should also be intensified to allow women to insist their partner wear condoms during intercourse if they suspect infections. Recommend hospitals and health stations to conduct HIV or STD tests free of charge.

Recommendations

- We recommend that the government extend medical professional training to traditional midwives and increase the number of medical staff and hospital beds throughout the nation to assist in child delivery for women who due to some reasons could not reach the health center.
- The government should pay attention to health care, especially for women, e.g. benefits of birth spacing, advantages of prenatal care, of blood testing for HIV and other diseases, awareness about HIV/AIDS, Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims, etc.
- We recommend that all medical acts for pregnant women be free of charge for the patients and that they go to public health centers for delivery.
- We request that the government adopt the law on tobacco control in a prompt manner in order to impose restrictions on smoking.

3. Education, information and media

Six members are part of this Sub-Committee:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------|
| 1. DAC | 4. VYCD |
| 2. NEP | 5. WMC |
| 3. Open Institute | 6. YRDP |

Coordinator: Chim Manavy (Open Institute)

The sub-committee on education, information and media met one time, on June 23.

Women and education

The overall situation of education in Cambodia is very grim. Resources are decreasing; there is a teacher shortage, lack of training, corruption, low quality and low intensity teaching, high drop-out rate in primary school and secondary school. The situation of women is even worse. In spite of largely publicized government efforts, results do not match expectations: 67% of women above the age of 25 have not completed primary school against 46% of men. The level of literacy rate of employed women is 69% compared to 84% for men. In remote areas it is certainly much worse.



The Ministry of education has largely publicized its efforts to increase the number of female students at all levels, however current figures shows that the number of girls enrolled each year still lags behind the number of boys. According to official statistics, about 10% of children are out of school, among which girls are the majority. Girls drop-out rate is worse, due to economic pressures. Gender discrimination is seen again when girls aged 15 – 17 are more likely than boys to be taken out of school by their parents to join the workforce.

Among the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society, it has been established that 30% of sex workers under the age of 18 have less than 3 years of basic schooling and little or no vocational skills. Along with other top priorities (increase education budget, promote teachers education, curb drop-out rates, help low income families, build new classes), the government must also increase its efforts to enroll adults in literacy programs, which current participation is less than 5%.

Recommendations (Education)

- Implementation of Child Friendly Schools (CFS) through training programs;
- Adopt a policy on education for children with disabilities;
- Ensure that all school-age children, especially girls, have access to free education in a safe environment;
- Increase the number of teachers and school material, especially those in remote areas;
- Scholarships should be increased and directed toward poorest families;
- Increase school operational budgets in accord with school plans;
- Develop credible statistics on school attendance.

Women and media

The role of women in Cambodian media is still weak. While 20% of personnel working in the media are women (most of them in administrative or technical tasks, and 17% as journalists), only 6% of them have reached the decision-making level. This situation is related to the overall obstacles to the promotion of women in Cambodia, and to more common problems related to family life and lower professional availability. In addition, the way women are generally portrayed in the media does not help the promotion of their rights and reinforces the discriminative stereotype of women in the country. Indeed they are rarely described as being powerful or even equal to men, while, in 80% of the programs or articles, women are portrayed as victims (58%) and sexual objects (22%). Since media can be a powerful leverage for promotion of women rights, it may seem useful to insist on women as victims in the society, as a way of education. But in the same time, it is important to present figures of successful women to serve as examples and not only role models, like singers or actors, wives of rich and powerful men which may set up a disturbing and useless reference to young people.



Recommendations (Media)

- Civil society and national institutions should establish a long term cooperation for a positive change in the image of women and avoid stereotyping women in the media;
- Granting scholarships to women, create training opportunity for women already in the media;
- Mainstreaming gender sensitivity within the media curriculum in universities.

4. Politics and decision making

Eight members are part of this Sub-Committee:

- | | | |
|------------|-----------|--------|
| 1. CDRI | 4. GAD | 7. WFP |
| 2. COMFREL | 5. NICFEC | 8. WMC |
| 3. CWPD | 6. SILAKA | |

Coordinator: Thida Khus (SILAKA)

The sub-committee on politics and decision-making met seven times on May 7, June 17, July 15, August 14, September 16, September 23 and October 14.

Promoting gender equality in decision-making has recently been a popular topic in Cambodian politics. Much progress has been made regarding the official recognition of the relevance of women's representation. However, analyzing the gap between ambitious and sometimes spectacular goals set up by the government, and the mediocre results, leads to focus on major obstacles remaining not only in the government strategy and implementation, but also in the Cambodian traditional culture, which undermines women. Marginalization of women in politics is still obvious albeit recent progress. Number of women in the National Assembly has increased to 22% after the 2008 election. In 2008 the Prime Minister decided to appoint one female deputy governor in each province and the representation of women in commune councils has increased to 14.6%: Only 9 out of 61 senate members are women. At the district and provincial levels they are only 13%. In the judicial system female judges are only 2.7%. The failure to reach the official goals is due to a constant lack of human and financial resources of the MOWA and strategies, which have much more to do with self-promotion of government efforts, than real implementation of policies or programs. Along with government, lack of funding and strategy, another obstacle refers to cultural traditions undermining women in education and social activities. In this context, women have much more limited access to education, and face huge difficulties to be independent, which is the basic requirement for access to decision making level.

