



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
15 February 2024

Original: English

---

**Human Rights Council**  
**Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review**  
**Forty-sixth session**  
29 April–10 May 2024

## **National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21\***

### **Cambodia**

---

\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## **I. Introduction**

1. The 3<sup>rd</sup> review of Cambodia held on 30 January 2019, with the representatives from 73 countries participating in providing 198 recommendations, of which Cambodia has accepted 173 and noted the remaining 25, was officially adopted by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) on 4 July 2019.
2. The Cambodian Human Rights Committee (CHRC), the staff of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), in collaboration with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), organised a national workshop in October 2019 in order to disseminate and distribute the accepted recommendations to relevant ministries/institutions. Stakeholders, including representatives from government institutions, civil society organisations (CSOs), as well as a number of embassies in Cambodia attended the workshop. In October 2019, the CHRC officially sent them to relevant ministries/institutions for action. In addition, the CHRC disseminated the report and the recommendations to civil servants, the armed forces and law enforcement officers at departments/units in some major provinces.
3. This 4<sup>th</sup> cycle report was prepared, based on the Mid-Term Report 2021, which Cambodia has compiled for the purpose of monitoring the implementation [of the recommendations] by the relevant ministries/institutions for a two-year period. In addition, there were meetings with relevant ministries/institutions and consultations with CSOs in collaboration with the OHCHR. This report outlines the measures, achievements attained and challenges in the implementation of the accepted recommendations from October 2019 to December 2023.

## **II. Measures and achievements**

### **Ratification and accession to international human rights instruments (Recommendations No. 2-10)**

4. The Kingdom of Cambodia is a State party to eight out of nine core international human rights treaties and a State party to other four optional protocols to international human rights conventions. The RGC has been studying legal, economic and social factors to access or ratify international conventions and some optional protocols to covenants and conventions such as the International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in relation to the abolition of the death penalty.

### **International cooperation (Recommendations No. 13, 19)**

5. The Kingdom of Cambodia has welcomed the OHCHR in Cambodia since 1993. On 1 January 2023, the RGC extended the Memorandum of Understanding with the OHCHR for another two years until December 2024, which clearly demonstrates Cambodia's unwavering commitment to promoting human rights through technical cooperation programmes. Cambodia has accepted the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia since 1993 and continued the mandate until today. Cambodia always provides constructive cooperation with the special procedures of HRC, including visits to Cambodia in accordance with the actual situation. Meanwhile, the RGC allowed the UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity to visit Cambodia from 10 to 20 January 2023. In addition, Cambodia has also organised bilateral dialogues on human rights with Japan and the United Kingdom.

## **Establishment of national human rights institution (Recommendations No. 34-44)**

6. On 4 August 2019, the Royal Government tasked the CHRC with the re-drafting of the law. In collaboration with the OHCHR and the Asia-Pacific Forum of the Australia-based National Human Rights Institutions (APF), under the auspices of the Australian Embassy in Cambodia, on 3 March 2021, the CHRC finalised the first draft law with 8 chapters and 32 articles.

7. The CHRC, in collaboration with the OHCHR, submitted this draft law for public consultation from 8 July 2021 with the ministries/institutions of the Royal Government, the National Assembly, the Senate, indigenous communities, CSOs and other stakeholders at the sub-national, national, regional and international levels, and welcomed public comment through the CHRC Facebook page and Telegram channel. The CHRC, the OHCHR and the APF have recently concluded and agreed that this draft law is in line with the Paris Principles; and the CHRC sent it to the Office of the Council of Ministers on 19 September 2023 for the National Assembly's approval in the future.

## **National policy in the field of human rights (Recommendations No. 1, 14, 128, 141)**

8. The RGC has been accelerating governance reform, modernisation of state institutions, sustainable, inclusive, equitable development, just, and the fight against corruption. The Royal Government has also set its ambitious goal of transforming Cambodia from a low-income country to a high-middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income country by 2050.

