

Voices for Gender Equality

JOINT STATEMENT



Phnom Penh, March 7, 2018

CSOs LAUNCH GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT, CALL ON RGC TO STEP UP SUPPORT FOR WOMEN, LGBTQ INDIVIDUALS

On this, the eve of International Women's Day, DanChurchAid (DCA), the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR), the Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM), and the Cambodian NGO Committee on CEDAW (NGO-CEDAW), launch the "Voices for Gender Equality" project, and call on the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to reassert its commitment to gender equality by amending the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims (DV Law) and taking action to ensure women, girls and LGBTQ individuals are protected from all forms of violence.

Cambodian women remain at high risk of gender-based violence (GBV), with up to 25% of ever-partnered women having experienced physical or sexual abuse. LGBTQ individuals and women in general face persistent inequality due to discriminatory societal norms, and those who stand up for their rights often face double discrimination, facing even greater risk of violence both inside and outside the home. Though these marginalized groups have taken encouraging steps toward claiming their rights to equality, more work is needed to stop GBV, end discrimination and achieve gender-equality. We, the undersigned consortium of implementing organizations, recognize the important role that civil society and the public must play in tackling Cambodia's GBV epidemic, ending discrimination and pushing for gender equality, and we hereby express our firm commitment to play our part.

However, the challenges of gender inequality and discrimination will never be fully resolved without increased commitment and concrete action from the RGC, which holds the primary responsibility for protecting human rights and achieving gender equality, and we call upon all relevant authorities to step up their efforts to achieve these shared goals. We commend the government's ongoing efforts to amend the DV Law, and call on all parties involved in drafting the amended DV Law – including the Ministry of Women's Affairs – to ensure a continued consultative drafting process so that women, girls and LGBTQ individuals across Cambodia will be meaningfully protected from violence. We further call on the Ministry of Interior to step up its training efforts for local authorities, including police and commune councilors, equipping them to handle GBV cases in a way that prioritizes the safety of women, girls and LGBTQ individuals, and respects their rights and dignity, so that no survivor ever need fear reporting abuse. We furthermore call on the RGC to fulfill its obligations to promote and protect the rights of all women and LGBTQ individuals, including their right to participate in public life in Cambodia.

The EU- and DCA-funded "Voices for Gender Equality" project launches today and will run through February 2022. It aims to complement the efforts of national and local authorities in realizing improved gender equality within government structures and in public life in Cambodia through an approach that will empower women, girls and LGBTQ individuals to claim their rights, ensure they have increased support to do so from authorities and their communities, as well as raise public awareness and overturn harmful stereotypes through behavior change interventions and media campaigns.

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