Recommendations

- Monitor enforcement of legislation, budget allocations and financial management.
- Support women and women's groups to hold the government accountable for their commitments.
- Remove all passages from the school curriculum which still reinforce female stereotypes and prevent women's full participation in decision making.
- Encourage media agencies to restrain from stereotyping and consider sanctions if they continue to do so.
- Training for women leadership.
- Integrate gender sensitive awareness in the work place.
- Government should integrate gender sensitivity training to their Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (GMAPs);
- Women salaries should be increased and paid regularly;
- Ensure the full participation of indigenous women.
- Adopt concrete measures to prevent gender violence and threats against women in politics.

5. Labor and economy

Six members are part of this Sub-Committee:

1. BSO
2. CDCAM
3. CWCD
4. GAD
5. OXFAM-GB
6. YRDP

Coordinator: Ruos Sopheap (GAD)

The sub-committee on Labor and economy met three times on June 9, August and October 14.

Women at work

Employment is one of the most relevant indicators of integration in society. The situation of Cambodian women at work is an accurate picture of the challenge still facing the implementation of CEDAW in the country, along with problems in health and education sectors.



Even if women's rights are fully guaranteed by the Constitution and a number of international instruments ratified by the RGC, official figures show that only 17% of women work and receive remuneration. Among them, only 69% have an acceptable level of reading and written literacy (84% for men). This gap influences negatively the situation of women at work. This reduces illiterate women's access to information, their ability to defend their rights, to protect the level of their wages and to resist harassment. Since there is no legal sanction for gender discrimination at work, women are paid 30% less than men and face constant difficulties to have their rights respected, especially for pregnancy leave.

An important proportion of young women work in the garment–shoe sector and a smaller proportion in the construction sector. The proportion of women working in the public sector is almost 3 times lower than that of men. In the public sector, men account for 77% of the work force and women represent only 23%.

The vast majority of women work in the non-formal economy where their rights are not guaranteed. In addition to poverty, low education and lack of employment opportunities in rural areas encourage young women to leave their home and work in vulnerable labor markets like entertainment, massage, karaoke parlors and brothels. This makes them subject to exploitation and sexual abuse.

It is also important to better protect female migrant workers who leave the country to find a job by providing them with information on risks involved, vocational training and enacting a specific law on overseas migration.

Recommendations

- Avoid gender discrimination in policies;
- At equal job, equal salary;
- The agriculture sector is the priority sector for Cambodian economic development. The government should facilitate micro lending and modernization of technology avoiding gender discrimination;
- The government should assist small enterprises to develop and join formal economy, avoiding gender discrimination and extend labor law protection to all workers (even in non-formal economy);
- The government should promote participation of women and other workers in all sectors of economy and assist them in finding and opening new markets;
- Provide small farmers, particularly female farmers with technical support to increase productivity;
- The government should establish a system providing work-related information in order to facilitate search for employment and help women to make appropriate work-related decisions;
- Create a labor market program to increase employment opportunities;
- Development of human resources should be reflected in advancement of women responsibilities;
- Take measures to monitor the status and safety of migrant workers abroad;
- The government should simplify procedures to establish small businesses and spread information to allow poor people, especially women, to access to micro credit.
- The government should ratify the convention on refugees' rights.

6. Vulnerable, disabled and minority women

Five members are part of this Sub-Committee:

- | | |
|---------|--------------|
| 1. ADD | 4. ICSO |
| 2. CDPO | 5. NGO-Forum |
| 3. DAC | |

Coordinator: Ki Nimol (NGO-Forum)

The sub-committee on vulnerable, disabled and minority women met one time on June 30.

Disabled women

The government recently adopted a law on promotion and protection of disabled people's rights. Despite government and NGO efforts to offer vocational training to several hundreds of handicapped women, the majority of the 46,367 disabled women are still living in miserable conditions due to poverty and discrimination in the society.

An important proportion of cases of rape against mute and deaf women remain unsolved and even unaddressed. In this case, the failure of the government is obvious, due to a lack of strategy and real dedication. The facts that there are no accurate statistics on disabled women and that the International Convention of disabled people's rights has not been ratified show the lack of interest of the government.



Recommendations (Disabled women)

- The government should take measures to ensure that disabled women have the same rights as those of the rest of the population.
- Disabled women should have access to special social services such as education, health, work. They should have the opportunity to participate in development programs like other people, including poverty reduction programs.
- The government should ratify the International Convention on Disabled People's Rights.

Ethnic minorities' women issues.

