



## **Monitoring and Review of SDG 16 Plus at the National and Regional Level ( 2015-2020) in Cambodia:**

### **CSOs perspective**

**By: The Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC)**

#### Chapter 1 Goal 16 within the Context of Cambodia

At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, world leaders adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The SDGs are a collection of 17 universal agenda that integrate three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environment. The Government of Cambodia finalized the localization process of Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) in late 2018. The Cambodia SDGs (CSDGs) Framework 2016-2030 selected all 17 SDGs and added one additional goal, related to clearance of land mine and explosive remnants of war, reflecting the national priority of de-mining Cambodia's territory. This resulted in a final version comprising: 18 CSDGs goals, 88 nationally relevant targets, and 148 (global and locally defined) indicators including 96 national indicators.

Since the adoption of the SDGs in Sept. 2015, the Cambodian government nominated Ministry of Planning to lead the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals effort in late-2015, and it has been active since that time to incorporate the Goals into national plans as well as reach out to other government ministries and agencies and to represent the government in dialogue with sub-national authorities and non-government stakeholders. The localization process of the SDGs in Cambodia began with the assessment of achievements and unfinished goals of the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs) in relation to the goals, targets and indicators of the SDGs. The CSDGs fully align with the government's long-term development vision as articulated in Vision 2050, and in its medium-term instrument – the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV, and the National Strategic Development Plan 2019 – 2023.

The government partnered with United Nations agencies in developing two preliminary analyses – the Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) in 2016 and the SDGs Assessment in 2017. The RIA mapped Cambodia's National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and other principal strategies to identify areas of alignment between the SDGs and Cambodia's policy agenda, while the SDGs assessment focused on the indicators



and availability of reliable data sources. The CSDGs have been fully integrated to the National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023, where they provide a large proportion of the Monitoring and Evaluating date; and via proposed inclusion in line ministry and agency’s Budget Strategic Plans (which are a major part of Cambodia’s performance-based budgeting arrangements).

There are 12 targets of the Global Agenda 2030 under Goal 16 to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all level. However, Cambodia government integrated only three targets into its CSDGs. Those targets are: 16.3, 16.5, and 16.9 (Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all; Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms; By 2013, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration). Within the context of Cambodia, some key ministries have significant roles to play under SDG 16 including the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Post and Telecommunication, Anti-Corruption Unit, etc.

Table 1: The Number of SDG 16 National Targets and Indicators

		Facts and Figures	Cambodia	Global
SDG 16 – national targets	4	Total number of National Targets for SDG 16 (both global and national)	3	12
	5	Number of global targets accepted for national targets of SDG 16	3	
	6	Number of newly created national targets	0	
	7	Numbers of global targets of SDG 16 not accepted	9	
SDG 16 – national indicators	8	Total number of global indicators out of 23 for SDG 16 used nationally	03	23
	9	Number of new voluntary national indicators adopted for SDG 16	0	

Table 2 : Text of the SDG 16 National Targets and Indicators

No	National Targets	Indicators	Ministry	Remarks
16.1	Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rate			



16.2	End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children			
16.3	Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	Proportion of people involved in disseminating law.	MONASRI Ministry of National Assembly and Senate Relationship and Inspection	Specific target numbers are to be set
16.4	By 2030, Significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime			
16.5	Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms			
16.6	Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all level			
16.7	Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	Proportion of female government officials in Ministries-Agencies	Ministry of Civil Service	Specific target numbers are to be set
16.8	By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration			
16.9	Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	Percentage of birth registered and receive birth certificate (by 2024, at least 90%)	Ministry of Interior	Specific target numbers are to be set
16.10	Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime			



16.11	Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development			
16.12	Enhance the protection of digital rights (new)			
16.13	Promote inter-Korea cooperation for peace and prosperity (new)			

The Government of Cambodia delivered a Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report at the 2019 session of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in 2019. The government produced the voluntary national review 2019 on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The Ministry of Planning (MoP) was authorized to lead and coordinate the monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs. The process underpinning Cambodia’s first Voluntary National Review (VNR) began in late 2018, led by the Ministry of Planning.

Since 2013, civil society organizations (CSOs) have been playing a significant role in contributing the formulation and supporting civil society organizations, development partners, as well as joining the government for adaptation and localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Cambodia. Civil society organizations play a key role in reflecting the progress and achievement as well as challenges of SDGs implementation through public feedback and Voluntary National Reviews in Cambodia. CSOs gained some spaces to work in partnership with the government and other stakeholders on SDGs localization, specifically through the national Technical Working Groups (TWGs) mechanisms, and the voluntary national reviews. One of the four of its engaged TWGs is the TWG on Planning and Poverty Reduction (PPR) which is co-chaired by the Ministry of Planning and UNDP in Cambodia and this TWG plays an important role in developing key development agenda for the country, including the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Cambodia is a member of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) and participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Busan, November. 2011). Generally speaking, the overall implementation of SDGs in Cambodia has been slow although some goals have been focusing on by the government and adequate mechanisms for national implementation of the SDGs have been established according to the principles of the 2030 Agenda. The awareness on SDGs in general, and CSDGs in particular is extremely low amongst the general public and a vast majority have not ever heard about it. These are attributed to two main reasons: resources availability and coordination among stakeholders.

Chapter II (to be written by ADA-FORUS-JANIC)



Refer to the main Study

### Chapter III SDG 16+ within the Context of Cambodia

#### Democracy and Civic Space in Cambodia

Due to the existing national framework and planning mechanism, the CSDG framework is not an action plan for delivery. Instead it lays out an alignment framework from national to global and vis-à-vis, and a groundwork for integration into the national policy framework, planning process, and monitoring achievements. The government-led coordination efforts have integrated the CSDGs into existing management and dialogue mechanisms, principally the Development Cooperation and Partnership Strategy and its associated network of Technical Working Groups that bring together senior government officials, development partners and civil society representative. On-going government reforms, especially the Public Finance Management and public administration reform, have provided momentum for the Goals with their respective focus on result-based budgeting and improved public service delivery. Nationally relevant targets 88 were developed in which 84 targets were adapted from the SDGs and 4 additional targets, 3 of which were set for Goal 18 (See Figure 1). Compare to 232 global indicators, CSDGs set less ambitious indicators of 148, in which 96 are nationally defined indicators (See Figure 2).

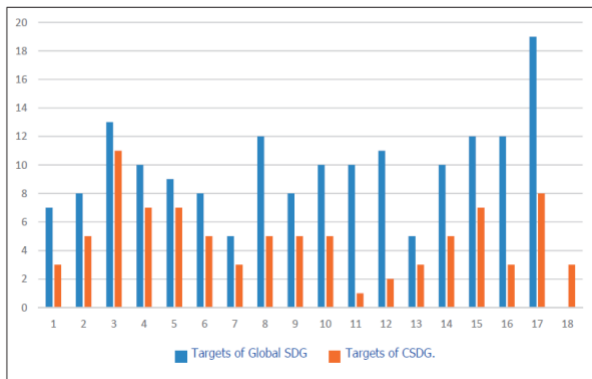


Figure 1: SDG vs CSDG Targets  
Source: CSDG Framework 2016-2030, p. 35

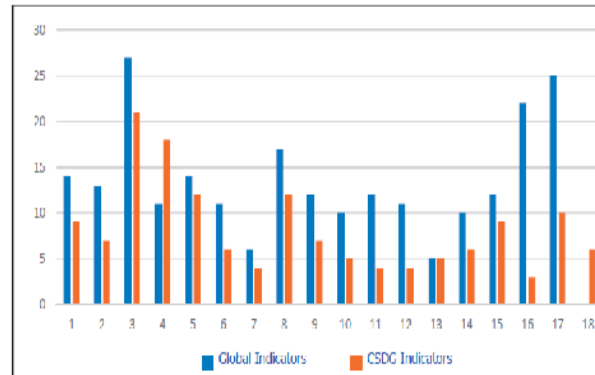


Figure 2: SDG vs CSDG Indicators  
Source: CSDG Framework 2016-2030, p. 36

The comparison by number of each target and indicator between



CSDGs and the SDGs is presented in this table.

