



គណៈកម្មាធិការ
សហប្រតិបត្តិការដើម្បីកម្ពុជា
Cooperation Committee
for Cambodia
Comité de Coopération
Pour le Cambodge

ទស្សនវិស័យ: ការអភិវឌ្ឍប្រកបដោយនិរន្តរភាពសម្រាប់ប្រទេសកម្ពុជា
Vision: Sustainable Development for Cambodia

Outcome Statement

CCC Annual General Meeting 2017

16 March 2018, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is the biggest platform of the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) and its constituent members. The event also widens the participation from other development actors including the government, development partners, private sector, and civil society not only to get them informed about progress of CCC’s membership but also to inclusively discuss and find solutions to the common development issues.

This year, 270 participants as CCC members and partners attend the AGM which is held under the theme: “Civil Society Space in Localization of Sustainable Development Goals and Beyond” and the six sub-themes: 1). Civil Society Financing for Development; 2). Civil Society Co-Existence and Improved Collaboration; 3). Legal Compliance (Taxation, Law on Association and NGOs - LANGO, Labor Law, National Social Security Fund -NSSF and other related laws); 4). Do SDGs Enable or Constrain for CSO Operations?; 5). CSO Engagement in Sub-National Democratic Development; and 6). Importance of Provincial Networks in Promoting Local Ownership and Sustainability.

The AGM applauds the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the subsequent efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia in localizing this 15 years agenda by integrating the process and contents that promote the principle of “leave no one behind” and multi-stakeholder partnerships. These enable all stakeholders to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of SDGs and national plans. Besides the SDGs, civil society highly appreciates the inclusion of multi stakeholder partnership as a key element of the Implementation Plan (IP3) of the Implementation of Social Accountability Framework (ISAF). This could definitely promote the engagement of civil society and other stakeholders in the sub-national democratic development.

At the same time, participants of the AGM seriously concerned with the enabling environment for their sector, particularly in terms of civic space, legal framework, financial sustainability, people participation in decentralization and democratization, and inclusive partnership for development. Additionally, the AGM agrees that civil society are still challenged with the inconsistent and lack of meaningful engagement among key players throughout the SDGs process so far and thus, further efforts are required for the sector after the SDGs localization phase. Notwithstanding that these challenges occur, the AGM reconfirms their commitment and preparedness to participate in the implementation of SDGs and ISAF.

Participants of the AGM express great concerns since the financial viability of civil society sector gets even deteriorated recently. Funding source for CSOs in Cambodia heavily relies on the Official Development Assistance (ODA) and INGO funding while the sector still has limited capacity to diversify its income. Even though Cambodia has already transited to the Low Middle Income Country (LMIC), the AGM strongly believes

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that civil society in Cambodia needs the continuation of development aid and other assistance which promote the existence and sustainability of civil society. At the same time, the AGM appreciates the recent initiatives of CCC for instance the establishment of Civil Society Fund, the capacity development on resource mobilization, the voluntarism, which could relatively respond to these challenges.

The AGM stress their particular concerns on the overall shrinking space of civil society, hindering them to carry out their activities, especially for CSOs who work on sensitive areas such as human rights, advocacy, anti-corruption, natural resource management, and election. Furthermore, civil society continues to experience relentless legal requirements/enforcement, specifically with regards to LANGO, Taxation Law, Labour Law, and NSSF. The legal support services introduced to CCC membership could solve a part of the issues but remains too little comparing to the demand. While there is clearly a need to maximize legal assistance for civil society, the legislation process must also made in full consultation with civil society and those who are affected, to ensure effective interaction in policy dialogue.

The AGM highlights another important aspect on the co-existence and collaboration within the civil society itself. So far, the depth of collaboration among CSOs working on different areas, and even across the CSO networks remain shallow. Participants of the events feel impressed with the findings from the recent research commissioned by CCC that the governance arrangement among CSO networks should be improved and then a certain modality of CSO collaboration should be treated as a common priority. Discussion made at the AGM also emphasized the needs for further capacity development to the provincial CSOs networks, who work closely at the ground with the community to address their issues.

In order to effectively localize the SDGs into Cambodian context and to promote sustainable development in Cambodia, the AGM raise the following key asks for the following stakeholders:

Royal Government of Cambodia:

- Continue to support the civil society to engage in key development agenda and reforms such as Legal Reform, National and Sub-National Democratic Development, and the Implementation of Social Accountability Framework (ISAF).
- Ensure the enabling environment for CSOs, especially in relation to the legal framework, meaningful partnership in policy development, and considerably the financing for development.
- Promote multi-stakeholder partnership and effectively apply the commitment in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and SDGs (all Cambodian SDGs, particularly SDGs 16 and 17 and the principle of Leave No One Behind). It is very important to reinforce key existing multi-stakeholder partnership modalities as stated in the Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategy (DCPS) 2014-2018, especially to have High Level Annual Government and NGO Consultation Meeting, and to create the new ones, if necessary, to confirm the government commitment towards those partnership mechanisms.
- Promote the incentive scheme such as tax exemption for civil society, allocation of annual national budget, and other initiatives. The government should support the Civil Society Fund as one of the dynamic mechanisms to promote financial sustainability for civil society sector.
- Collaborate with all stakeholders, including civil society and private sector to have regulatory framework on Responsible Business Conducts.

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Development Partners/Donors:

- Stand with civil society organizations by understanding and promoting their enabling environment through having the overarching civil society policy, road map and/or pillar of civil society.
- Promote and support CSOs partners towards harmonization and good governance among the sector. The support on Governance and Professional Practice (GPP) certification system is strongly asked for.
- Promote the newly introduced initiatives of civil society, specifically on the Civil Society Fund, guideline on good practice and sustainability of Community Based Organizations, CSO Assembly, and other common efforts.
- Ensure continuation of development aid, and where possible increase funding supports. The support should come with relaxed conditions for local CSOs to participate in the bidding process, promotion of rights based approaches, inclusive partnership, and local ownership and sustainability.

Private Sector:

- Sensitize among the sector the outstanding development priorities, especially the Busan Agreement on Effective Development Cooperation, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Jointly advocate with civil society to have regular Public-Private and Civil Society Dialogue to promote prosperity for all actors and to promote effective development cooperation.
- Promote the championship and the application of Business and Human Rights throughout the business sector as well as the best practices from other countries.
- Support the newly established Civil Society Fund, both through technical and financial manners so that civil society continues to play important roles to sustainable and democratic development of Cambodia.

Civil Society:

- Promote coordination among and across sectors. The AGM proposes CCC, as the umbrella organization to work with other CSO networks to have regular dialogues within the sector (e.g Annual CSO Assembly) to address their common issues and to develop common strategies.
- Strengthen their awareness, capacity and professionalism for innovative response to development challenges especially in the localization and subsequent agenda of SDGs.
- Promote the legal compliance capacity, ownership and support to the local CSOs while clearly defining the agenda and collaboration between INGOs and LNGOs.
- Support existing CSO initiatives such as Voluntary Certification System, Civil Society Center, Civil Society Holistic Institutional Capacity Development, Civil Society Fund, CSO Assembly, CSO Staff Alumni, and other common efforts.

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