



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA



**Cambodia Report to the General Assembly resolution
A/Res/72/148 on “Women and Girls in Rural Areas”**

Prepared by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs

Royal Government of Cambodia

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1. Integrating gender equality considerations in national laws, policies and program

The Constitution (Article 61) states that the “State shall promote economic development in all sectors and remote areas, especially agricultural and handicrafts industries, and with attention to policies relating to water, electricity, roads, means of transport, modern technology and systems of credit.”

Legal measures on environmental and natural resources in Cambodia have integrated gender mainstreaming in their policies. The draft on Environment and Natural Resources Code of Cambodia which has been revised as of 25 July 2017 has integrated gender concerns in its objectives and articles. One of the objectives of the code requires participation of vulnerable people, including minorities, women, youth, disabled people, and the marginalized in the promotion of cooperative, transparent and inclusive approach for environmental protection and natural resource management. Its principle of gender equality in environmental protection and natural resources management emphasizes gender equity and the participation of women in all aspects of decision-making concerning the environment and natural resources be promoted and encouraged. Moreover, if mitigation measures are necessary for any decision that will potentially affect local communities, the project proponent and relevant ministries or institutions is to ensure that mitigation measures are appropriate, sustainable, and governed by a commitment to non-discrimination, including gender discrimination, and that particular attention is given to persons who are vulnerable or most at risk as a result of the potential impacts of the decision. Moreover, to increase participation of women and vulnerable groups the ministries or institutions related to Strategic Environmental Assessment need to provide opportunities for women, children, disabled persons, vulnerable persons, ethnic minority groups, and indigenous peoples to participate in the Strategic Environmental Assessment process. The Environmental Impact Assessment report aims to focus on the issues raised by women and those most vulnerable potentially impacted by the project.

There are also gender sensitive disaster management laws in place. The Law on Disaster Management mentions women as one of the affected groups that need special attention. In Article 18, it states, “In the case of any disaster event or incident occurred, the on-site competent authorities of the affected areas shall pay high attention to the needs of women, children, elderly, handicapped, and disabled persons”.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries through the *Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategic Framework in Agriculture 2016-2020* has made substantial progress in improving women’s participation and agriculture livelihoods in rural areas.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport has constructed new bridges and roads connecting to rural areas and neighboring countries, improving women’s access to economic opportunities, healthcare services and education.

Cambodia has made a good progress towards integrating gender concerns in environment and climate change negotiations, over the past years.

At national level, and most recently, RGC has developed a Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) 2014-2023 that aims to reduce gender vulnerability and risks to environment and climate change impacts. Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) is a participating ministry to the formation of the CCCSP which is being coordinated by the Ministry of Environment (MoE). The CCCSP 2014-2023 action plan has set one of its objectives to “Reduce sectoral, regional, and gender vulnerabilities and health risks related to climate change impacts”. The M&E framework has further developed a gender sensitive target/indicator: “By 2020, 10% of the protected areas, conservation areas, agro ecosystems and forest ecosystems including mangroves, that have been under a lot of pressures in recent years are in an advanced state of restoration and are providing enhanced services, particularly to women, elders and children in local communities and indigenous ethnic minority groups”. The focus of this target/indicator is on the supply of essential services, including services related to water, health, food security, climate change adaptation, resistance and resilience to land degradation or natural disasters and, in general, services related to livelihoods and the well-being of Cambodians. It has placed emphasis on addressing specific needs of women, local communities and ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable groups. The plan has also submitted two National Communication Reports to the UNFCCC in 2002 and 2015, respectively. Nonetheless, there has been no reporting on gender issues.

As a follow-up to CCCSP, a “Gender and Climate Change Strategic Plan (GCCSP) 2014–2023 as well as a near-term Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP) 2014–2018 have been developed by MoWA. GCCSP 2014-2023 consists of strategies to incorporate women into decision-making on climate change adaptation and mitigation, and natural resources management; to increase awareness and relevant capacities on gender and climate change within MoWA and its decentralized offices and other stakeholders; conduct research on gender and climate change; and deliver targeted interventions for women related to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Similarly, the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (GCCAP) 2014–2018 highlights six priorities, as presented below:

- Integrating gender into climate adaptation and mitigation plans;
- Increasing women’s decision-making power at all levels;
- Improving data on gendered roles in climate change adaptation;
- Designing gender indicators for a national monitoring and evaluation framework on climate change; and
- Designing gender-responsive climate change adaptation and mitigation projects.