Goal	Global Framework		CSDG Framework		Net change	
	No. of Targets	No. of Indicators	No. of Targets	No. of Indicators	No. of Targets	No. of Indicators
1 End poverty	7	14	3	9	-4	-5
2 Zero Hunger	8	13	5	7	-3	-6
3 Health & well-being	13	27	11	21	-2	-6
4 Quality education	10	11	7	18	-3	7
5 Gender equality	9	14	7	12	-2	-2
6 Clean water	8	11	5	6	-3	-5
7 Affordable, clean energy	5	6	3	4	-2	-2
8 Decent work & growth	12	17	5	12	-7	-5
9 Industry & infrastructure	8	12	5	7	-3	-5
10 Reduce inequality	10	10	5	5	-5	-5
11 Sustainable cities	10	12	1	4	-9	-8
12 Responsible consumption	11	11	2	4	-9	-7
13 Climate change	5	5	3	5	-2	0
14 Life below water	10	10	5	6	-5	-4
15 Life on land	12	12	7	9	-5	-3
16 Peace and institutions	12	22	3	3	-9	-19
17 Partnerships	19	25	8	10	-11	-15
18 Demining & ERW	0	0	3	6	3	6
repeated indicators		12			0	0
Total without repeated indicators	169	232	88	148	-81	-84

Cambodia has gone, and is going through a turbulent period. This has seen civic space shrink dramatically, and a return to autocratic practices by the government. Rights, advocacy groups, critics of the government and the media have been targeted, resulting in a number of groups/firms being forced to close, and individual being prosecuted.

### 1). Law on the Management of the Nation in State of Emergency

A state of emergency has not been declared. However, the government has promulgated a national emergency law that provide increasing power if a state of emergency is declared. The report summarizes the Covid-19, democracy and human rights as the following: After initially denying the dangers of the virus, the government has used the sweeping powers of the emergency law to crack down on dissent (journalists, civil society activists and opposition politicians) in the name of “fighting disinformation”. This is likely to lead to deepening authorization in a country that was already severely strained before the pandemic, with a weakened opposition in exile and severely curtailed civic and media space.

### 2). Legislation on NGOs/CSOs



The 2015 Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (LANGO) is now the overriding legislation influencing the formation of civil society organizations and the recognition of foreign organization wishing to operate in Cambodia. It required all local organizations to register with the Ministry of Interior in Phnom Penh, and is currently a centralized (and time consuming) process.

On paper the registration (the approval component) process is meant to be completed within 45 days, if all required documentation can be submitted or within an additional 60 days if additional information is sought. However, it frequently takes far longer with six months to one year being mentioned by CSOs who have gone through the process. Officials involved in previewing applications, often require applicant organizations to reformat and rephrase documents including organizational statutes in a particular way, and these demands have to be adhered to before formal submission for approval, and these demands apparently causes delays. It was also reported that “fast tracking” of applications can be achieved on payment of unofficially fees. Over half of surveyed CSOs (50%) believed the CSO registration process is difficult.

In terms of CSO operations, the scope of the LANGO is quite limited; it imposes requirements to submit annual activity and financial reports or copies of reports submitted to donors, as well as copies of project agreements. Non-compliance with these requirements could result in suspension or closure. LANGO also states that domestic associations or NGOs (and similar clauses apply to registered foreign organizations) that conducts activities that endanger the security, stability, and public order, or jeopardize the national security, culture, tradition, and custom of Cambodian national society, regardless of other criminal punishments” can be closed. But how these are and can be interpreted remain unclear, however, it does state that if accuse of breaches of these, there is a right of appeal.

### **3). Freedom of Expression/Assembly**

While protected by international Law and the Constitution the ability to freely express one view is now considered to be curtailed. As there are now numerous examples of people being prosecuted for expressing dissenting views.

In October 2017, Ministry of Interior issued a statutory instruction requiring NGOs to “notify” local authorities in advance of activities and this notification was more often than not interpreted by local authorities as requiring their permission. While this was considered an administrative restriction, most CSOs worked around it, though it had sector implications. CSOs working on social issues/services, livelihoods etc., had no problems in undertaking activities or organizing events in communities. Those working on right and advocacy issues or identified (by authorities) as being critical, often could not get



the “permissions”, or they would not be given the go ahead, so couldn’t or wouldn’t go ahead with activities in communities for fear of confrontations or reprisals.

#### **4). Access to Information**

Cambodia is considered an information communication telecommunication (ICT) savvy country with the rapid uptake of internet usage and mobile phone penetration. With internet usage jumping from 300,000 in 2010 to over 4 million users four years later! While mobile phone ownership is reported to be 92 per 100 persons. So mobile devices have enable users to access the internet, which has become one of the main sources of information for the public.

Cambodia continues to lack an Access to Information (A2I) Law which has been drafted but remains unapproved (as of September 2019). This sets out a possible framework to enable citizen to access information they need. The country also lacks a cybercrimes law. The CSO survey for the study found that, over a third of CSOs (36%) believe access to information from state at national levels was difficult and relied more on personal contacts than from an open access system.

However, it has been observed, that since 2015 internet users have been targeted by government for being critical of government with at least 13 individuals charged with offences including under the recently adopted (2018) Lese-Majesties Law. While most were charged under the very ambiguous defamation and incitement article of the criminal code, which has often been arbitrarily used to suppress critics of freedom of speech.

#### **5). Government Authorities and CSOs Relationships**

This dimension was difficult to qualify, as CSO responses to it were so diverse, also there are multiple factors that influence this dimension. Most CSOs have some operational relationship with authorities, this is frequently at commune and district levels, where CSOs often engaged and involved representatives of local authorities. As they are often the designated focal points for multiple development activities for example women and children committees, disaster management committees, etc...., most frequently at commune and district levels but also at provincial levels.

However, many consulted CSO personnel believed that there was often ‘a cooling’ in relations with engaged local authorities and official during the period of the review, which they associated with the increased apprehensive political environment between 2016-2018.

#### **6). Inclusive Partnership (Private, Government and CSOs)**





There are multiple partnering and coordination mechanisms at national level. These are generally focused on partnering and coordinating development partner inputs with government. The most commonly known ones are the 21 technical working groups (TWG). While most are active, some are inactive, but it is hard to identify the cumulative impacts of their activities, as they are fragmented. Stakeholder consulted indicated that the TWGs are generally higher level coordination mechanisms. They do not generally engage in policy interventions or implementation. There is CSO representation on some of the TWGs, mainly those engaged with social sector (education and health, etc.).

### ***International Monitoring Reports on Cambodia***

#### **1. IDEA**

Cambodia is considered as an authoritarian regime since 2018 after being classified as a hybrid regime between 1993 and 2017. A state of emergency has not been declared. However, the government has promulgated a national emergency law that provide increasing power if a state of emergency is declared. The report summarizes the Covid-19, democracy and human rights as the following: After initially denying the dangers of the virus, the government has used the sweeping powers of the emergency law to crack down on dissent (journalists, civil society activists and opposition politicians) in the name of “fighting disinformation”. This is likely to lead to deepening authorization in a country that was already severely strained before the pandemic, with a weakened opposition in exile and severely curtailed civic and media space.

Regarding the freedom of expression, Cambodia was classified as concerning development by the report. Some prominent journalists have been under arrest since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic for allegedly causing chaos by posting comments critical of the Government on social media, or for spreading 'fake news'. COVID-19 has tightened restrictions on public communication. Reported by several online media outlets - such as The Diplomat, Khmer Times and Bangkok Post, and Human Rights Watch - Article 222 of the Cambodian constitution used as a basis for establishing emergency conditions has led to the arrest of civilians and opposition activists for expressing their concerns about COVID-19 on social media. ARTICLE 19 and the Cambodian Center for Human Rights have condemned the arrest of journalists, a majority of whom were charged with the offence of 'incitement' during the pandemic. They further condemned the Government's aggressive attitude towards the independent media during the pandemic. In early October, the Phnom Penh Court convicted Sovann Rithy, one of the many journalists who were arrested during the pandemic. Although he was convicted and sentenced to 18 months, the Court suspended his sentence and released him from detention. He was charged with incitement for publishing a statement made by the Prime Minister in relation to the pandemic in April. Media groups, while

commending his release, are concerned that the conviction will have a chilling effect on the freedom of the press.



