



Draft Summary Result of the Virtual Meeting Between CSOs and the United Nations

Phnom Penh, June 02, 2021

The Virtual Meeting between CSOs and the United Nations (hereinafter the “Virtual Meeting”) was conducted on June 2, 2021. The major membership-based and coalition organizations, consists of the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGO Forum), Health Action Coordinating Committee (HACC), Cambodian Disabled People’s Organization (CDPO), Advocacy and Policy Institute (API), Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC), Transparency Internal Cambodia (TIC), Child Rights Coalition Cambodia (CRC), Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC), Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD), and NGO Education Partnership (NEP) representing different sectors such as civic space, human rights, education, health, children, women and gender, are participated the virtual meeting.

The Virtual Meeting reiterates significant roles of civil society to enhance civic space and sustainable development, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, in Cambodia. Civil society appreciates the United Nations’ commitments and efforts to assist the government combating the Covid-19 community outbreak. In addition, we expressed appreciation, noticing a great participation representing various development actors and the UN agencies, likes OHCHR, UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNDP, who actively attended and discussing within the spirit of mutual understanding and inclusive partnership. The participants had discussed in details on four sectors in align with enabling environment and development challenges for civil society in the context of Covid-19 pandemic:

Sector 1: Enabling Environment: When civil society is included, everyone benefits. During the ongoing Covid-19 community pandemic, civil society is facing several constraints on its ability to carry out its works, as a result of administrative and health measure by Cambodia government. Civil society has crucial roles, especially during the pandemic, to ensure inclusive engagement and partnership with other development actors to uphold civic space, fundamental human rights, defenders, and enabling environment in Cambodia. *Civil society calls for official annual dialogue with the United Nations to make our voices heard by addressing common challenges and implication caused by Covid-19 on national policies, partnership dialogue, legal compliance and reform and beyond.* Those common concerns are significant to enhance the UN roles in Cambodia during and post Covid-19 pandemic at both national as well as sub-national.



Sector 2: Human Rights: CSO role has been narrowed down and down and mainly neglected and the fundamental human rights and freedom are being seriously violated by the local authorities, at last, 30 people have been arrested because of their freedom of speech exercises during the government measure over the COVID 19. The CSOs are not involved or consulted in the measurement over the COVID 19, resulting a lot of concern on its transparency, respecting the fundamental human rights and equity of the public service to the citizens of Cambodia from all political ideologies as called by the UN/OHCHR. All the UN Agencies in Cambodia including the UN/OHCHR continue and increase intervention & closely watch and support for releasing of all the prisoners of Conscience more than just releasing their written or oral statements at the HRC - Human Rights Council.

Sector 3: Health & Social: Poor and vulnerable people face challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic. The core public health and social response shall prioritize vulnerable people, especially people with disability, economically disadvantaged, children, etc. As agreed by the participated civil society, a particular mechanism is needed to enable workers in civil society to get vaccination. By getting vaccinated, civil society can help community to improve health, education and other fundamental social service for people and children who have limited capacity and insufficient IT skill. During the COVID 19, UN support to children to enable them to continue and having proper education is also necessary. Children need to be well equipped the online education material and the teachers also need to be trained as well on the right and effective teaching methodologies for the online teaching.

Joint Sector 4: Financing CSOs: The United Nations plays a significant role to ensure that Cambodia government will use national budgeting effectively and transparency to assist people in needs during the covid-19 pandemic. We observe that there is the absence of approach that allows collecting inputs from the general public on the budget management in order to enhance inclusive participation at both national and sub-national level. In order to ensure continues role of CSOs, we would like the UN agencies to find ways to finance civil society, by using UN Trust Fund, UN Emergency Funding as the funding sources from the UN Agencies are neutral and independent and will be safe for conducting activities, projects and programs.

Finally, we all are committed to continue working together in partnership, professionalism and enabling environment to address development challenges and enabling environment for civil society in the context of Covid-19 pandemic.