



Feasibility Study On

Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Networks Development Effectiveness in Cambodia



Commissioned by Cooperation Committee for Cambodia

By: NEB Sinthay, KHIEU Vicheanon, and O'LEARY Declan
Consultant Team

December 2017

**Partnerships for Sustainable
Development in Cambodia**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Numerous Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and their networks have been created in Cambodia, but exactly how many organisations are functioning and operating remains unclear. Reported figures for registered CSOs range from 4,378 (USAID 2015) to 6,268 (MoFAIC 2017), while only a third of these may be operational to some degree (CCC, 2012). Additionally there is no clear insight into the number of operational networks, though the study identified at least 110 networks, at national and provincial levels, including sector and issues based networks or collaborative mechanisms and membership organisations which (claim to) represent members' interests on some issues, though there are likely more networks, collaborative groups and mechanisms in existence.

The Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) initially commissioned this feasibility study to explore CSOs, their network operations and issues, trends and factors affecting them now, and project forward for the coming period. Following discussions it was agreed that the study would focus on network related issues, and not on individual organisations.

The objectives of the feasibility study were threefold¹; “(i) Assess the development and trends of social, economic and political situation at global and national levels having impact(s) on CSOs; (ii) Assess the performance and functions of CSOs, Networks and Technical Working Groups toward the development of the country; and (iii) Explore the working mechanisms, strategies and functional roles for CSOs in the new development context in Cambodia”.

The feasibility study applied a mixed methods approach, combining a range of key informant interviews, consultations and focus group discussions (FGDs) at national and select provincial levels², initially three provinces, expanded to six but only resulting in five provincial network consultations³. These were augmented by an online network participation self-assessment⁴, asking recipient organisations to identify and qualify strong and weak networks. While the online assessment was sent to 785 email addresses through eight existing membership organisations/networks, in the end only 75 responses were received even after multiple follow ups, and, a number of other challenges confronted the study, including ; (i) timing/scheduling of the assignment; (i) lack of responsiveness from government at national and sub-national levels, development partners and some CSOs and networks; (iii) increase tense political and perceived decreasing democratic space. The online assessment, consultations, key informant interviews, and FGDs findings were used to quantify and qualify the functional nature of networks and associated issues. The study identified 110 networks at national and sub-national levels spanning numerous sectors and issues as well

¹ As per the terms of reference provided-see annex one

² Examples of the Questionnaires, tools and guidelines used can be seen in Annex 4

³ Kampot, Kratie, Battambang, Prey Veng and Phnom Penh provinces

⁴ Links to forms in English https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfirqivHP2I2vCeeYHObKIC8CxaXUJFJTs-f5CqFydl-Ls8EA/viewform?usp=sf_link, and Khmer https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfD_bQBgjDRSQQIhfUIn743EWXRKWPDRdGe3so7uc6Njxuq8Q/viewform?usp=sf_link

generic and sector provincial “coordination” networks, some of which feed into national networks, and there are likely numerous others.

Objective 1: Assess the development and trends of social, economic and political situation at global and national levels having impact(s) on CSOs

While commendable social and economic progressive has, is, and will be made, Cambodia remains categorised as a Less Developed Country (LDC) and is likely to be the only LDC in Asia after 2025⁵. Evidence by the progress being made across a range of social and economic indicators, including the:

- Significant falls in poverty from 53.2% in 2004 to 13.5% of the population in 2014.
- 58% increase in Cambodia’s composite Human Development Index (HDI) from 0.357 to 0.563 measuring health, education and standards of living.
- Continued national economic growth, averaging 7.6% per annum for over a decade⁶.

The current politic situation in country is of considerable concern, as civic space has shrunk. It is apparent that CSOs and networks have and are being targeted for suppression, as defamatory statements have been reported upon in the media⁷⁸⁹ associating CSOs/networks and others with “colour revolutionary activities” which is considered threatening by the government. Further the main opposition party has been suspended and is facing dissolution, after having won control of 30% of all communes (with a reported 43% of the popular vote¹⁰) in the local elections in June 2017, which was a significant increase for them, as it saw them gain control from just 2% (40 communes)¹¹ in 2012.

The direct implementation roles (in providing and augmenting public services) by CSOs involved in networks, is likely to decline. As the situation of potential target groups (the poor and marginalised) improves and the justification for cross subsidising services for the general population lessens. Additionally the remaining poor and marginalised groups will likely be in smaller, more dispersed and remote pockets which will be harder and more expensive to service. There will be continuing roles for specialised and niche organisations who can provide specialised services.

⁵ See Box 1 on Graduating from Less Developed Country Status, which was extracted from United Nations Conference on Trade and Development-UNCTAD (2017) “The Least Developed Countries Report 2016- The path to graduation and beyond: Making the most of the process”.

⁶ www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview October 2017 update

⁷ Interior Ministry Issues Stop-Order to Situation Room NGOs <https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/interior-ministry-issues-stop-order-to-situation-room-ngos-132133/>

⁸ Phnom Penh Post (24/10/2017) Banks, businesses and MFIs latest suspects in ‘colour revolution’, <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/banks-businesses-and-mfis-latest-suspects-colour-revolution>

⁹ Phnom Penh Post (20/10/2017) NGO accused of plotting revolution <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/ngo-accused-plotting-revolution>

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambodian_communal_elections,_2017

¹¹ As two separate parties before merging to form CNRP

So future roles for some CSO/ networks¹² will likely reduce, as resources for broad ranging actions reduces, unless qualifiable impact driven results can be justified (requiring CSOs to change their focus to other issues and sectors where assist and support will continue to be needed). The roles and opportunities for specialised and better performing organisations and networks and those involved in human rights, equity and social protection will continue to exist, but will likely be in increasingly supporting role(s), and need to be more aligned with national development objectives and goals especially those contributing to the localised Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) framework.

Objective 2: Assess the performance and functions of CSOs, Networks and Technical Working Groups toward the development of the country;

The government's Development Cooperation and Partnership Report (2016) explicitly states that "the Royal Government recognises the significant contribution of NGOs in supporting national development". It goes on indicated that (at least) 17% of the USD 1.34 billion reported Overseas Development Assistance¹³ (ODA) disbursed in Cambodia in 2015 was directly channelled by non-government organisations, which increases to 24% when combined with other development partner agency resources reported channelled through NGOs/CSOs. It is also worth noting that (just) 23 organisations are reported to be responsible for over half (53%) of all the ODA delivered through CSO/NGOs, and this percentage rise to 70% when 66 organisation are considered, leaving just 30% available for ~373 other reported organisations.

Sector and issues based networks appear to perform and function better, as they often have clearer objectives and action plans on what they wish to achieve. In some instance they are readily aligned and harmonised with national development goals, objectives, and have good working relations with government entities at different levels (for some sectors). In a number of instances, the national sector/issues hubs were often registered CSO in their own right, (necessary and) able to secure, manage, and disperse support to sub-national levels.

Generic coordination networks often lacked this direction, and were frequently identified as being weakly led/coordinated, with the selected/elected organisations to act as coordinators, unable and (in some instance) unwilling to provide the necessary inputs to properly facilitate their networks. Since the adoption of the Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations (LANGO) by the government (august 2015), there has often not been an issue which has united and coalesced CSOs and other networks for joint actions, and this is likely to continue until such issues arise. It was observed by stakeholders consulted with, that there have been multiple attempts to form generic coordination networks at different levels but

¹² Those involved in direct services provision (for example health, education, poverty reduction, etc...) or widely spread projects,

¹³ Defined) as grants and/or loans to countries and territories on Part I of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD's) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) List of Aid Recipients (developing countries including Cambodia); which are: (a) undertaken by the official sector (including NGOs and CSO); (b) used for the promotion of economic development and welfare as the main objective; (c) at concessional financial terms [having a Grant Element of at least 25 per cent]. In addition to financial flows, Technical Co-operation is included in aid.

these have universally failed, as such networks couldn't come together on issues (which are likely better address by sector/issues based mechanism), lacked resources to support their networks or members.

Some systemic issues identified which affected all networks were:

Representativeness; did networks represent a sufficient number of CSO actors/members¹⁴, to be able to claim the network spoke for them? For some sector based groups this is probably so, but for the generic coordination networks it probably wasn't, as the number of reported actively involved CSOs in many provincial networks was often small (probably the result of experiences with previous efforts to create network mechanisms),

Recognition; there are increasing concerns about the recognition of networks, especially since the "Situation Room" incident after the commune elections, and the targeting of CSO as supporting "coloured revolution". While some networks and membership organisations are registered CSOs in their own right¹⁵, most provincial and other issue networks are not. Many of networks met with, had become more apprehensive of network involvement due to the sense of rapidly decreasing political and civic space, where political space is defined as "Political space refers to the avenues, opportunities and entry points available for (all) citizens to express their voice and influence political (and other) processes and outcomes. The relative degree of political space may be placed on a continuum from open and inclusive to closed and exclusive. Political space is considered open if citizens are able to communicate their preferences, organise, act individually and collectively and engage government without restrictions or harassment"¹⁶.

The government and development partner endorsed Technical Working Groups (TWGs) has been the agreed formal aid coordination approach and mechanism since the mid 2000s' and forms part of the evolving aid architecture of improving national ownership, with the number of TWGs progressively increasing to a reported 19+1 TWGs now¹⁷. A recent review of TWG performance (Ballard 2015¹⁸) reports "TWG architecture is generally sound but performance is mixed. As a result, TWG contributions to achieving sector objectives and national development goals, including aid effectiveness and public sector reforms, is uneven".

One suggestion from Ballard was that "the participation of relevant local and/or international NGOs (on TWGs) could also help fill expertise gaps (on TWGs') in certain sectors and provide a useful perspective concerning the implementation of sector plans and strategies Efforts to identify CSO and membership organisation participation on all TWG was

¹⁴ See Annex 1 Provincial Networks and Activities

¹⁵ See box two on some of the possible 'pros and cons' of registering networks as formal organisations

¹⁶ NDI (2016) Civic Update A Matter of Political Space

¹⁷ Currently 19 Technical Working Groups are in existence with one additional one under discussion for approval, source http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh/cdc/joint_TWG/joint_TWG.htm update September 2017.

¹⁸ Ballard, B. (2015) Technical Working Group Performance Review, CRDB/CDC

not achieved by the study as their does not appear to be consolidated list of who is on what TWG. But it was known that NGOs CSO have and do participate on some TWGs including; educations, health, de-concentration and decentralisation, agriculture & water, HIV/AIDS, gender, rural water supply and sanitation and other....,. But how effective and communicated this participation is in terms of the individual CSO/NGOs on the TWG or as a representative of sector active NGOs/CSOs, is unknown. Comments made by some consulted networks and CSOs members were that those NGOs/CSOs on TWGs were considered “gatekeepers” sometimes communicating issues to and from the TWGs and sometimes not, possibly indicating a lack of preparation and coordination by CSOs for TWG engagement.

Stakeholders met with (who co-chaired or participate in TWGs) mentioned that the modalities of the TWGs was very formalistic, with limited opportunities to realistically raise and influence policy or resource allocation issues, a challenged also highlighted by Ballard in terms of the often congested agenda leaving little or no time for discussions. They mentioned that far better opportunities for policy and other influencing exist within sector/line ministry mechanisms and approaches. The CSO or network representatives on TWGs varied, in many instances it was individual CSOs (including membership organisations) invited to participate rather than representative sector/ issue networks, which was identified by some stakeholders as a deficiency. As it was often unclear whether they (the CSOs on TWGs) were there represent themselves or sector actors in general.

Ballard in 2015 also suggested that (i) CSOs could (be invited) to serve as a chair, or co-chair chair, of certain TWG sub-groups. CSOs, perhaps certain membership organisations, could also be invited to participate in the Partnership & Harmonization TWG (the main TWG for discussion/coordination ODA/aid flows). (ii) That the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) should convene annual consultations with CSOs as envisaged in the “Partnership and Dialogue Arrangements” role of the government Development Cooperation and Partnerships Strategy, adopted in 2014¹⁹.

Objective 3: Explore the working mechanisms, strategies and functional roles for CSOs in the new development context in Cambodia

The roles of CSOs/networks is changing as is the nature of development assistance, rather than often working in parallel with deficient institutional setups as in the past.

- (i) CSOs (and their networks) now need to work with, in and through improved national systems or hold these more accountable. CSOs and networks also need to better harmonise their programmes, projects and activities with the national development framework (the Rectangular Strategy, National Strategic Development Plan-NSDP and the evolving consideration of the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals-

¹⁹ RGC Decision (No: 108 SSR) on the Development Cooperation and Partnerships Strategy adopted June 9 2014

CSDGs²⁰). As well as with improved subnational planning processes at provincial, district/municipal/khan (DMK) and commune administrative levels, as these are increasingly the responsible levels.

- (ii) There is also a need to consolidate CSOs and this could best be achieved through harmonising roles through sector based networks, which are likely to be more effective at national and provincial levels, as they are more focused and deliver results, than generic coordination network mechanisms/entities. One necessary aspect of this would be to gain better insight into the 4Ws (Who? Is doing what? Where? And at what scale?) of CSOs and networks, as this continues to be lacking, and hinders and limits coordination, cooperation on action and future consolidation.
- (iii) Sector based planning and coordination needs to be strengthened to better target and qualify where inputs should be made and the resources required to deliver them in the most efficient and cost effective manner.
- (iv) CSOs, and networks need to better harmonise their activities and advocacy on issues to be seen to speaking with one voice and to better engage with development partners.
- (v) There is also a need to improve research and analytical capacities to support engagement with government and Development Partners.
- (vi) Greater consideration and understanding of the evolving post 2015 development agenda and the SDG needs speeding up, as continuing delays will retard CSOs and their networks abilities to participate and mobilise resources.

Making progress on these six points, would contribute to advancing sector and other strategies as well as overall development and the evolving functional roles for CSOs in the new development context in Cambodia.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The intention of this feasibility study was to firstly look at evolving social, economic and political trends (through national and global filters) and to see how these are and will affect CSOs /networks now and in the future, secondly to assess the functioning and performance of CSO networks and Technical Working Groups. Thirdly to explore the working mechanisms, strategies and functional roles for CSO networks in an evolving development context. These were ambitious and some would say ambiguous objectives for the assignment, as they required consideration of a wide range of issues and sectors, each of which on their own could (and would) warrant more focused research and understanding. And this extensiveness of issues to be covered, likely diminishes the findings and results, as they became more generalised across such a wide gamut of issues covered by networks.

- While social and economic progress has and is been made further progress is going to be increasingly difficult to better find and target poor, vulnerable, and

²⁰ Annex 3 for a list of the 18 CSDGs

marginalised groups across the country. As those in continuing deprived circumstances will increasingly be in smaller, more isolated and remote communities/groups and harder to reach. While capturing and delivering some of the economic benefits from the country's impressive growth in a more equitable manner will also be a challenge.

The shrinking political and civic space is an increasing issue of concern, as there is an identified risk that the country is sliding into authoritarianism^{21,22,23}, and the continued adversarial atmosphere between the "CSO sector" and state entities (at national and sub-national levels) continues to hinder and hamper joint initiatives to make progress on addressing development issues and challenges.

There is a demand from development partners for greater coordination between Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and by implication of their networks. As they (CSOs) are generally perceived as being fragmented and disjointed in approaches on issues and platforms. They (DPs) would like to and desire to have a single engagement (entry and exit point) entity to meet with and hear from. Rather than often having to deal with multiple individual organisations or small networks, which they feel represent an organisation's own interests, rather than playing a representative of a network.

The CSO networks and membership organisation only represent a portion of the CSOs active in country. Which limits and or constraints civil society organisations acceptance as being a representative of civil society, as this representativeness is often self-proclaimed, with little or evidence or documented support to back it up. The challenge occur on the current lack of knowledge and information on who, is working where, on what, at what scale ("the 4Ws) stifles co-ordination and collaboration.

On the other hand, some stakeholders, view the current membership organisations as "Gatekeeper"²⁴ controlling the flow of information to network members in both positive and negative contexts, and competitors for the perceived decreasing pools of funding rather than as sector or issue facilitators.

²¹ Jensen, A., (27/1/2016) "Cambodia on the Cusp of Authoritarianism"

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/cambodia-on-cusp-of-authoritarianism-report-106504/>

²² Kurlantsick, J., (28/6/2016) "Cambodia's Turn Toward Authoritarianism" (Again), Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/cambodias-turn-toward-authoritarianism-again>

²³ Economist Intelligence Unit Global Democracy Index <https://infographics.economist.com/2017/DemocracyIndex/>

²⁴ Which is defined as an organisation which can control and influence the flow of information to networks, with both positive and negative connotations, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gatekeeping_\(communication\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gatekeeping_(communication))

Recommendations

1. Who or what entities should lead on coordination needs to be worked out, as current structures and membership organisations (are perceived to) only represent a portion of civil society organisations active across the country.

- Membership organisations should consider evolving away from (fee based) membership structures which is seen as limiting involvement by many local organisations unable (and some would say unwilling) to pay the requested fees to be a members. It may be best to ask organisations to contribute what they can and give guidance on this. But of greater importance is to encourage more organisations to join and get involved.
- It has been suggested by the consultative group to possibly consider advocating for establishing a National CSO Council (modelled on the experiences with the Cambodian National Council of Women) to provide a legally mandated engagement structure for better involvement and coordination with government entities.
 - An alternative or interim measure could be to create a CSO partnership secretariat led by an independent facilitator to engage with and consult and facilitate CSO networks to participate and partner on issues to be identified.

It is recommended, that network and membership organisations who claim to represent and coordinate CSOs, better engaged in collaborative approaches to better represent the CSO sector in general, by jointly organising CSO congress(es) or forum(s) around the country to hear from, and listen to CSOs and existing networks around the country. And based on these congresses/forums, lead on identified evolving issues, such as the application and scope of the LANGO and the recognition of CSO contributions to national development to name just two issues.

2. Membership organisations and networks should better outline what services they currently provide, and can provide to members (and the costs of provision if required). To better structure and provide capacity development inputs for networks and CSOs.

3. Access to (competitive) dedicated provincial sector funding could be considered, but these clearly need to be better targeted at qualifiable and quantifiable poor vulnerable /marginalised groups.

4. There is clearly an expressed need to continue to strengthen provincial networks and their members, to improve

- Institutional/ network governance,
- Improve network functioning
- Strengthen networks abilities to engage with local government, and
- Improve network horizontal and vertical engagement with national networks and platforms.

5. There is a need for better engagement and regular communication from CSOs/networks and membership organisations active at national levels as well as in the provinces and around the country? To identify and consolidate issues that CSOs/ provincial networks feel are of concerns to them; and identify ways and means to better address these issues?
 - Information communication technologies (ICT) allows for and enables reasonable connectivity throughout the country. So cloud based data storage and information engagement and sharing approaches should be promoted and supported to enable greater timely access to information being accessible and to better engage organisations/networks involved in and interested in different sectors and issues, “as being an organisation on a string is and should no longer be acceptable”.
 - The use of ICT should also contribute to greater transparency and accountability, which while often demanded from government is perversely often absent from CSO/network operation and activities.
6. Consider initiating joint activities with Government’s Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) to jointly map out, sensitise and encourage CSO/networks, to contribute to the aid effectiveness database. The CSOs, networks and membership organisations outputs should be channelled through provincial and national level coordinating entity (such as CCC) most likely on a bi-annual basis (twice a year) to better qualify and quantify the activities, outputs and impacts which are supported by CSOs/networks.
7. Increasing transparency and accountability by all development actors, including state agencies, CSOs, networks, and the private sector is necessary, but will also be challenging.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CAMFEBA	Cambodia Federation of Employers and Business Associations
CCC	Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (the client)
CDC	Council for the development of Cambodia
CMDGs	Cambodian Millennium Development Goals
CPWP	Committee to Promote Women in Politics
CRDB	Cambodian Rehabilitation & Development Board
CSDGs	Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DP	Development Partner
DPO	Disabled Person Organisation
EC	European Commission
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations General Assembly
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FNGO	Foreign non-governmental organisation (as defined in LANGO), used interchangeably with INGO as both have the same meaning.
GDI	Gender Development Index
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
HACC	Health Action Coordination Committee
IHDI	Inequality Human Development Index
INGO	A non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in another country, but operating in Cambodia, used in parallel with the terminology foreign NGO as applied in the LANGO

IPO	Indigenous People’s Organisation
LANGO	Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations
LDC	Least developed Country
MPI	Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index
MtR	Mid-term Review
NEP	NGO Education Partnership
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan (2014-2018)
ODA	Official (overseas) Development Assistance
RGC	Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
The 4Ws	Who? What? Where? And at what scale?
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WBG	World Bank Group
WHO	United Nations World Health Organisation

For the purposes of this report the terms Civil Society Organisation and Non-Governmental Organisation will be inter-changeable. It covers registered not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation operating in Cambodia.

I- BACKGROUND

“Civil society is at the core of human nature. We human beings want to get together with others ... and act collectively to make our lives better. And, when we face evils and injustice, we get together and fight for justice and peace. Civil society is the expression of those collective actions. Through strong civil societies, enjoying the freedoms of association and assembly, we encourage and empower one another to shape our societies and address issues of common concern”. Archbishop Desmond Tutu²⁵.

“The multiple roles and functions civil society organisations (CSOs) in addressing the developmental challenges, including improving good governance and human rights protection, democratic governance and environmental conservation at local, national, regional and global levels are well recognised. Civil society organizations, working in partnership with government institutions and development partners, have been contributing to strengthening the effectiveness of development efforts and promoting accountability in the use of development assistance and local and national resources. At the same time, CSOs help governments to define development priorities, targets and indicators like SDG targets and indicators (UNDP & OECD, 2016).

The term CSO or CSO network ambiguously explained and narrowly defined. CSO refers to registered non-governmental organisations’ (NGOs) and (frequently) associations. The Article 4 of the Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations (LANGO) approved by the National Assembly in 2015 gives guidance on the possible nature of both associations and NGOs. However, the law makes no mention of or for registering networks or collaborative mechanisms/approaches. Additionally while groupings of other civil society entities exist; with over 3,000 Trade Unions reported in 2015 (CAMFRE 2015) , numerous community-based organisations (CBOs) reportedly in excess of 25,000 (Oxfam 2014), the majority probably remain unrecognised , though this may change in coming years. This study stays within the generally “limited” definitions of CSOs as commonly applied in Cambodia, focusing on networks or collaborative mechanisms of CSOs. In this context, CSOs are those registered non-governmental, non-profit organisations involved in “development” related activities.

While the situation toward collaborative/networking mechanisms has become more ambiguous, “in theory” (and supposedly) protected by the National Constitution in terms of freedom of gathering and association. However, by practice, it is required CSO networks registering with the state. After the 2017 commune elections, the recent occurrence and state investigation of CSO alliance who monitored the election situation (self-branded situation room). Networks and stakeholders met with, also mentioned increasing apprehensions about imposed requirements to have registered networks, though it is noted that many of the observed more effective networks/collaborative mechanisms/membership organisations are themselves officially registered entities.