## 2. Democracy Index (EIU)

The Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2017 downgraded Cambodia from a hybrid regime to an authoritarian one, and ranked it at 124 out of 167 countries. The report dropped the status of Cambodia due to the elimination of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) – the ruling party’s only real competitor in the national election. In addition, Cambodia scored poorly in electoral process and pluralism following the forced dissolution of the main opposition party which turned the country into a de factor one party state.



### 3. SDGs Indicators 2020

Cambodia is ranked No. 106 of 193 countries, and its score is 64.39. Cambodia is below the regional score by approximately 3 points.

#### OVERALL PERFORMANCE

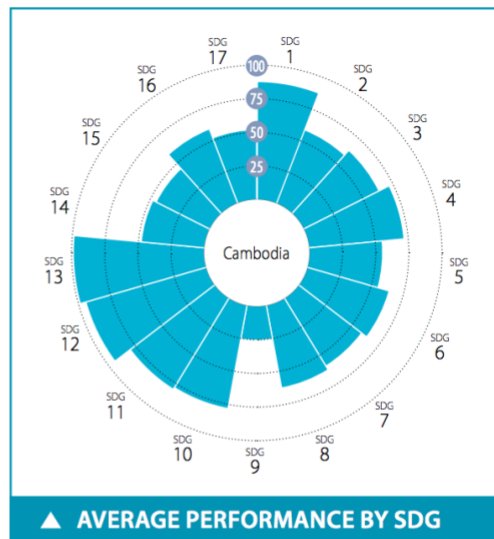
Index score



Regional average score



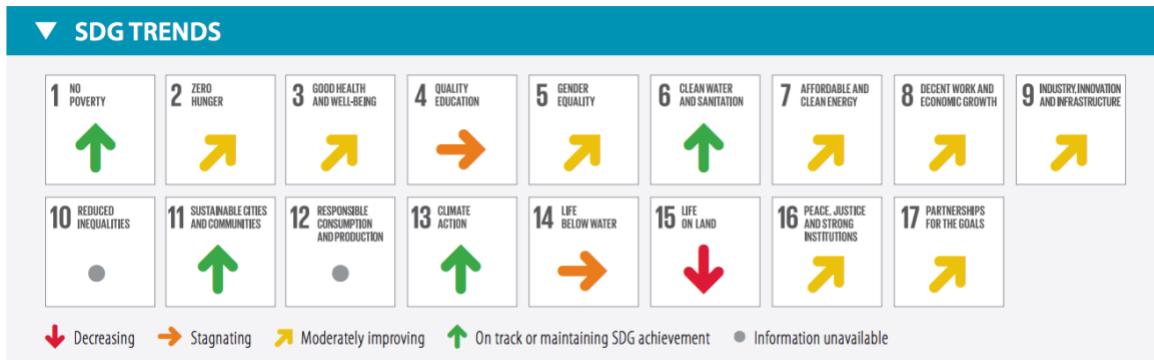
SDG Global rank 106 (OF 166)



#### SPILOVER INDEX

100 (best) to 0 (worst)





Notes: The full title of Goal 2 "Zero Hunger" is "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture".  
The full title of each SDG is available here: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabledevelopmentgoals>

#### 4. UNDP- Human Development report 2019<sup>1</sup>

- **Problem:** Since 2010 – 2018 the Cambodia's forests and natural resource shrank from 57.07% to 46.86% national territory; Cambodia's forests cover 8.7 million hectares. These losses occurred in the context of rapid economic growth and a transition to a market oriented economic. The year 1965 forests and natural resource covered 73.04%.
- **Resolve:** To sustain Cambodia's vital ecosystem, the government has implemented environment governance reforms include new policies and legal frameworks, jurisdictional reforms in natural resource management, a new draft environment and natural resource code, decentralization of natural resource management and a moratorium on new economic land concessions.
- **Challenges:** Cambodia has remaining challenges in sustaining natural resources such as the low productivity of natural resources, limited human resources, market failures and unclear and overlapping land uses.
- **Result:** Community based natural resource management which safeguarding ecosystems by 2018:
  1. Community forestry: 604 sites comprising 470,970 hectares
  2. Community protected areas: 168 areas with 39,452 households, comprising 272,110 hectares.
  3. Community fisheries: 51 sites mostly around Tonle Sap.
- **Toward a better future:** Cambodia has opportunity to avoid a future of continued degradation of natural environment by extensive remaining natural ecosystems in which can achieve future socio-economic and environmental sustainability. Rural communities can be empowered as custodians of natural resources, and new roles can be designed for state agencies as regulators and enablers, supporting and guiding communities and building partnerships.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/library/human\\_development/human-development-report-2019--sustaining-natural-resources-for-.html](https://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/library/human_development/human-development-report-2019--sustaining-natural-resources-for-.html)



According to FAO (2016) about 13% of Cambodia's population is living in severe poverty or with income less than US\$1/day, and half of the country population count not make more than \$2.5 per day. This group is extremely vulnerable that it could easily fall back into severe poverty through just one natural or human induced disaster. According to the World Bank, net enrollment increased to 97% in 2016, but the lower secondary school completion rates was at 57% only in 2017. This is significantly low compared to the average lower middle income countries. Lacking of human capital with knowledge and skills in scientific technology economy math (STEM) as well as technical and vocation skills are the key constraints for Cambodia to become added value in manufacturing export and industrialation. Access to health, water and sanitation, electricity and general public services remained limited for people living in rural area and those who make lower wage. As of 2017, about 21% and 31% of population did not have access to improved water and improved sanitation, respectively. About 1.23 million people (National Census 2019) were reported being migrant workers because of cannot find a decent job or good paid job within the countries. The mostly target countries include the neighbouring Thailand, South Korea and Malaysia.

The Cambodian Women's Resilience Index in 2019 showed Cambodian women and men have 56/100 and 59/100 resilience index respectively. The study found the least resilient capacity are access to sustainable income and livelihoods, access social protection, access to and control over natural resource and limited infrastructure (ActionAid Cambodia, 2019). Climate change has factored Cambodia in a critical vulnerable country to climate change, putting Cambodia at 19<sup>th</sup> mostly impacted by climate change between 1998-2017 (Global Climate Risk Index 2019). USAID estimated that climate change could victimize 61% of rural population and will directly impact 7 million employed in agriculture and 240,000 employed in construction sector by 2050. This will lead to a loss of \$1.5 billion (J. Talbert & K. Reytar, USAID, 2014).

One in five women experiences intimate partner violence (NAPVAW) and one in four women feeling unsafe walking in city at night (ActionAid, 2016). Public services and tax redistribution has under played investment in public education, health, agricultural infrastructure and input and water management, resulting less responsive and gender sensitive public services and investment.



## 5. UNDP - Inequality in Human Development Report 2019<sup>2</sup>

- Human Development Index (HDI): Cambodia has value for 2018 is 0.581, which put the country in the medium human development category-rank 146 out of 189 countries and territories.
- Gender Development Index (GDI): Cambodia value for 2018 is 0.919 (F 0.557 – M 0.606)
- Gender Inequality Index (GII): Cambodia value for 2018 is 0.474, ranking 114 out of 162 countries. 19.3% parliamentary seats are held by women, 15.1%. For every 100,000 live births, 161.0 women die from pregnancy related cause.
- Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI): refer to 2014, Cambodia MPI 37.2% are multidimensional poor.
- Dashboard: Cambodia perform better than at least two third of countries
  1. Quality of human development: selection of 14 indicator associated with the quality of health, education, and standard of living.
  2. Life-course gender gap: selection of 12 key indicators; childhood and youth, adulthood, and older age.
  3. Women’s empowerment: selection of 13 women-specific empowerment indicators; reproductive health and family planning, violence against girls and women, and social-economic empowerment.
  4. Environmental sustainability: selection of 11 indicators that cover environmental sustainability and environmental threads.
  5. Socio-economic sustainability: selection of 11 indicators that cover economic and social sustainability.

## 6. CIVICUS Civic Space Monitoring

Civic space in Cambodia is rated “Repressed” by the CIVICUS Monitor. It calls for Cambodia government to drop charges and unconstitutionally release all journalists jailed for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, end harassment of journalists and media outlets, repeal or significantly amend repressive laws so as to allow for a vibrant and free media landscape in line with its international human rights obligations, and reverse revocations of media licenses to facilitate media freedom and the right to freedom of expression and information.