The Government of Cambodia has further established an institutional mechanism by forming a ministry based working group ‘Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAG) to mainstream gender issues into respective strategies, policies, programs/projects’ and ‘establishment of Gender and Climate Change Committee (GCCC) Working Group in Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) to take responsibility for technical work, administration, finance, and raise ideas that are relevant to climate change. This has resulted in the development of an institutional framework for mainstreaming gender and climate change issues in Cambodia. The active GMAG at national (GMAG) and provincial level (PGMAG) have been working since

it was incepted. The GCCC at national level has been working effectively but it does not exist yet at provincial level and district level.

Climate Change Priorities Action Plan for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (CCPAP-AFF) 2014-2018 was designed for the implementation to reach CCCSP's goals of the MAFF's policy as a response to the impacts of the climate change. However, the plan has made a general reference to gender as one of the cross-cutting issues to be addressed and the focus has been limited the participation of women and marginalized groups on environment and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy.

The National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2014-2018 has set up a plan to mainstream gender in environment and climate change policies. In doing so, it has focused on mainstreaming gender in all development programmes and sectors in order to reduce women's poverty and vulnerability especially disabled women and minority women. Further focus has been placed on women's economic empowerment, gender and climate change and green growth, women's decision making in public and political spheres, legal protection for women and girls, women's health, and education for women and girls. It has integrated following activities to mainstream gender in the implementation of the environment and climate change policies:

- Ensuring the relevant policies and strategies on climate change, green growth, and disaster risk management are gender responsive.
- Increasing climate change resilience for the community, especially for women and girls.
- Reducing the impacts on women's and children's health, especially during flood and drought.
- Increasing their knowledge on mitigation measures to ensure natural resources sustainability and environmental protection.
- Building the capacity of state and non-state development agencies in gender mainstreaming in environment and climate change policies, programmes and national environmental action plans.

National Protected Area Strategic Management Plan (NPASMP) 2017-2031 understands different interests and priorities of men and women in developing protected area management approaches to reduce conflicts and that support both conservation and sustainable livelihoods. Hence, NPASMP 2017-2031 has mainstreamed gender into every aspect of its implementation to ensure this crosscutting issue receives broad-based support at local, regional and national levels. Gender mainstreaming in NPASMP 2017-2031 entails incorporation of strategies and actions that ensure women and the most vulnerable groups are empowered to participate in planning, management and decision-making processes related to protected areas, and share equitably in the benefits from the provision of livelihood opportunities. Gender mainstreaming strategies and actions include:

- Incorporating gender perspectives in the training and capacity building of protected area staff;
- Incorporating gender perspectives in the development of awareness and educational materials to reach a larger population (by not excluding women and young people);

- Assessing and considering the needs of women in establishing appropriate criteria for zoning and management planning of protected areas (e.g. access to water and fire wood);
- Developing livelihood opportunities that recognize the capabilities and strengths of women (e.g. micro-credit schemes, community-based tourism enterprises, NTFP handicrafts);
- Ensuring part of revenues from ecosystem services (e.g. carbon fixing) is earmarked for promoting equity in beneficiary communities; and,
- Establishing gender equity criteria and targets for monitoring progress in implementing the NPASMP.

National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan (NESAP) 2016-2023 has focused on extending its efforts to strengthen collaborations led by National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSA) in promoting a cross-sectoral coordination, with emphasis on the cross-cutting themes such as gender and capacity development in relation to environment and natural resources management and conservation. An action plan has also been developed and one of its objectives is to study and increase understanding of the impacts of changing environment on public health, poverty, gender inequality and other associated risks in a scientific and evidence-based manner. Moreover, achievement of gender equality and empowering of all women and girls has been one of its strategic goals.

The Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) established the *National Action Plan and Provincial Action Plan for the Rural Development Sector (2014–2018)*, which incorporated key elements of the MRD GMAP 2012–2016. The plan aims to eliminate gender inequality, reduce poverty and improve the living conditions and livelihoods of women in rural areas.

In 2015, the RGC introduced the *Land Policy “White Paper”* in response to socio-economic development and land reform. The *“White Paper”* (Points 5 and 7) includes key guidelines and activities for achieving gender equality in the land sector and equity between men and women in the land registration process. In addition, the aim is to increase women’s involvement in decision-making, monitoring, implementation and initiatives in the land sector.