Women of 17 ethnic minorities groups, most of them living in mountainous areas in North-East Cambodia, along the sea or near the Vietnamese border, are in a very bad situation with very limited access to healthcare and education. Their livelihood relies totally on basic agriculture, without financial resources for their customary living. In some areas, their situation is worsening, due to evictions without proper compensation. Typical examples are the construction of two hydroelectric dams (Sesan Kraom River) and the development of large portions of land devoted to industrial cultures in the northeastern part of the country.

Recommendations (Ethnic Minority women)

- The government should adopt temporary protection measures for ethnic minority lands. They should be transparent and applicable to all relevant ministries and officials. They should provide support for the communities and protection against land grabbing.
- The government should ensure that indigenous minority women may voice their comments on the draft sub-decree on procedures for registration of indigenous ethnic minority community lands.
- Land development partners should immediately increase technical, financial and institutional supports for registration process of granting certificates of ownership of collective lands. The supports for registration of indigenous ethnic minority communities as legal entities are welcome.
- The government should publicize and disseminate documents regarding policies, concessions and land registration. This process should be transparent. Indigenous ethnic minority should receive this information in priority.

Hiring a Consultant

In 2009, NGO-CEDAW steering committee took the decision to recruit an external consultant to assist on the preparation of the third Shadow Report.

The chairperson drafted the terms of reference (TOR) with the support of Paz Y Desarrollo. The NGO-CEDAW steering committee approved the TOR for hiring an external consultant to be recruited and financed by Paz Y Desarrollo.

Paz Y Desarrollo confirmed that they have recruited an international consultant scheduled to come to Cambodia in March.

PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES:

- Identify major issues included in the information provided by the 6 sub-committees.
- Assist, collect important information for the shadow report taking into consideration the status of women, the RGC's report and UN Committee on CEDAW's recommendations.
- The shadow report will serve as a tool for NGO-CEDAW members to advocate for change in order to get equality between women and men, one the necessary condition for social stability and balanced and harmonious development in Cambodia after the post war.

TIMEFRAME:

The shadow writing is expected to be drafted out in 2010.

REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS:

One international Consultant will be recruited to conduct preparation work for the drafting of the shadow report. The international Consultant possesses in-depth knowledge of the CEDAW, experience in drafting shadow reports and background in law and international Human Rights law.

JOB DUTIES (Terms of reference⁹)

- In close cooperation with the members of 6 sub-committees, the international consultant will:
- Analyze the issues to be contained within the 2 shadow reports, using the existing information already submitted by the 6 sub-committees;
- Review the government 1st report and the current draft report;
- Review the 42 points of the UN Concluding Comments;
- Conduct a thorough analysis of the issues;
- If necessary draft questionnaires to collect additional information from the 6 sub-committees;
- Analyze additional information from the 6 sub-committees;
- Combine design and draft shadow report (DSR);
- Resent the DSR to all members of the NGO-CEDAW in General Assembly meeting (GAM) in order to receive feedback;
- Add the comments to the DSR and present the final results to the SC for approval;

⁹ See annex

- Organize a workshop with the government in order to initiate dialogue;
- Using the results of the workshop, compile, edit, illustrate and finalize the NGO shadow report.

Impact (Shadow report)

- Writing the Shadow Report through the six sub-committees taught NGO-CEDAW members to work as a team for a common goal. It also showed them the necessity of collecting accurate and reliable data and information.
- Processing and sharing of all collected information, helped identifying problems. This serves as a basis for elaboration of future advocacy programs and activities. Comparative analysis with the official report allowed to fine-tune issues needing to be addressed or revealed other priorities to be put forward.
- As a reliable basis of data and information, the shadow report is the major tool to set up new strategies for the future action plan.
- It may also serve UN Committee on CEDAW to compare information and make recommendation to the government.

VIII. Conclusion

After a period of 15 years, plagued by inadequate administrative structure, no official registration, and strong staff turnover, NGO-CEDAW has, during the 2008 – 2009 period, entered a new phase which consisted in the consolidation of its administrative backbone (down-sizing the steering committee, appointing a new secretary general, with accurate and relevant job description), allowing it, through a thorough analyze of its main shortcomings and strength, to take the first step toward more efficiency. During this timeframe, we managed to organize a campaign of popular dramas to promote women rights, and collect through our network crucial information to write a shadow report, aimed at balancing the government report, and provide the basis of future actions.

After many years of civil war, the traditional Cambodian culture came back in force with all Cambodian society is largely rural and traditional. It is very important for NGO-CEDAW to be able to reach the population all over the country.

Working to eliminate prejudice and gender discrimination is a very long-term process. NGO-CEDAW is here to assist Cambodian women and the government to keep in mind the objectives of CEDAW and to help embedding them into Cambodian culture and attitudes toward women. More human and financial resources are needed for NGO-CEDAW to continue its action and be able to reach its goal to definitively and permanently eliminate gender discrimination all across Cambodia. Only with a strong support will we be able to use the unique advantage of our network, which could a powerful tool to improve the situation of women in Cambodia.

