

**CSO's Remarks to National Workshop on Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) 2017 of NSDD**

**24-25 November 2016, Ministry of Interior**

**By Mr Soeung Saroeun, Executive Director**

**of Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), and a representative of CSOs**

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**Respect Your Excellency Pundit Aun Pornmoniroth, Senior Minister and Minister of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.**

**Respect Excellencies ministers, secretary of states, undersecretaries of states, provincial, councilors and governors.**

**Representatives from implementing agencies, from Government Ministries and Institutions, Provinces, Districts and Municipalities, representatives from Civil society, and Development Partner colleagues,**

**Honored Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

On behalf of the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), Working Group for Partnership in Decentralization (WGPD), NGOs working on Implementation of Social Accountability Framework and civil society participants, I would like to our sincere thanks for having me and civil society colleagues in this workshop and thanks so much to my civil society friends and colleagues for trusting in me to speak on your behalf. I also would like to thanks to development partners, especially EU and its member states, World Bank ADB, and all DPs for continuing to provide both technical and financial support to the D&D reforms over nearly 10 years.

Civil society organizations would like to congratulate and highly appreciate for the key achievements and progresses made related to sub-national democratic development such as 1) promoting social accountability through the implementation of Social Accountability Framework, 2) functional transfers starting with some services in education, health, and rural development, 3) human resources development, and 4) improving quality of service delivery and initiating for a multi-stakeholder partnership at sub-national level, and fostering for financial effectiveness and sustainability through the fiscal reform and DM fund management.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman!**

The decentralization reform is about promoting local democratic development and the people demand centered responses. It needs a multi-stakeholder approach and environment that enable all actors (state and non-state) including women and youth to play their necessary balance and complementary roles in this important reform process.

I would like to submit some key inputs/recommendations made by civil society organizations to the APWB 2017 as follow:

1. **Fostering Demand-Supply partnership and collaboration:** we have learned some good practices in of term of collaboration between the government and CSOs in the implementation of social accountability framework (ISAF). CSOs strongly encourage government to **a) include civil society representatives in other sub-working groups such as the functional transfer, human resources and capacity development and fiscal management, b) replicate** this model to sub national level as it helps not only improve relationship and building trust among demand and supply sides, but it is also effective in term of addressing local challenges and promoting active participation from citizens, especially women and youth, **c) foster enabling environment for civil society** by 1) amending some impractical articles in the 2015 enacted laws – law on Election of national Assembly (LEMNA), and law on Association and NGO (LANGO), and 2) having regular workshop (s) at national/sub-national levels on “promoting effective partnership between Royal Government of Cambodia and Civil Society Organizations for sustainable development in Cambodia. We recommend the Ministry of Interior to take the leading role in this.
2. **Communication Strategy:** CSOs is willing to work in partnership with NCDD-S for the implementation of communication strategy to ensure citizens’ awareness and access to open data for improvement of fiscal transparency. It would also be much more effective if the government develop the legislation/law on access to information.
3. **Capacity Development:** giving the size of the investment made, concern remains about the sustainability (value for money) of the capacity development investment and whether it is generating and supporting sufficient change in term of knowledge, attitude and skills of SNA and Councilors. Where possible CSOs will support the capacity development of SNA by sharing good practices and lessons learned, providing complementary trainings, mentoring, coaching, learning by doing, promoting champions etc. in such areas as administrations on downward accountability, citizen engagement (outreach and consultation), social accountability tools, effective implementation of new functions, gender equality and issues related to access to information.
4. **Quality of Service Deliveries:** CSOs acknowledged the progress made at the national level in term of formulations of sub-decree, policies and other supporting documents. However, actually improving quality of public services to citizens is less focused so far. We need to go much further to ensure the decentralization of service delivery is actually implemented leads to improved quality of service deliveries and accountability to citizens. The concrete steps will need to move from central government to true implementation at SNA level through AWPB 2017 and beyond. In order to be able to deliver this, SNA must have clear transferred functions with clear line of authority and accountability and the appropriate resources to deliver those services. It is also crucial to promote **multi-stakeholders/tripartite dialogue (s)** that representatives from key stakeholders such as government, private sector, and civil society work together in all development stages (planning, implementation, and monitoring/evaluation) at all levels.

5. **Fiscal management/DM Fund:** The D&D reforms, with support from our development partner friends over the past years, have laid very strong foundations, so it is time for the government to take more ownership in term of financing the reforms. Stating from AWPB 2017, CSOs would expect sizable increment of DM fund '**conditional and unconditional grants**' on development component that will enable councilors and SNA respond to the needs of local citizens while the DMs currently remains under funded.
  
6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** We suggest adding one more priority output on "Monitoring evaluation and learning including documenting good practices"; as another key priority for this APWB 2017.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman!**

I would like to conclude my remarks by reconfirming that civil society organizations will play important roles in **policies dialogues**, especially with the functional assignment and implementation processes, with government both at national and sub-national levels, **capacity building and human resource development, empowering citizens** to participate in development process, to **mobilize resources** and many other roles to support development priorities, to deliver high quality services in supplement to government's.

I and my CSO colleagues would like to appreciate the leadership of NCCD-S, especially **H.E Sak Setha, and H.E Ngan Chamroeun** in promoting the inclusive partnership in the development and implementation of the APWB so far. We trust that trough inclusive and participatory approaches so far, and during this two days we will create a plan where every stakeholder is enable to contribute their resources, have strong ownership and long term commitment, which is crucial to make the reform more effective and to enable Cambodians/citizens improve their livelihood, and exercise their rights and potentials in 2017 and beyond.

Once again, on behalf of the civil society organizations, let me warmly thank you for allowing us to share our views, concerns and comments on the SNDD reform in this important workshop. I wish you and all Cambodians the best and success in your work and life.

Thank You!