²⁵ Statement endorsing the “Defending Civil Society Report” 2nd ed, 2012 by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, http://www.icnl.org/research/resources/dcs/DCS_Report_Second_Edition_English.pdf

Overview of Civil Society Organisations in Cambodia

The numbers of active CSOs in Cambodia are not clearly and consistently recorded within the database of government institutions and CSOs. In 2014, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) reported 4,378 registered organisations including non-governmental organizations and associations and in 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MoFAIC) of Cambodia reported that “Cambodia is home to some 6,268 registered associations and NGOs, both national and international. In 2012, CCC recorded 5078 entities of organizations functioning in Cambodia, however, it concludes that about one-third of these organizations were possibly active. Additionally, indicated that only about a third of (these) registered NGOs and associations in the country were possibly active. In addition to the 25,000 generally ‘unregistered’ CBOs existing in country. At least 110 networks responding to the study survey at national, provincial levels and many more were reported.

Networking approaches have tried to gather likeminded or interested organisations together for various causes and purposes. However, these have also often only engaged with a relatively small percentage of existing or active organisations with the largest membership organisations or networks in the country. 170 network members are registered, reported and considered active, as they received and responded the questionnaires of the study survey. So there remains a dearth of information on civil society organisations and networks in terms of whom? Is doing what? Where? And at what scale? (“The 4Ws”). In fact, the civil society organisations and their networks in the Cambodian context remain debatable with different actors and stakeholders interpreting the phrases differently.

In 2011 and 2012, CCC undertook a number studies to qualify the number of organisations operating in Cambodia. In 2011, CCC reported potentially 3,963 organisations or association of whom 2,007 (1,839 LNGOs and 168 INGOs) could not be contacted, so only 1,956 were “in theory” operational. In 2012, the CCC report “CSO Contributions to the Development of Cambodia 2012- Opportunities and Challenges” identified 1,918 CSO²⁶. It identified 1,315 CSOs as being open, of these CSOs, 670 were local NGOs, 321 are “Foreign”²⁷/ international NGOs and 324 are named and or registered as associations. 86 per cent were reported as funded and implementing some projects in 2012. The 2012 CCC report went on to state that of the 1,315 open CSOs, these were benefiting 1.3 million people, primarily through activities in the education, health and agriculture sectors. With CSOs reportedly dispersing approximately US\$600-700 million in 2012²⁸, and directly employed around 43,000 people.

²⁶ The 2012 CCC report stated that 56 organisation in an original population of 1,956 duplicate names and were removed, other organisation were more recently formed and some changed their status to businesses and were considered as closed

²⁷ The term “foreign association and NGO” are use in the LANGO (chapter 3) which requires them to register with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. But INGO is more commonly use in global publications and will be used in the report, as FNGO and INGO both mean the same thing as original not from this country.

²⁸ This figure was generated/extrapolated by the responses of a sample of 200 organisations, based on projecting the then reported average and is questioned, as it possibly exaggerates the value of interventions, as the beneficiary costs based on this would range between US\$461-538 per beneficiary (for the reported 1.3 million) a relative high units cost. It may be

As mentioned MoFAIC²⁹ recently reported that “Cambodia is home to some 6,268 registered associations and NGOs, both national and international” but said little more. Another Government entity, part of the Government’s Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) is the Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board (CRDB) which is the operational arm of the CDC, mandated to act as the RGCs coordinating body for managing Official Development Assistance (ODA) between line ministries, agencies, development partners and others. One of the responsibilities of the CRDB is to “act as the “One-Stop Service” and operational arm in liaising with the Development Partners and NGOs that provide grant assistance to Cambodia, and to serve as the focal point in the contact among government's ministries and institutions for coordination for receiving and/or managing development assistance”³⁰.

One of the functions undertaken by the CRDB is the maintenance and updating of an “ODA database”³¹. According to this, there are currently 584 active reporting NGOs implementing 1,680 projects up to the end 2016, are made up of 284 national NGOs and 300 Foreign NGO. In addition the database documents another group of 1,041 (894, national and 147 foreign NGOs) who exist but are not reporting to the ODA database (as reporting is a voluntary obligation). So potentially there could be at least 1,625 NGOs/CSOs implementing projects? However, explaining the situation of NGOs, covering the data on who is doing what, where, and what scale is a hard task as no reliable data is available.

Categories	NGOs	Reported Project	Non Reporting (but probably active) NGOs	Projects
National NGOs	284	689	894	53
Foreign NGOs	300 ³²	991	147	16
Implemented Projects	584	1,680	1,041	

In fact no reliable data exists on who, is doing what, where, and at what scale (“the 4Ws”). Nor does there appear to be any up-to-date record of collaborative networking mechanisms anywhere? It was partly because of this dearth of information, causing a vacuum in knowledge and understanding (in that we still don’t know, who? is working where? doing what? and at what scale?) after roughly 25 years of increased NGO/CSO activity in Cambodia following the signing of the Paris Peace Agreements in October 1991, that the long functioning organisation

fair to postulate that this \$6-700 million figure reported may have given stimulus for promulgating the LANGO as the state had little or no knowledge (as no effective systems were in place) how it was being spent.

²⁹ MoFAIC (2017) Cambodia, Democracy and Human Rights to tell the Truth April 11, 2017 <https://www.mfaic.gov.kh/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Ministry-of-Foreign-Affair-201704-388.pdf>

³⁰ Role and Responsibilities of the Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board «CRDB» (Extracts from Sub Decree No. 60 ANK BK, Article 13, and dated 05th April 2016), @ <http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh/cdc/>.

³¹ The ODA database has two parts; one tracking support from and through development partners (multilateral, bilateral agencies) and a second focusing on NGO support. Submission to the ODA is voluntary and may only track some of the financing/ investments made .

³² It is worth stating, that many of these ‘larger’ NGOs disburse some of their funds to the small organisations and networks.

CCC commissioned this study. To see what is going on in terms of collaborative activities between registered organisations possibly in the form of networks or other collaborative approaches across different sectors, on different issues and in different provinces.

The 2016 Development Cooperation and Partnership Report from the Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board (CRDB) of the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) (May 2016) explicitly states that “the Royal Government recognises the significant contribution of NGOs in supporting national development”. This further indicates that of the USD 1.34 billion in reported Official Development Assistance (ODA) disbursed across Cambodia in 2015, at least one-fifth (17 per cent) USD 228 million came through NGOs³³ in 2015. It was seen as a decrease of 7% compared to the 2014. It is worth noting that NGO core fund disbursements (excluding funds delegated by other DPs) are considered relatively stable (by CRDB/CDC) at around USD 225-230 million per year over a period of three years (2013-2015) and when combined with resources channelled by other development partners through NGOs, the amount increases and equates to approximately 24% of the total external funding (US\$321 million) provided to the country.

The report also observed that, “notably, amongst the 439 NGOs who reported their activities to CDC in 2015 23 largest NGOs are responsible for 53% of the total NGO financing, and when this number is increased to just 66 NGOs, they are responsible for 70% of all NGO financing delivered in country.

³³ Additional fund are likely to have also been channelled through NGOs but are not effectively captured by the ODA database operated by CRDB/CDC.

II- INTRODUCTION

CSOs in Cambodia are regulated by the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the 2007 Civil Code of Cambodia (which only became operational in December 2011), and various regulations and 'Prakas' (proclamations), and most recently by the requirement of the 2015 Law on Association and Non-Government Organisations (LANGO). While these generally layout requirements for the formation and registration of and reporting by NGOs, they say little about operations (as they should).

The situation with networks is more ambiguous, Article 31 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia (1993) states that "Cambodia shall recognise and respect human rights as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human rights, the covenants and conventions related to human rights, women's and children's rights" and this was later reaffirmed by the decision of the Constitutional Council in 2007, while Articles 41 and 42 provide more details on freedoms of assembly and association (through these end by stating, "these rights shall be determined by law" and it has and is the subsequent legislation that is accused being progressively limited freedoms to associate". These should intrinsically be applicable to CSO entities forming collaborative mechanisms.

However, ambiguities and misinterpretation of a range of Laws (particularly LANGO) appear to be mis-used to constraint, restrict, as reported by multiple stakeholders consulted for this study) and possibly intimidate organisations, as there is an increasing sense of trepidation among local CSOs consulted, into not being critical of government, for the lack of transparency and accountability of investments in and the provision and levels of services provided to the people.

Criticism of state entities and officials (valid or otherwise) has been effectively criminalised by the articles 305 of the 2009 Criminal Code³⁴ and this has been used to prosecute individuals and others periodically. Additionally the recent incident and ongoing investigation³⁵ of the "Situation Room"³⁶ a voluntary network of 38-40 organisations networking on the observance of the commune election process is a current example of "lawfare"^{37,38}. It is evident that there is a need to clarify how the government wishes to treat collaborative approaches, but this will have

³⁴ Defines "Defamation shall mean any allegation or charge made in bad faith which tends to injure the honor or reputation of a person or an institution." This widened the scope of defamation so that the defamation of institutions as well as individuals could result in criminal charges, as it has been frequently used by officials and institution to counter criticism. Additionally while under the previous UNTAC Penal Code, an allegation would have to actually harm reputation or honour, while Article 305 states that a charge need only to tend to harm reputation or honour, CCHR (2014) The criminalisation of defamation and freedom of expression in Cambodia, CCHR Briefing Note – May 2014

³⁵ Government probing 'Situation Room' article Phnom Penh Post (30/6/2017) <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/government-probing-situation-room>, Interior Ministry Issues Stop-Order to Situation Room NGOs article Cambodia Daily (5/7/2017) <https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/interior-ministry-issues-stop-order-to-situation-room-ngos-132133/>

³⁶ COMFREL (June 2017) Situation Room for the 2017 Election: Purposes and Activities, https://www.comfrel.org/eng/components/com_mypublications/files/599513Press_Release_on_Situation_Room_28_JUNE_2017_English.pdf

³⁷ Which can be defined as <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawfare>

³⁸ <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/analysis-cambodias-government-learns-art-lawfare>

rights, constitutional, (in terms of the rights to associated and gathering), regulatory, and bureaucratic implications (in terms of scope), as any type of gathering or meeting could be covered.

Other parts of the 2009 Criminal Code (Article, 205) was also recently used against CSO workers and others, some of whom became known as the “ADHOC 5” who were held in pre-trial detention for (427 days) in contravention to the country commitments to the UNs International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)³⁹ and article 12 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders⁴⁰, Their detention and the perceived targeting of other rights advocates such as Ms Tep Vanny the outspoken land rights activist who was convicted of violence with aggravating circumstances (Article 218 of the 2009 criminal code) and sentences to 2.5 years in prison for an reactivated case from 2013⁴¹

Paradoxically, it is also accepted that government and other actors efforts are being made to improve “recognition” of sector actors, networks and groups in and across some sectors (education, climate change, humanitarian relief and previously health) including through the roll out and application of the social accountability framework through Sub-National Administrations (SNAs), supported by the National Committee for Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS) and some of the now 21 Technical Working Group⁴². Additionally some ministries have undertaken periodic engagement with (some) CSO networks for example the Ministry of Land Management Urban Planning and Construction are (now) committed to meeting CSOs on a quarterly basis.

As mentioned, levels on information on the functioning and performance of CSOs and their networks remains deficient, generally in terms of what they are doing? Where they are doing it? How they operate? What impacts are they having? And how do they coordinate and cooperate on issues of mutual benefit or concerns to them to gain synergises or take joint actions on these issues.

III- OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The terms of reference set the objectives of the assignment as three folds, namely to:

- Assess the development and trends of social, economic and political situation at global and national levels having impact(s) on CSOs;
- Assess the performance and functions of CSO Networks, and Technical Working Groups toward the development of the country; and
- Explore the working mechanisms, strategies and functional roles for CSOs in the new development context in Cambodia.

³⁹ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) article 9(3)

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CCPR.aspx>

⁴⁰ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/Declaration.aspx>

⁴¹ Civil Society Calls for Justice for Tep Vanny at Appeal Court <http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=425>

⁴² http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh/cdc/joint_TWG/joint_TWG.htm

IV- APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY⁴³

A mixed methods consultative approach was initially outlined as part of the proposal and later evolved through consultations with CCC. The approach involved a literature review which was the primary research method used for objective one.

An online networks self-assessment survey utilising Google forms was used⁴⁴ as one of the research methods for objective two. This endeavoured to capture some general information on organisation in terms of what provinces they work in, what sectors (based on a restrictive list) they were active in, participation in 'national', 'provincial' or 'sector' networks. The survey also asks organisations to rate two networks they participated in, in terms of a strong network and a weak network.

On each network the survey asked:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the network has a clear mandate or terms of reference? • What is the size of the network in terms of membership by organisations? • How active is the organisation (regular participations)? • Consideration of whether they consider the network recognised or not by state or an 'informal' network? • Whether the network has a strategy or action plan? • Whether the network has a secretariat or organisation acting as a hub? And who this is? • What is the frequency of meetings, and scheduling • How are agenda prepared? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of outputs of network? • Meetings with government and sub-national levels? • Who initiated these meetings? And their frequency? • Application of the outputs of these meetings? • Whether the organisation believes these meeting with state entities are effective? • Then the perceived Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Challenges to the network • What are the benefits of participation in the network? • What could be done to improve the effectiveness and cooperation of the networks? • Who should be targeted for improvement? • Feedback on social, economic and political |
|---|--|

⁴³ Question guides, tools/questionnaires (in English and Khmer) used are attached in Annex 4

⁴⁴ Hardcopy forms were not used as limited time and resources provided for the research limited the opportunities for data collection, coding, entering and cleaning required by hardcopy forms. Links to the survey forms in English https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfirqivHP2I2vCeeYHObKIC8CxaXUJfJTs-f5CqFydl-Ls8EA/viewform?usp=sf_link, and Khmer https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfD_bQBgjDRSQQIhfUln743EWXRKWPDRdGe3so7uc6Njxuq8Q/viewform?usp=sf_link

- | | |
|---|---------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of organisation’s participation in the network? • Outputs of network meetings? | trends? |
|---|---------|

This was augmented by a mix of consultative and ‘participatory’ approaches involving meeting and consultations with a range of key informants spanning, development partners and agencies, partnering CSOs, INGOs, LCSOs, and existing networks and membership organisations which contributed to and validate issues in objective one and two, and contributed to objective three.

These meetings contributed to gaining insights into the current development context with reference to CSOs and their networks and their perceptions on network and their performances, some additional insights are provided in two case studies prepared. Additionally a series of provincial consultations were held with identified networks, initially in Battambang, Kratie and Kampot and later with Prey Veng and Kampong Thom (though this meeting fell through) and Phnom Penh.

The developed online networks assessment survey forms (in Khmer and English) was sent to a total of 786 email addresses through eight existing membership organisations and networks (see table for numbers reported in organisation/network) including; CCC; NGO Forum for Cambodia; NGO Education Partnership-NEP; the newly renamed Health Action Coordinating Committee-HACC; Committee to Promote Women in Politics –CPWP; the Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development-CPDD, formerly the Working Group for Partnerships in Decentralisation-WGPD; Cambodian Disabled People’s Organisation; and the NGO Committee on the Rights of the Child-NGO-CRC.

#	Name of Network	Reported # of members	Comment
1	CCC	170	The cumulative number of email addresses the online survey sent to, likely multiple copies going to the same organisation and even different people within the organisation. We assumed that less than half this number of email addresses are distinct separate entities
2	NGO Education Partnership (NEP)	145	
3	NGO Forum on Cambodia	95	
4	HACC	124	
5	CPWD	12	
6	CPDD (formerly WGPD)	120	
7	CPDO	70	
8	NGO CRC	50	
	Subtotal	786	

While links to the online network assessment forms in Khmer and English was sent to 786 addresses, it was highly likely that a significant percentage were duplicate addresses across a range of networks. It was evident, that CSOs were frequently members of multiple networks and that often multiple addresses within organisations existed with personnel within the same organisation being counted separately in some instances. In the end it is believe that roughly 300 different organisations received the online survey.

An effort to cross reference network memberships was stifled by the reluctance of approached networks to share organisation membership lists. While the online network assessment forms were sent to a wide range of organisations, only 75 organisations responded with varying degree of completion were received, even after two notifications of extension sent out. It is probably worth observing that this number or responses (75) possibly reflects CSOs commitments (and possible ambivalence) to networks and aid effectiveness. Of the data collected through the different streams qualitative analysis were applied to identify trends and commonalities between the responses, obtained through open, axial and selective coding, which was then incorporated into the report.

The latter phases of the assignment involved synthesising quantitative and qualitative findings from the CSO survey and from key informant interviews, which fed into the drafting of the report, followed by a further series of feedback consultations with identified key stakeholders and a consultative group prior to finalisation.

Constraints & Challenges

The greatest constraint was and is the actual lack of knowledge of the 4Ws in terms of civil society organisations and their networks. As yet, no one has a reasonable clear insight into this. But is this an unrealistic ideal? One would have expected someone to have tried to get a better insight into this after roughly 25 years of NGO/CSO activities in country, yet it is still significantly lacking? As is the monitoring, accumulation and validation of the results and impacts of CSO/NGO supported development activities. Additionally the benefits of investments made through CSOs/NGOs and the outputs, outcomes and impact of these is not effectively captured and reported upon or captured by Government, as these would/ could be used to assess and qualify the contribution, performance and function of CSOs, Networks and Technical Working Groups toward the development of the country.

Other challenges and constraints included:

- In undertaking the assignment, the limited number of responses to the online self-assessment (distributed in both Khmer and English) which was sent to 786 emails addresses, but which was likely received by at least 300 separate entities/ organisation may indicate the limited interest in and commitment to exploring network issues.

- Provincial networks met with, and others, were asked to provide copies of available documents (drafts or approved) about their networks in terms of identified roles, functions, strategies, etc. none were received, even after a number of follow ups.
- Frequently survey respondents and stakeholders consulted with generalised, they bundled networks together and often gave examples of issues which were reflected of one or more networks or membership organisations.

The study was also unable to make any significant inroads on meetings with Government at different levels to gain their insights into and for the study. Multiple efforts were made to request meetings with the responsible officers within the Ministry of Interior and the Council of Ministries, but contacted officials were unable and reluctant to meet with the study team, without higher level approval, which apparently were not forthcoming and meeting were not arranged. Efforts to meet with provincial and lower sub-national official also ran into similar issues with the timing of the field visits to selected provinces.

A number of stakeholder raised concerns and issues in that which could be considered as systemic issues in attempting to look at some of the networks/ members organisation covered by the study in that;

- Some membership organisations/networks are frequently introverted, primarily looking at their members' needs and issues, with limited regard for the broader national, provincial or sector development perspectives.
- Who do these organisations/ networks represent? Who has appointed them?
- Where organisations have formed networks these are often issue or sector based and have again become introverted.

These three points raise issues that may have contribute to the limited reported interaction of CSO/NGO networks now. As there are no significant issues on which to coalesce around or agreements to do such, unlike the previous coming together around the debate prior to the adoption of LANGO in 2015.

V- FINDINGS

Objective 1: Assessing the development and trends of social, economic and political situation at global and national levels having impact(s) on CSOs;

Global Trends

Different countries are facing different challenges and those confronting developing countries include but were not limited to poor public service delivery, malfunctioning of public institutions, inefficient and ineffective democratic governance and corruption (World Bank Group, 2017). It was seen that both state and civil society organisations have contributed to improving socio-economic indicators at global, regional and national levels. By 2014, about one billion people living in extremely poor conditions have been helped to lift out of poverty. Stunting of children under-5 fell from 198 million in 2000 to 155 million in 2016. Between 2000 and 2015, the global maternal mortality ratio declined by 37 per cent, while the under-5 mortality rate fell by 44 per cent, the Tuberculosis (TB) incidence rate by 17 per cent, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) incidence rate by 46 per cent. Women's participation in national parliaments reached 24 per cent in 2017 (United Nations, 2017).

In 2015, health, reproductive health, education, economic development and humanitarian assistance received the highest attention from the donor community and health projects of civil society organisations are the most popular ones (Baobab, 2016). Education continues to be one of the top priority sectors for donor funding, particularly NGOs activities, but for about a decade, the proportion of primary school aged children out of schools stagnated at about 9 per cent. Around 1 in 10 children worldwide are reported engaged in labour in 2012, when they should be in education. (United Nations, 2017). This may require concerted efforts of all stakeholders, including CSOs.

Politics affects the lives and social and economic development of all, as funding is often politically influenced, motivated and approved by political institutions. In 2010, 18.5 billion US dollars and in 2015, 21.5 billion were reportedly officially channelled via civil society organisations globally, for development purposes (baobab, 2016). Globally even though, funding has increased for civil society organisations, they (CSOs) continue to face challenges caught in the interplay of politics and development. Numerous incidence of violence, intimidation, harassment and imprisonment of representatives of CSOs and activists, particularly those working on the protection of human rights were recorded (CIVICUS, 2016). In 2014, violations against civil rights activists were reported in 96 countries, and in 2015, violations against civil rights activists in 109 countries were recorded and political abuses over other groups such as journalists and social activists were also recorded (CIVICUS, 2016). These

causes result in the development of a sense of trepidation among CSO actors and to some extent, the general public⁴⁵.

The global economy has recovered and is growing, with industrial production, increasing stimulated by, and stimulating global trades, but remains slow. Reported global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) dropped to 2.3 per cent in 2016, but is projected to grow to 2.7 in 2017 (United Nations, 2017), however agricultures contribution to this continues to decline (IMF, 2017). The slow pace of growth contributes to causing high levels of unemployment and increasing vulnerability in work, particularly in the developing world and acts as a barrier to development (United Nations, 2017).

The world continues to face complicated social, economic and political challenges, possible solutions continued to be proposed and implemented, and these mobilise meaningful and productive engagement of civil society organisations in order to ensure the reality of the Sustainable Development Goals. As stated in the 2012 European Commission Communication, “an empowered civil society is a crucial component of any democratic system and an asset in itself..... contributing to more effective policies, equitable and sustainable development and inclusive growth and participatory democracy”⁴⁶.

National Trends

Cambodia moved into the tier of being a lower middle income economy in 2016, but remains a least developed country (LDC) and is unlikely to graduate from LDC status until post 2025, and is forecasted to be the only Asia country⁴⁷ categorised as a LDC post 2025 (UNCTAD 2017)⁴⁸. Though it has maintained considerable and stable economic growth of 7.6 per cent per year for over a decade, this growth has significantly contributed to the alleviation of absolute and other forms of poverty, with the overall poverty rate dropping from 52 per cent in 2004 to 20 per cent in 2011 (World Bank, 2014) and 13.5 per cent in 2014 (World Bank, 2017) which equates to some two million people remaining below that national poverty line.