9. The Royal Government continues to pay attention to the promotion and protection of human rights by enforcing laws, establishing or amending laws and regulations, educating about the law and human rights, promoting the implementation of all human rights recommendations obtained from all stakeholders and expanding cooperation with national, regional and UN human rights mechanisms, as well as with CSOs and stakeholders.

## **Socio-economic development and poverty reduction (Recommendations No. 56-67)**

10. The poverty rate in Cambodia dropped significantly from roughly 33.8% in 2009 to 17.8% in 2019/20. To improve peoples' living standards, especially in rural areas, the competent ministries have launched various programmes, including building infrastructure such as concrete, rubber and red gravel roads, bridges, canals, sewers, water ponds and many other constructions in remote provinces and the provinces where indigenous peoples live, making transportation services convenient, efficient, safe and with low transportation cost; building rural clean water supply structures, Abrid water pump wells, community water ponds, rainwater reservoirs, water distribution systems through community mini-pipelines and filters; improving the efficiency of rural safe water supply, building rural sanitation physical infrastructure, providing sanitary services and toilets to 82.4% of poor households nationwide; promoting the creation of jobs and employments in rural areas, promoting and expanding foreign markets for agricultural products, promoting rural household economic activities and building rural markets, organising exhibitions of rural community products, providing training in human resources and vocational skills, promoting rural community integrated development, and developing and conserving indigenous peoples, including launching work programmes on agriculture, animal husbandry, and aquaculture.

## **Supply of clean water (Recommendation No. 150)**

11. The RGC, with the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation as its staff, has set out policy, legislation and various programmes, including (1) plans to expand the scope of safe water supply in order to realise the Cambodian Sustainable Development

Goals (CSDGs) 2016-2030 which states that, “By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all,” (2) four conditions imposed to provide water supply services: “water must be of quality, safe, sustainable and at a very affordable price,” with the aim of ensuring public health and interests of all parties, especially the people, with subsidies available to help the poor, and (3) introduction of guidelines on subsidies for the right to purchase clean water for poor households in February 2021. In May 2017, the Ministry implemented the common principle of setting the price of clean water by changing from setting the price of single water to the price table divided by the level of consumption (Block Tariff). At the same time, measures have been taken to reduce the price of clean water and to connect water supply for workers and students living in rented rooms so that they can get it at a reasonable price.

12. The Ministry of Rural Development, the staff of the RGC, has set out a vision for the National Strategic Plan on Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene 2014-2025, which states that, “Every person in a rural community has sustained access to safe water supply and sanitation services and lives in a hygienic environment by 2025.” As of 2022, the coverage rate of safe water supply in rural areas accounted for 82.7%.

### **Access to health-care Services (Recommendations No. 140, 142, 143, 147, 154, 155, 157, 158)**

13. The RGC is committed to achieving universal health coverage for the Cambodian people and implemented the Health Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and is actively implementing various policy frameworks, including (1) increasing the national budget expenditure on public health in line with economic growth and fiscal capacity for the provision of priority health services in rural areas; (2) increasing the efficiency of the use of financial resources, in a transparent and accountable manner, at all levels of the health system; (3) increasing the prevention of financial risk to accessing and using quality health-care services; and (4) adjusting and harmonising the development assistance with health policies and strategies, and strengthening coordination of development partners’ funds. Strengthening the health sector continues to focus on key priorities: firstly, improve the health of the general population; secondly, strengthen the health system resilience; and thirdly, strengthen governance and regulatory mechanisms, monitoring system, and evaluate health system performance and health research.

14. To achieve the aforementioned policy, the RGC has expanded the basic infrastructure such as buildings, medical equipment, medical technology, safe water supplies, electricity, sewerage, garbage/medical waste incinerators, information and communication technology networks, means of transportation with effective management, competent personnel, availability of proper medical equipment and medicine, as well as financial risk prevention and facilitated the process of service production with sufficient quantity and good quality.

