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22th July 2010



A communiqué to the Royal Government of Cambodia and our development partners Outcomes from a two day forum on CSO development effectiveness forum

Representatives from civil society organisations gathered in Phnom Penh on 20 and 21 July 2010 to discuss how we can be accountable for our contributions towards realising development effectiveness in Cambodia.



Civil society organisations have greatly appreciated the opportunity to attend and participate in the two day forum. As a result of our participation, we have deeper understanding of the parameters and complexity of development effectiveness and of civil society's contribution to development effectiveness.

We are aware of the significant achievements of government, our development partners and the private sector that contribute greatly to Cambodia's social and economic development. We respect and appreciate the leadership shown by many other actors, especially the Royal Government of Cambodia, in regards to Cambodia's development.

On behalf of civil society organisations, we hereby state that:

Civil society is itself central to effective development in Cambodia. We make important contributions to Cambodia's development especially in the areas of service delivery, policy development and research, advocacy and in facilitating democratic processes. We fill gaps that others cannot.



Civil society organisations in Cambodia are necessarily diverse. We vary in our breadth and complexity, size and scope. Our diversity is our strength. Our effectiveness can be understood as a product of our diversity.

The core principles to which civil society organisations in Cambodia subscribe are: social justice, participation, equity (including gender equity), independence (especially from political bias), democracy, transparency, empowerment, partnership, shared values, accountability and rights.



Some of the key challenges that face many civil society organisations in Cambodia include:

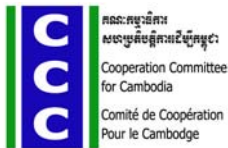
- Lack of long term, sustainable funding
- Uncoordinated demands from donors e.g. reporting requirements
- Difficulties in accessing relevant information in a timely manner
- Struggle in effectively engaging communities in project ownership
- Coordination remains challenging due to our diversity
- Opportunities to strengthen our capacity, notably in relation to management and governance, are yet to be fully maximised
- Lack of recognition, for example, in not being adequately represented in dialogue with our development partners



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We now seek greater recognition, a stronger voice and increased capacity. Non-government organisations are development actors in our own right. We have very valuable experience and local knowledge which is relied on by our development partners. We are keen to ensure that our knowledge, experiences and expertise are fully acknowledged by our partners.



Civil society organisations take seriously our responsibilities to work at the highest standard of accountability. An example of this is the development of a national Code of Ethical Principles and Minimum Standards of Good Governance. We commit to supporting each other to reach these standards. We cannot and should not be judged or indicted for the sins of a few.



We have commenced a process for determining the mechanisms, guidelines and indicators that will help us comply with the principles of development effectiveness that we have set. We need more time to complete this process. We wish to consult with our development partners in completing this work and call on our development partners to actively support and join this process.

We call on the Royal Government of Cambodia to:



- Strengthen law enforcement and implementation in a fair and accountable manner
- Increase, and offer more substantive, systematic dialogue between CSOs and development partners, using existing mechanisms eg CDCF, technical working groups, etc
- Be open and receptive to ongoing and ad-hoc communication with civil society organisations during which our ideas are heard and respected
- Assist us to secure collaboration and support from local and sub-national authorities



We call on our donors and other development partners to:

- Offer long term funding to civil society organisations
- Offer core funding to civil society organisations in support of civil society's capacity for responsiveness to their constituents
- Fund (institutional) capacity building programs
- Respect the governance of NGOs and avoid undue influence over their mission
- Reduce the complexity of funding criteria
- Set aside some funds to ensure the sustainability of smaller non-government and community based organisations
- Coordinate their respective contributions to Cambodia's development at a national and sub-national level