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<sup>2</sup>[https://www.google.com/search?xsrf=ALeKk01AsUnlTUzi7PLjYpbdTu\\_2ZARt9w%3A1598113330147&ei=MkZBX4XNCLKortoPtY6bmAo&q=human+development+report+2019+by+UNDP+Cambodia&oq=human+development+report+2019+by+UNDP+Cambodia&gs\\_lcp=CgZwc3ktYWIQAziFCCEQoAE6BwgAEEcQsAM6CAG\\_AEM0CEIsDOggIABAIEAcQHjoGCAAQDRAeOggIABAIEA0QHjoECAAQzoGCAAQBxAcOgIADoGCAAQFhAeOgQIIRAVOggIIRAWEB0QHICgXVif5gFgiuwBaANwAHgBgAGXA4gB4yWSAQoyLjIxLjMuMy4xmAEAoAEBqgEHZ3dzLXdperegBAsABAQ&scient=psy-ab&ved=0ahUKEwiFruqKnK\\_rAhUylEsFHTXHBqMQ4dUDCAs&uact=5](https://www.google.com/search?xsrf=ALeKk01AsUnlTUzi7PLjYpbdTu_2ZARt9w%3A1598113330147&ei=MkZBX4XNCLKortoPtY6bmAo&q=human+development+report+2019+by+UNDP+Cambodia&oq=human+development+report+2019+by+UNDP+Cambodia&gs_lcp=CgZwc3ktYWIQAziFCCEQoAE6BwgAEEcQsAM6CAG_AEM0CEIsDOggIABAIEAcQHjoGCAAQDRAeOggIABAIEA0QHjoECAAQzoGCAAQBxAcOgIADoGCAAQFhAeOgQIIRAVOggIIRAWEB0QHICgXVif5gFgiuwBaANwAHgBgAGXA4gB4yWSAQoyLjIxLjMuMy4xmAEAoAEBqgEHZ3dzLXdperegBAsABAQ&scient=psy-ab&ved=0ahUKEwiFruqKnK_rAhUylEsFHTXHBqMQ4dUDCAs&uact=5)



## **7. Human Freedom Index**

As for personal freedom, Cambodia scores 6.82 or ranking 86 off 162 countries. Additionally, regarding economic freedom ranks 43 off 162 countries. However, Cambodia received low status on rule of law as its scores only 2.6.

## **8. Rule of Law Index**

Cambodia has come second to bottom in an index of 128 countries ranked according to rule of law. In the East Asia and the Pacific Region, Cambodia came in the last place out of 15 countries included in the report, and the last in the group of 30 lower-middle income countries.

## **9. Freedom House – Political Rights and Civil Liberties**

Cambodia is a Not Free country. Political rights score only 5 off 40 while the civil liberties score 20 off 60. Cambodia's political system has been dominated by Prime Minister Hun Sen and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) for more than three decades. While the country conducted semi competitive elections in the past, the 2018 polls were held in a severely repressive environment. Since then, Hun Sen's government has maintained pressure on opposition party members, independent press outlets, and demonstrators with intimidation, politically motivated prosecutions, and violence.

## **10. World Freedom Index**

Cambodia was ranked 130<sup>th</sup> out of 168 countries, and its total freedom score was 50.98 out of 100. Cambodia received low score 32.37 on political freedom while the economic freedom gains the highest score 64.67.

## **11. RSF – World Press Freedom**

Cambodia ranked 144<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries, one rank down from 2019. Worried by the prospect of losing the July 2018 general elections after 30 years in power, Prime Minister Hun Sen launched a pre-emptive war against the media in which around 30 radio stations were silenced and Cambodia Daily, an English-language newspaper that had helped to nurture Cambodia's fragile democracy, was forced to close. The last bastion of the independent press, the Phnom Penh Post, was bought by a Malaysian businessman with ties to the Cambodian government in May 2018. The pro-government editorial policies that he subsequently imposed were such that many of its journalists resigned. As a result of this clean sweep,



Cambodians now only have access to news provided by major media groups directly linked to Hun Sen, such as the online news agency Fresh News, which pumps out pro-government propaganda. Only the Voice of Democracy network, whose radio station was closed, tries to resist on social media.

## 12. Transparency International – Corruption Perception Index

Cambodia continued to rank lowest compared to other Southeast Asia countries, raking at 162 of 180 countries. The corruption index, now in its 25<sup>th</sup> year, have frequently shown that Cambodia continues to remain plagued with corruption, ranking close to countries, like Iraq, Zimbabwe and Libya.

## 13. UN-UPR-32<sup>nd</sup>

30 January – 01 February 2019, Cambodia delegation presented<sup>3</sup> to 73 delegations made statements with 198 recommendations including 173 accepted and 25 noted. There are 173 accepted recommendation. All 198 recommendation<sup>4</sup> is the most related to SDGs 16 focus on applying international human rights instruments, statelessness, the law on association and NGOs, rebuilding democracy, political opposition rights, freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, free civic space and protect human rights defender, and justice system. The next is SDGs 17 focus on standing invitation to UN special procedure-special rapporteur OHCHR. The following SDGs 5 mention about gender recognition law and LGBT. SDGs 4 mention about promote access to free education. SDGs 3 mentioned about improving the quality and access to health-care. SDGs 15 focus on land reform, granting communal land title, allocate community land concession to indigenous people. SDGs 1 to combat poverty reduction. SDGs 8 To promote economic growth and social inclusion. And last recommendation 110.150 focus on SDGs 6 facilitate the supply of clean water to poor citizen.

In addition, there are 25 noted recommendations. Over 80% of 25 recommendations in relation to SDGs 16 in which focus on rebuilding democracy to reinstate the rights of member of the political opposition, freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, statelessness, free civic space and protect human rights defender, and justice system. And Over 10% of 25 recommendations are related to SDGs 17 focus on standing invitation to UN special procedure-special rapporteur on human rights, Ms. Rhona Smith, the United Nations Special Rapporteur, hold this position who visit Cambodia twice times a year.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://webtv.un.org/search/cambodia-upr-report-consideration-28th-meeting-41st-regular-session-human-rights-council/6055891180001/?term=&lan=english&page=3>

<sup>4</sup> Report of the working group final: <https://www.upr-info.org/en/review/Cambodia/Session-32---January-2019/Adoption-in-the-Plenary-session#top> and recommendation made by Cambodia: <https://www.upr-info.org/en/review/Cambodia/Session-32---January-2019>





**Chapter IV** Whole of Society Approach/Multi-Stakeholder Engagement on SDG 16+

Civil society is a crucial actor in monitoring and implementation of SDG 16+. It has key role to play in reflecting the progress and achievements as well as challenges of SDG 16+ implementation through public feedback and Voluntary National Review. Civil society organization wants an open, transparent and inclusive participatory approach in VNR process. Civil society organization expresses concern on the timeframe to submit the VNR report posed by the Ministry of Planning. However, some input for VNR reported has been submitted by to Ministry of Planning and other line ministries. However, we did not receive any feedback or clarification for further discussion on our inputs. Some CSOs work with 19 Technical Working Groups (TWGs), but some TWGs are not. We observe that the Ministry of Planning is lack of mechanisms to ensure that reflections of CSO and other stakeholders inputs in the whole VNR report process of the government. CSOs continue to work with UNESCAP and UNDP.

Wholistic Approach	Working Definition	Strategies and Action Plans
Whole-of-government	“Whole-of-Government denotes public services agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues,” (Christensen et al 2007)	Policy and institutional coherence (SDG 17)
Whole-of-Society	Acknowledge and count in important role and contribution of relevant stakeholders in society, including youth, children, women, elderly, minority, communities, religious groups, civil society organization, academia, media, and private sector in support of national efforts for sustainable development.	<b>HRBA:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Empowering</b> civil society and active citizen</li> <li>- <b>Solidarity</b> and United,</li> <li>- <b>Joint Advocacy/Campaign</b> (partnership for policy advocacy)</li> </ul>
Whole-of-SDGs	SDGs are highly interlinked, some are crosscutting (SDG5, 10, 13, 16) and some are enablers for overall outcomes of SDGs (2 & 3).	Nexus approach, Intersectionality, integrated development and rights-based approach.

