

## Speech of HE Dr. Kantha Phavi ING

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### Background

Since the Paris Peace Agreement was signed in 1991, there have been dramatic changes in Cambodia's economic, political and social landscape. War and conflict

have ended and political stability has been achieved. Economic growth is accelerating with infusions of external assistance as well as growing private sector investment.

discrimination because of their low levels of education, and lack of knowledge regarding their rights, the law, and access to legal assistance. This means that legal and constitutionally established fundamental rights are still not adequately respected

and implemented.

In addition, stereotyped gender roles have been ascribed to women in Cambodia. The code of women called "Chbab Srey", a set of morals expected of women, is widely taught and has oppressed women in every field of their lives. Women are considered as subordinate to men.

On October 15, 1999, the ICJ ruled in favor of the United States and the United Kingdom.

However, there is no law which identifies offences and punishments for acts of discrimination against women. The Transitional Criminal Law, which is currently in force, does not have any provision which mentions offences of discriminating against women. Article 61 of this Law only addresses discrimination based on nationality,

Regarding the extent to which CEDAW is reflected in the Constitution, the Ministry of Justice has been examining and modifying the Draft Criminal Code which states that

- Article 36 Equality to choose employment and to receive severance pay, to obtain social security, and to form and to be members of trade unions.

Apart from the above laws to ensure the protection, development and advancement of women based on the equality between men and women, there are other legal documents adopted by the Royal Government such as Sub-decrees, Circulars and Proclamations, Regulations etc.

The RCC has also embodied the principle of elimination of all forms of discrimination

against women in its national policies and actions to ensure equal rights between men and women. It has set out systematic strategies to develop and advance women to

Technical Working Group on Gender (TWGG), whose role is to mobilize support and resources on gender mainstreaming and to provide technical advice to promote

~~gender equality in government policies and programs. The RGC~~

Supreme Council of State Reform to undertake the implementation of several reforms, among them the promotion of gender equality in which the Minister of Women's Affairs is the Deputy High Commissioner in charge of Gender Equality and Culture.

For nearly eleven years, the RGC in partnership with national, international and civil

society organizations has made significant progress in implementing and monitoring the process to ensure that the policies and programs of the government are addressing gender issues and are operational with gender targets and indicators in

based Women and Children's Committees and required women to be members of these committees. The Planning and Budgeting Committee of the Commune Councils

villages (1 Chief, 1 Deputy Chief and 1 Assistant), the RGC has determined that one of them must be female. Since 2004, a program to set up the process of gender budgeting has been initiated to build the capacity of staff from the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Supreme National Economic Council (SNEC), and some key line ministries.

I will now highlight the achievements in various sectors.

### **1. Health**

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has developed a number of policies designed to ensure safe motherhood. These include plans to increase the number of trained midwives and outreach services from the district health centres in order to better meet the

## 2. Education

The government recognises education as one of its four priority sectors (together with health, rural development and agriculture), and has increased the share of its recurrent budget allocated to education. Considerable progress has been made by the government in women's and girl's education. In the past five years the numbers of children enrolled in primary, lower secondary and high secondary schools rose in both rural and remote areas.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) has a well-developed gender strategy, collects sex-disaggregated data and has some strategies including budget allocations to address gender disparities. These include:

- More and improved school facilities including separate toilets for girls;

• In remote areas, girls are able to attend school and continue a

higher education. These dormitories exist in Teacher Training Centres and

Dormitories do not exist in some remote and disadvantaged areas;

- Limited scholarships for poor girls and ethnic groups;
- Fixed and mobile libraries and community learning centres are limited;

A ~~example~~ on the illiteracy rate for ~~poor women~~ and women of ethnic groups has not