Cambodia has made recognised considerable and commendable progress towards achieving at least six of its eight international MDGs between 2000 and 2015:

⁴⁵ International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (2016) Global Trends in NGO Law, “Closing Civic Space: Impact on Development and Humanitarian CSOs” VOLUME 7, ISSUE 3.

⁴⁶ EC Communication (COM(2012)0492) “The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations” <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM%3A2012%3A0492%3AFIN%3AEN%3APDF>

⁴⁷ Currently eight countries in Asia are categorised as LDCs’, (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Yemen).

⁴⁸ UNCTAD (2016), The Least Developed Countries Report

CMDGs Adopted	Considered	Remarks
CMDG1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Achieved	Four of six indicators
CMDG2: Achieve universal primary education	On the threshold of achieving	Two indicators reported upon
CMDG3: Promote gender equality and empower women	On its way to achieving	Four indicators reported upon
CMDG4: Reduce child mortality	Achieved	Three indicators reported upon
CMDG5: Improve maternal health	Achieved	Two indicators reported upon
CMDG6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	Achieved	Two indicators reported upon
CMDG7: Ensure environmental sustainability	Achieved	Three indicators reported upon
CMDG8: Forging a global partnership for development	Achieved or is well on its way to achieving	Three indicators reported upon
CMDG9: De-mining, removing explosive remnants of war, and victim assistance		
Source: ASEAN Statistical Report on Millennium Development Goals 2017		

However, provincial differences raise some concerns for public policy actions. About 90 per cent of the (roughly two million) poor continue to live in rural areas (World Bank, 2014), and remain heavily dependent on subsistence agriculture (Asian Development Bank, 2014). These raise some policy and institutional implementation of actions issues, due to gaps in designing and the allocation of sufficient resources for implementation. Remedying these should require more meaningful and productive engagement with accountable and democratic civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

Education is a driver of endogenous growth, but this sector continues to face challenges to be collaboratively and strategically addressed. While net enrolment in primary education increased from 82% in 1997 to 97% in 2016, lower secondary completion rates at 43% in 2013, are significantly below the average for lower middle-income countries (World Bank, 2017). In 2015, 21 per cent of Cambodian people aged 25 and above did not or only have some schooling, 36 per cent did not complete primary schooling, 21.9 per cent completed primary schooling, 11.4 per cent completed lower secondary education, 5.3 per cent completed upper secondary education and 4.7 per cent received post-secondary education (MoP/NIS, 2016). This may contribute to explaining why the majority of the Cambodia labour force are considered to only possess low skills, still too minimally to effectively contribute to endogenous growth.

Health needs more strategic planning and investment in order to contribute to achieving the ambitious SDG health targets and indicators effectively and efficiently. 32 per cent (or approximately 0.5 million) of children under five are stunted (CDHS 2014). As of 2015, 24 per cent of Cambodia's lack access to an improved water source nationally, and 58 per cent (9.3 million people) do not have access to improved sanitation (World Bank, 2014). The maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births decreased from 472 in 2005 to 170 in 2014, while the under-five mortality rate decreased from 83 per 1,000 live births in 2005 to 35 per 1,000 in 2014 (World Bank, 2017).

Cambodia has and is enjoying a stable growth rate of about 7 per cent per annum in 2016 and 2017 and will continue so to 2018 (World Bank, 2016), but depends largely and heavily on what are considered low-skill industries (mainly apparel, construction labour), which has greatly contributed to the continuing solid growth in garment exports and a strong construction sector. These two sectors may not be able to bring Cambodia to an upper middle income country status by 2030.

In 2016, Cambodia was persistently ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in ASEAN, ranked 156th out of 176 surveyed countries in the world (Transparency International, 2016). While this report is still contested by the government, it has never recognised such uncertainty. Cambodia's governance is facing the challenges of a kleptocratic bureaucracy, including red tape and inefficient and ineffective governance. Contributed to by ineffective enforcement of the relatively good anti-corruption laws and the correction of governance deficiencies in public service providers (Transparency International, 2016; World Bank, 2009).

Forum Syd reports that the number of civil society organisations in Cambodia have diminished in recent years after the 2013 general elections (ForumSyd, 2017) as laws (LANGO) which are considered to heavily restrict civil society organisations were approved by the National Assembly in 2015. Freedom of expression has been curtailed and is felt more difficult among representatives of civil society organisations after 2013, and in the run up to the 2017 local elections, and considered to have declining further in the current period before national elections in 2018.

Participants in some of NGO networks focus group discussions echoed their concerns over the current Cambodia political situation related to the targeting, attacks on and murder of human rights, land activists, political parties, and public intellectuals reported by Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch, 2017). The unsettled political situation is and may severely affect the democratic governance and development of the nation in the long run, and could have adverse impacts on economic growth and progress.

Studies and advocated approaches (Busan Aid Effectiveness etc) suggest that graduating from LDC status (see box 1 below) and ensuring progress and attainment of the SDG targets and indicators requires an engaged partnership between government institutions, the private sector, civil society organisations and development partners. The political promise of moving Cambodia to an upper middle income country by 2030 will require greater transformation requiring increasingly higher skilled human capital and this will require the productive and accountable engagement of civil society organisations and other stakeholders to contribute to making needed progress on public policy design and implementation.

Box 1 Graduating from Less Developed Country Status

Cambodia remains categories as a Least Developed Country (LDC) along with 48 other countries (UNCDAF 2017), and it is likely to be considered so, till the late 2020s. The consideration of LDC categorisation is reviewed tri-annually (every three years) by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), a group of independent experts reporting to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The CDP, recommends countries for addition to, or graduation from, the list of LDCs. Three criteria are (currently) used by the CDP for consideration of countries as LDC:

#	LDC Criteria
1	Per-capita income , based on a three-year average estimate of the gross national income (GNI) per capita, with a threshold of \$1,242 for graduation from LDC status;
2	Human assets , involving a composite index (the Human Assets Index) based on indicators related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Nutrition (ii) Health (iii) School enrolment, and (iv) Literacy,
3	Economic vulnerability , involving a composite index (the Economic Vulnerability Index) based on indicators related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Natural shocks (ii) Trade related shocks ((iii) Physical exposure to shocks (iv) Economic exposure to shocks (v) Smallness and (vi) Remoteness.

A country will normally qualify for graduation from LDC status if it has met graduation thresholds under at least two of the three criteria in at least two consecutive triennial reviews of the list (so for six year). However, if the three-year average per-capita GNI of an LDC has risen to a level at least double the graduation threshold (current \$2,484), and if this performance is considered durable, the country will be deemed eligible for graduation regardless of its score under the other two criteria. This rule is commonly referred to as the “income-only” graduation rule.

By 2025, only 16 countries are projected to have graduated including all but one (Cambodia) of the eight Asian LDCs⁴⁹. RGC’s Rectangular Strategy Phase III aims to graduate “from a low-income country to a lower-middle income status in the very near future and further to become an upper-middle income country by 2030”. Some sector plans have been specifically developed

⁴⁹ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Yemen.

to address some of the graduating criteria issues, including Education Sector Support Programme (UNCTAD 2017)

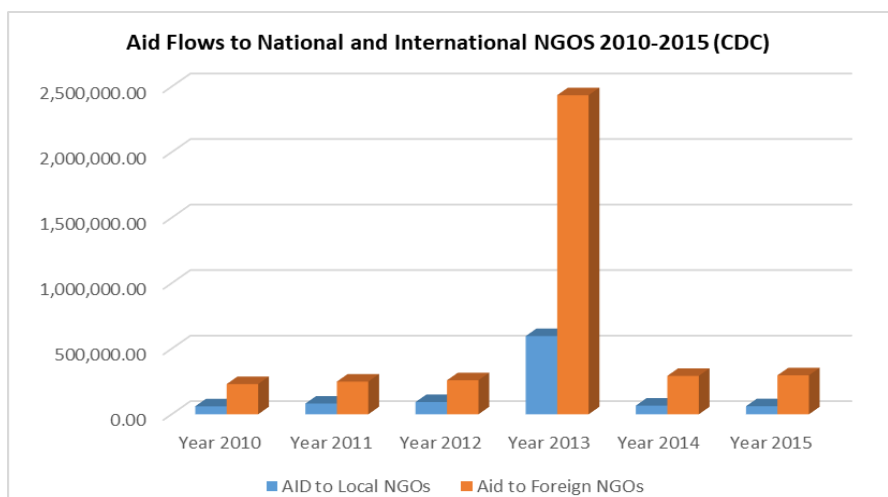
It is worth noting that “Cambodia is projected to satisfy all three graduation criteria by 2021, but as mentioned surpassing the thresholds have to be sustained for two triannual semesters for 6 years, so graduation may not be completed until the late 2020’s.

Qualifying the numbers of functioning registered CSOs and their coordinated networks remain difficult to ascertain. Only 295 local CSOs and 364 INGOs presented their status of funding, projects and performance to the CDC (CDC2016). This does not explained why most CSOs in Cambodia do not fulfilled their obligations to share their reports on funding, projects and performance with the government, which is now mandatory (To MoFAIC for international organisation and MoI for national) under the LANGO since 2015

The basic living requirements, socio-economic status and a better sense of security by Cambodian people have been improved (World Bank, 2014), but demands for access to better quality public services, rule of law, accountability of public institutions and land tenure security have and are increasing. Addressing these issues requires adaptive and innovative approaches of meaningfully and productively engagement by and between state and non-state actors in evolving public policy processes across different responsible institutions (Ministries and central government). Adaptive and innovative approaches require multi-stakeholders approaches engaging both public institutions and non-state actors including civil society organisations and the private sector, requiring some changes in current behaviours and cultures of governance to be more inclusive and accountable.

The adoption of the SDG and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the commitment of the world to address world’s problems. Cambodia’s adoption of the SDG had manifested her willingness to have a socially and ecologically accountable model of development and inevitably engages all stakeholders to contribute to addressing its people’s historical problems as explained the earlier paragraphs.

The role(s) of CSOs in contributing to achieving global SDGs has be given greater significance by the United Nations, development partners and governments (OECD, 2009; Asian Development Bank, 2011). Given this significance, globally, the percentage of Official Development Assistance



(ODA) channelled through CSOs has progressively increased since 2010, from 2010, around US\$19.7 billion, around US\$21.8 billion in 2014 (Baobab, 2016) for development purposes. The Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) reported in 2016 that aid for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) has remained positive since 2010 (see chart below). The funding for local NGOs slightly decreased in 2014 and 2015 compared with that of 2013. These statistics may validate concerns Cambodian NGO networks consulted with about the perceived decline in funding for local organisations, but it is more likely the increasing concentration of funding to a limited number of organisations which may fuel this perceived decrease in funding. Even though (some) of the better funded organisations may be the account holders of consortium based approach which redistribute received funds to other organisation

While the overall flow of aid to NGOs in Cambodia reported by CDC has not declined since 2010. Participants in FGDs and other stakeholders' consulted felt that they have found it increasingly more difficult to mobilise resources for projects', as funders and donors were requiring ever more complicated proposals and reporting requirements (raising an issue of the evolving capacities needs of CSOs). In addition, the study found that some sector-based networks of CSOs were often considered strong in the sense that they had shared visions, but not well-constructed visions and often appreciated the coordinated organisation of the networks in building technical, financial and strategic capacity of member organisations.

The distribution of ODA is concentrated with a small number of individual CSOs. In 2015, the CDC reported that among reported 364 international NGOs, 62 accounted for 80 per cent of the total ODA and among reported 295 local NGOs, 19 accounted for 72 per cent of the ODA channelled through CSO (Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), 2016). With the ODA funding via local and international CSOs contributing to improving community and social welfare, education and health, governance, environment, agriculture, HIV prevention and climate change (Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), 2016).

In term of the political context and as mentioned over the course of the assignment and following the commune elections in June 2017 which saw the opposition party secure control of 30% of commune/sangkat councils. The government alleged and later applied existing legislation to accuse and prosecute the leading opposition party which has since resulted in its leader being imprisoned on pre-trial detention for treason and the opposition party being dissolved with its national assembly and commune seat being allocated to other small political parties.

Objective 2: Assessing the performance and functions of CSOs, Networks and Technical Working Groups toward the development of the country

CSO Networks

CSO network are defined in this context as an established group or a coordinated and collaborated group of CSOs or a membership organisation. The study found that 110 national and provincial and sector/issues networks, have been established and functioning and the majority of the networks' members have focused their work on child protection and rights, education, health, disability, HIV, land and housing, fishery and forestry issue, natural resource and the environmental related issues and climate change. Of the survey respondents, 48 were members of some provincial networks reported across 21 provinces. Which was more than the previous reported coverage of 18 provinces (CCC network list provided May 2017- see table in annex 1). The remaining provinces are likely to have established CSO networks, but member organisations may have not responded to the survey.

National and provincial networks of CSOs in general are not strong in the sense that they often do not have developed shared visions, objectives, strategies and goals for individual and joint actions, nor have they promoted capacity building for members, joint financial strategies and quality leadership. Interviews and survey findings found that members of the networks often complained about the clarity and sharing of their network's vision. All five provincial network(s) FDGs stated that they never developed clear and long-term strategic plans, one reported it was preparing a strategic plan with the assistance of INGOs but didn't share the draft for review. Others stated that they made collaborative efforts to strengthen their voices in some provincial sector implementation processes.

Democratic and performance-based management of CSO networks are still the concerns of funding agencies. Some participants in the five provincial CSO networks FDGs complained about the establishment of the networks and selection/election of leaders/ coordinators. The chairpersons of the networks apparently were mostly selected, with one province reporting that their chairperson was elected by members of the Executive Board of the networks. The survey found that the members of all networks require/ demand better quality leaders, so that they can help member organisations in mobilising resources and developing technical and strategic capacities and proposal for the network members.

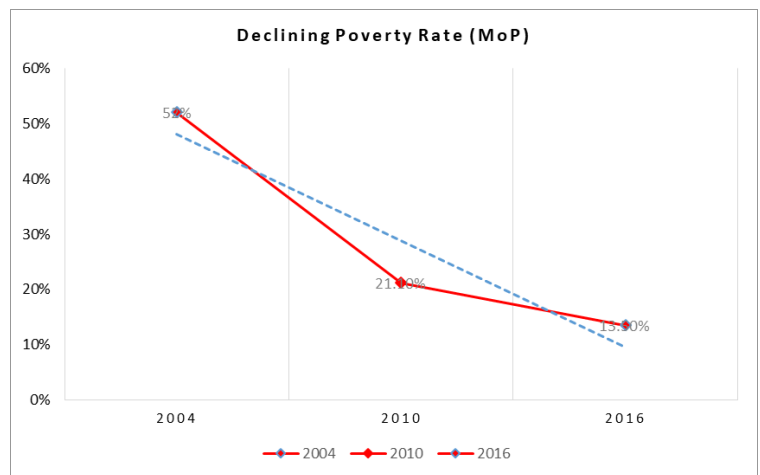
Sector/ issues based networks were often recognised as effective in terms of engaging more in public policy processes at both national and sub-national levels, particularly with technical governmental departments. Of the 75 CSOs respondents, 50 reported that their networks actively and meaningfully engaged in technical and policy meetings at both national and sub-national levels. Six reported that their networks did not effectively engage in public policy processes with governmental institutions and 20 did not response to the question. Among the 75 respondents, 42 reported that their networks were effective in terms of meaningfully engaging with national and sub-national governments in technical and policy meetings,

however they also reported rarely have quality research-based papers to contribute to influencing policy changes in the government meetings.

The majority of provincial CSO networks were and are not officially registered, but members are registered as individual CSOs with government institutions. The five provincial network focus group discussions reported not registering their networks with any government institution, members have worked at coordinating or collaborating with groups in order to influence policy and implementation processes at provincial level. In addition, the networks see themselves as weak networks in terms of lobbying on policy issues with government institutions, monitoring CSO members' performance, promoting evidence-based and common voicing of concerns for changes.

CSOs' Contributions

The performance of CSOs networks, working groups or individual organisation in contributing to the development of the nation is still not explainable in specific terms from the study. However, sources of evidence show that CSOs have contributing to achieving national CMDGs targets, including reducing the poverty rate (Asian Development Bank, 2011). The country's poverty rate dropped from 52 per cent in 2004 to 13.5 per cent in 2014 (World Bank, 2017).



Source: (World Bank, 2017; World Bank, 2014)

Moving Cambodia to an upper middle income country level by 2030 as is the government's expressed strategy, will require meaningful and productive engagement of accountable and effective CSOs. However, CSOs themselves are still struggling to become models of effective and efficient democratic governance, as they preach in public information networks. CSOs, both professional organisations and community-based non-governmental organisations in Cambodia have unclear practices in ensuring internal democracy and accountability (World Bank, 2009). The survey found that CSO networks do not have an established monitoring system of performance, but only those of individual projects of CSO members.

The study's focus group discussions found that the CSO network system today is not reliable in terms of helping members to have better access to development funding and develop technical assistance and capacity development. In that not many CSOs have joined provincial networks. The survey also found that while CSO networks have been established, it is hard to call for technical meetings, while there is little or no follow-up on agreed actions to be undertaken by the networks as a group or individual members.

Representativeness

Policy decision process requires the meaningful engagement of representatives from different groups, including CSOs and community groups and adequate research evidence. At provincial level, individual CSOs are mostly invited by provincial authorities to participate in relevant technical and policy meetings, but networks are not invited. In general many of the reported networks and membership organisations only involve a few of the organisations working on issues and in sectors nationally and in particularly provinces (though there appear to be exception). Surveyed provincial networks and others appear to undertake limited or no action to engage or involve other CSO actors. There often appears to be a reluctance to engage other CSOs to join in general networks, as more members were often perceived as increasing competition.

The so-called provincial “coordinating networks” in general appeared to lack direction (none of those met appear to have a clear strategy or action plans (when compared to the sector based networks), while they exist only a small portion of provincially reported and active CSOs participate in the network system. The networks lack clear mandates, strategies, role(s), and resources to function and support members and CSOs often lack confidence and credibility in the networks to deliver on results and create/support mutual benefits. Where networks exist and function they do provide and are reported to provide opportunities to meet, share information and experiences (but this is often in a general manner and not in structured or focused manner), and discuss issues, they are often not taken seriously by government, as they lack coherency on what should be focused upon.

Recognition

Most subnational/provincial networks remain unrecognised by local government (again with exceptions⁵⁰). As it is the individual members who often engage with sub-national governments’ and authorities at different levels. It was reported by some stakeholders that individual organisations generally represent their own organisation’s issues rather than the network’s (possibly indicating weak (less cohesive) and deficient networks). This was also highlighted at national level in some instances, where some networks members (often those based in the provinces) stated that some facilitating/leading members or groups had “different agendas” to them, but use their roles and position in networks, and the presence of the network to leverage an individual organisation’s position and more importantly access to resources.

⁵⁰ Where a network, sector platform had established itself as a legal entity by registering itself (eg. NEP, HACC) and become membership organisation, these appear to have greater engagement with Government

Box 2 Some of the Possible Pro’s and Con’s of Network Registration

Possible Pro’s and Con’s of Network Registration		
	Pro’s	Con’s
Registering Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legally recognised/ legal entity status⁵¹; • A documented registration/ approval process (reportedly ranging between 45 -110 working-days if corrections/ adjustment or automatic approval if longer needed, article 8, LANGO) • Networks able to seek & obtain funding; • Network able to open bank accounts & <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Enter into contracts, rent property etc...; • May have greater recognition with government agencies and institutions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear registration process based on the requirements stated in the LANGO; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ (costs, to register as a network); • Unclear reporting requirements, if operational at subnational levels; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Unclear channels of reporting;
Not Registering Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not need to, as networks could be considered to be an express of the constitutional right of freedom of expression and association. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a legal entity, may not be recognised by government; • Unable to open bank accounts; Or to secure and manage funds directly; • Unable to rent property;

Additionally at national levels, when opportunities came to engage with, or take part in one of the (now) 21 ‘statutory’ Technical Working Groups (TWGs). It was again the individual member organisations invited, rather than the network in most cases. In some instance development partners were asked to invite CSO representatives rather than the TWG secretariats, possibly indicating a lack of effective consideration of CSO as potential and valuable development partners. Requests to most national coordinating mechanisms/ organisations for lists of CSO or networks who were on TWGs could not be responded to, as in many instance they did not know?

The recent targeting of a CSO collaborative mechanism/ network in and for election monitoring, the self-branded “situation room”. Has raised concerns and fears about the perceived “legality” of networks/ collaborative mechanisms. This was expressed by a range of interviewed stakeholders especially at sub-national levels about the perceived legality of networking as the recent incident had put them on edge.

Sub-national networks closely tied to and often subordinate to national sector base networks/ membership organisations often appeared to be more recognised by local authorities.

Data and analysis for the assessment on the performance and functioning (of networks) came from three sources (i) The online organisational network self-assessment which was completed

⁵¹ Mol may deny the request for registration of a domestic association or non-governmental organization whose purpose and goals are found would endanger the security, stability and public order or jeopardize national security, national unity, culture, traditions, and customs of Cambodian national society

by 75 organisations, and (ii) From key informant interviews and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders (CSOs, networks, donors/ development partners) at different levels, national, provincially, and with sector based groups (iii) five of six organised focus group discussions of provincially based CSO involved in network(s).

Nearly all organisations (96%) stated that they participated in some form of networking mechanisms, those that did not (two organisations) stated that they did not see any benefits from participating, even after participating for some time.

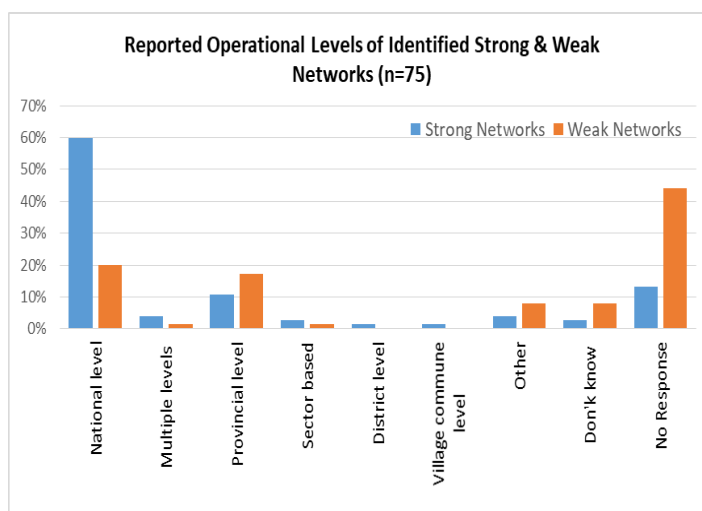
Organisational respondents were asked to consider two networks their organisations' were involved with: (i) One they considered a strong network and (ii) One considered a weak network.