2. Adopting and funding gender- and climate-responsive agricultural and rural development strategies for the economic empowerment for rural women

The greatest outreach of financial services in rural areas is through Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs), with 68 MFIs registered with the National Bank and NGOs providing credit and loans. In 2017, these institutions provided over 3.99 billion USD in loans, an increase from 2.95 billion USD in loans in 2015. According to the Cambodia Microfinance Association, more than 70 percent of loans were provided to women, who now have as much access as men to financial services from both commercial and MFIs.¹

¹ CEDAW/C/KHM/6, paragraph 149

The MRD has expanded a micro-credit scheme with low interest rates to enable people in rural areas, especially women, to obtain loans for small businesses and agriculture activities. In 2017, the credit scheme released capital totaling 1.31 million USD to 6,035 clients (4,989 women or 82.7 percent) in 15 provinces.² Women run 65 percent of all enterprises, yet men's businesses are bigger than women's enterprises on average. Therefore, women are engaging in less profitable businesses than men, and access to financial and business development services are crucial to the growth of women's enterprises.³

From 2013–2017, the MRD conducted trainings with rural communities on the roles of Village Development Committees (VDCs) and community development activities for 880 VDCs in 6,160 villages with 30,806 villagers, including 9,104 women (29.6 percent). Vocational training programs provided skills training and services, such as business information to support women's rural entrepreneurs, job creation, animal raising, food processing, agricultural education and technology transfer. From 2015–2017, a total of 9,270 people have participated in trainings, including 4,481 women (48 percent).⁴

Neary Rattanak IV included a focus on Women's Economic Empowerment with the key objective to improve women's status in the economy, particularly in formal employment, with increased incomes, rural livelihoods and social protection, and equal economic and social rights and opportunities. The first *Operational Strategy for Women's Economic Empowerment (2014-2018)* builds on the *MDG Acceleration Framework Cambodia Action Plan 2013–2015*, which prioritizes the enhancement of micro, small and medium enterprises led by women. Importantly, MoWA, as a catalyst and provider of capacity development and technical advice on gender mainstreaming in the economic sector, aimed to ensure line ministries and economic actors were systematically addressing specific targeted gender gaps in their economic, business and financial services.

At the local level, MoWA has long been committed to reducing poverty and improving women's economic situation through women's entrepreneurship development through the Women Development Centers. Annually, the 14 Women Development Centers (WDCs), in conjunction with the PDWA, have provided vocational skills training, which includes financial literacy, small business enterprise, and sewing/tailoring, for about 3,000 poor women. Many women have since applied their skills towards income-generating activities and obtaining employment at factories.

Additionally, 399 producer and saving groups were formed with 5,629 villagers (4,860 women or 86.3 percent) in 11 provinces to expand the variety of income-generating activities. As part of the WDC vocational training program, 354 women were trained on

² Ibid, paragraph 151

³ UNGA Report on Rural Women, CNCW 2017, page 3.

⁴ CEDAW/C/KHM/6, paragraph 152

budget management, savings and loans. These efforts have led to increases in household income and improvements in livelihoods.

3. Supporting the resilience and adaptive capacities of women and girls to respond to the adverse effects of climate change, including gender-responsive strategies on mitigation and adaptation to climate change

The Cambodian Development Resource Institute under its UNDEF grant has been supporting women and women's groups to promote and advocate for climate change adaptation initiatives. The project started in 2017 and has focused on four provinces in the country aiming to train local women, and form climate change groups to analyze the climate change risks to their communities and to propose ways to enhance resilience against negative effects of natural disasters such as landslides, floods, and droughts. Women groups are encouraged to submit specific proposals to commune councils and are also implementing independent small-scale initiatives that are funded through small grants.

4. Ensuring women's full participation in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues, in particular on strategies and policies related to the impacts of climate change

Promoting Women in Decision Making at all levels is a priority articulated in the Rectangular Strategy: 'Rectangle I, Human Resource Development, Side 4: Improving Gender Equity and Social Protection: Enhancing women's capacity and proportion in leadership roles at both national & sub-national levels, in ministries-institutions'. The NSDP 2014-2015⁵ included the following interventions a) Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework and carry out periodic gender audits on representation and participation of men and women in politics and decision-making positions b) Develop and strengthen policies, legal provisions and programmes, to increase women's representation in politics and other key decision-making positions. c) Formulate and implement capacity building programmes for sitting and aspiring women leaders and support initiatives, including resource mobilisation efforts that seek to promote women in politics and other governance structures. d) Invest in programmes aimed at enhancing assertiveness and leadership confidence in young women to ensure equal participation in leadership in schools, tertiary institutions and youth groups and other community-based organisations. e) Set affirmative action measures in areas where sharp gender disparities exist, f) Create and support a focal point/gender working group in Parliament and promote the application of gender lens to decisions taken by all Parliamentary Committees.

