

Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum 2007
Statement on behalf of the Technical Working Group on Gender
by Chairperson, H.E. Dr. Ing Kantha Phavi Minister, Ministry of Women's Affairs

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are crucial to human development, good governance and to sustainable social and economic development, to social justice and to alleviating poverty.

The Royal Government of Cambodia is committed to implementing gender equality as outlined in the Rectangular strategy and national policy documents as well as the governments international commitments.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to address women's as well as men's concerns in all sectors, so that women and men benefit equally in all spheres, and inequality is not perpetuated. Gender mainstreaming can be effective when a) decision-makers are strongly supporting the internal process relating to the design, the implementation, monitoring and evaluation, of gender responsive policies and programmes b) the process is integrated into the core technical work (not considered additional work), c) sectoral gender expertise is provided to the Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) and d) adequate budget is provided for specific gender mainstreaming activities.

Some of the most chronic gender inequalities persist in areas which directly affect women's wellbeing and require significant support to implement legal reforms as in domestic violence and trafficking, as well as increased prioritization and targeting for social services such as in the health sector to tackle the unacceptably high rate of maternal mortality and in the education sector to address gender inequities above primary school level and gender gaps in literacy. Other areas such as the low level of women in decision making and the civil service (less than a third of all civil servants are women, and only 9% at senior levels): provide a strong rationale for promoting gender responsive policy processes that the GMAGs will support.

MoWA has played an active role in gender mainstreaming and advocacy with key line ministries, both in engendering the NSDP and in supporting the establishment of GMAGs in line ministries and in developing Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (GMAGs) with the ministries. There are now 24 GM action groups in 27 ministries and institutions. The GMAGs have a membership which includes a broad base of technical expertise from different departments and senior management of their ministries. 9 of these groups have now also developed their GM action plans. MoWA has also supported the development of guidelines for the integration of gender issues in the provincial planning and budgeting cycle.

Apart from supporting the development and implementation of the GMAGs, other strategic entry points for mainstreaming gender are related to the national statistical system and to promoting gender responsive budgeting processes.

Clearly, adequate resources, both human and financial, are needed to undertake the measures needed to build commitment and capacity and to develop and implement gender responsive policies and programmes at all levels. Thus it is the mission for the whole of government, not only Ministry of Women's Affairs, and an important mission for its development partners, to support the national mechanisms and processes for gender mainstreaming to achieve the goal of gender equality stipulated in the Cambodian MDGs, and to sustain good governance and democratic development.

Thank you.