**National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP):** The NSDP is a mandated strategically operationalized plan for an elected Government for a period of its five-year mandate. It is a political commitment and an overarching framework which guide national reform agendas, Public Investment Plan, National Sector Strategies, National Actions Plans, and Budget Strategy Plan by line Ministries/Agencies. NSDP for the



2018 elected Government developed a five-year strategic priority for 2019-2023 which also set the backbone of its focus to overcoming binding socioeconomic constraints, deepening socioeconomic development as well as to mobilize resources and monitor progresses. The NSDP 2019-2023 has seven focusing themes: (1) promoting poverty reduction and inclusive growth; (2) expanding agriculture; (3) securing greater competitiveness; (4) managing migration and urbanization; (5) combating climate change and deforestation; (6) better governance; and (7) improving the human resource base. The NSDP 2019-2023 is drawn from a longer and higher Rectangular Strategy and the Cambodia Vision 2050, which targets attainment of high-income country by 2050.

**The Rectangular Strategy:** The Rectangular Strategy Phase IV (RS IV) is a mandated political platform of the 6<sup>th</sup> National Assembly mandate (2018-2023). The RS IV serves as a policy framework of the elected political party for formulating the NSDP 2019-2023. The RS IV follows in previous phases of the same ruling Government. As the name suggests, it set priorities over 4 thematic areas and an overarching theme at the core. Under each thematic area and core theme, there are four angles of priority. The thematic focuses include the followings:

- Core Theme: Good Governance: Peace, political stability, security, and social order. This prioritizes fighting against corruption, legal and judicial reform, public administration reform, and reform of the royal Cambodian armed forces.
- Theme 1: Enhancement of the Agriculture: improving agriculture and diversification, land reform and clearing of mines, fisheries reform, and forestry reform.
- Theme 2: Further Rehabilitation and Coordination of the Physical Infrastructure: further restoration and construction transport infrastructure, water resources and irrigation system management, development of energy sector, and development of information and communication technology.
- Theme 3: Private Sector Development and Employment: strengthening private sector and attracting investments, creation of job and ensuring improved working condition, promotion of SMEs, and Correction of social safety.
- Theme 4: Capacity Building and Human Resource Development: strengthening the quality of education, enhancing health services, implementation of gender policy, and implementation of national population policy.

The RS IV set out an inclusive, equitable, resilient, sustainable, and stable economic growth of 7% or above. It also aims at creating high value-added workforce especially among young citizen. It set a target of an annual one percent point to reduce poverty in the country. Additionally, it seeks to improve institutional capacity and governance at national and sub-national levels and ensuring effective public services.



As set in the RS IV and the NSDP 2019-2023, Cambodia with the support of multiple development partners and International Finance Institutions, including the Asia Development Bank, the World Bank, USAID, EU/EC, SIDA, JICA, Germany and Australian Aid have prioritized three key reforms:

- Public Financial Reforms is led by the Ministry of Economic and Finance and key participating ministries, including Ministry of Education, Interior, and Commerce. The reform focuses on tax and custom reform, salary system for civil servants, digital business registration, and procurement.
- Administrative reform focuses on the subnational administration restructure to bring more alignment and coherence of services and role and responsibility.
- Sub-national decentralization and democracy reform aims at bringing public services and decision closer to the people, particularly focuses on commune/Sangkat level planning budgeting and allocation of resources.

However, there are interesting fact from UPR July 2019 on the Conclusions and/or recommendations.

- 110.28 Protect non-governmental organizations and associations and ensure that the administrative provisions of the law on associations and non-governmental organizations are not used to close down, suspend or otherwise negatively affect non-governmental organizations and associations.
- 110.93 Protect the rights of human rights defenders and bring laws, regulations, and policies on freedom of expression, association, and assembly into accordance with the State's international obligations (Italy).

## **1. Challenges on the Coordination Among Stakeholders**

This mainly emphasizes the complementarity and inclusive participation among stakeholders who were engaged in the process. Some CSOs work with 19 Technical Working Groups (TWGs), but some TWGs are not. We observe that the Ministry of Planning is lack of mechanisms to ensure that reflections of CSO and other stakeholders' inputs in the whole VNR report process of the government. CSOs continue to work with UNESCAP and UNDP.

However, the awareness on SDGs in general, and CSDGs is extremely low amongst the general public and a vast majority have not even heard about it. The budget to do public engagement and awareness for the CSDGs process was limited. The attention and commitment to private sector operating in the country were rather weak.



Through the engagement so far, with CSOs was not yet inclusive and there was no clear measure to ensure that inputs from CSOs are taken into account. They should have more chance to discuss, share efforts, and complement each other.

## **2. Stakeholder's engagement on SDGs especially major groups, and partnership dialogue at national level**

The Royal Government of Cambodia approved the Development Cooperation and Partnerships Strategy (DCPS) 2019-2023 through the Decision no 03 SSR dated on 11 January 2019. The DCPS is designed to ensure that Cambodia, by working together with all development actors. The RGC is committed to leading a multi-stakeholder partnership that maximizes resource mobilization opportunities and, in line with other RGC reforms, promotes the achievement of development results.

The RGC's Rectangular Strategy – Phase IV records several impressive achievements that guide the next phase of the DCPS. These include maintenance of macroeconomic stability and continued broad-based economic growth, an unwavering commitment to governance reforms and the rule of law, socioeconomic progress underlined by important advances in health and education, and encouraging trends in economic transformation, industrialization, and diversification. The Cambodia government is committed to leading a multi-stakeholder partnership.

In term of implementation, the Ministry of Planning (MoP) who facilitated the development of the VNR had request the Cambodia Cooperation Committee (CCC), which is an umbrella organization working on CSO capacity building and enabling environment, to coordinate regional and national consultation to provide inputs. CCC had conducted three regional workshop and collecting inputs for MoP; however, feedback was not informed back whether they accepted input or not. It was observed that only positive inputs/results were collated. The consultation had missed all other major key stakeholders such as youth, private sector and women's groups. We observe that there is lack of mechanism to ensure the stakeholders' inputs, especially from CSOs, in the whole VNR report process of the government. Civil society organization wants an open, transparent and inclusive participatory approach in VNR process. The Ministry of Planning does not make a template or format sample for stakeholders to submit the VNR report. To response to this challenge, the Ministry of Planning should develop knowledge management hub for CSOs and other line ministries to do research studies, stoke take reports, and disseminate information through all channels. So, the quality of data will be circulated by line ministries and CSOs engaging in their relevant field of CSDGs goals and processes.



The awareness on SDGs in general, and CSDGs in particular is extremely low amongst the general public and a vast majority have not even heard about it. These are attributed to two main reasons: resources availability and coordination among stakeholders. 1) Resource availability: CSDGs is the ambitious development agenda. Country like Cambodia who just entered the Low middle income status will still need to rely on support from international community while the capacity for domestic resource mobilization remains poor. At the same time, budget allocation for the government to do public engagement and awareness for the CSDGs process was limited. Last but not least, the attention and engagement with private sector operating in the country was rather poor. 2) Coordination among stakeholders: this mainly emphasizes the complementarity and inclusive participation among stakeholders who were engaged in the process. They should have more chance to discuss, share efforts, and complement each other. Through the engagement so far, the engagement with civil society was not yet inclusive and there was no clear measure to ensure that inputs from CSOs are taken into account.

#### Chapter V SDG 16+ & Fundamental Freedom through the Voluntary National Review (VNR)

The Voluntary National Review (VNR) was done for the first time by the Cambodian Government in June 2019. SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (economic growth), and SDG 10 (reduced Inequality), SDG 13 (climate action), and SDG 16 (peace and strong institutions), plus SDG 17 (partnerships) were reviewed in 2019. Cambodia's VNR also focused on these providing an in-depth review of each goal each. Cambodia performance on those six goals is very positive, with well over 60% of the targets above or on track. The VNR consists of 7 key sections including:

- Introduction: cover country context, government commitment, nationalization of the global agenda, rationale of the report.
- Methodology and approach: discuss approaches and sources, key milestones and VNR drafting processing.
- Policy and Enabling Environment included creating ownership, incorporating into national planning and policy making framework, matching the three dimensions into development strategy, economic development, sustainability, and inclusion, leaving no one behind principles and securing environmental sustainability.
- Progress on goals and targets is the most important section which report progresses against the milestone indications starting with first the review of 6 prioritizing goals, and the review of 12 non-prioritizing goals.