In Cambodia, although both women and men are now participating at the operational decision making in climate change policies, their influence on operational policy changes has been limited. For example, in forest resources management, women's involvement in the decision making in non-timber forest product extractive activities is found to be 67%, yet their

⁵ RGC (2014): NSDP 2014-2018

decision-making role at local level is found to be limitedⁱ. Barriers identified to hinder women's participation in the decision-making process at local level include but are not limited to the traditional attitudes towards women's work, less education and the lack of peer support.

In Cambodia's fishery administration, the total number of women officers in 2014 was 171 out of 1039 staffⁱⁱ. Of these, 92 women out of 345 staff were working at the central level and 79 women out of 694 staff were working at provincial and municipal level. This implies the proportion of participation by women in formal decision-making bodies is much lower than men at all levels.

Gender inequality in voices and representation persist in Cambodia at national-level elected offices; as governors of provinces, districts and communes, as village chiefs and local development committeesⁱⁱⁱ. This implies that Cambodian women's views as well as their experiences, knowledge and awareness of natural resource management and climate change adaptation/mitigation, are not heard clearly and properly and thus are mostly absent on the laws, policies and programmes being designed and implemented.

The 2013 *Agriculture Census* found that women's organizations were the most numerous out of all local interest groups, with 34 percent of villages reporting such organizations. As of 2016, women represented 41 percent of 1,138 commune extension workers and 9 percent of 9,276 village extension workers. As of 2016, 857 Agriculture Cooperatives with 87,986 members (60.4 percent women) were registered, and women are serving in the executive committees. Women represent 35 percent of the 475 inland community fishery groups. By 2017, the number of women village veterinarians was 963 (out of 12,510 people) and they play an important role in improving the community's skills in animal rearing and care as well as in producing animal waste for biogas. As a result, 26,450 biogases were established and about 30 percent of all users were women. The total number of biogas beneficiaries was 145,400 people (48 percent women).

Under the legal framework of the Ministry of Environment, there are 151 natural resource protection communities in 270 villages covering 248,857 hectares of land and benefiting 36,058 households (143,195 total, 71,570 women). At the community level, only 40 female (3 percent) out of 1,221 national park rangers are involved in decision-making and policy formulation, At the national level, only 17 percent of female officials in the nature conservation and protection administration are involved in decision-making and policy formulation.

5. Providing sustainable infrastructure and technology and improving rural women's and girls' access to renewable, efficient and clean energy and safe and reliable water supply and sanitation to build their climate resilience

The MRD has made important progress in promoting access to improved water supply and sanitation in rural areas in line with NSDP and CMDG targets. The percentage of rural population with access to improved water supply increased from 44.2 percent in

2013 to 53 percent in 2015 to 58.3 percent in 2017. Access to improved sanitation reached 70.9 percent in 2017, up from 56 percent in 2015 and 37.5 percent in 2013.⁶ A National Strategic Plan for Rural Water Supply Sanitation and Hygiene 2014–2025 was approved in January 2014. In 2016, a National Action Plan for Phase 1 (NAP) was created, and each province created their own Provincial Action Plan, with support from the World Bank, UNICEF and Plan International.

MRD has made important progress in rehabilitating rural roads at the provincial, district, commune and village level. The number of rural roads registered under MRD totals 45,241 kilometers. Improvements in rural road infrastructure have made travel easier for everyone, and women have better access to health centers, schools, markets and employment opportunities, thereby contributing to overall poverty reduction efforts in rural areas.

The NCDD aims to expand the participation of women at the sub-national levels. In 2015–2016, public services were moved closer to local communities via 24 One-Window Service Offices that provide a number of administrative services in 13 sectors. Women have benefited directly from these services. In 2016, One-Window Service Offices in the target areas provided a total of 609,638 administrative services such as small business registration, motorcycle registration, land registration, construction licenses and notary services.

