

Guideline on the Annual Consultative Meeting between the Royal Government of Cambodia and Non-Governmental Organisations

1. Background

On 17th February 2012 at the "Peace Palace" **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia**, met with a number of active national and international NGOs, to discuss support during the 2011 flooding as well as the rehabilitation effort to be implemented under Government leadership during 2012. Samdech Prime Minister identified numerous lessons, including issues of coordination, information sharing, logistical arrangements and service delivery that have been addressed.

During the meeting, **Samdech Techo Prime Minister** reaffirmed the RGC's commitment to continue working in partnership with NGOs in the interest of national development. In this regard, he announced that an annual meeting to consider a "*specific sector or theme*" between the Royal Government and *active NGOs* would take place to ensure that NGO support was consistent with national development priorities and was well coordinated with Government activities and resources. The meeting will provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion in a constructive manner to promote a common understanding of challenges and solutions that can promote improved service delivery in line with the national development vision. This Guideline provides clarification on how such a meeting could be organised for maximum effect and mutual benefit.

2. Objectives of the annual meeting

The purpose of the annual meeting shall be to support the implementation of Cambodia's national, sub-national and sectoral/thematic development strategies. The meeting will therefore:

- Focus on a "*specific sector or theme*" to identify shared goals and appropriate actions for Government, NGOs and, where relevant, joint activity that can lead to improved performance and development effectiveness;
- Promote mutual understanding and information sharing on progress achieved, challenges faced and solutions proposed. Information sharing will include consideration of the use of information management systems for key sectors or humanitarian activities;
- Share lessons and innovative practices by promoting lesson-learning, knowledge building and information exchange *amongst* NGOs as well as *between* NGOs and the Royal Government that can be useful for policy making and programme implementation;
- Strengthen and establish communication beyond the annual meeting, including through links to other routine dialogue mechanisms at national, sectoral and sub-national level at which issues raised at the annual meeting may be followed-up for further discussion, resolution and/or monitoring.

3. Guiding principles for the conduct of the annual meeting

A number of general principles are useful to ensure that all parties understand the context for convening an annual meeting of Government and NGOs.

The annual meeting shall promote a partnership that is based on the following principles:

- (a) *Constructive* – the meeting is designed to promote the achievement of national development goals. It therefore provides an opportunity for offering feedback that is based on recent experience in programme delivery with a view to promoting future impact through improved policy development and operational practices and effective use of resources and expertise;
- (b) *Coordinating* – the meeting offers an opportunity to bring together a range of actors and partners to ensure that all essential tasks (including the use of information systems and

information sharing) are being performed efficiently with a minimum of overlap and duplication;

- (c) *Consultative* – the meeting shall provide an opportunity for effective two-way communication, allowing all parties to engage in a dialogue and seek clarifications on issues that influence the implementation of their programmes and the impact of their work;
- (d) *Complementary* – the meeting will promote efficiency and effectiveness by promoting linkages between different areas of work and by ensuring consistency across different policies and sectors;
- (e) *Collaborative* – the meeting shall identify opportunities (and learn from current experience) for promoting Government-NGO partnership in service delivery and contracting in key sectors or in coordinating an emergency response;
- (f) *Mutual benefit* – all parties should be able to utilise the meeting to guide their own work more effectively and to promote the achievement of results that benefit the people of Cambodia. This can be achieved, in part, by establishing a greater understanding of the work of other actors in the development process.

4. Organisation of the annual meeting: roles and responsibilities

The annual meeting will take place over half a day and will focus on a specific sector or theme (education, health, agriculture, rural development etc). The sector or theme should be identified in advance by **Samdech Techo Prime Minister**, based on its importance to the development of Cambodia. In order to maximise the effectiveness of the annual meeting, the following roles and responsibilities have been assigned:

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister **Keat Chhon**, Minister of Economy and Finance and First Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Development of Cambodia, is responsible for the overall coordination of the meeting.

The Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board of the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CRDB/CDC), under the management of H.E. Chhieng Yanara, Minister attached to the Prime Minister, serves as the Secretariat of the annual meeting. Under H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Keat Chhon's guidance, the Secretariat in cooperation with the Lead Ministry/Agency will lead in identifying and coordinating with NGO participants, preparing a draft agenda, confirming levels of NGO activity/funding in the sector for review, and managing logistics for the meeting. The Secretariat is also responsible for the preparation of pre-meetings with the Lead Ministry and Agencies and NGOs and is also tasked to prepare a briefing note for Samdech Techo Prime Minister's high consideration. Based on the discussion of the meeting, the Secretariat prepares a meeting report that includes agreed follow-up actions.

