

Concept Note for the 5th Annual Gender Platform

From Dialogue to Action: Advancing Gender Equality and Safe Workplaces to support Cambodia's LDC Graduation

Date: Tuesday 22nd September 2026

Venue: Sun & Moon, Riverside Hotel

1. Background

Cambodia's upcoming graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status on 19th December 2029 marks an important economic milestone but also raises significant implications for women workers, especially in the garment, textile, and footwear sector, where women comprise over 75 percent of the workforce. As preferential trade arrangements gradually change, sustaining competitiveness will depend on enhanced productivity, workforce skills, social protection systems, and responsible business practices that ensure decent work and protect workers' rights. Meanwhile, longstanding challenges, including gender inequality, gender-based discrimination, occupational safety risks, limited access to skills progression, and underrepresentation in leadership, continue to constrain women's economic opportunities and Cambodia's human capital development ambitions. These factors make coordinated action by government, employers, workers' organizations, and development partners increasingly urgent. Evidence from existing programmes in Cambodia shows that workplace literacy, reskilling initiatives, and gender-transformative leadership development can empower women workers, improve productivity, and strengthen their resilience in the face of economic transition.

There is already credible evidence from Cambodia that well-designed, workplace-centred interventions can protect women workers while improving productivity and resilience. Through its long-standing engagement with Cambodia's GFT sector, the ILO's Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) has demonstrated that gender-responsive workplaces strengthen labour standards, protect workers' rights and support more competitive businesses. Guided by the principles of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (C190), BFC promotes labour compliance, capacity building and social dialogue to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH). Civil society partners, including CARE and other NGOs, have developed factory-level reporting mechanisms, survivor support services and preventative programming that strengthen worker representation and trust in grievance systems. Skills development institutions such as the Cambodian Garment Training Institute (CGTI) contribute market-aligned vocational education and recognised certification that narrows skill gaps and improves employability across the sector. Complementary models such as *WE House*, provide a safe space, supporting workers through essential services with counselling, legal aid and skills training, illustrate the value of holistic approaches that address workers' wellbeing alongside their economic needs. Programmes such as *RISE*, in collaboration with local organisations, have furthered financial-health literacy, respect-focused workplace awareness and digital skills among workers, reinforcing economic resilience at the individual level.

To sustain an ecosystem that supports women, the Gender Platform will remain proactive as a space for continued dialogue and collaboration with key stakeholders to identify solutions and work in solidarity during times of crisis. This year's event, co-organised by CCC, RISE, ILO-BFC, CGTI, LABS, GIZ-FABRIC, and CARE, will build on the momentum of previous gatherings to advance gender equality in Cambodia's Garment, Footwear, and Travel Goods (GFT) sector.

2. Objectives of the platform

This annual platform is designed to:

- Serve as a multi-stakeholder forum that brings together public institutions, the private sector, and civil society organisations (CSOs) working in the garment, textile and footwear sector to foster dialogue on gender equality, address gender inequalities, and promote actionable, collaborative solutions.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing, advocacy, and partnerships to advance gender equality and promote safe, inclusive, and respectful working environments in the garment, textile and footwear sector.

3. Outline agenda

Organisers: GIZ FABRIC Cambodia, LABS, CARE Cambodia, ILO-BFC, CCC, RISE, CGTI

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Target Audience: The Royal Government of Cambodia, the private sector (brands, factories, associations), civil society, development partners, and trade unions (50-100 pax).

Time	Agenda	Responsible
08:00 - 08:30	Registration and networking	GIZ/CCC/CARE/BFC
08.30 - 08.35	National Anthem	
08:35 - 08:45 (10 mins)	Welcoming Remarks by GIZ FABRIC Cambodia	Mr. Hasso Anwer, Project Director
08:45 - 09:10 (25 mins)	Opening Remarks by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) <i>Setting the scene including the current development of the Government's initiatives and strategies to advance gender equality and how it will support the LDC graduation.</i>	H.E Hou Samith, Secretary of State, Ministry of Women's Affairs (TBC)
09:10 - 09:30 (20 mins)	Keynote inputs by the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT): <i>Investing in Women's Skills: A Strategic Path to LDC Graduation</i>	MLVT's representative (TBC)
09:30 - 10:20 (50 mins)	Reflections and open discussions <i>Session objective: To provide participants with the opportunity to actively engage in with the strategic level content shared during the opening sessions.</i>	Ms. Samantha Diouf
10:20 - 10:40	Coffee Break	

10:40 - 11:30 (50 mins)	Ground Realities: Exploring Current GFT Initiatives Supporting Smooth LDC Graduation <i>Session objective: To provide the opportunity to understand and explore ground level realities and insights relating to gender equality in the GFT sector.</i> Participant breakout sessions and dialogue 1. Updates on C190 (CARE) 2. Women's empowerment principal community outreach - UNWOMEN 3. Childcare/unpaid care (PE&D) 4. NAPVAW (to be confirmed) - (MoWA) 5. Open space discussion - sharing of burning issues	Moderator/facilitator
11.30 - 12.00 (30 mins)	Presentation: RISE Respect roll out in Cambodia <i>Session objective: To launch the RISE Respect programme and raise awareness amongst the platform participants.</i>	Mr. Sok Sethypong
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch Break	
13.00 - 13.20 (15 mins & 5 mins buffer)	Women's empowerment group drumming performance	MeDha Team
13.20 - 14.25 (40 mins)	Ensuring effective GBVH Referral Pathways <i>Session objective: To engage stakeholders in the development of the Action Plan for Harmonization of GBVH referral pathways.</i>	Francesca Biasiato, Technical Officer Gender, non-discrimination & Inclusion, Better Work Global
14.25 - 14.35 (10 mins)	Presentation on LDC graduation process (UNDP) <i>Session objective: To set the scene and provide an update on Cambodia's LDC graduation process.</i>	UN (TBC)
14.35 - 15.25 (50 mins)	Panel discussion Title: Gender Equality and Human Capital Development in Support of Cambodia's LDC Graduation <i>Session objective: To explore whether Cambodia's GFT sector is on track to support a smooth LDC graduation while advancing gender equality, decent work, and women workers' future readiness.</i>	Moderated by: Ms. Kan Sopheap (CARE) Panelists: • GFT committee member (Emerald) • MLVT • CGTI • Participating factory (GEAR project)
15.25 - 15.45 (20 min)	Community impact through WE Network <i>Session objective: To promote the WE network and call for future collaboration.</i>	Ms.Sinal Hean & Ms. Maly Man (GIZ)
15:45 - 16:00	Coffee Break	
16:00 - 16:30	Market Place: Digital tools to support women workers	Ms. Choung Sythol

	<i>Session objective: To showcase available digital tools to support GFT workers, especially women, in the workplace.</i> - GBV Safe App (MoWA) - Our Rights App (GIZ) - ILO-BFC chatbot (ILO-BFC) - MLVT App (MLVT) - QR Code LABs (LABS) - Youth Health App (CHC) - Migration App (CHC) - RISE digital tool (RISE & CWPD)	
16:30 - 16:50	Closing Remarks by MLVT (TBC)	H.E Sovann Vannarothe, Permanent Secretary of State, MLVT (TBC)

Reserved rights for alternative changes!