The responses/feedback often 'generalised' the perceptions of networks, in fact when asked about strong and weak networks, respondents frequently bundled networks together (list a number of networks as being strong and/or weak) but this is necessary due to the diversity of networks and organisations covered by the assessment.

Operational Levels of (Strong and Weak) Networks

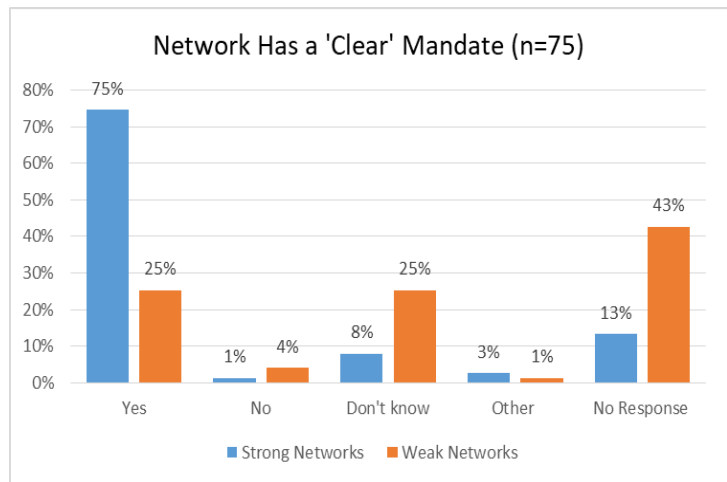
Those networks identified as being strong were generally reported to operate at national and multiple levels (cumulative 64%), while weaker considered networks, were more distributed across different levels usually at sub-national levels.

It was observed as a general trend of the assessment that non responsiveness to specific questions for weaker networks often made up a considerable percentage, possibly indicating a lack of interest/ concern by organisational respondents on and in network roles and issues. Some provincial networks met with were identified as coordinating mechanisms, but all lacked a sense of direction and clear idea of what their role(s) were, they were also considered to be stifled by the limited leadership available to them. Leadership/ organisational capacities were also factor affecting weak national levels.



Clarity of Networks Mandates & Roles (Strong & Weak Networks)

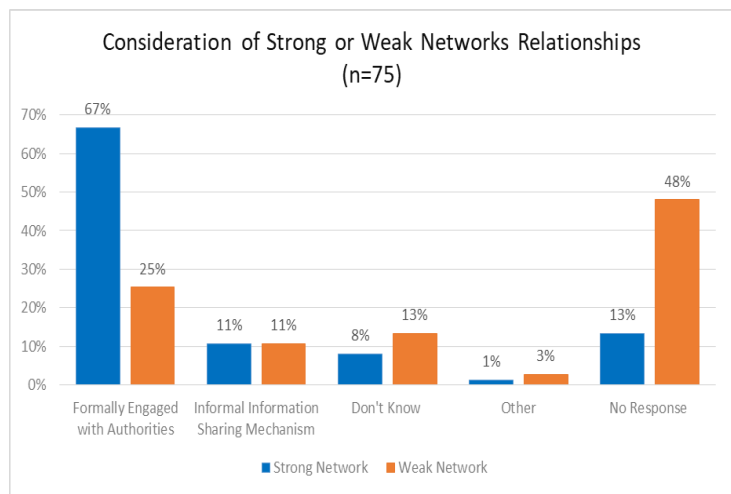
Stronger networks (75%) were reported to have clearer mandates, often supported by documented “terms of reference”, “organisational by-laws”, “constitutions” or “charters” of what they were going to work on or achieve. In many instances stronger networks themselves were registered entities (likely required to enable rental of office space, operate bank accounts, received funds etc...). While weaker networks reported responses or lack thereof possibly indicated a lack of knowledge or engagement with those networks.



Perceived Functional Roles of Networks

When asked what was the primary role of the network? Most organisational respondents (67%) felt that engaging with Government and authorities was the primary functioning of the ‘strong’ networks.

Government engagement was also the greatest reason for weaker networks (25%), but again nearly half of respondents didn’t comment on this for weaker networks.

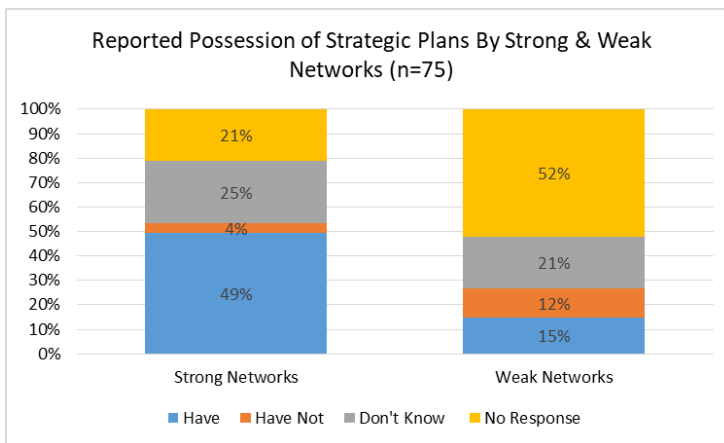


The second most frequently mentioned role was information sharing. The first role was seen as being more formal (as it involved engagement with government entities), while the secondary role was considered more informal.

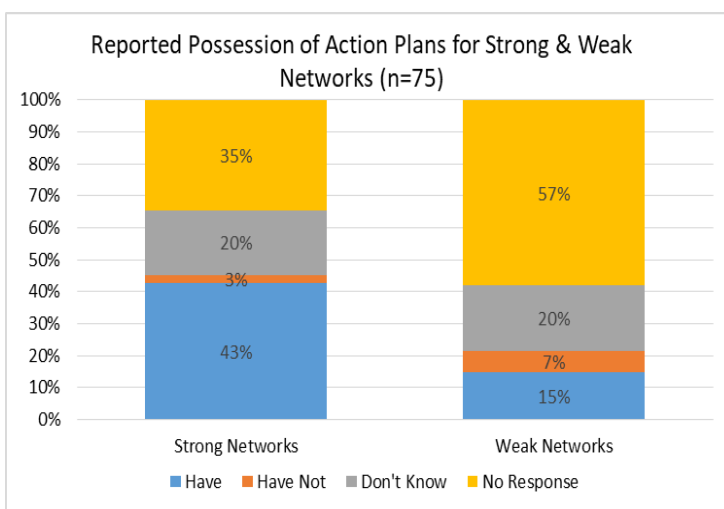
Network Strategies & Action Plans

Networks were asked about possessing a network strategy and/or action plan? As a possibly indicator of the network performance.

Nearly half of reported strong networks had either or both a strategy (49%) and action plan (43%), while the reported presence of these with and by weaker networks was significantly lower (15%), sector based networks were also often found to be stronger with action plans etc. while coordinating mechanisms didn't have these and lacked a overall sense of direction.



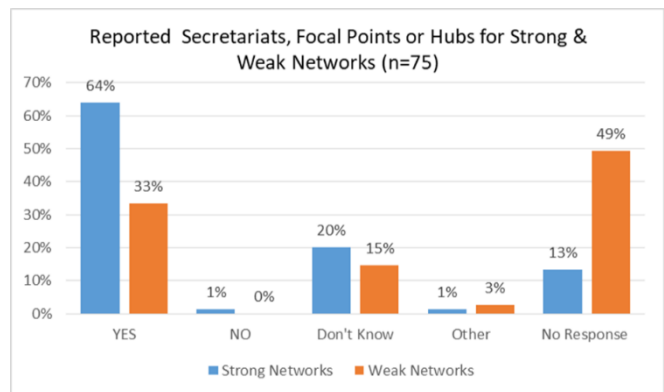
Provincial networks met with commented upon the lack of direction on in what they should do, and this deficiency was a factor in previous networking approaches also failing, as no single coordinating mechanisms is likely able to give effective consideration to the broad natures of issues, which separate sector or issue based networks/ collaborative mechanism often provide. Lack of response to this question by stronger and weaker networks was also considered quiet high, with nearly a fifth of strong respondents (21% for strategies and 35% for action plans) not knowing if the networks they participated in, had strategies or action plans? While over twice this number of weaker (52% and 57%) network couldn't /or didn't response.



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Network Coordination Mechanisms (Strong and Weak Networks)

Another proxy indicator of performance was the presence of a secretariat, focal point or hubs, to support coordination of members and facilitate consolidation of issues and inter and intra communications between network members and other stakeholders including government. With the presence of such, being much more evident in stronger networks with nearly two thirds (64%) of strong networks reported to have a secretariat while only a third of the weaker networks were reported to possess one.



It should be noted that such secretariats, focal points and hubs were often seen as a source of contentious for some respondents and stakeholders consulted with. As they were reported that the (secretariats/lead/facilitating organisations etc..) were often seen as or perceived to be attempting to:

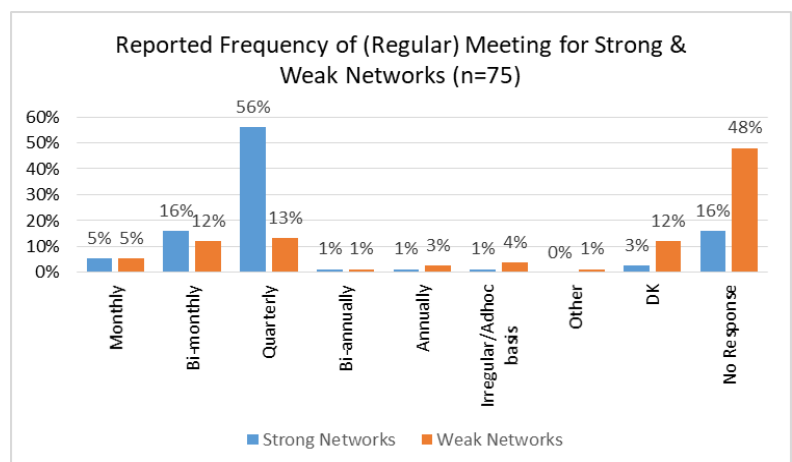
- Control and manipulate the networks (and members);
- Filtering and limited information flows to and between members;
- Restricting issues and topics to be raised and addressed by the network;

Though in response to this, some networks (hubs) mentioned that demands from members (often) exceed the capacities and resources available to the networks. As they were unable to “address every demand from members”, and that this was managed by members through “reaching consensus on issues to be taken up and addressed”.

Frequency of Network Meetings

Information on the knowledge and participation of the frequency of regular meetings held by networks was also gathered.

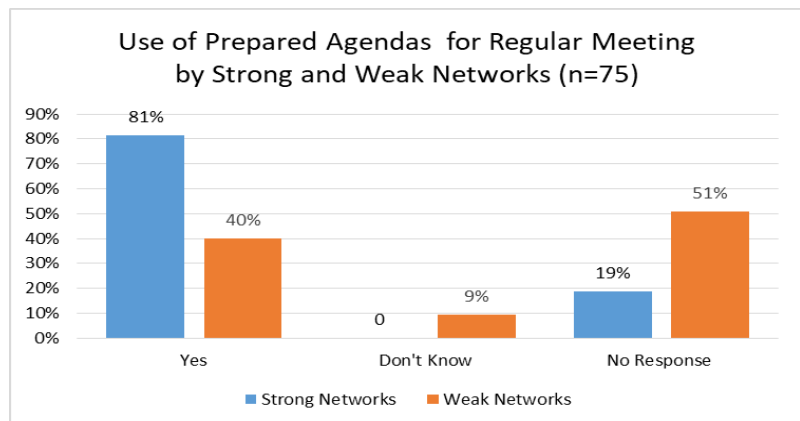
Knowledge of this was far greater in stronger network than weaker ones, with over half of the stronger networks (56%) reported as meeting on a quarterly basis. With over a fifth meeting more regularly (bimonthly or monthly).



In the opinion of the study this significant lack of responses on weaker networks (48%), could be interpreted as lack of or limited knowledge of respondents on these networks.

Use of Prepared Agendas

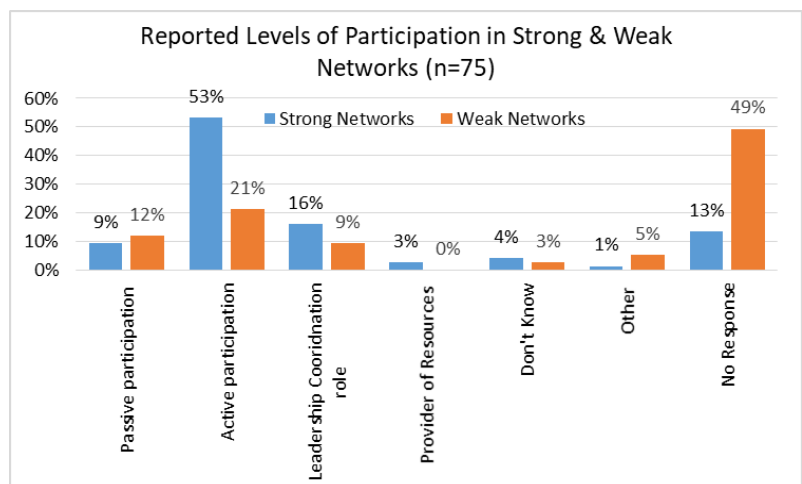
Networks were also asked whether they prepared or used agendas for meetings most responses for strong networks were that agenda were commonly used for regular meeting, while for weaker networks agendas were reported use by 40% of respondents or not commented upon at all by 51% of organisational respondents.



All five provincial networks met with all reported irregularly frequency of meetings, as motives to hold meetings were lacking, additionally many mentioned that member organisations representatives were often too busy with their own organisations work to organise, attend or participate in network meetings and this factor was more important for office holders in networks who had the role to call and lead meetings of networks.

Perceived Levels of Participation in Networks

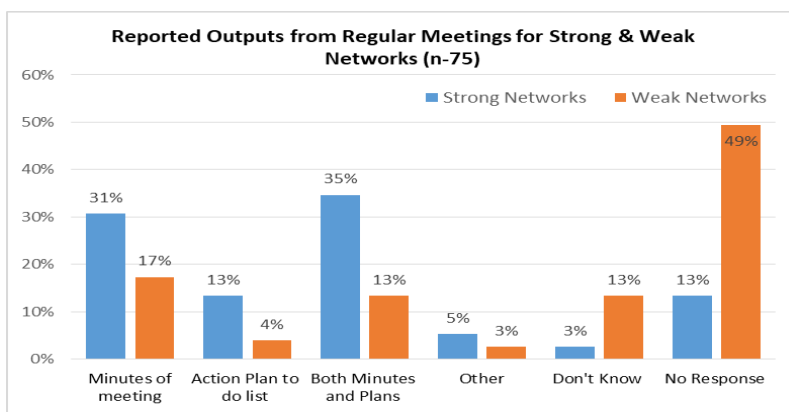
Respondents were asked to rank their participation in strong and weak networks, most respondents (for strong network 71%), claimed to actively participate (53%), or take a leadership role (16%) or be a provider of resources (3%) in and for the strong networks. With only a small percentage (9%) stating that they passively participate in the networks.



The reported situation was different for weaker networks, with far lower levels of participations reported apart from passive participation. Again lack of responses to the specific questions for weaker networks, calls into question network members' commitments to those networks.

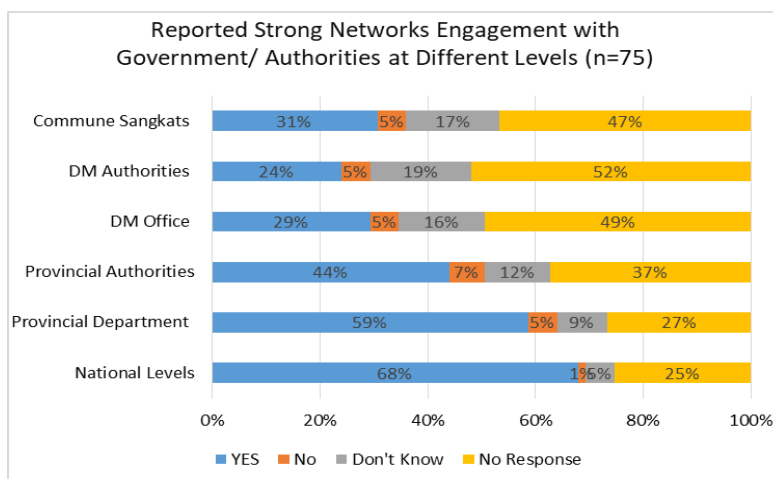
Networks Meeting Outputs (Strong and Weak Networks)

Respondents were asked about what were the outputs from these regular meetings? Again the strong networks were reported to generate more outputs in general when compared to the weaker networks. With 83% of the respondents on strong network reporting some form of output from network meetings, against just 34% for weaker networks.

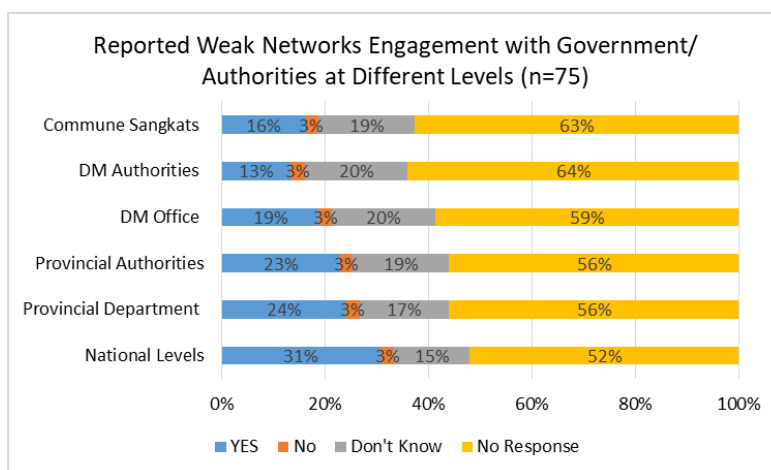


Networks Engagement with Government

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the networks' engagement with government and local authorities at different levels, (with respondents asked to state whether the network 'meets with or engages' with each level). Positive results were as expected for the two categories (strong and weak) of networks. With stronger networks significantly more engaged with government at national levels 68% versus 31% for weaker networks. In general, strong networks were twice as likely to engage with Government institution and authorities at all levels as weaker networks.

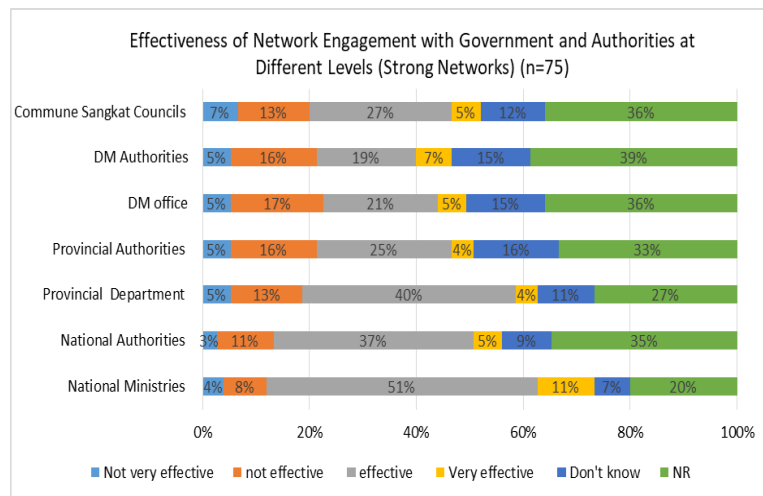


What is of interest is the high percentages of don't knows and no response to the specific questions for both strong and weak networks? The respondents were also asked who was responsible for call meeting between government and CSO networks. In fact most respondents either didn't response or didn't know cumulatively

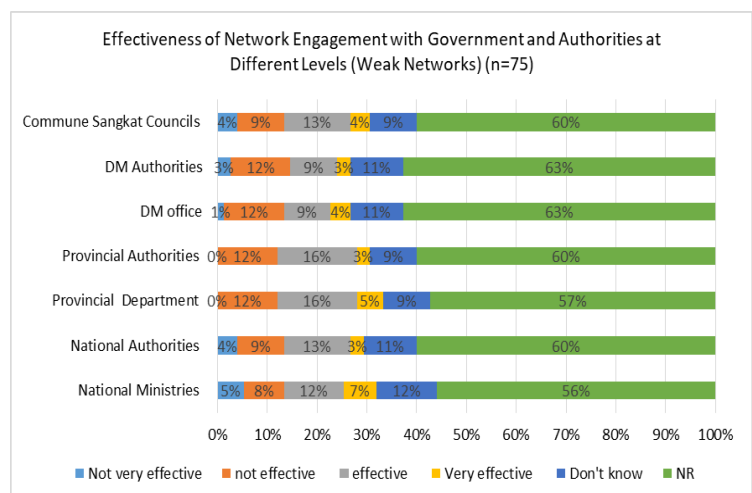


~70%, this was interpreted as respondents not being aware of or knowing the modalities for formal network meetings Government and authorities at different levels.

They were asked about the networks effectiveness in engagement with government/ authorities at different levels. On average over a third of the strong networks (37%) reported that the networks engagement with government and authorities across all levels was effective or very effective, When disaggregated this ranged from a high of 62% effectiveness at national levels to 26% effectiveness at District Municipal authority levels. Conversely nearly a fifth of strong networks (18%) felt that the networks were not or not very effective across all levels.



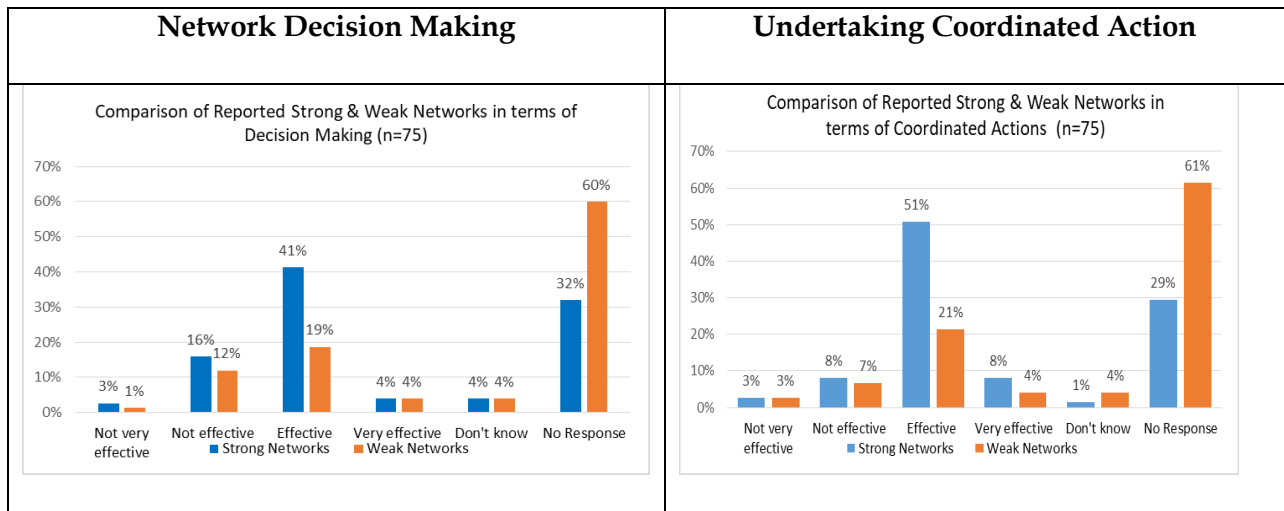
For those networks identified as being weak, less than a fifth (17%) were considered effective (effective and very effective) across the different levels, though it should be observed that the reliability of the responses is questionable in that 60% of respondents did not bother to answer the question on the effectiveness of networks engagement with Government and authorities.