- Means of Implementation section covers integration of CSDGs within the national policy and planning structure, resourcing and enabling the goals, M&E and policy feedback, awareness raising, capacity building, enhancing multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The VNR 2019 provide 60% of results were on track and ahead of track. The review clustered the 6 prioritized goals separately from other 12 non-prioritized goals. Overall, among the 6 prioritized goals: 29% were ahead of track, 32.3% on track. Among the 12 non-prioritized goals: 29.8% were ahead of track, 12.3% were on track, and 12.3% were below track. Each cluster has over 38% of data were unavailable, presenting the weakness of the M&E system of the CSDGs.

See the charts below which were extracted from the VNR report.

Figure 6: SDG performance priority goals

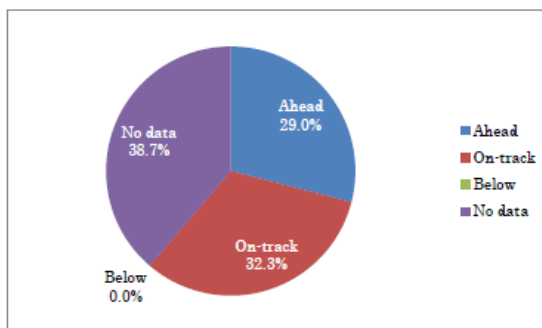
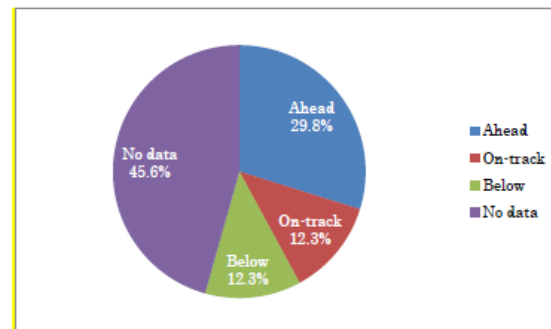


Figure 7: SDG performance (for the non-prioritized 12 goals)



The report also discussed the limitation in ownership by line ministries/agencies, who were not clear about who report what. There are more results which were not reported due to this challenge.

In addition, VNR has presented several challenges and can be summarized as follows:

- VNR emphasis the progress of employment in Cambodia was mainly due to limited dynamic young labor workforce and limitation of Cambodian human capital. For instance, young people do not have added-value skill deriving low paid job in the country and cannot attach high technology industry into the country.
- Increasing climate related events and degradation of natural resources are the key threats which obstacle the fast progress of achieving CSDGs.
- Collective actions and M&E remain key constraints to report and monitor the progress. There are more results which were not reported



The report concluded with the Government’s commitment to strengthen the linkages of implementation through improvement of the Monitoring and Evaluation ecosystem strengthening. It also hoped that the on-going reforms would accelerate achievement of CSDGs. It also emphasized the importance to improve capacity and system strengthening for resources mobilization.

CCC had conducted three regional workshop and collecting inputs for Ministry of Planning. However, feedback was not informed back whether they accepted input or not. It was observed that only positive inputs/results were collated. The consultation had missed all other major key stakeholders such as youth, private sector and women’s groups.

There are key challenges on SDG 16 implementation within the context of Cambodia. Out of 12 Targets of the SDG 16’s global goal, Cambodia government localized only three targets into its CSDGs. Those targets are: 16.3, 16.5, and 16. 9. We do not see updated data in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2019. However, there are some progresses reflected under SDG 4.

	Targets & Indicators	CSDG target			Actual			Progress
		2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	
16.3	Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all							No data
16.7	Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels							On track
16.7.1	Proportion of female government official in ministries/agencies	40	41	42	40	40	41	On track
16.9	By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration							No data

Sources: CSDG Framework and ministries

	Targets & Indicators	Unit	CSDG target				Actual			Progress
			2015	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	
4.1	<b>By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes</b>									<b>Ahead</b>
4.1.1	Completion rate at primary school	%	80.0	81.2	82.6	83.9	82.5	82.8	86.1	On track
4.1.2	Completion rate at lower secondary school	%	39.0	40.7	42.1	43.6	44.5	46.5	47.6	Ahead
4.2	<b>By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education</b>									<b>Ahead</b>
4.2.1	Proportion of grade 1 students passed through all ECE programs (sex aggregate)	%	62.0	64.1	66.3	68.5	64.0	65.0	72.0	On track
4.2.2	Percentage of children attended all aspects of ECE (aged 3-5 years old)	%	21.0	22.9	24.9	26.8	41.0	43.1	39.9	Ahead
4.3	<b>By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university</b>									<b>No data</b>
4.5	<b>By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations</b>									<b>Ahead</b>
4.5.1	The Gender Parity Index (GPI) of gross enrollment rate at lower secondary education	Index	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	Ahead
4.5.2	The Gender Parity Index (GPI) of Gross Enrollment Rate at Upper Secondary Education	Index	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	Ahead
4.6	<b>By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy</b>									<b>Ahead</b>
4.6.1	Adult literacy rate (15+year)	%	78.0	79.6	81.0	82.5	84.4	82.5	-	Ahead
4.A	<b>Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all</b>									<b>Ahead</b>
4.a.1	Proportion of pre, primary and secondary school with basic drinking water facilities	%	27.0	30.5	34.1	37.6	47.9	48.2	46.7	Ahead
4.a.2	Proportion of pre, primary school and secondary schools with basic sanitation facilities	%	57.0	60.2	63.1	65.9	62.5	69.0	68.7	On track
4.C	<b>By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States</b>									<b>Ahead</b>
4.c.1	Proportion of teachers in pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education who have received pre-service or in service training	%	99.0	99.0	99.0	99.1	98.7	98.4	99.3	On track
4.c.2	Percentage of pre-school teachers qualified according to national standards	%	56.0	57.6	59.2	60.8	62.1	63.6	64.0	On track
4.c.3	Percentage of primary teachers qualified according to national standards	%	61.0	62.9	64.9	66.8	70.2	72.1	73.0	Ahead
4.c.4	Percentage of secondary teachers qualified according national standards	%	32.0	34.5	37.1	39.6	85.8	85.0	86.0	Ahead

Sources: CSDG Framework and EMIS/MOEYS

## SWOT Analysis and Assessment

Identification of key challenges and opportunities (SWOT analysis) about Cambodian SDGs:

<p><b>Strength:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It achieved 60% of the targets above in goals 4, 8,10,13,16,17.</li> <li>- Economic growth from 0.087% to 7.05% in 10 years</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weakness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification of unfinished CSDGs all 12 goals which will need to be prioritized</li> <li>- CSOs have insufficient knowledge on health issues, and other technical skills on rural</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With solidarity among development actors, Civil society organizations working on SDGs in Cambodia are able to provide policy recommendation and advocate for better improvement through our channel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development, taxation and finance, environmental matter, etc.</li> <li>- planning, data and M&amp;E issues</li> <li>- Lack of Human resource</li> <li>- Oversight and delivery lessons.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing new statistical surveys.</li> <li>- Work more with stakeholders.</li> <li>- CSDG Visions 2030 and 2050 aim of becoming a high-income nation.</li> <li>- Active citizens are rising, especially on social media responding to social challenges such as gender-equality, climate change, human rights, and other social issues.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Thread</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The economic uncertainty caused by the trade dispute.</li> <li>- Environmental risks one major challenge is growing vulnerability, both economic and environmental.</li> <li>- Covid-19 pandemic disrupts NGOs' activities and funding opportunities, especially those NGOs located at sub-national level.</li> <li>- Due to economic decreasing caused by Covid-19, people are becoming less concerned about human rights issues.</li> </ul>

In addition, Cambodia's integration has 4 guiding frameworks: 1. Coherence and consistency, 2. Prioritization due to limited human and financial resources, 3. Realistic resourcing, and 4. M&E and Policy Feedback. This is where Cambodia can choose to adopt priorities from SDGs or integrate its priorities into the CSDGs.

### 1. Coherence and consistency

Coherence has been delivered at NSDP process and during line ministries/agencies performance review and feedback, including during the adoption of multi-year programme-based budget under Budget Strategy Planning process.