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Access to clean water in lower and upper secondary schools for both sanitation and toilet usage has increased; all provinces are estimated at 60 percent or above, except for two provinces (Pursat and Pailin). MoEYS has constructed more latrines and separate toilet facilities for girl students in secondary schools to encourage more

⁶ CEDAW/C/KHM/6, paragraphs 153-155, CSES 2014, 2015, 2017

⁷ CEDAW/C/KHM/6, paragraph 262

⁸ <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/cambodia-finding-solutions-climate-change-empowering-women>

regular attendance. Only 11.8 percent of lower and 1.5 percent of upper secondary schools have yet to develop adequate latrine facilities.⁹

Older Cambodian women are not familiar with the use of ICT whereas younger women are. ICT in agriculture involves how farmers can use ICT to solve agriculture issues, increase productivity and improve markets for smallholder farms and value chains. The 2015 Agriculture Extension Policy aims to address gender issues in all agriculture development sectors and service provisions. Current use of mobile phones as tools for rural women to plan when to harvest, link with markets and increase revenues.^{iv}

6. Promoting education, training and information programs for rural and farming women through affordable and appropriate technologies to improve their climate resilience

Agriculture sector in Cambodia is highly exposed to climate changes risks such as high temperature stressing plants and is affected by rainfall variation as a result of recurring droughts and floods. These events often damage the crops and livestock causing food insecurity. As a result, agricultural production and productivity are severely affected. These issues have raised the attention and urgency to give due considerations to the agriculture sector including other cross-cutting sectors in Cambodia towards achieving the goals of “Feed the Future and the Global Food Security Strategy” while taking into consideration cross-cutting issues, particularly gender issues^v.

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7. Strengthening the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on the links between rural women and girls and climate change resilience by considering their time use, unpaid care and domestic work, land tenure, and access to energy and water and sanitation

Population Census: The General Population Census of Cambodia is conducted every 10 years (1998, 2008, 2013 inter-censal population survey, and planned for 2019) and collects data on the following: 1) Population Size, Growth and Distribution, 2) Sex composition, Age Distribution and Marital Status of the Population 3) Literacy and Education Attainment 4) Economic Characteristics of the Population, 5) Migration 6) Fertility, Age Mortality and Maternal Mortality 7) Population with Disability and 8) Housing, Household Characteristics and Amenities. The Census data is disaggregated by geographic location, employment, sex,

⁹ CEDAW/C/KHM/6, paragraph 111

age, education, marital status, migratory status, and disability. Some information is captured on religion and mother tongue.

CDHS: The Cambodian Demographic and Health Surveys (2000, 2005, 2010, 2014, planned for 2019) collects data on the following: 1) Household Population and Housing Characteristics, 2) Utilization of Health Services for Accident, Illness or Injury, 3) Disability, 4) Respondent Characteristics, 5) Fertility, 6) Practice of Abortion, 7) Family Planning, 8) Other Proximate Determinants of Fertility, 9) Fertility Preferences, 10) Adult and Maternal Mortality, 11) Infant and Child Mortality, 12) Maternal Health, 13) Child Health, 14) Early Childhood Education and Development, 15) Nutrition of Children and Women, 16) Micronutrients, 17) HIV/AIDS Related Knowledge, Attitudes and Behavior, 18) Women’s Empowerment and Demographic and Health Outcomes, and 19) Domestic Violence. The CDHS data is disaggregated by geographic location (by urban/rural and province), income, (wealth quintile), sex, age, education, marital status and some information is also disaggregated on disability, household size, number of living children, and occupation.

CSES: The Cambodian Socio-Economic Surveys (1996, 1997, 1999, 2004, and annually from 2007 to the latest publication in 2017) collect data on the following topics: 1) Demographic characteristics, 2) Housing, 3) Agriculture, 4) Education, 5) Labour force, 6) Health, 7) Victimization, 8) Household Income and Liabilities, 9) Household Consumption and 10) Vulnerability. In recent years, the CSES data is increasingly disaggregated by geographic location (Phnom Penh, other urban, rural), sex, age groups, educational level, employment (occupation), and income, but varies across the different topics.

ⁱ Sun, V., and T., Kouk, 2002. Gender in Community Forestry Management. The Community Based Natural Resource Management Learning Institute, Cambodia.

ⁱⁱ http://www.fao.org/figis/pdf/fishery/countrysector/naso_cambodia/en?title=FAO%20Fisheries%20%26

ⁱⁱⁱ MoWA. 2013. Climate Change Strategic Plan for Gender and Climate Change (2013-2023)

^{iv} Cambodia Report to UNGA, June 2017

^v US Government. 2011. Feed the Future: Cambodia FY 2011-2015 Multi-Year Strategy.