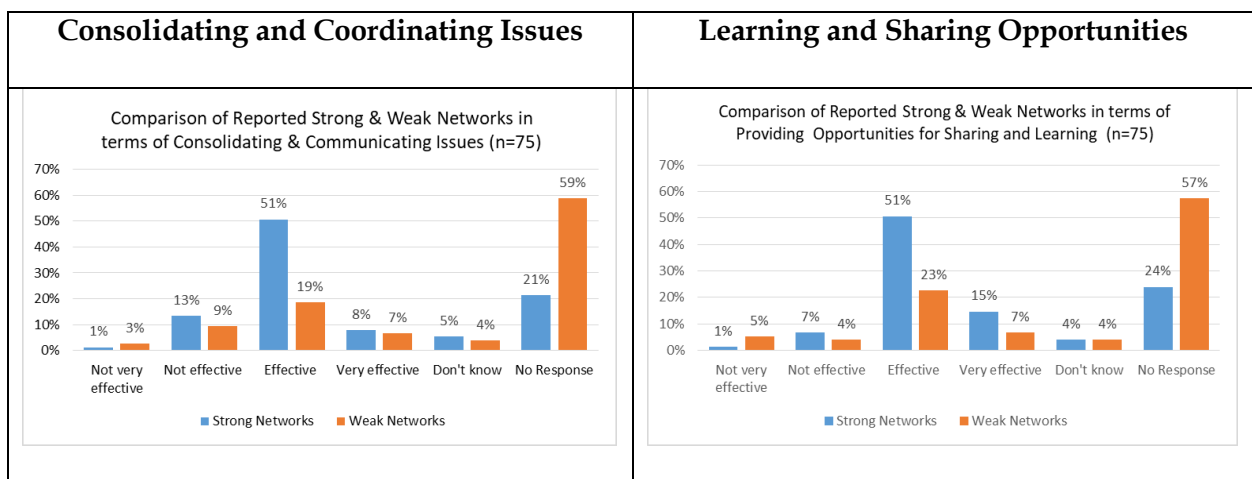
Networks Functioning

Organisations were asked about how strong and weak networks performed in terms of a number of in terms of identified network functions/ characteristics, responses given indicated that on average strong networks performed at least twice as well as weak networks for the identified functions.

Identified functions including decision making, where 45% of strong networks were considered effective or very effective, while only 23% of weak networks were considered effective. Another function was coordinating actions with 60% of the strong networks consider effective or very effective in coordination actions between their members. While only 25% of weak networks were considered effective at coordinating action between their members.

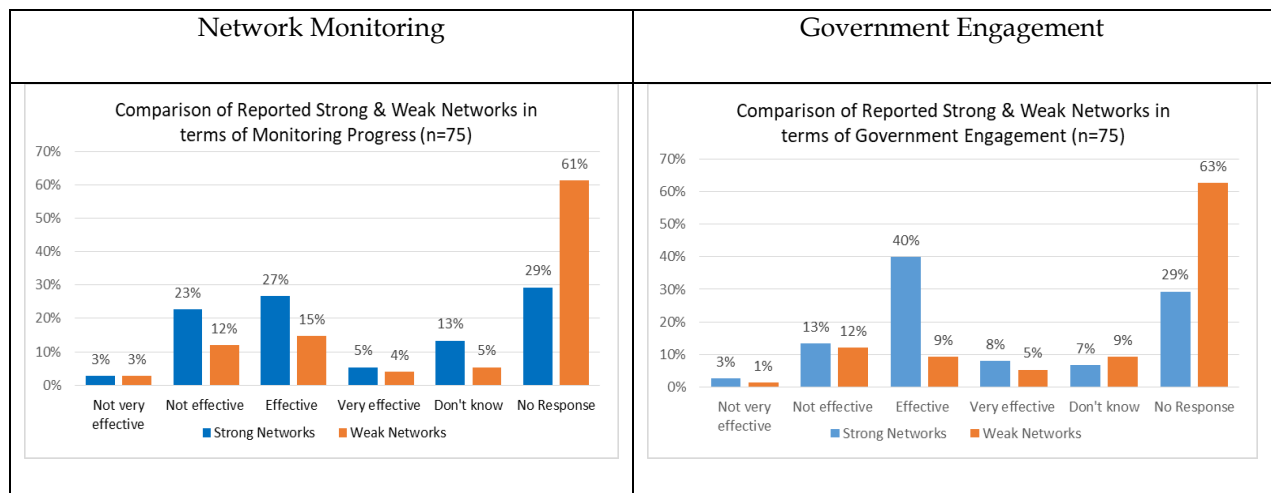


59% of reportedly strong networks were either effective or very effective at consolidating and communicating issues relevant to their networks compared to 26% of weak network. While 66% of strong networks were considered effective or very effective at providing opportunities for sharing and learning for their network member compared to just 30% for weak network.



Organisations were also asked about how the networks monitored progress of activities they were involved in. Both strong and weak networks would appear to be deficient in monitoring network activities with less than a third (32%) of strong networks and fifth of weak networks (19%) considered effective or very effective at monitoring their (network) activities. While a quarter of strong network (26%) and 15% of weak networks through their networks were not effective or not very effective at monitoring.

As a cross check to early questions, organisations were again asked about the network engagement with government while nearly half of strong network (48%) were considered either effective or very effective at government engagement, only a 14% of weak network were through to be effective at government engagement.



The graph explained that a large number of the respondents in the weak networks didn't respond to these questions as with other questions, which call into questions of the commitment and involvement of respondents/ organisations to networks.

Identified Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Challenges of Networks

Respondents were asked about the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOCs) of the networks and

Strong Networks SWOC
<p>Strengths</p> <p>A range of issues were attributed to the strong networks, these were often bundled together as diverse</p> <p>Learning, Sharing, & Training, in that strong network were good at sharing information and experiences, which could be used by members to learn from, as well as providing opportunities for network members to train.</p> <p>The organisational structure of the networks, the strong networks were attributed with have good organisational structures, as many of the networks identified were membership organisations in their own rights. The strong structures were identified as contributing to progress the network had made on issues. As was the fact that involved organisations in the strong networks were often aligned on activities and issues. While other strengths including</p> <p>Collective Actions, in that organisations in strong networks were often aligned in terms of activities or had a hierarchical structure which enabled bottom to top alignment, or operated on a collaborative manner with like focused organisations</p> <p>Relations with Government, Strong networks were perceived to have good relation with government entities at different levels</p>

Weaknesses

Institutionally Weak, contradictorily to the strengths questions, was the attribution of weak institutional setups networks, which limited or hindered the network. A broad range of issues were raised which made networks weak, including the lack of clear mandates, strategies and action plans to direct networks, as well as weak chairing and functioning of the networks with few meeting and activities to engage members in the network, weaknesses in the member organisations- often attributed to the lack of resources to function.

Variable Participation by & Between Networks Member, levels of participation by organisations was seen as affecting the performance of networks. In that often the best resourced and largest organisation didn't regular take part and often did their own things. Also while organisations were listed as members, they often didn't take part of provide support to the networks. Remarks were also made about organisations "taking from the networks but not contributing".

Lack of Cooperation from Government, some members attributed poor cooperation with and from government as affecting the functioning and performance of the networks

Opportunities

Advocating with Policy Makers and Government, organisations felt that there were opportunities for greater engagement with government and policy makers at all levels, but greater cooperative efforts were needed between and across networks and membership organisations to coordinate inputs and efforts.

Improved Vertical and Horizontal Networking, there was a perceived need for better integration and improved coordination and cooperation between networks and membership organisations. They national levels networks and organisations need to listen to and be more responsive provincial organisations and networks.

Improve Information Sharing & Policy Inputs, even though there are some good examples organisations felt that there were still opportunities for greater information sharing and cooperation, as well as the need for improved coordination on drafting and submitting policy inputs for consideration.

Securing Operational Resources, organisations felt that resources need to be better allocated and distributed especially to smaller "in the field" provincial organisations. As many provincial organisations reported experiencing decreasing resources or access to resources in recent years.

Challenges

Funding, concerns about the availability and access to funding were seen as being one of the greatest challenges to organisations and networks, many organisations/ networks met with felt that resource availability had declined and or access and opportunities for funding had also declined. This remark was more frequently made by sub-national networks and

organisations. While some of the sector networks reported funding going and coming down to provincial levels to assist with meeting etc..., very little funding was reported available activities. All the provincial coordinating networks mentioned having no resources to support the networks or the organisations who make up the networks.

Government Cooperation & Legislations, organisations felt that government engagement, involvement and cooperation with networks were often lacking. Others expressed concerns about the LANGO, in that it was felt as being a threat to the functioning of networks and organisations

Weak Networks, while the national networks were often seen as being strong, provincial and some of the issues networks were considered weaker, and lack direction, strategy and action plans, some of this was attributed to lack of resources at sub-national levels.

Lack Capacities, organisations and networks felt the current levels of capacities hindered both, in that some organisations continually lost competent personnel to larger organisations or government and it took considerable time to replace their capacities. While networks often didn't have sufficient capacities to organise themselves, though there were exceptions in terms of the members organisations/networks.

Weak Networks SWOC

Strengths

Opportunities for meeting organisations and sharing of information was seen as the greatest strengthen of the 'weaker networks'

Weaknesses

Institutionally Weak, how network were formed and operated was seen as a weakness for some of the networks. Weaker networks often lack cleared mandates and direction, in terms of not having a network strategy and action plans. The lack of these was often attributed to the lack of resources for the networks, as membership fees were often insufficient to operate and only formal organisational networks had access to adequate resource.

Variable Participation by & Between Networks Member, participation in weaker network was seen as a weakness as members were often didn't participate in meeting and contribute to activities, the lack of clear direction/ mandates of some networks did not in still confidence in the networks.

Lack of Funding/ Resources, Limited or lack of financing was seen as a weakness for/by the weaker networks and more particularly for involved organisations. The lack of resources for organisation deprived them of the ability to function and to be active in networks.

Lack of Government Cooperation, network were often seen as being weak as they did not have good government relations and cooperation, which hindered their abilities to operate

and undertake activities.

Opportunities

Contributing to Information sharing and research for policy discussions and inputs was seen as an opportunity

Expanding and strengthening network, respondents saw opportunities for weaker (and all) network to grow and become strong, as current membership (in most network) often did not incorporate a significant number of organisation active in a sector, on an issue or in a province

Advocacy and advocating with policy makers & government, there are opportunities for greater advocacy on issues (but getting consensus on these issues need to be worked on), and also advocating with government at different levels for improvements

If Additional Financial Resources are made Available, many networks believe that funding has been shrinking for a number of years which has results in few CSOs/NGOs being active. Other organisations have seen their activities curtailed when compared to before, with few activities programmes being implemented.

Challenges

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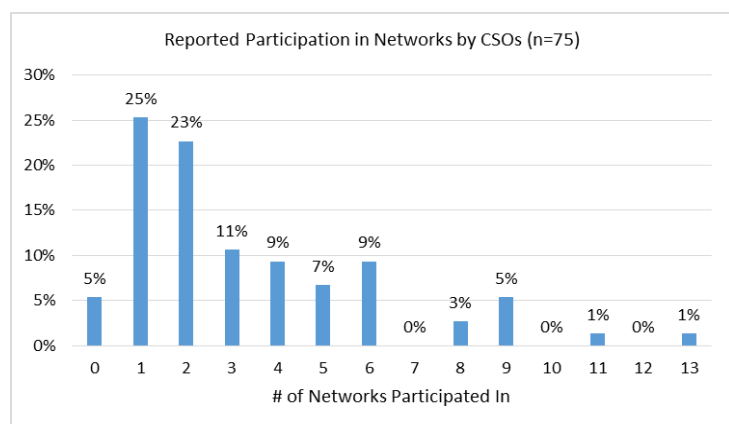
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Funding, concerns about the availability and access to funding were seen as being one of the greatest challenges to organisations. Many organisations/ networks felt that resources had declined and or access and opportunities for funding have declined.

Overall Participation in Networks/Collaborative Mechanism

60% of the 75 respondent organisations reported participating in fewer than three networks, with a quarter of respondents (25%) only reporting participating in one network. The number of networks participated in ranged from 1 to a high of 13 networks.

Those networks/ collaborative



mechanisms most frequently mentioned were related to education at different levels national and provincial, followed by decentralisation and child rights.

Cross Network Collaborations

There was limited reported evidence (from the survey) of cross network collaborations at any levels, as since the adoption of the LANGO in 2015 as there does not appear to be much motivation for such collaboration/ joint actions. Some membership organisations are driving the (re)establishment provincial networks (through a project based approach), however as previous experiences with such approaches have shown these have generally disappear soon after the end of projects. While consulted stakeholders highlighted collaborative approaches across networks in some sectors (Land and housing, natural resources management, fisheries, mining, Human rights, especially women rights and HR defenders). Sector and issues based networks who have national and sub-national structures (for example NEP, CHF) do coordinate and support joint actions at different levels, but across different networks nothing was reported. Most sector and issues based networks have more than sufficient work within their own areas of interest and or demands for services that far exceed the resources available to them.

Evidence suggest that well-constructed and shared visions and evidence-based long-term strategies and mutual actions are critical to ensure the success of established institutions and CSO networks alike. The study found that 37 of 75 CSOs reported that while their networks had some form of long or short-term strategies, how evidence-based they are, was not verifiable. During the five provincial focus group discussions, no shared strategy of the networks was presented. The study suggests that the construction and sharing of coherent strategies for networks requires greater evidence and consultation and the skills to facilitate these.

Case study 1: How CSOs Worked Together on the LANGO

Cambodia has enjoyed prolonged economic growth and political stability, however, it continues to be confronted by a number of significant gaps and challenges. The issues of, human rights; democratic participation and poverty reduction remain, and need to be better addressed for long term development and support. Over the last two decades, CSOs/NGOs have been contributed to the economic, social and political development in Cambodia. The Government of Cambodia has expressed both positive and negative views on CSOs and civil society in general regarding their participation and the roles that they have played in contributing to Cambodia's development. Given the current often tense and uncomfortable relationship between the Government and some civil society organisations, it is emerging that the government has been recently increasingly seeking to undermine the creation of an enabling social and legal environment for civil society to develop.

In 2011, the Ministry of Interior attempted to pass the Law on Association and Non-Governmental Organisation (LANGO). If that version of the LANGO was adopted, it would have affected to all NGOs and civil society organisations in Cambodia. It noted that while NGOs and CSO have worked very well together in 2011 influencing the Government's decisions. With a strong and active of civil society, supported by engaged donors and the international community support, as a result, Prime

Minister HUN SEN agreed and stated ⁵²:

He wanted the Ministry of Interior and local NGOs to continue discussions that would make the law “acceptable” to all....But Hun Sen also made it clear that the draft law would not be dropped altogether....“If there is no agreement in 2012, it must wait until 2013,” “And if it is not until 2013, it will not die”.

Cambodia’s democratic development processes have become increasingly complex, and are still and some would say becoming more fragile after the 2013 national and recent 2017 local elections. In 2015, Government started to review the drafted LANGO again and attempted to submit and pass it rapidly by the National Assembly. This version of the LANGO, according to the draft, introduced a number of worrying laws (cybercrime, etc.) and policies which, if it was adopted and implemented, would have endowed it with excessive powers to silence independent dissent; impose undue restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly; as well as to inhibit the creation of an enabling environment for CSOs.

Prior to the passage of LANGO in 2015, membership organisations including Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGO Forum), and the Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC), under the leadership of CCC, In April 2015 launched their “Stop and Consult” campaign and several activities were organised and conducted. This showed a strong solidarity by NGOs/CSOs on the LANGO content.

However, it was observed that there was not a strong unified voice amongst NGOs and civil society organisations as well as membership organisations who demanded the adaptation of the LANGO, there were those who urged its complete rejection.

In a joint NGO/CSO statement, there were only 315 NGOs and civil society organisations in Cambodia endorsing the statement⁵³ that called on the Government to revise the provisions of the drafted law and also campaigning for ‘Stop and Consult’. Without worrying about the national and international concerns over the drafted Law. The LANGO was adopted in July 2015 by the National Assembly. A group of 38 organisations and community based organisations submitted a joint statement ‘Civil Society Calls on the Senate to Reject LANGO’ to Cambodian Senate⁵⁴. There were several joint statements released by different groups of organisation both in and outside Cambodia.

The lessons learnt from the LANGO campaign was that there is a pressing need from all stakeholders, particularly the CSOs and donors, to work together to strengthen and encourage sustainable democracy and development. The small number of NGOs endorsing the joint statement showed a weak, fragile, and fragmented NGO community in Cambodia. If combined all the member organisations from seven organisations⁵⁵, then the number of organisation who signed on the joint statement would have had more numbers. This clearly showed that these membership organisations did not appear to work well together on the law that affected their members and CSOs in general in

⁵² Hun Sen Calls for More Talks on NGO Law. Accessed on 14/10/2017 <https://www.voacambodia.com/a/hun-sen-calls-for-more-talks-on-ngo-law-136319558/1357096.html>

⁵³ A copy of joint statements: 1) has 315 organisations and 2) has 186 organisations on the statement for submission to the Cambodian King.

⁵⁴ Joint statement ‘Civil Society Calls On Senate to Reject LANGO’ <http://www.licadho-cambodia.org/pressrelease.php?perm=388>

⁵⁵ CCC (170), NGO Forum (95), HACC (124), WGPD (120), NGO CRC (50), CHRAC (18), and NEP (145).

Cambodia.

The voice of CSOs/NGOs is weakening and civil society space is shrinking in Cambodia. Furthermore, foreign donors appear to be pulling out, making funding freedom of express for NGOs/CSOs and civil society scarcer and more competitive. In addition to these challenges, CSOs have also faced a number of internal challenges, including the recent two big membership organisations collapsing, and questions over the delivery of effective, sustainable leadership and management, and particular the diminishing enabling legal environment that's curbing space for human rights and advocacy organisations in response to their growth and the needs of their target groups, stakeholders, and partners. Sustainable networks and collaborative approaches for CSOs/NGOs requires more institutional development, as well as better, clearer mechanisms and strategy CSO/NGO cooperation. If there is a strong national coordination mechanism, and better synergize strategies that represent Civil Society Organisation in Cambodia. Then perhaps CSOs/NGOs can have stronger unified voices and equal rights in dialogues with the Cambodian Government and development partners on the issues related to civil society advancement, development, and operations in Cambodia that pave the ways for them to continue their vital work in addressing the needs of Cambodia.

Technical Working Groups (TWG)

The TWG architecture is meant to be an important cornerstone of the RGC's Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategy 2014 - 2018 that aims to promote and strengthen aid effectiveness. The Government with support from Development Partners have progressively created 21 Technical Working Groups spanning a wide range of sectors and issues. Of these 21 TWGs, Civil Society Organisation representatives are reported present on number of TWGs.

Effort by the study to ascertain who and how many CSOs/ networks on each TWG could not be achieved. While some organisations including membership organisations have obtained seats on some of the TWG their roles in representing a sectors or networks is limited, they are often their as an organisations rather than sector/ issues representatives, and what impact they have in representing civil society and on issues is unknown.

“Technical Working Groups (TWGs) were originally established by the RGC in 2004 to serve as coordinating bodies and dialogue mechanisms. They were meant to bring together Government, development partners and civil society representatives to support the attainment of national development goals set out in the Rectangular Strategy, NSDP and associated sector, thematic and reform programmes of the Government. The over-arching objectives of the TWGs is to support Government efforts to: (a) implement sector plans and reforms; (b) mobilise and coordinate all resources; and (c) deliver development results in order to manage all resources to the attainment of priorities of national and sector strategies and plans. TWGs are meant to play a supporting and facilitating role and are not intended to substitute for or to duplicate the functions of ministries and agencies, and this final statement is the critical.

A number of higher level stakeholders and network representatives met with by the study who participate and /or co-chair TWGs mentioned that their and the TWG roles are often exaggerated, the modality and practices of the TWG meetings is very formalistic, with little or no opportunity to raise issues, agendas are pre-set by the TWG secretariat at line ministries and are generally adhered to. Where opportunities for engagement and discussions exist is usually in the preparatory meetings or directly with the line ministry processes and not with the TWG which are often just “rubber stamping exercises”.

There are opportunities for CSOs and their networks to more proactively prepare and engage ministries on national development objectives. But, CSOs/ networks need to reach consensus on what issues should be raised, as at present they are often considered (by Development Partners (DPs) and other stakeholders) to be fragmented and (the majority of network) are not representative of the sector they work on. DPs and stakeholders met also observed about the weakening analytical and document capacities of CSOs and networks when compared to the increasing government’s ability to lead on and commission policy studies. For example there is no effective monitoring and reporting system of the CSO/ networks contributions to development objectives across different sectors that can be validated and current actions are often not well aligned with national development objectives.

CSOs/networks should also better engaged with a broader range of development partners and request that DPs to better listen to CSO/Network concerns and incorporate these into DP statements at the TWGs, as these are often the only opportunities at the TWG meeting to raise issues. It is noted that some DPs are already doing this but they would like to see greater consensus on CSOs/Network issues.

Ballard (2015) 56 notes that while the “TWG architecture is generally sound (the concepts behind having them) their performance (i.e., implementation) is mixed. (Though he goes on to state that this architecture has gotten a bit unwieldy with too many TWGs which may need consolidation). As a result, TWG contributions in achieving sector objectives and national development goals, including aid effectiveness and public sector reforms, is uneven. It is worth observing that while some of the overarching functions are carried out; primarily in terms of alignment, coordination and resource mobilisation/utilisation, others appear to be ignored or are limited in their implementation for example (a) sector monitoring and progress review is not really undertaken, as monitoring is generally limited to what are termed the Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMIs)⁵⁷, (b) Policy dialogue (c) information sharing.