### 2. Prioritization of goals, targets, and indicators

Prioritization is the second consideration given the limited financial and human resources. Due to context and the needs defined by the Government, the Ministry of Planning extracted priorities from NSDP and agreed with multi-ministry consultation on three key principles: leaving no one behind principles, fitting



in government's identified during the National Strategic Development Plan's development process and unfinished business from the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals; and lastly drawing from the global 'accelerators' programme, which emphasis on gender equality, children, rural infrastructure, and social protection reform.

### **3. Realistic resourcing**

Another importance substance to enable the goals is resources required to deliver the CSDGs. The commitment was based on the projections from the Development Finance Assessment undertaken by the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) in 2017 and the economy outlook 2050. The Government also consider the fundability from the Official Development Assistance (ODA), CSO funds, remittance and climate finance, etc.

### **4. M&E and Policy Feedback**

Understanding that the issues to be resolves and progress monitoring go beyond the Government, indicators were set based on their evaluability and opportunity drawn from the progress of technology, based on which the Ministry of Planning had discussed improvement of the M&E ecosystems between CSDGs and NSDP. The evaluation/tracking set out three monitoring rating:

- Ahead of track, being ahead of the milestone value by at least 10%;
- On-track, being within plus or minus by 10% of the given value;
- Off-track, being below the milestone by at least 10%.

## **Chapter VI Lack of Progress on SDG 16+ within the context of Cambodia**

Out of 12 Targets of the SDG 16's global goal, Cambodia government localized only three targets into its CSDGs. Those targets are: 16.3, 16.5, and 16. 9. Within this regard, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) recommend the Government of Cambodia to further localize the global SDGs by integrating its targets and indicators, especially SDGs 16.10, 16.1, 16.2, 16.5, 16.6, etc., into the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs).

Within these challenges, civil society organizations (CSOs) engaged with the Ministry of Planning on monitoring and evaluation the implementation of the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs). We joint in the Inter-Ministerial Meeting on Readjusting Indicators of the CSDGs. We mobilize voices of CSOs to propose for readjusting some key targets on SDGs Goal 16. We advocate the government to accept more targets in Goal 16. After this meeting, we will facilitate other related NGOs to jointly submit letter to the Ministry of Planning, and other involved ministries.



Civil society is a crucial actor in monitoring and implementation of SDGs 16 plus, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic on democracy and civic space. We are active in holding policy-makers to account for the commitments they have made to meaningful participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and to link SDGs 16 to human rights standards/mechanism. The response to the Covid-19 in terms of democracy and civic space as the following:

- Participation: We, the Civil Society Organization, advocate for full engagement and meaningful participation, especially among the most vulnerable affected group (i.e. Islam, Indigenous people, LGBTIQ, etc.) from the Covid-19. Presently, the government has insufficient approach to engage all key stakeholders, like private sector, CSOs and the government itself, in consultation, decision making, and resilience preparedness. We have not had established a platform that people can share their point of view related to government’s measurement to Covid-19.
- Accountability: the government should be accountable to its own citizen in term of budgeting, expense, and responsible for their national policy to fight again the Covid-19 pandemic. We still advocate for open government, and our network raise concerns on public procurement and budget expenditure. We call for more transparency and be informed to the public.
- Non-discrimination: We are monitoring the government response and recovery actions, especially the national policy to support the poor and the most vulnerable people of the Covid-19. We suggest the government to provide information about unusual implementation of authorities where ignorance and discriminatory response/recovery are observed. We advocate with government to strengthen the mechanism with zero tolerant on discrimination in providing fund relief.
- Empowerment: During the pandemic, the people needs access to information and engagement opportunity. We observe gap of information, especially those who are living in rural area and could not access to social media; like Facebook, Youtube, etc. Therefore, the local authority should enlarge their works to effectively disseminate information from national level to grassroots, and to conduct public awareness on prevention and protection, especially affected groups, and allow space for their engagement.

**National Indicators for Key SDGs and Targets Goal 16**

SDG 16 and 12 Targets	National Indicators
16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	No National Indicator



16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	No National Indicator
16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	<i>Promote rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all – measured by “Proportion of people involved in disseminating laws” (result with NO DATA)</i>
16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime	No National Indicator
16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms	No National Indicator
16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	No National Indicator
16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	<i>Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all level – measured by “Proportion of female government officials in ministries/agencies” (result ON RIGHT TRACK)</i>
16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance	No National Indicator
16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	<i>By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration – measured by “Percentage of birth have birth registered and receive birth certificates” (result with NO DATA)</i>
16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	No National Indicator
16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime	No National Indicator



16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development	No National Indicator
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**Case Study: Fundamental Freedom on Media**

Mr. Sovann Rithy, the Chief Executive Officer of the digital media network TVFB, was arrested at night by the Cambodian authorities for having accurately quoted comments made in a speech by Prime Minister Hun Sen. On his person Facebook page, Mr. Sovann Rithy excerpted the Prime Minister’s speech: “If motorbike-taxi drivers go bankrupt, sell your motorbikes for spending money. The government does not have the ability to help.” The Prime Minister admitted that the government was unable to help informal workers, but the police claimed that the words of Prime Minister were intended as a joke.

He remains in jail for pre-trial detention for an accusation of the “inciting to commit crimes” under article 494 and 495 of the Penal Code by Phnom Penh Municipal Court. In addition, the Ministry of Information revoked the online TVFB’s media license on the ground that Mr. Sovann Rithy broadcast information “which was to generate an adverse effect on the security, public order and safety of society.”

Mr. Sovann Rithy has been awarded the 2020 Deutsche Welle (DW) Freedom of Speech Award along with 17 journalists from 14 countries. The award he received representing all journalists worldwide who have been arrested or threatened because of their reporting on the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Cambodian authorities has arrested and called for education a number of people allegations that they had spread “fake news” about the Covid-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Information claimed that 47 Facebook account and pages had spread misinformation about the virus with the intention to causing fear in the country and damaging the government’s reputation. Similarly, the Minister of Interior warned that anyone who spreads misinformation about the Covid-19 “to stir chaos” would face legal action. The recently promulgated Law on the Management of the Nation in State of Emergency is vaguely worded and open for interpretation, as stipulated in Article 5, subsection 11, that: “Prohibition or limitation of the distribution or dissemination of information that could cause fear,” which pave way for the government to curtail press freedom and freedom of expression.

Civil society organizations, especially media organizations, reporters, editors and rights group, etc., have expressed serious concern over the restriction environment and curtailment of freedom of expression for Cambodian citizens. Fundamental freedom, especially the freedom of expression, is a key principle to



foster important roles of citizen and the functioning of democratic society. Within this regard, everyone shall have the right to freely express their concern and opinions without interference from the government. As explicitly guaranteed in article 41 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Cambodia citizens has have freedom of expression, press, publication and assembly.

## Chapter VII Parliament and Roles of CSOs

The Parliament of Cambodia does not have official procedure to monitoring and evaluate the SDGs implementation. SDGs was regulated by the Executive Branch. Parliament has legislative power. The bi-cameral Cambodian parliament consists of a National Assembly and Senate. The current 125 members of the National Assembly are elected in a national election for a five-year mandate, whereas the current 62 Senators are mostly indirectly elected by Commune/Sangkat and National Assembly members for a six-year mandate. The Cambodian People's Party holds all seats in the National Assembly and absolute majority seats of the Senate. However, the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Framework was regulated by Prime Minister at Executive Branch in 2018.

The CSOs promotes multi-stakeholder partnership, and through that it well enforces the SDGs Goal 17 and Leave No One Behind principle of this development agenda. The CSOs provide space for participation from youths, Civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector, and the government so that they could work hands in hands to uphold peace, democratic and sustainable development. The Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), as one of the largest membership based organizations, have created and implemented four strategic plans accelerating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Cambodia. The strategic plans compose the following: 1). Raising awareness via public sensitization programs, especially among youth of different socioeconomic backgrounds; 2). Building capacity development for integrating SDGs and CSDGs among work programs of youth groups; 3). Promoting inclusive partnership with stakeholders (government, private sector and civil society) on financing for development and SDGs related policies prioritization and coherence; And 4). Reflecting the progress and achievements as well as challenges of SDGs and CSDGs implementation through public feedback and voluntary national review.