Lead RGC Ministry/Agency will work with the Secretariat to identify NGO participants and to prepare the agenda, including to organise pre-meetings with NGOs to identify and resolve as many outstanding issues as possible in advance of the Annual Consultative meeting; this ensures that the Annual Consultative Meeting is focused only on matters that require the attention of **Samdech Techo Prime Minister** or require inputs and discussion across multiple Ministries. As the lead technical agency, they will take responsibility for implementing any follow-up decisions and will prepare a progress report six months after the meeting for the attention of the Prime Minister (together with an update for inclusion in **Samdech Techo Prime Minister's** Keynote Address at the subsequent annual meeting).

NGO coordination group – this group – either an established NGO coordination body or an ad hoc grouping established for the annual meeting – will be the Principal Focal Point for communications with the Royal Government. They will be responsible for coordinating any pre-meetings amongst NGOs for issue identification and for leading the NGO representatives in developing the agenda and for serving as the "*Principal NGO Focal Point*" during the annual meeting itself and for coordinating/monitoring follow-up actions under the responsibility of NGOs. NGOs, at their own

initiative, could organise their own meeting for lesson learning and the exchange of experience as well as for follow up.

The principal NGO Focal Point will be self-selected by the NGO community based on the criterion that it is:

- (i) active in the topic/sector that is to be discussed at the annual meeting;
- (ii) able to lead discussions and facilitate information sharing related to technical aspects of the topics to be considered at the annual meeting and resourced with sufficient leadership and capacity to play a coordinating role in the preparation, conduct and follow-up of the meeting;
- (iii) willing to engage in and facilitate a results-based dialogue between the Royal Government and the NGO community and to support monitoring efforts after the meeting (including to prepare a report 6 months after the meeting to the RGC Lead Ministry/Agency).

Preparation arrangements will be as follows:

- (a) **Samdech Prime Minister**, upon H.E Deputy Prime Minister **Keat Chhon's** proposal, decides the sector or theme for discussion and the timing of the meeting.
- (b) CRDB/CDC uses the NGO Database and consults with line ministries, TWGs and NGO coordination groups, and sub-national networks to identify NGOs that are active in that sector or thematic area.
- (c) NGOs are invited to use their existing or ad-hoc coordination channels to nominate a focal point (based on the criterion above) and to convene a pre-meeting or internal consultation that can identify a list of proposed issues for discussion at the annual meeting.
- (d) The NGO Focal Point will then meet with CRDB/CDC and the lead technical ministry/agency to inform them of their preparation for the meeting, especially the proposed issues for discussion.
- (e) If required, pre-meetings will be co-organised by the Secretariat and the Lead Ministry/Agency prior to agreeing the main issues to be put forward for discussion at the Annual Consultative Meeting.
- (f) CRDB/CDC, in consultation with the lead ministry/agency, prepares a draft agenda and the proposed issues for discussion to H.E. Deputy Prime Minister **Keat Chhon** for submission to Samdech Prime Minister for consideration.

The format of the half-day Annual Consultative Meeting will be according to a generic agenda that can be adapted for each meeting based on the following draft template:

- (i) Welcoming remarks and introduction of the agenda by H.E. Deputy Prime Minister **Keat Chhon**, to include an overview of the status of development in the sector, recent achievements, current challenges, future objectives etc)
- (ii) Opening remarks by the Principal NGO Focal Point
- (iii) Key Note Address by **Samdech Prime Minister**
- (iv) Presentation by NGOs on achievements, challenges, issues for dialogue with the Royal Government and proposed future actions
- (v) Response by concerned Government ministries and agencies including proposed actions and monitoring arrangements
- (vi) Plenary discussion
- (vii) Identification of agreed actions and monitoring arrangements
- (viii) Summary of the meeting and Concluding remarks by **Samdech Prime Minister**

Monitoring of follow-up actions will be the responsibility of: (a) the Lead RGC Ministry/Agency for actions agreed at the meeting that fall under the responsibility of Government; and (b) the Principal NGO Focal Point, which will prepare a brief report on actions taken by NGOs after the meeting. The reports will be consolidated by the Lead Ministry/Agency and submitted to **Samdech Techo Prime Minister** 6 months after the meeting and may be used for further dialogue and coordination between the Royal Government and NGOs.

5. Participation and timing of the Annual Consultative Meeting

Participation: The focus is to be placed on both local and international NGOs that are actively engaged in the sector or theme of the annual meeting. The meeting will therefore place an emphasis on bringing together: (a) NGOs working at the national and sub-national level; (b) international NGOs who finance or support local NGOs; (c) development partners who finance NGOs. Key Government ministries and agencies related to the sector or theme will also attend the meeting. Invitations will be issued by the meeting Secretariat.

Timing: The annual meeting shall take place during the first quarter of the year or at any time that is convenient to **Samdech Prime Minister** in order to inform any further decisions and necessary actions.