Ballard goes on to identify a number of factors for both good TWG performance and challenges confronting the TWG, these challenges include (a) the lack of an over-arching accountability framework to monitor and evaluate performance (for example the JMI were usually too narrowly defined or at institutionally high levels to be of limited relevance to CSOs/networks. (b) The ability to discuss and address contentious development was found limited (for example the

⁵⁶ Ballard (2015) Technical Working Group(s) Performance Review, CRDB/CDC

⁵⁷ http://www.cdc-crdb.gov.kh/cdc/documents/MUTUAL_ACCOUNTABILITY_AND_PARTNERSHIPS_FOR_RESULTS.pdf

Land TWG hasn't been operational for some years and in 2017 it targets in the JMI framework was dropped. (c) shifting circumstances and changing stakeholder perceptions of development issues and priorities (how the localisation of the SDGs are to be considered is an on-going process and this not complete (Sept 2017), as is the potential contribution of the ODA which has and is declining as the overall economy grows from 4.2% of the country's GDP in 2015 to 2.3% in 2025, while the overall share of CSO contributions will decrease from 1.3% in 2015 to 0.6% by 2025 though the financial value of the CSO contribution that this projection is based upon will remain flat at roughly US\$225 million per year to 2025) (CRDB/CDC 2017)⁵⁸. (d), aid and investment modalities are changing and new development actors are emerging. (e) The quality of participation by TWG members, both RGC, DPs (and CSOs/network) is inconsistent. (f) TWG meetings often have agendas that are so crowded they preclude dialogue concerning both technical and policy issues.

The study was unable to ascertain who participated on which TWG from the CSO/ network side (in most cases) even after requesting this from the client (CCC) and NGO Forum, who because of their relative size were reportedly often invited to represent CSOs but do they have such a mandate, and are they authorised by their members to represent other CSOs active across a broad range of sectors. As mentioned by, DPs, other stakeholders, networks and CSOs met with by the study who have participated in different TWGs, all concurred that the TWGs were generally not the forums for effective CSO engagement on sector issues, as far better institutional opportunities existed with the line Ministries which could and should be developed.

Objective 3: Explore the working mechanisms, strategies and functional roles for CSOs in the new development context in Cambodia.

CSO Networks

The study found that while CSOs and some networks participate in (some of) existing formal development cooperation mechanisms (the TWGs). It was and is variable, with some TWGs having (education, decentralisation for example) more active multi-stakeholder engagement than others, this variability was also commented upon by Ballard's review of TWG performance in 2015. Some TWGs are considered to have failed (for example the land TWG has been suspended as meeting are apparently no longer being organised and the sector indicators have been dropped from the officially agreed (by government and Development partners) Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMI). In some instances it was reported that representative networks are not invited to the TWGs, rather individual CSOs are asked to participate, and this goes for the membership organisations and raises the issue of representativeness (do CSOs or membership organisations adequately represent the CSO sectors or their own interests?).

⁵⁸ CRDB/CDC (2017), (DRAFT) Cambodia Development Finance Assessment, CRDB/CDC.

Overall the TWG approach is considered a too formalistic mechanism for practical engagement on policy issues with government or on monitoring sector performance, involved stakeholders consulted mentioned that better opportunities exist in the preparatory process for the TWGs meeting and through line Ministry processes.

Sector and issues based platforms, networks and collaborative approaches are likely to be more effective at national and provincial levels as they are likely to be more focused and deliver results, than generic coordination network mechanisms, who as yet do not have a clear idea of what they are support to do. As these coordination are unlikely to have the breath of understanding and capacities to target and address relevant issues across the all sectors. It is worth observing that coordinating mechanism, at national and provincial have been periodically tired in the past and few have been sustained and the same is likely to happen with the current effort. There have been instance of effective coordination for example while advocating for changes in the LANGO, but since this has become law, what other possible roles are their apart from ensuring understanding and compliance with the legal requirements.

Better consideration needs to be made of sector based investments and how these are and can be applied in the future with continuing development across the country, as pockets of deprivation are likely to persist but these will becoming smaller and more dispersed. As mentioned previously, achieving qualifiable results, impacts and outcomes in some sectors will become harder, and all actions need to be better harmonised with the SDGs, Rectangular Strategy, NSDP and sector strategies, as this is and will be the agreed upon national development framework by government, donors, and development partners under the auspice of localising aid effectiveness. CSOs/NGOs and their networks need to gain greater access and engagement with development partners, and government, this will only be gained through improved collaboration, coordination and consolidation of voice and on issues.

It is interesting to note UNDP's recent views (May 2017) on "Who will finance development in Cambodia?" which stated that "the Government is well positioned to lead and finance the next stage of national development. Managing partnerships with the private sector will be of increased importance while Cambodia's development partners and NGOs will need to adapt to new roles in support of the SDGs"⁵⁹. This could be interpreted as seeing a decreasing role for CSO and NGOs, while the role of the private sector will increasingly play an increasing role. When one looks at the international development context it is evident that the role(s) non-governmental civils society organisations play have been relegated, while the involvement and role(s) of the private sector has and is on the rise and this is not just in Cambodia, but globally. In terms of the government position, one only has to look at the approval of a US\$6 billion national budget for 2018, with government now able to borrow US\$1.4 billion from external

⁵⁹ UNDP (24/5/2017) "Who will finance development in Cambodia?"
<http://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/ourperspective/who-will-finance-development-in-cambodia/>

sources including multilateral and bilateral sources⁶⁰ due to the perceive strengthen of the economy.

There could be a role for some form a collaborative coordination mechanism, involving the sector issues platforms/ networks. But what this would be (what it would do, how it is structure and funded) needs to be agreed upon by the sectors network, donors and development partners through a consultative process to avoid it drawing financial and other resources from the sectors which deliver results.

Development Partners and Donor Organisations

Development partners and others met with, highlighted the continued fragmented nature of CSO/NGOs in country which diminished their value and acceptance, though there are exceptions. Existing representative groups/organisations/network were often considered to only represent a portion of the organisations active. While sector based networks/coordinating/members organisations were in some instances better evolved and focused on particularly sector (than generic coordination mechanism), they (all) need to be strengthened.

- ✚ To better research, articulate and present issues for consideration (both by government and development partners).
- ✚ To better engage with government and development partners by ensuring alignment with agreed national development objectives, gaols and targets, as well as with the evolving post 2015 development agenda, consolidated through the Sustainable Development Goals, and targets.

It was noted that the SDGs are currently being localised, but efforts to raise awareness and understanding on the SDGs and related issues in general amongst provincial CSOs/ networks was significantly lacking, which was leaving them behind in developing new or evolving approaches to contribute to meeting the SDGs.

Some of the stakeholders met with (particularly as provincial levels) felt that CSO/network engagement was often further diminished by the centralised natured of representative groups who “take the credit and benefits for work done by others”. Stakeholders met with often accused national/ Phnom Penh based groups and large organisations of not effectively representing the needs and demands from the provinces. Provincial network members and others met with mentioned instances of groups coming from Phnom Penh to engage with them to obtain information and insight (often to develop proposals) and in some instance “baiting”

⁶⁰ Reference is made to approved projects from the World Bank Group, the Asian Development Bank, China, Japan, South Korea, France and India, source Government plans to borrow \$1.4B for 2018 national budget, <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/government-plans-borrow-14b-2018-national-budget>

local CSO with being partners in a new project. But when the projects come, the local CSOs/NGOs are often not invited to be involved.

Some development partners and funding organisations expressed concerns about the continued inability (lack of capacities and apparently confidence) of networks/membership organisations to identify, consolidate and prioritise issues. And to express these in a coherent and evidence backed manner to (possibly) justify support. Network members felt that there was still too much reliance on leading organisations “to tell them what to do”. Additionally they felt the organisations and networks had not kept up with evolving aid modalities and focuses and some were “stuck in the past” in thinking, management, delivery approaches. Those organisations and networks that had learned and changed were securing support in the changing development environment.

Development partners welcomed and generally acknowledged civil society participation in the technical working groups but noted that the modality of these was often too formal and structured for effective policy and issues engagement. They did observe, that for some TWGs, the preparatory process of meeting were the more effective areas for engagement. Some observed that there should/ could be a specific step for TWG preparatory meeting to engage with CSOs/networks more.

Government Engagement

As mentioned, the assignment was unable to effectively engage with government entities at different levels so was unable to garner their views so perspective give might be one-sided. While example(s) of well engaged and involved CSOs and networks in government lead initiatives exist, and the one mentioned most was the education sector and NEP, it was the exception rather than the norm. Stakeholders and NEP members’ mentions this was probably due to the general consensus on issues for the education sector, “as there was not much not to agree on”. So sector stakeholders have been able to make good progress partly attributed to the reported current good and open (to partnering) leadership of the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MoEYS).

Another considered reasonably well function network was the Working Group for Partnerships in Decentralisation-WGPD recently renamed the Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development-CPDD, which has established a good working relations with the National Committee for Demographic Development Secretariat. It is actively involved in encouraging CSOs/networks involvement in the three years Implementation Plan (known as the IP3), for of the National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development (also known as NP-SNDD). NP-SNDD is the program of the Royal Government of Cambodia to develop the roles and responsibilities of Sub-National Authorities (SNAs). WGPD has also been working on supporting and gaining civil society involved in social accountability mechanism.

Numerous development partners and other stakeholders met with, wanted CSOs/networks to have better working relations with responsible government entities. This probably coincides

with their commitments and progress towards localising aid effectiveness in which national governments are to lead. Perceived obstacles to this were the continuing fragmented nature of CSOs and networks on reaching consensus on issues to be raised and addressed, or their lack of representatives, as network membership generally did not represent a significant percentage of CSOs working in sectors or issues.

Other stakeholder mentioned a sense of exclusion as networks and their CSO had often requested meetings with government entities but these had not been forthcoming with arrangement delayed or rescheduled at short notice. There was also a greater sense of reluctance to meet on sensitive and contentious issues or for government to meet with certain members of networks but not others, who are considered as “blacklisted” for a variety of reasons. Mainly for being critical of government or showing them in a “bad light” and making them lose face, which results in critical or adverse implications, with increasingly closing down access to government and the imposition of barriers to being able to operate.

There is a need to encourage the establishment of improved sector and provincial engagement mechanisms involving government, networks, CSOs, and other stakeholders that are regularly held on schedule, and which progressively explore different sectors or issues. Such mechanisms would also be of use contribute to sector coordination and to channel information on issues to national levels on a regular basis.

It remains difficult to ascertain the benefits of CSO participation on and through the Government/Development Partners TWG mechanism, as available information is lacking. Should CSOs or representative (sector) networks be present on these? Yes if the aspirations of the evolving aid effectiveness architecture of greater partnership are to be adhered to.

However networks need to actively broaden and expand their memberships and representativeness to involve more sector active organisations, ensuring that the 4Ws and the results and impacts of CSO supported activities are better documented to identify gaps and issues. Sector networks should need to better engaging more with government and development partners in preparation for TWG meetings and reporting to ensure that the roles, activities and more importantly results and impacts of CSO/ NGO support activities are better documented and considered by the TWGs as existing monitoring system don't effective capture these. They CSO networks should advocate for a preparatory meetings with TWG secretariats and responsible and involved Development Partners to better inform them of the CSO roles contributions and potential.

Case Study 2 The Annual Consultative Meeting between Government, Prime Minister and NGOs

In 2012 the Government introduced guidelines for Annual Consultative Meeting between the Government and NGOs/CSOs. During the meeting on 17th February 2012, Prime Minister HUN SEN on behalf of the government, reaffirmed the commitment of Government to continue working in partnership with CSOs/NGOs in the interest of national development.⁶¹ The guidelines stated the annual meetings should consider a 'specific sector or theme' to be address between the Government and active CSOs and this should take place to ensure that NGO support was consistent with the national development priorities and was well coordinated with Government activities and resources.

Under the new leadership of the Minister of Environment, H. E. Say Sam Al, the relationships and collaborations between Government and CSOs have been enhanced and fruitful discussions on environmental issues and natural resource management in Cambodia have been held. In 2016, under the initiative and coordination of the Minister of Environment, the first meeting called the Forum on "the Protection and Conservation of Natural Resources" was organised at the Peace Palace building between Prime Minister HUN SEN and CSOs who were working on natural resource environmental management related issues. About 500 participants from government, CSOs and community representatives participated. Prime Minister HUN SEN announced "right now we have join together for the same goal,"⁶².

It was evident that there was no clear mechanism on how CSOs, particular those working on environmental issues, had been invited to attend. The NGO Forum on Cambodia which actively worked with other CSO/NGOs and networks in order to identify and document the issues and consolidated the recommendations to be made prior to the meeting with Prime Minister.

In 2017, a second meeting was organised on 22 August 2017 at the Peace Palace which was crowded with participants from the Government's and CSO/NGOs. Prime Minister HUN SEN pledged a "20 per cent budget increase for the Environment Ministry next year (2018) and an agreement to support long-gestating plans to reintroduce tigers in Mondulkiri province."⁶³ The Forum went well and issues were raised and discussed, however, again there was no clear mechanism and coordination for inviting NGOs and community representatives to attend the Forum.

The Forum 2017 was also attended by a group of land activists who raised their issues at the meeting. It was a surprise and was questioned by the Minister, why was this group invited to participate?⁶⁴ The Minister of Environment, at the beginning, accused the NGO Forum on Cambodia (who was active and working with environmental NGOs and groups) of inviting the group, but the NGO Forum on Cambodia received only one invitation for one take part. The NGO Forum had no role in invitation made to other NGOs and community based organisations for attendance. The participants of NGOs and communities acknowledged that the annual forum with Prime Minister HUN SEN is a great opportunity for NGOs and CBOs to raise and discuss controversial issues on environmental

⁶¹ Guideline on the Annual Consultative Meeting between the Royal Government of Cambodia and Non-Governmental Organisations.

⁶² At Environmental Forum, Hun Sen Spreads the Blame; by Khuon Narim | August 23, 2016;

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/environmental-forum-hun-sen-spreads-blame-117041/>

⁶³ PM vows to help environment; Wed, 23 August 2017 by Phak Seangly; <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/pm-vows-help-environment>

⁶⁴ Meeting note (on 6th October 2017) with one NGO leader who attended the meetings.

governance and natural resource management in Cambodia.

What has been learnt, is that without clear and better mechanisms for coordinating invitations for CSO/NGOS in Cambodia can affect who attend and participates. It will not be a useful and fruitful forum for discussing and addressing natural resource environmental management issues in Cambodia, unless the right organisations and networks are invited. Having clearly defined coordinating mechanisms for NGO/CBO participation are needed, in order to facilitate and consolidate the common voice of NGOs/CBOs to have a better say on issues to be resolved and how actions can be taken after the meeting.

CSO and Network Mechanisms

The future roles and functions of CSOs/NGOs and their networks in Cambodia as elsewhere is changing and evolving and this change needs to be better addressed. While thousands of CSOs/NGOs exist on paper in country (and this does take in account the tens of thousands of community based organisations-CBO which are not covered by this study). Only about a third of the registered CSOs/NGOs may be active, and there is likely a need to consolidate those that are active and (some may feel that this is controversial) extinguish/close those that only exist on paper, which that have not functioned (undertaken and reported activities) for some years.

- It is proposed that a serious effort has to be made to clearly identify and ascertain what is going on in terms of the 4Ws both for CSOs and networks, and why effective efforts for this have not been made over the course of the last 25 years remains unknown.

CSO/NGO approaches also need to evolve and change, in the past (during the relief and rehabilitation phase for the country up to the early/mid 2000's) there was a justification for duplicating or providing parallel service delivery mechanisms to state entities as these were often woefully deficient, at that time. However the overall improvements made through national development have generally mitigated and reduced the need for direct service provision, so CSOs/NGOs need to move out of or adapt their roles in service provision.

- It is proposed that sector coordination mechanisms need to be expanded where they exist and initiated where they don't. To take advantage and make the most of these, CSO and networks need to better engage sector and issue based CSO and reach consensus at different levels of what needs to be address and what roles (each) CSO can possibly play. This consolidation of efforts also needs to be closely tied to investment requirements to achieve what has agreed upon. Being realistic not every location/province is likely to be financed and better efforts are needed to target investments where they are most needed.

One has to bear in mind that at least 2 million people are still poor (~13.5%) and a greater percentage are vulnerable (just above the national poverty lines) and continuing to be deprived of access quality basic services, but these are scattered and harder to find and serve throughout the country. There also continues to be marginalised groups who need to

be better located qualified and quantified (one only has to reflect on the effective consideration of people with disability who remain marginalised) so that they can be targeted with possible interventions.

- Rights abuses have and will continue to persist in the country and are of increasing concerns, it is proposed that there is and will be a need for continuing further and likely greater support to improve and enhance right based defenders capacities and competencies to tackle and address these abuses. And, this needs to be done in environment where political and civic space is shrinking, with the ever hanging threat of legal action based on vague defamation provisions and a politicised judiciary.
- It is proposed that efforts need to be made to encourage existing organisations and networks to come together most likely in sector based/related collaborative networks to have more documented qualifiable impacts and to gain greater and more cost effective results and impacts. Activities need to better align with the evolving development framework in terms of the SDGs and Climate Change.

The Private Sector

CSOs and their networks need to engage with the private sector more, as their role is on the increase, they will be a possible source of funding. Some parts of the private sector have been evolving corporate social responsibility (CSRs) frameworks, one part of which is often to mitigate or provide support for social and environmental causes. Larger business entities often providing funding for social and environmental actions. In future they may want CSOs or networks to qualify what they have done or are planning to do or to align activities with broader development objectives.

VI- CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The intention of this feasibility study was to firstly look at evolving social, economic and political trends (through national and global filters) and to see how these are and will affect Civil Society Organisations and their networks now and in the future, secondly to assess the functioning and performance of CSO networks and Technical Working Groups (this was later refined by agreement to focus more on CSO networks engagement and interactions). Thirdly to explore the working mechanisms, strategies and functional roles for CSOs in an evolving development context. These were ambitious and some would say ambiguous objectives for the assignment, as they required consideration of a wide range of issues and sectors, each of which on their own could (and would) warrant more focused research and understanding. And this extensiveness of issues to be covered, likely diminishes findings and results, as they became far more generalised.

The feasibility study used a mixed methods approaches involve consultation and interviews with key informants from development partners, 'donor organisation', CSOs, national, provincial, and sector/issue based networks. As well as an online network self-assessment (in Khmer and English) targeted at organisations to feedback on what through were strong and weak networks their organisations' were involved in. While the links to the self-assessment was sent to 785 email address held by eight networks and membership organisation, it was likely only received by ~300 organisations as most active organisations are involved in multiple networks (as membership organisations were reluctant to release the names of members organisations for cross referencing). In the recent MTR of the NSDP one of the conclusions found was that "more financial resources are certainly required, but it is equally important to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of investments through better coordination and collaboration between relevant government institutions, Development Partners, CSOs, and the private sector... (also) more efforts are required to strengthen M&E" (NSDP MTR 2017).

Conclusions

While social and economic progress has and is been made further progress is going to be increasingly difficult to better find and target poor and vulnerable groups across the country as those in continuing deprived circumstances will increasingly be in smaller, more isolated and remote communities and groups and harder to reach. While capturing and delivering some of the economic benefits from the country's impressive growth in a more equitable manner will also be challenge.

The shrinking political space is and will remain a matter of concern as there is an identified risk that the country is sliding into authoritarianism⁶⁵⁶⁶⁶⁷, continued adversarial atmosphere between

⁶⁵ Jensen, A., (27/1/2016) "Cambodia on the Cusp of Authoritarianism" <https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/cambodia-on-cusp-of-authoritarianism-report-106504/>

⁶⁶ Kurlantsick, J., (28/6/2016) "Cambodia's Turn Toward Authoritarianism" (Again), Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/cambodias-turn-toward-authoritarianism-again>

the “CSO sector” and state entities (at national and sub-national levels) continues to hinder and hamper joint initiatives to make progress on addressing development issues and challenges, and this will have a greater impact as

There is a demand from development partners for greater coordination between Civil Society Organisations (CSO). As they (CSOs) are generally perceived as being fragmented and disjointed in approaches on issues and platforms. They would like to have and desire to have a single engagement (entry and exit point) entity to meet with and hear from, rather than often having to deal with individual organisations with often representing what they feel are the organisation’s own interests.

Existing CSO networks and membership organisation only represent a portion of the CSO active in country, which limits and or constraints civil society organisations acceptance as being a representative of civil society, as this representativeness is often self-proclaimed, with little or evidence to back it up?

The current lack of knowledge and information on who, is working where, on what, at what scale stifles co-ordination and collaboration. On the other hand, some stakeholders view the current membership organisations as competitors for the perceived decreasing pools of funding rather than as sector or issue facilitators.

Recommendations (ranking implied) interms of timing

1. Who or what entities should lead on network coordination needs to be worked out, as current structures and membership organisations only represent a portion of civil society organisations or networks active across the country.
 - ✚ A provisional measure could be to create a CSO partnership secretariat, led by an independent facilitator, to engage with, consult, and facilitate CSOs and networks to participate and partner on issues to be identified. This has been identified as being the priority, as the possible role of the facilitator would also be to begin to engage with CSOs and networks and ascertain their interest in collaborative approaches.
 - ✚ Membership organisations should consider evolving away from (fee based) membership structures which is seen as limiting involvement by many local organisations unable (and some would say unwilling) to pay the requested fees to be a members. It may be best to ask organisations to contribute what they can and give guidance on this. But of greater importance is to encourage more organisations to join and get involved.
 - ✚ It has been suggested by consultative group to possibly consider establishing a National CSO Council (modelled on the experiences with the Cambodian National Council of Women) to provide a legally mandated engagement structure for better involvement and coordination with government entities.