The CSOs is active in holding policy-makers to account for the commitments they have made in an open, transparent and inclusive manner in the implementation of SDGs. CSOs are aligned and closely backed up by the two key umbrella NGOs, including the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) and the NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF), who are holding space at the Planning and Poverty Reduction Technical Working Group (PPR TWG), the working group that oversees the implementation and monitoring of



CSDGs and National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP). The CSOs also extended its collaboration with many more sectoral leading NGOs as NGO Education Partnership (NEP), World Vision Cambodia (WVC), ActionAid Cambodia, Health Action Coordinating Committee (HACC), Child Rights Coalition Cambodia (CRC-Cambodia), Indigenous Community Support Organization (ICSO), Advocacy and Policy Institute (API), Banteay Srei, Transparency International Cambodia (TIC), Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD), and Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC). Through them, youths and civil society could collectively convey their inputs and recommendations for further improvement to different ministries, government institutions, development partners, and UN agencies in Cambodia.

In order to understand how civil society perceived about the localization and implementation of the SDG 16, the CSOs has conducted regional consultation workshop to collect inputs from CSOs at provincial level engaging 15 provincial NGOs networks to discuss on Goal 16 monitoring and evaluation for providing inputs and recommendation on the Progress Report 2019 on the Achievement of the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs).

## Chapter VIII Recommendation

### Key Action Plans/Recommendations to the Government – National and Local Level

1. The government should lobby the United Nations Resident Coordinator/UNDP in Cambodia and UNESCAP to support developing a “Cambodia CSO/Government Road Map to SDGs 2021-2030.” It is also relevant to mobilize resource to ensure that the government will establish an independent national human rights institution by 2023 (as per UPR recommendation), and monitor the implementation of SDGs recommendations by the government and relevant bodies.

2. The government should ensure that the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) 16 align with the Global SDGs 16 in order to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all level. In this regards, rather than reporting only three targets under CSDGs 16, Cambodia government should extend the scope of implementation and reporting to be align with the Global SDG 16.

3. The Ministry of Planning should develop knowledge management hub for CSOs and other line ministries to do research studies, stakeholder reports, and disseminate information through all channels. So, the quality of data will be circulated by line ministries and CSOs engaging in their relevant field of CSDGs goals and processes.

4. The government seemed to lack of an effective mechanism to localize SDG 16 from the global level to the national



and down to the local level. We observe that the national government has limited human resources or understanding on SDG 16. As the result, the local authority has not properly received knowledge about SDG 16 and this will influence the whole implementation of this particular goal. These challenges are attributed to two main reasons: resources availability and coordination among stakeholders.

5. The government, especially the Ministry of Planning, should establish effective mechanism to ensure that inputs and recommendations from all stakeholders, including CSOs and Development Partners, will be implementing properly on SDGs implementation and the voluntary national review. The government should allocate budget to support public sensitization program on public awareness of SDGs to public servants and the general public, especially among younger generation.

6. The government to ensure that CSDGs and SDGs 16 are well integrated into the National Strategic Development Plan with sufficient resource allocation and financing for those priorities. It is important to enable private sector to finance and support the implementation of SDG 16.

7. Develop communication strategy and raise public awareness on SDGs and Human Rights for the government institutions. The government should involve CSOs and private sectors to engage in the SDGs framework by ensuring inclusive participation in the planning, implementation, feed-backing, monitoring and evaluation. The government should ensure policy and national framework in place to promote full and efficient participation of women, people with disabilities and people living in poverty to have equal opportunity to leadership and benefits at all levels.

8. The government should lobby the National Assembly and Senate to establish a monitoring and reviewing mechanism of CSDGs to hold the government agency to be more accountable to SDGs. We observed that there was lack of mechanism to ensure the stakeholders' inputs, especially from CSOs, in the whole VNR report process of the government in 2019. Civil society organization wanted an open, transparent and inclusive participatory approach in VNR process. The Ministry of Planning did not make a template or format sample for stakeholders to submit the VNR report.

There are some specific recommendations to be addressed shortly for the national government as the following:

- The government should ensure that the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) 16 align with the Global SDGs 16 in order to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all level. In this regards, rather than reporting only three targets under CSDGs 16, Cambodia government should extend the scope of implementation and reporting to be align with the Global SDG 16.
- The government should ensure that CSDGs and SDGs 16 are well integrated into the National Strategic Development Plan with sufficient resource allocation and financing for those priorities.





It is important to enable private sector to finance and support the implementation of SDG 16.

- The government should translate and integrate SDGs 16 to sub-national level via its Decentralization and De-concentration (D&D) Reform, Public Administrative and Public Financial Reform to local and provincial authorities.
- The government should consider CSDGs and other targets of Global SDGs 16 as the permanent goal to be reviewed.
- The government, especially the Ministry of Planning, should establish effective mechanism to ensure that inputs and recommendations from all stakeholders, including CSOs and Development Partners, will be implementing properly on SDGs implementation and the voluntary national review.
- The government should allocate budget to support public sensitization program on public awareness of SDGs to public servants and the general public, especially among younger generation.

#### **Key Action Plan and Proposal to CSOs/Development Partner/United Nations in Cambodia**

1. Mobilizing a CSOs Working Group on Cambodia SDGs, especially those who work on enabling environment and civic space, and to engage with the government on thematic focus by conducting joint M & E. In addition, CSOs should advocate the public about the national budget allocation to support public sensitization program on public awareness of SDGs to public servants and the general public, especially among younger generation. The awareness on SDGs and CDGs in general, including the SDG 16 in particular is extremely low amongst the general public and a vast majority have not even heard about it.

2. Develop communication strategy and raise public awareness on SDGs and Human Rights for CSOs Working Group and the government institutions. Within this regard, CSOs should work very closely with the government, especially the Ministry of Planning, to establish effective mechanism to ensure that inputs and recommendations from all stakeholders, including CSOs and Development Partners, will be implementing properly on SDGs implementation and the voluntary national review.

3. Lobby the United Nations Resident Coordinator/UNDP in Cambodia and UNESCAP to support developing a “Cambodia CSO Road Map to SDGs 2021-2030.” It is also relevant to mobilize CSOs to advocate the government to establish an independent national human rights institution by 2023 (as per UPR recommendation), and monitor the implementation of SDGs recommendations by the government and relevant bodies.

4. Lobby the National Assembly and Senate to establish a monitoring and reviewing mechanism of CSDGs to hold government more accountable to SDGs. We observed that there was lack of mechanism to ensure the stakeholders’ inputs, especially from CSOs, in the whole VNR report process of the government in



2019. Civil society organization wanted an open, transparent and inclusive participatory approach in VNR process. The Ministry of Planning did not make a template or format sample for stakeholders to submit the VNR report.

5. Raise CSOs the government awareness and capacity building on SDGs and Human Rights. In addition, it is important for CSOs to lobby the government to review CSDGs' targets and indicators by integrating more global SDGs' targets and indicators into CSDGs, and to engage private sector and CSOs into the government's platform for monitoring and evaluation of SDGs implementation in Cambodia. CSOs advocates the government to ensure that CSDGs and SDGs 16 are well integrated into the National Strategic Development Plan with sufficient resource allocation and financing for those priorities. It is important to enable private sector to finance and support the implementation of SDG 16.

#### **Recommendations to Regional and International Organizations**

1." Leave No One Behind" – CSOs in Asia can build solidarity through multi—stakeholder dialogues and international monitoring to exchange good practices and effective response to Covid-19 by using international frameworks such as VNS, UPR or human rights treaties. It is crucial to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

2. The principle of leaving no one behind should involve youth to use their potential for transforming our world to sustainable development, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Regional and International Organizations should consider youth as the driving force to realize this global agenda and Beyond by Investing in youth allow the whole nation to harvest fruitfully in the long run.

3. Should provide a crucial platform to allow CSOs in Asia to monitor target countries' situations on Covid-19. Participants should follow up monitoring and evaluation of SDGs implementation in their perspective country.

4. Suggestions for future strategies to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs for the Decade of Action (2020-2030).

- **Global conversation from a risk-based view of transformational trends towards a positive**, possibility focused perspective that recognizes global megatrends as an engine for advancing socio-economic development.
- **Elaborate a practical and positive approach for businesses and countries** to leverage possibilities associated with ongoing global transformations, many of which will be accelerated by the COVID 19 crisis.



- **Systemic change requires transformational policies** -identified a set of characteristics **common to countries** that have demonstrated successful growth and increased wellbeing. In this context, successful growth means growth that improves living standards and societal wellbeing and cohesion.

## Reference

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