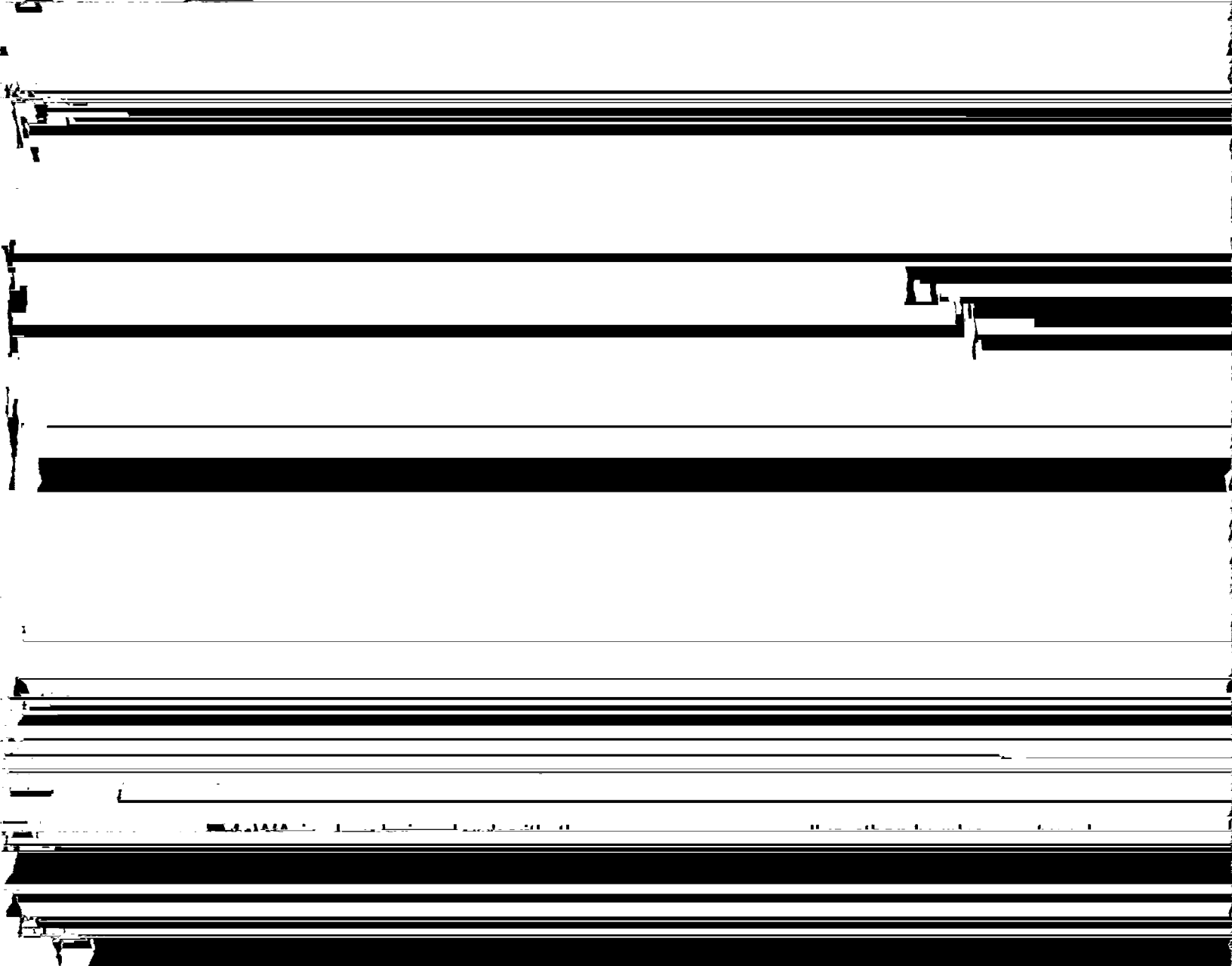


Some of the significant laws that we have been drafting are:

- The Civil Code and Civil Code Procedure;
- The Criminal Code and Criminal Code Procedure;
- The Law on the Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation;
- The Law on the Organization of the Court;
- The Law on the Status of Judges and other Laws.

There are a number of programs involving Cambodia and the countries of the Greater

Myanmar-Old Border (OMB) region. The programs include:



The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children was adopted by the National Assembly on 24 November 24, 2005.

The draft law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims was passed and came into force on 24 October, 2005. This law aims specifically to prevent all forms of domestic violence and protect the victims. Husbands, wives, and dependant children are all protected under this law. Moreover, this law applies to

Some challenges that remain:

- Law enforcement needs to be strengthened;
- The 1996 Trafficking Law still has some legal gaps and needs to be amended;
- The absence of the trafficking victim's cooperation hampers the prosecution of the offenders;
- The absence of economic support to the victims might lead to re-trafficking.
- The absence of full time labour attaches in Cambodian embassies abroad, dedicated to protecting the interests of Cambodian migrant workers.

#### **4. Women and the Economy**

Cambodia has the highest female labour force participation rate in the region at 74.8% of all women 15 years of age and older. The public sector provides 2% of female employment, and an estimated 80-85% of all employment is in the informal sector, with women being primarily self-employed and unpaid family workers. Women

work as skilled agriculture and fishery workers, and also make substantial contributions in non-agricultural sectors of the economy; they are also major contributors of the primary labour force in wholesale and retail trade, as well as

MoWA in at the beginning of a process of converting the existing provincial Women in

Development Centers to Women's Empowerment Centers (WECs) in 2006.

- Piloting a project with a local NGO, to provide social support to women garment workers. The government has also recently signed an MOU with ADB, the Garment Manufacturers Association, and ILO to provide training to garment workers through the Garment Training Centre. Training women to become skilled...

Supervisors in garment factories is already underway.

The Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Labour and Manpower

must be a woman. This effort has been considered successful in increasing the

## 6. Land

The RGC has taken into account the

on the part of MoWA and NGOs is needed, as well as building a ground swell in civil society.

- Success in achieving the aims of CEDAW requires financial commitment. Public Sector Financial Reform (PSFR) is a commitment of the RGC in this mandate (*Rectangular Strategy*). The gender budgeting process should be integrated into PSFR to ensure greater influence and action at the macro economic level.
  
- Significant cultural changes are taking place resulting from globalisation, economic forces including poverty, and social disruption caused first by wars and other factors. The reality is far different but is not necessarily part of the consciousness of either men or women. The belief that men are the heads of families and have the right to discipline women and children with violence is widely held. MoWA will be working with other ministries to articulate and promote social values that make it clear that this behaviour, and other behaviour offensive to women and human rights, cannot be tolerated.
  
- While there has been significant progress in the education sector demonstrated by increased numbers of enrolment and higher rates of retention, the same focus and

ministries and other institutions. This has been the message that MoWA consistently  
advocates

gender equality over the past five years. It has realised the need to identify the right  
people to lobby in order to get gender issues included in government activities