2. It is recommended that network and membership organisations who claim to represent and coordinate CSOs, better engaged in collaborative approaches to better represent the CSO sector in general, by jointly organising CSO congress(es) or forum(s) around the country to hear from and listen to CSOs around the country. And based on these congresses/forum, lead on identified evolving issues, such as the application and scope of the LANGO and the recognition of CSO contributions to national development to name just two issues.
3. Membership organisations and networks should better outline what services they currently provide and can provide to members (and the costs of provision if required). To better structure and provide capacity development inputs for networks and CSOs
4. Access to (competitive) dedicated provincial sector funding could be considered, but these clearly need to be better targeted at qualifiable and quantifiable poor vulnerable /marginalised groups.
5. There is clearly an expressed need to continue to strengthen provincial networks and their members, to improve:
 - ✚ Institutional/network governance,
 - ✚ Improve network functioning
 - ✚ Strengthen networks abilities to engage with local government
 - ✚ Improve network horisontal and vertical engage with national networks and platform.
6. There is a need for better engagement and regular communication from CSOs at national levels as well as in the province and around the country? To identify issues that CSOs feel are of concerns to them; and identify ways and means to better address these issues?
 - ✚ Modern information technologies allows for and enables reasonable connectivity throughout the country. So cloud based data storage and information engagement and sharing approaches should be promoted and supported to enable greater timely access to information being accessible and to better engage organisations involved in and interested in different sectors and issues, as being an organisation on a line is and should no longer be acceptable.
7. The use of Information Communication Technologies ICTs should also contribute to greater transparency and accountability, which while often demanded from government is perversely often absent from CSO operation and activities!
8. Initiate a joint activity with CDC to jointly map out, sensitise and encourage CSO to contribute to the aid effectiveness database, with support from development partners and other funding activities in Cambodia. The CSOs inputs could be channelled through provincial and national level coordinating entity (such as CCC) most likely on a bi-annual basis (twice a years)
9. Increasing transparency and accountability by all development actors, including state agencies, CSO, the private sector, which will be challenging.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Provincial Networks and Activities

The following table attempts to show reported numbers of organisations active in and across provinces. It draws on a number of sources of information including the CDC's NGO database reported activities and presence (upto December 2016). Provincial networks currently being reported by CCC (2017-apparently only for eight provinces associated linked to EU funded project in which CCC is a partner), the other provinces come from a 2016 list also provided by CCC. As can be seen a number provinces are reported to not have any networks currently functioning? Though they did appear to have network previously 2015/16? Whether this is the case is difficult to ascertain. In general it would appear that existing networks only represent a portion of the CSOs reported as active. They do not appear to engage with or involved the growing numbers of community based organisations (CBOs) that have emerged and exist across districts and provinces of the country, who are frequently the "true grassroots organisations" (issues identified about the provincial NGO Networks are discussed elsewhere in this report).

#	Provinces		# of Organisations participating (CCC Network List Feb 2017)	CDC reported NGO active in Province 12/2016	Project being implemented by Reported NGOs (CDC dbase - updated 12/2016)	Reported Status (CCC- list Feb 2017)	
1	Banteay Meanchey	NO Network reported		64	90		
2	Battambang	Battambang NGOs Network		93	129	No Provincial NGOs network but from 16 January 2015, they form new network	Unclear if Active (old list up to 01/2015, stating new network to be established)
3	Kampong Cham	NO Network reported		62	87		
4	Kampong Chhnang	Kampong Chhnang NGOs Network (KCNN)	13	55	77		Active
5	Kampong Speu	Kampong Speu NGOs Network	8	69	84	Reported as Inactive	Inactive
6	Kampong Thom		19	56	77		
7	Kampot		35	49	54		Active
8	Kandal	NO Network reported		71	88		
9	Koh Kong	NO Network reported		25	38		
10	Kratie		20	43	62		
11	Mondul Kiri	Mandulkiri NGO Network	25	31	42		
12	Phnom Penh	NO Network reported		169	226	45 NGOs involved PPUPTWG have network	two networks (at least apparently in the process of merging)
13	Preah Vihear	NO Network reported		32	51		
14	Prey Veng	NGOs Network of Prey Veng (NPV)	28	56	76		
15	Pursat		33	60	81		
		CACA network	34			Three Networks reporting a total of 35 participating NGOs (8 involved in all three, 26 in two and 1 in one)	
		CHF network	11				
16	Ratanak Kiri	RATANAKIRI NGO NETWORK (RNN)	21	32	46		
17	Siemreap	Siem Reap NGO network	43	127	189		
18	Preah Sihanouk		13	36	41		
19	Stung Treng	Stueng Treng NGOs Network	11	27	37		
20	Svay Rieng	NGOs Advocacy Coordination Network- Svay Rieng (NACN)	40	39	48	Old network (46 NGO) +new network list 14 (9 on both 5 new))	
21	Takeo	Takeo NGOs Network	11	63	85		
22	Oddar Meanchey	NO Network reported		31	36		
23	Kep	NO Network reported		10	11		
24	Pailin	NO Network reported		21	23		
25	Tboung Khmum	NO Network reported		31	50		
*26	Report Nationwide Initiative			36	39		
*27	Coverage/location unreported			5	7		

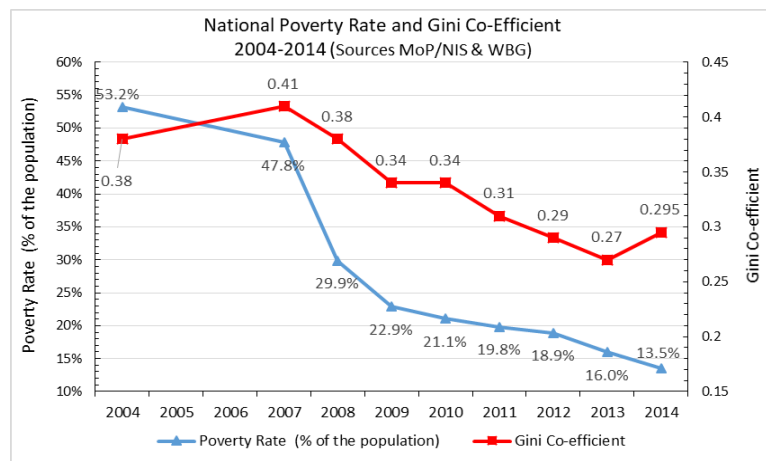
Annex 2. Abridged Social, Economic and Political Situation Analysis (national and Global Contexts)-for Objective 1.

Social

National Context Social

Cambodia is recognised as having made impressive progress across a range of social and economic sectors over the last decade and a half, since the year 2000. With at least five out of the nine nationally set Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs) (poverty, child care, maternal health, communicable diseases and partnership) being considered met (see Annex XX for reported progress). Further progress and development is likely to continue, though at a slowing pace, as “the easier fixes have now been achieved”. Cambodia has also been recognising as a significant achiever of many of the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs).

The Government and Development Partners agree that significant progress has been made to alleviate absolute and other forms of poverty, with the overall poverty rate dropping from 53 percent in 2004 to the most recently reported rate of 13.5 percent (NSDP Midterm Review 2017) which is a significant and commendable progress and as commented upon by the World Bank in 2014 “surpassing all expectations”⁶⁸. However those (13.5% of the population) still in poverty, equates to roughly two million people (~400,000 families) living below the national poverty line!



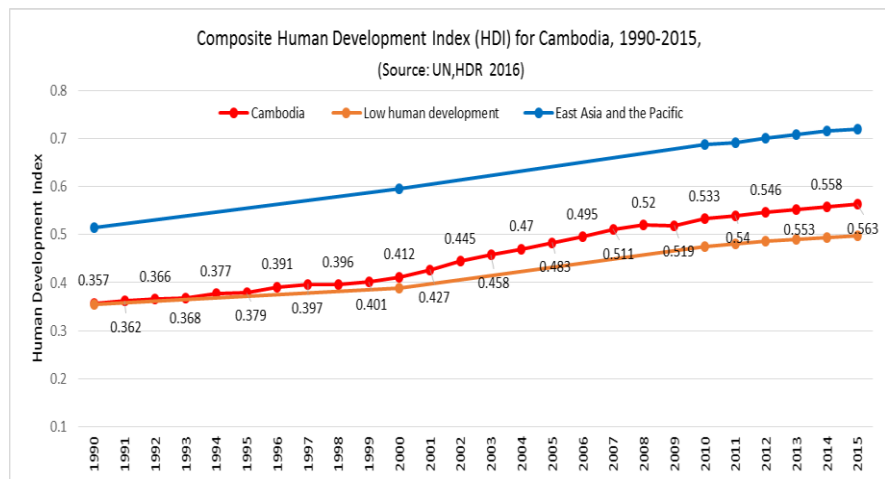
As pointed out⁶⁹ while many families have risen out of poverty “the majority of these people escaped poverty only slightly: they remain highly vulnerable—even to small shocks—which could quickly bring them back into poverty”. Now often highlighted quotes from the World Bank’s 2013 Poverty Assessment “in 2011 a small shock of CR 1,200 per day (US\$0.30 or the cost of two small water bottles from a street vendor in Phnom Penh) would cause Cambodia’s poverty rate to double”, and “where did all the poor go? Not very far! Most moved from being poor to being vulnerable”, and these concerns, need to be kept in mind, as those still poor are often further neglected by the focus on growth and monetary development.

⁶⁸ WBG (2014) Where have all the poor gone?: Cambodia poverty assessment 2013 (English)

⁶⁹ ditto

It also shows the precarious nature of the current development route, which while resulting in reduced food and income poverty. Making further progress on the drivers behind these will create new challenges to the Government and development partners to support the move upwards and out of vulnerability. Real progress on poverty and vulnerability may (and can) be concealed by aggregated statistics based on the growing economy and its value, which may leave significant portions of the population behind in real terms (see MPI below).

The United Nations composite Human Development Index (HDI)⁷⁰ is a broad based metric/measure which assesses progress across three basic dimensions of human development: (i) a long and healthy life, (ii) access to knowledge, and (iii) a decent standard of living.



Based on this index, Cambodia is currently ranked 143 out of 188 countries and territories reporting (in 2015), with a HDI value of 0.563.

Between 1990 and 2015, Cambodia’s composite HDI value increased from 0.357 to 0.563, a significant increase of 58 percent, indicate considerable overall development across many of the sub areas covered by the HDI. Some of Cambodia’s human development highlights include

- Life expectancy at birth for Cambodia has increased by 15.2 years between 1990 and 2015,
- Mean years of schooling increased by two years and expected years of schooling increased by 4.2 years.
- Cambodia’s Gross National Income (GNI) per capita⁷¹ increased by about 278 percent between 1990 and 2015.

However Cambodia’s 2015 HDI of 0.563, is below the average of 0.631 for countries in the medium human development group, as well as for the average of 0.720 for countries in the Asia and the Pacific region. For a simple comparison with countries from East Asia and the Pacific

70 Where (i) a long and healthy life is measured by life expectancy at birth. (ii) Knowledge level is measured by mean years of education among the adult population, which is the average number of years of education received in a life-time by people aged 25 years and older. As well as the access to learning and knowledge by expected years of schooling for children of school-entry age, which is the total number of years of schooling a child of school-entry age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates stay the same throughout the child's life. The standard of living is measured by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita expressed in constant 2011 international dollars converted using purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion rates (UNDP HDR 2016)

71 Simply put, the GNI per capita is the dollar value of a country's final income in a year, divided by its population. It reflects the average income of a country's citizens.

region which are close to Cambodia's HDI ranking and to some extent in population size are Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and Myanmar, which are HDI ranked 138 and 145 respectively.

The HDI is an average measure of basic human development achievements in a country. Like all averages, the HDI masks inequality in the distribution of human development across the population at the country level, for this purpose the **Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI) was developed** the IHDI, takes into account inequality across all three dimensions of the HDI but 'discounts' each dimension's average value according to its level of inequality. The IHDI is basically the HDI discounted for inequalities.

The 'losses' in human development due to inequality is given by the difference between the HDI and the IHDI, and is expressed as a percentage loss. As the inequality in a country increases, the loss in human development also increases. As Cambodia's HDI for 2015 is 0.563, however, when the value is discounted for inequality, the HDI falls to 0.436, a loss of 22.5 percent due to inequality in the distribution of the HDI dimension. The Human inequality coefficient for Cambodia is equal to 22.4 percent.

Gender Development Index (GDI)

The GDI endeavours to highlight continuing gender inequalities across the same three dimensions of the HDI: (i) Health measured by female and male life expectancy at birth, (ii) Education measured by female and male expected years of schooling for children and mean years for adults aged 25 years and older; and (iii) command over economic resources (measured by female and male estimated GNI per capita). The female HDI value for Cambodia is 0.529 in contrast with 0.592 for males, resulting in a GDI value (female to male ratio) is 0.892. While women live longer, they are generally deprived across other social and economic indicators.

	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Means years of schooling	GNI per capita	HDI Value	GDI Ratio
Female	70.8	10.1	3.7	2,650	0.529	0.892
Male	66.7	11.7	5.5	3,563	0.592	

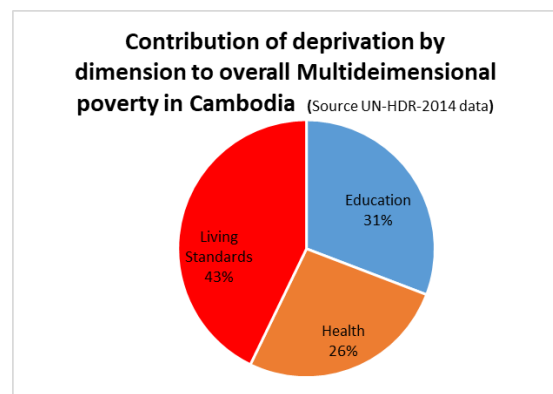
In addition to the GDI was the introduction of the **gender inequality index (GII)** in 2010 this endeavour to highlight gender based inequalities across the three dimensions (reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity). Cambodia has a GII value of 0.479, ranking it 112 out of 159 countries in the 2015 index. In Cambodia, 19.0 percent of parliamentary seats are held by women, and only 13.2 percent of adult women have reached a secondary level of education compared to 26.1 percent for males. Female participation in the labour market is 75.5 percent compared to 86.7 for men.

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was developed to give greater insight into deprivation suffered by populations. It is being encouraged (by the UN and others) that government start incorporating a Multidimensional Poverty approach into the development monitoring systems (how this is ongoing and as yet Cambodia has not formally adopted the MPI as one of its core development statistics⁷², though governments do consider MPI results in development planning.

The MPI identifies multiple overlapping deprivations suffered by households by examining ten components indicators⁷³ across three dimensions: education, health and living standards, with the intention of contributing to gaining a greater insight of and in more complex poverty related deprivations, and the contributing ratios for the multidimensional poverty (in Cambodia) are shown.

The most recent analysis for Cambodia, 2014, indicated that 34 percent of the population (~ one million families, 5.1 million people) are multi-dimensionally poor and an additional 22 percent (3.3 million people) being near multi-dimensionally poor. The breadth of deprivation (intensity) in Cambodia, which is the average deprivation score experienced by people in multidimensional poverty, is 44.3 percent. Of the Multidimensional poor 11% of the population are severely affected so ~1.8 million people.



When one “compares multidimensional poverty with the currently adopted (by government) approach based on income poverty, measured by the percentage of the population living below the national poverty line. It shows that income related poverty only tells part of the story. The multidimensional poverty headcount is 31.6 percentage points higher than income poverty. This implies that individuals living above the income poverty line may still suffer deprivations in education, health and other living condition, and aligns with the concerns expressed in the World Bank’s Poverty Assessment in 2013.

⁷² It is politically challenging for governments which having made significant progress in (income and food) poverty reduction, to then adopt a Multidimensional Poverty Approach and see the poverty rate surge back up.

⁷³ The component indicators are Health (nutrition, child mortality), Education (years of schooling, child enrolment) and Standards of Living (Cooking fuel used, access to a toilet (improved sanitation, access to improved water, access to electricity, floor type, possession of assets).

While social conditions have and are improving, they remain marginalised and excluded groups on whom poverty and social deprivation is more intense and frequent including single parent households, households with a person with a disability or long terms illness, indigenous people's population, or where the head of households are illiterate to name just a few. These group are often on the edge local/village society and often lack the voice to be express their needs and be effectively heard. And it is and will increasingly become these groups that need greater assistance to improve and have a positive impact on those remaining poor and marginalised.

Global Context-Social

It is recognised that significant progress was made globally in achieving the targets under Millennium Declaration made in 2000 and the eight Millennium Development Goals⁷⁴ (nine in Cambodia which added a goal on mine clearance) implemented from 2000-2015, with (start-up) benchmarking dates often back dated to the mid-1990s. Some of the recognised achievement were :

MDG 1 the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day has been reduced from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015. Considering that in 1990, nearly half of the population in the developing world lived on less than \$1.25 a day; that proportion dropped to 14 per cent in 2015, (UN 2016).

MDG 2: Global primary school enrolment figures have risen significant from 83% in 2000 to 91% in 2015, but the goal of achieving universal primary education was missed, but close to be achieved.

MDG 3: About two-thirds of developing countries have achieved gender parity in primary education. The developing regions as a whole have achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

MDG 4: The child mortality rate has reduced by more than half over the past 25 years from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births – but it has failed to meet the MDG target of a drop of two-thirds.

MDG 5: The global maternal mortality ratio has fallen by nearly half – short of the two-thirds reduction the MDGs aimed for.

MDG 6: The target of halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV/Aids by 2015 has not been met, although the number of new HIV infections fell by around 40% between 2000 and 2013.

⁷⁴ The Millennium Development Goals targeted eight key issues– poverty, education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, disease, the environment and global partnership. Each goal was supported by a total of 21 specific targets and more than 60 associated indicators.

MDG 7: Some 2.6 billion people have gained access to improved water supplies since 1990, so the target of halving the proportion of people without access to improved sources of water was achieved in 2010.

MDG 8: Between 2000 and 2014, overseas development assistance from rich nations to developing countries increased by 66% in real terms, and in 2013 reached the record figure of US \$134.8 billion⁷⁵.

The need for a new development framework was identified for the post 2015 development agenda early on, and following the Rio 20+ Conference in 2012 work began on consultation on formulating “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (see annex XX), 169 targets (and later ~239 indicators) which was adopted by countries in September 2015.

This ambitious post 2015 development agenda commits all government “between now and 2030, to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. (It) resolve(s) also to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all, taking into account different levels of national development and capacities”(UN2016)

2030 Agenda sees ‘immense challenges to sustainable development, with billions of our citizens worldwide continuing to live in poverty and denied lives with dignity. There are rising inequalities within and among countries. There are enormous disparities of opportunity, wealth and power. Gender inequality remains a key challenge. Unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, is a major concern. Global health threats, more frequent and intense natural disasters, spiralling conflict, violent extremism, terrorism and related humanitarian crises and forced displacement of people threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades. Natural resource depletion and adverse impacts of environmental degradation, including desertification, drought, land degradation, freshwater scarcity and loss of biodiversity, add to and exacerbate the list of challenges which humanity faces. Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and its adverse impacts undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development’. With many of these resonating with and for the Cambodian context.

The 2030 Agenda also see immense opportunities as ‘significant progress (through the MDGs) has been made in meeting many development challenges. Hundreds of millions of people have emerged from extreme poverty. Access to education has greatly increased for both boys and girls. The spread of information and communications technology and global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop

⁷⁵ Source: Galatsidas, A., Sheehy, F., (July 6 2015) “What have the millennium development goals achieved?” The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/datablog/2015/jul/06/what-millennium-development-goals-achieved-mdgs>

knowledge societies'. These and numerous other prospects can, will and should provide opportunities for making significant development progress toward the goals and targets for 2030.

Economic

National Context Economic

Cambodia has been one of the 10 fastest-growing economies in the world over the past 20 years. Poverty has fallen sharply – from 53 percent of the population in 2004 to 13.5 percent in 2014. The World Bank now classifies Cambodia as a lower-middle income economy, however it remain a designated a Less Developed Country (LDC) due to persistent social and economic vulnerabilities, and is unlikely to graduate from LDC status until post 2025 (UNCTAD 2017). Cambodia's growth performance is supported by a stable (and some say "hard won") macroeconomic environment reflected by relatively low inflation, increasing international reserves, modest fiscal deficits and low public debt, and prudent economic policies, an open and market-oriented economy, located in the world's fastest-growing region, with the benefits of a relatively young vibrant population.

Following more than two decades of strong economic growth, Cambodia has attained lower middle-income status in 2015, with a gross national income (GNI) per capita reaching US\$1,070 and partly driven by tourism and garment exports. Cambodia has sustained an average growth rate of 7.6 percent in 1994-2015, ranking sixth in the world. According to preliminary estimates, economic growth slightly eased to 6.9 percent in 2016, compared to 7 percent in 2015. However, it is expected to remain strong over the next two years as recovering tourism activity coupled with fiscal expansion compensate for some moderation in garment exports and construction growth.

Poverty continues to fall in Cambodia, albeit more slowly than in the past. In 2014, the poverty rate was 13.5 percent compared to 47.8 percent in 2007. About 90 percent of the poor live in the countryside. Cambodia has achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving poverty in 2009, the vast majority of families who escaped poverty were only able to do so by a small margin, thus around 4.5 million people are near-poor.

The IMF projects that growth will remain robust at around 7 percent in 2017–18 because of garment exports and activity in the real estate and construction sectors with moderating private investment offset by higher public spending and robust construction and tourism activity which is (roughly) concurred to by the World Bank and ADB projections for the country. Though ADB observed a mild slowdown in industry and services (in 2016) was mitigated by a slight pickup in agriculture. GDP is forecast to grow by 7.1% this year and next, with inflation edging up and the current account deficit narrowing.

Reviving agriculture is (seen by some as) critical to sustaining rapid growth and poverty reduction (ADB 2017). Inflation rose to 3 percent (in 2016), driven by higher food and energy

prices and is likely to hover around that level for some time. The current account deficit narrowed to 8.8 percent of GDP in 2016. Supported by the lower current account deficit and continued strong Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) inflows, foreign reserves continued to grow, reaching US\$7.9 billion in June 2017.

The economic outlook is positive, although there are downside risks: (i) managing macro-financial risks, as rapid credit growth over the past decade has led to a significant increase in the bank credit-to-GDP ratio to close to 70 percent (ii) safeguarding fiscal sustainability, and (iii) accelerating reforms to support growth, resilience and inclusion. The National Bank of Cambodia has taken measures to mitigate financial stability risks. While the IMF recommends that “authorities should continue to take measures to improve resilience and address elevated financial sector vulnerabilities, such as better managing credit risks, introducing targeted macro-prudential policies, developing a crisis management framework, and upgrading regulation of non-bank financial institutions” (IMF June 2017).

Nonetheless, many economic challenges remain. There is always more that must be done to maintain economic stability, build sustained growth, and to ensure that all Cambodians benefit. First and foremost, that means creating good jobs for your country’s young population⁷⁶. Cambodia faces other structural constraints, including a narrow economic base (an over reliance on a limited range of (what are considered) low value goods), a weak business climate and still underdeveloped financial markets. These constraints limit growth potential and render the economy and financial system vulnerable to shocks.

The governments “Revenue Mobilisation Strategy (RMS), coupled with robust growth, has seen tax revenues increase significantly to over 15 percent of GDP in 2016. But this year the fiscal deficit is projected to widen to about 3.7 percent of GDP. Owing to higher public sector wages and other current spending commitments. Looking ahead, Cambodia will face rising spending pressures and, unless the RMS is re-invigorated, revenue growth is expected to moderate”. Additional measures will be needed to safeguard fiscal sustainability and achieve a growth-and development-friendly expenditure mix.

In particular, the IMF sees a need to contain near-term fiscal deficits, strengthen tax administration and policies, prioritise productive pro-development spending and ensure that public wage increases remain sustainable and are accompanied by further progress in public administration reforms. There is also room to improve the public-private partnership framework to help manage fiscal costs and risks, while addressing infrastructure deficits, (IMF 2017).

In spite of the achievements, Cambodia still faces a number of development challenges, including improving the quality of public service delivery impeding inclusive development, land administration and natural resources management, environmental sustainability, and

⁷⁶ Mitsuhiro Furusawa IMF Deputy Managing Director’s presentation at the Royal University of Law and Economics, Phnom Penh, Cambodia June 7 2017, on the Cambodian Economy: Outlook, Risks and Reforms <http://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2017/06/06/sp060717-the-cambodian-economy-outlook-risks-and-reforms>

good governance. Going forward, the success of addressing these challenges will rest not only on maintaining macroeconomic stability and enhancing economic diversification and export competitiveness, but also on improving the quality of public service delivery to be accompanied by enhanced allocation and use of public financial and human resources (World Bank 2017).

As mentioned previously Cambodia is still considered one of the 48 recognised Least Developed Country (LDCs) and one of eight in the Asia region⁷⁷ and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. A country will normally qualify for graduation from LDC status if it has met graduation thresholds under at least two of the three criteria (see box) in at least two consecutive triennial (three year) reviews of the list. However, if the three-year average per-capita GNI of an LDC has risen to a level at least double the graduation threshold, and if this performance is considered durable, the country will be deemed eligible for graduation regardless of its score under the other two criteria. This rule is commonly referred to as the “income-only” graduation rule.

UNECOSOCs foresees Cambodia as being the only Asian country not to have graduated from LDC status by 2025 (UNTCAD 2017). While Cambodia is projected to satisfy all three graduation criteria by 2021, which would infer a graduating roughly six years later, so post 2027. UNECOSOCs foresee Cambodia as being the only Asian country not to have graduated from LDC status by 2025.

LDC status has advantages for the country’s industrial sector, as it is eligible for low or non-tariffed trade with countries and trading blocks and once it graduates these tariff exceptions are usually progressively removed, .

LDC Graduation Criteria

The list of LDCs is reviewed every three years by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), a group of independent experts reporting to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The CDP, in its report to ECOSOC, recommends countries for addition to, or graduation from, the list of LDCs.

The three criteria used by the CDP in the latest review of the list, in March 2015:

- (a) **Per-capita income**, based on a three-year average estimate of the gross national income (GNI) per capita, with a threshold of \$1,035 for possible cases of addition to the list, and a threshold of \$1,242 for cases of graduation from LDC status;
- (b) **Human assets**, involving a composite index (the Human Assets Index) based on indicators of (i) nutrition (percentage of undernourished population); (ii) health (child mortality ratio); (iii) school enrolment (gross secondary school enrolment ratio); and (iv) literacy (adult literacy ratio);

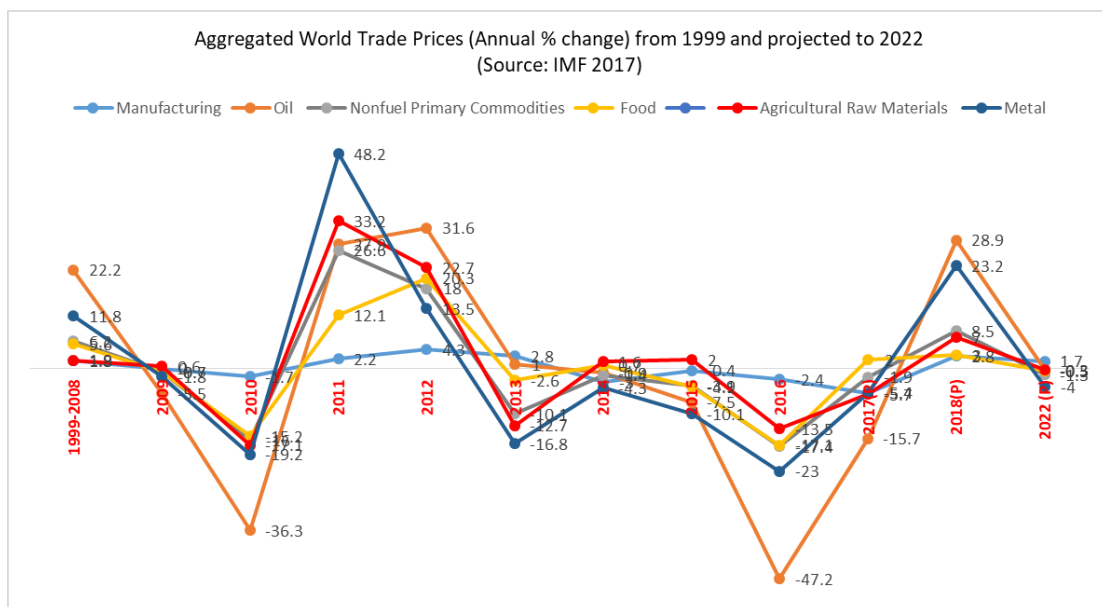
⁷⁷ Asian LDCs: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Yemen.

(c) **Economic vulnerability**, involving a composite index (the Economic Vulnerability Index) based on indicators of (i) natural shocks (index of instability of agricultural production; share of victims of natural disasters); (ii) trade related shocks (index of instability of exports of goods and services); (iii) physical exposure to shocks (share of population living in low-lying areas); (iv) economic exposure to shocks (share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in GDP; index of merchandise export concentration); (v) smallness (population in logarithm); and (vi) remoteness (index of remoteness)

Global Context Economic (Most of this has been extracted from the International Monetary Fund-IMF Biannual World Economic Outlook) <http://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/datasets/WEO>.

The IMF and others report that “Global economic activity is picking up with a long-awaited cyclical recovery in investment, manufacturing, and trade”. Global growth is projected to increase from an estimated 3.1 percent in 2016 to 3.5 percent in 2017 and 3.6 percent in 2018, (compared with the 7 percent or near to it growth for the Cambodia economy over the same period).

Economic activity is projected to pick up markedly in emerging market and developing economies (such as Cambodia) because conditions in commodity exporters are gradually expected to improve, supported by the partial recovery in commodity prices, while growth is projected to remain strong in China and many other commodity importers. Through dependent economies (such as Cambodia) continue to be exposed to market and price fluctuations. One also only has to look at the fluctuation in the reported world trade prices (annual percent change) for selected trading commodity groupings, over the last 15 years, and the projection to 2022 as shown below



Other risks to global economic stability and growth identified in the medium term, due to some uncertainty surrounding trade and economic policies. In general buoyant market sentiment suggests that there is now more tangible upside potential for the near term, but in light of the sources of uncertainties discussed below, a sharp increase in risk aversion is also possible. Risks to medium-term growth appear more clearly negative, also because policy support in the United States and China will have to be unwound or reversed to avoid unsustainable fiscal dynamics.

Generally, downside risks stem from several potential sources:

- An inward shift in policies, including toward protectionism, with lower global growth caused and resulting in reduced trade and cross-border investment flows.
- A faster-than-expected pace of interest rate hikes in the United States, which could trigger a more rapid tightening in global financial conditions and a sharp dollar appreciation, with adverse repercussions for vulnerable economies
- An aggressive rollback of financial regulation, which could spur excessive risk taking and increase the likelihood of future financial crises
- Financial tightening in emerging market economies, made more likely by mounting vulnerabilities in China's financial system associated with fast credit growth and continued balance sheet weaknesses in other emerging market economies
- Adverse feedback loops resulting in weak demand, low inflation, weak balance sheets, and anemic productivity growth in some advanced economies operating with high levels of excess capacity
- Other noneconomic factors, including geopolitical tensions, domestic political discord, risks from weak governance and corruption, extreme weather events, and terrorism and security concerns.

These risks are often interconnected and mutually reinforcing. For example, an inward turn in policies could be associated with increased geopolitical tensions as well as with rising global risk aversion; noneconomic shocks can weigh directly on economic activity as well as harm confidence and market sentiment; and a faster-than-anticipated tightening of global financial conditions or a shift toward protectionism in advanced economies could exacerbate capital outflow pressures in China.

The Global economy is beginning to grow at a slightly quicker paces, with real world GDP growth reported as 3.5 percent (half of what Cambodia has been achieving) while emerging market and developing economies have a slightly higher rate of growth at 4.5 percent, while advanced economies have only been growing by 2%. Economic forecast to 2020 at least indicate that rate are likely to grow to reach 3.7 percent for the world economy, 4.9 percent for the

Emerging market and developing economies, While the advanced economies growth will continue to slow to 1.7 percent by 2020⁷⁸

Political Situation (under development)

National Context Political Situation

While social and economic conditions are generally seen to be improving, the political space in the country is seen as shrinking. The recent commune election went off well, with all observers generally commending the actual undertaking of the elections on the day. However their observations on the period leading up to the official commune election-day campaigns varied. Some have felt the civil, political, environmental spaces has become increasingly politicised, with CSO being accused and targeted in an increasing adversarial atmosphere. Stakeholders met with generally felt that civil society space was shrinking, reducing opportunities for CSOs and their networks to function independently and contribute to development and the welfare of the people. Some observers pointed to the inability of government to take (any form) of criticism, which was increasingly limiting the space for transparency and accountability. In fact amendments and ambiguities to defamation legislation could result in criminal actions for being critical of state activities and services?

The overall sustainability of CSOs in Cambodia is reported to have declined slightly in 2015 according to the USAID supported regional assessment “CSO Sustainability Index” (CSOSI) for Asia (USAID 2015) and has likely continued to contract. The assessment report’s, that the legal environment for CSOs deteriorated dramatically in 2015 with the passing of a number of pieces of legislation including the Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations (LANGO), the Law on Election of Members of the National Assembly (LEMNA) and the previously adopted Trade Union Law.

These are considered to constrain and constrict the political environment and space for civil society even after a range of development partners from the US, EU and UN “requested the government (to) promote civic space and an enabling environment for CSOs in Cambodia. However, the government blamed these development partners for stirring public unrest and interfering in the internal affairs of Cambodia. The public image of CSOs deteriorated in 2015 due to the government’s opposition to CSOs’ advocacy against the LANGO and other laws” (USAID 2015).

The random and arbitrary application of law has been progressively used to repress civil society and the people’s rights. Incidents of land rights abuses continue to persist with families and communities being continually denied their basic rights as enshrined in law and access to fair compensation.

⁷⁸ Source IMF, (April 2017) World Economic Outlook, Indicator Groups, http://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO?year=2017

The recent and ongoing “Adhoc 5” cases exemplified other arbitrary issues have been incarcerated for 423 days of pre-trial detention, they have only recently been released on bail, with the continued threat of trial and or further detention hanging over them. The emerging issue of the collaborative commune election monitoring activity the “situation room” is now in the spotlight with participating organisations and networks possible under threat. This targeting of CSOs/NGOs has intimidated some, who lack the ability to stand up for their own defence

The UNOHCHR’s annual report spanning the period July 2015-June 2016 highlighted a number of issues about political space, it mentioned that “The period under review began at a time of rising political tensions, in the wake of the breakdown of the “culture of dialogue” agreed to in 2014 between the ruling Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) and the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP). Dialogue had been a central feature of the negotiated settlement of a year-long political stalemate following the contested National Assembly elections in 2013”. “The ban on large-scale demonstrations announced in January 2014 continued to be applied, while housing and land disputes continued to be the cause of most protests and violations in the field of economic, social and cultural rights. Increased political tensions led to a tightening of the democratic space, and repeated infringements on the rights to freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly and movement.”

“The legal and institutional framework in Cambodia underwent some notable changes during the period under review. New laws coming into force contain provisions that could potentially restrict the freedoms of expression, association and assembly, particularly the Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations, the long-awaited Trade Union Law and the Telecommunications Law. At the end of the period under review, other bills with potentially profound implications for human rights were in various stages of drafting, including on access to information, whistle-blower protection, cybercrime and State secrets, only some of which are open to public consultation.”

Global Context Political Situation

There are increasing tensions globally, with perceived threats from North Korea, and the Islamic State as well as continuing conflicts in the Middle East especially in Syria, Yemen, but also Iraq and Afghanistan. Regional tensions persist linked to the South China Sea and most recently Myanmar’s possible “Ethnic Cleansing” of the Rohingya minority, with at least 125,000 refugees displaced into Bangladesh in recent weeks. European countries have seen the need to better address the increasing refugee and economic migrant issues by focusing some of the overseas development assistance internally

Overseas Development Assistance

The future of development assistance

While the value of global development assistance continues to rise, its allocation to least developed countries such as Cambodia, fell in 2016. The reported value of global development aid in 2016 reached a new peak of USD 142.6 billion in 2016, an overall increase of 8.9 per cent from 2015, after adjusting for exchange rates and inflation. Part of the rise was attributed to additional resources for settling refugees in donor countries⁷⁹ – when these costs are stripped out, aid effectively rose by 7.1 percent on 2015, according to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC). However, despite this progress, the 2016 data showed that bilateral (country to country) aid to the least-developed countries fell by 3.9 percent in real terms from 2015, as some DAC members backtracked on a commitment to reverse past declines in flows to the poorest countries⁸⁰.

2016 saw Germany join five other countries – Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom – in meeting a United Nations target to keep ODA at or above 0.7% of GNI. While the Netherlands slipped below 0.7% to join 22 other donors under the benchmark. Official development assistance (ODA) from the 29 OECD/DAC member countries averaged 0.32% of gross national income (GNI), up from 0.30% in 2015. Measured in real terms and correcting for inflation and currency fluctuations – ODA has doubled (up 102%) since 2000.

Overall, total net ODA rose in 22 countries in 2016, with the biggest increases in the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Spain. For some the increases were due to higher refugee costs. However ODA fell in seven OECD countries, with the largest declines seen in Australia, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden. Of the several non-DAC members who report their aid flows to the OECD body, the United Arab Emirates posted the highest ODA/GNI ratio in 2016 at 1.12%.

Globally, ODA makes up more than two thirds of external finance for the 48 least-developed countries (including Cambodia) and the DAC is pushing for it to be better used as a lever to generate private investment and domestic tax revenues in poor countries, and in turn to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Within 2016 ODA, contributions by DAC donors to multilateral organisations rose by nearly 10% in real terms. The share of multilateral aid (aid provided via multilateral bodies) to bilateral aid (aid is provided directly by one country to another) is now roughly half to half.

“While governments should be commended for sustaining investment in development during these difficult times, it is unacceptable that – once again – aid to the poorest countries is in decline. Recent signals from some donor countries on future aid levels add further cause for concern”, said OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría. “Major donor nations have committed to refocus their efforts on the least developed countries. It is now time to turn these commitments into action. Together, we must pay close attention to where the money is going and what is being included in foreign aid.”

⁷⁹ ODA spent on hosting refugees inside donor countries jumped by 27.5% in real terms from 2015 to reach USD 15.4 billion. That equates to 10.8% of total net ODA, up from 9.2% in 2015 and 4.8% in 2014 (OECD 11/4/2017)

⁸⁰ OECD (11/04/2017) “Development aid rises again in 2016 but flows to poorest countries dip”, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/development-aid-rises-again-in-2016-but-flows-to-poorest-countries-dip.htm>

Annex 3. Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

Annex 4. Case Studies of Provincial Network Meetings

Kampot NGO Network (KNN)

Representatives from five organisations participated in the consultation (held on 23/6/2017) on the provincial NGO network. It was reported that the network was first been established in 2011 to

- Share information about organisation experiences, works,
- To coordinated to avoid overlapping work,
- To voice the concerns together and solve problems related to staff working and NGO operation (within the context of the then evolving LANGO and tax liabilities)

The network is reported to have by-laws and a strategy (though these were later reported to be only draft form and not adopted by the members). The network met regularly in 2016 but no so in 2017 as active members have been busy. Another factor has been changes in personnel and (the funding) situation in some organisations, which has resulted in lower participation.

The members met with believed that there are about 30 organisations working in the province (though other sources (CCC & CDC) appear to put the figure between 35-54 organisations) but agreed that this number was only a guess, as a number of organisations only existed on paper as they had no funds for activities, the network agreed that the provincial CSO listing needed updating. This network tries to facilitate and collaborate with national networks (such as NEP and WGPD and others.

The network has met with the Provincial governor in June 2016 and observed that some NGO activities have become easier since then. While his request to be kept informed of NGO activities hasn't been followed by all organisation. Though recently (in 2017) they did remark that to undertake activities and even to do research provincial NGOs have to seek permission from provincial office as

Issues Highlighted

- The network members felt that local authorities have attempted to stifle CSO activities by requiring them to require permission first for activities, through an abuse/ misunderstanding of the provisions of the LANGO
- CSOs in the province don't collaborate on actions, every group just does its own thing.
- There is a lack of confidence in the network as it is considered an ad-hoc informal (not registered) structure and not recognised, and this lack of confidence hinders it role and the will to work jointly on actions through the provincial network.
- Lack of funds for the network to operate or to stimulate and encourage collaboration between CSOs in the province.

Provincial Recommendations

- (i) Need for greater network engagement with government and the Governor and (combined cumulative) reporting on the work and impacts of CSOs/sectors/activities
- (ii) CSOs need to meet more regularly to (a) share what they have done; (b) identify challenges, (c)

discuss whether network should become a registered CSO;

- (iii) Need to deliver on identify capacity needs assessment, as well as facilitating and supporting strengthening the network structure and functioning through the adoption of the by-laws/strategy, consideration of registration and creation of a secretariat

Members of Kratie NGO Network (KNN) met with

Representatives of 3? organisations participated in the meeting (held on CCCCCC). A network was first established in the provinces in 2002 and since then has had many manifestations. Though a coordinating network have not been active in the province for “several” years. In 2016 another effort was made to establish a network facilitated by VSO to access funds being made available by VSO however no CSO worked together on this and the funding application window was missed. The re-establishment of the network and the election of steering committee (chair, deputy, secretary and seven members) in 2016 was considered recognised as the process was overseen by a deputy provincial governor.

The current network is more focused on natural resources management while the previous (2002) incarnation was more broader based. The proposed role of the current network are

- To share knowledge,
- Encourage capacity development for member organisations,
- Propose and present possible joint solutions on sensitive issues faced by NGO members to relevant provincial authorities.

Though these have not been agreed upon? The current steering committee haven’t been committed to the network, as they are more focused on their own organisations’ work, so the network doesn’t function well. There is no consensus on a strategy or action plan and the network structure has not been well established with some officers (two) recently resigning. The network hasn’t engaged with local government and does not (try to) influence local policy as its leadership is weak (non-existent) and it has no resources to function, while some network members are actively engaged advocating for change.

Provincial Recommendations

- (i) To be effective the network should mobilise resources for itself and its members
- (ii) Support and lead/ commission action research on issues of interest for the network
- (iii) It should lead policy discussion and reach consensus with its members through regular meetings before engaging with government.
- (iv) The network should lead on advocacy issues of interest to the network and its members.

Battambang NGOs

Representatives of 10 organisations participate in the meeting held on (22/6/2017), the current network was stimulated by a provincial member of the WGPL at their request to facilitate a provincial network. There have been previous efforts at NGOs alliances, coordination which have ceased to function. While one organisation tries to facilitate the network it doesn't have any dedicated resources for this, and members NGOs are generally preoccupied with their own work and not really interested in working together. Organisations present were aware of different approaches in other provinces with including, sector specific network (trafficking), rotating sectors (in Banteay Mean Chey-BMC) and network /CSO engagement facilitated by NCDD (in BMC & Pursat) but not in Battambang?

CSO would like to see a more assertive network to better represent and voice CSO's collective concerns/ problems. As well as trying to get NGOs to collaborate together.

At present no effective network which knows how many NGOs active in the provinces, or which organises regular meetings, leads on facilitating provincial action plan(s) or strategy. Meeting for meeting sake or for sharing not worth the effort and not effective. We formed network because we want to work together to address the issues that effects on NGOs. Participants felt that national level networks/ coordination mechanisms are taking all the resources and not sharing with provincial networks for working together. Funds always seem to stay at the coordination/lead network's organisation. Provincial NGOs just asked to participate in national level entity led events, but little more, We identify issues and challenges and provided inputs on what need to be done but no results for the provincial NGOs only for the national level.

There is self-recognition that their provincial coordination network doesn't function well, and this lack of function is attributed to a lack of cohesion and lack of joint actions and funding for this as no one prepares or facilitates joint funding proposal development. They also mentioned that there are a number of other networks in the provinces which, if lead/ facilitator is strong then the network is strong, as other networks have also failed mainly because of the lack of institutional and financial support.

Provincial Recommendations

- (i) Need to strengthen the capacities of networks and their members
- (ii) Provincial networks needs its own resources to stimulate collaborative actions
- (iii) Networks need to identify key issues affecting CSO work in province
- (iv) How to harmonised and collaborate between networks in the province.
- (v) Would like to see greater collaboration between CSO through developing joint (medium to longer term) strategies and actions to enable and support common voice on issues.
- (vi) There need to be a provincial Technical Work Group mechanism with Local government co-chaired by province (NCDD) and CSOs, to enable the raising and addressing of issues. With clear guidelines and frequency of meetings

Phnom Penh

A Phnom Penh coordination network of CSOs arose in 2013 to address and contribute to the work of the Phnom Penh Urban Poor Technical Working Group which was established by the capital authority with backing from UNICEF. Two Sub groups were established

around 40-50 NGO/CSO initially took part and these PPUPTWG and its subgroups.

But over time meetings at provincial/capital level were less frequent even though requested, City Hall was always too busy, NGOs/ CSOs tried to coordinate their roles and work, also there was an inability to agree on key/critical issues (Land housing, exclusion etc..).

More recently in later 2016 time another network was created to take on the less sensitive issues which has made some progress, and the two networks are now trying to come together and merge. The more recent network felt that the secretariat of the original network were pushing their programme objectives and that city hall was not allowing some components of this programme that it partly sidelined the organisation, which unfortunately affect the official engagement. Other urban stakeholder felt that city hall was more manipulative in that it wanted to have some form of ineffective token engagement to show its participatory credentials, but wanted little more. Both networks have tried to coordinate CSO activities but have felt somewhat frustrated with city hall's lack of engagement on issues.

Annex 5. Examples of Questionnaires, Tools and Guides

- (b) Online Survey Forms English (reformatted for printing-from online version in Google Forms)
- (c) Online Survey Form Khmer (reformatted for printing-from online version in Google Forms)
- (d) Combined General/Guiding Questions for CSO Network Study for different forums/ organisations and networks.

Vision:

Sustainable development for Cambodia.

Mission:

As a membership based organization, CCC works in inclusive partnership for good governance, enabling environment and sustainability of civil society organizations in Cambodia.

Goal:

A strong and capable civil society, cooperating and responsive to Cambodia's development challenges.

Values:

- Integrity
- Responsiveness
- Cooperation
- Quality
- Inclusiveness

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