15. As of December 2022, there were 1,288 public health centres nationwide (1,250 in 2020), 125 health posts (129 in 2020), and 132 referral hospitals (128 in 2020), including 12 national hospitals, 25 capital/provincial referral hospitals, and 95 Krong/district/Khan referral hospitals in 103 operational districts of the 25 capital and provinces throughout the country. The newly established hospitals are Tbong Khmum Hospital, Luang Mey Hospital, Techo Santepheap Hospital and Sihanoukville Hospital Centre of Hope, and five other district referral hospitals that have been upgraded from bedside health centres to referral hospitals such as Bavel Referral Hospital in Battambang, Sambo Referral Hospital in Kratie, Prek Prosop Referral Hospital in Kratie, Keo Seima Referral Hospital in Mondulhiri and Choam Ksan Referral Hospital in Preah Vihear.

16. The Health Achievement Report 2018-2022 shows that maternal, infant and child under-5 mortality rates continue to decline, with maternal mortality diminishing from 170 to 154 per 100,000 live births. Infant mortality from 0-27 days decreased from 18 to 08 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality reduced from 36 to 12 per 100,000 live births, and the second pregnancy test increased by 98.54%. There are 169 health facilities providing services to female victims of violence and 1,304 health facilities providing mother-to-child transmission of HIV prevention services; an increase of 71 health facilities that can provide

emergency maternity services and 40 health facilities that can provide full obstetric emergency services throughout the country. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, has established and announced the launch of a multi-service facility to assist victims of violence in six provincial referral hospitals.

### **Prevention of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS (Recommendations No. 159-160)**

17. The National Strategic Plan to End TB 2021-2030, which is the 5<sup>th</sup> plan for the fight against TB in the Kingdom of Cambodia, aims to diagnose TB and provide free treatment. The successful cure rate of TB has been maintained above 90% for 22 consecutive years. For example, in 2022, the success rate of treatment was 96%, which exceeds the set target of just 90%. TB treatment services are available at the national level: 25 provincial referral hospitals, 103 district referral hospitals of the operational district offices, and 1,288 health centres where people may find the service near their homes. The NGO-supported community TB network has worked closely with health centres, with two volunteers per village trained to transport TB patients, deliver sputum for TB diagnosis and receive TB medication from health centres for patients. Overall, referral hospitals and community health centres across the country cover 100% of TB services. There is a network of 220 TB laboratories and 88 locations for GeneXpert.

18. As of December 2022, there were a total of 64,209 people living with HIV, including 2,983 children. There were 99.48% of all the active HIV patients receiving antiretroviral therapy at the HIV treatment service. 97.57% of people living with HIV being treated with antiretroviral drugs were tested for viral load and had viral load suppression in 2022. 82.91% of people living with HIV had been diagnosed with TB, of which only 1.04% were found to have TB. Opportunistic care and treatment services and antiretroviral therapy increased to 71 locations in 25 capital/provinces.

### **Health approaches to drug consumption (Recommendation No. 156)**

19. Articles 105-109 of the 2012 Law on Drug Control provide options and encourage drug users and addicts to receive treatment and rehabilitation. Pursuant to this provision, drug users and addicts receive physical and mental health care, general education, life skills training, treatment and rehabilitation, and other vocational training that may serve as the basis for them to prevent from relapsing into drug consumption and to make a living. In addition, the Royal Government has been increasing the coverage and access to comprehensive, community-based, voluntary, counselling and mental health services, and drug detoxification.

20. As of September 2023, the RGC has organised 454 locations for mental illness and drug addiction examination and treatment services, in which there are 2 national hospitals, 25 capital/provincial hospitals, 72 referral hospitals and 355 health centres; and over a 9-month period in 2023, 2,754 drug addicts were examined and treated. As regards heroin addicts (opium), the Royal Government has provided methadone replacement therapy at the Khmer-Soviet Friendship Hospital and Meanchey Referral Hospital in Phnom Penh; so far 131 heroin addicts have been provided with this therapy.

21. In order to reduce the risks associated with the drug consumption, especially the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission and other bloodborne diseases, the RGC has further authorised the partner organisations to implement the risk reduction programme, meeting with and counselling 621 drug addicts, providing 603,730 clean needles/syringes over the past 6 months, and collecting roughly 466,239 used needles/syringes (78%) for burning. Overall, the RGC still continues to pay attention to legal aspects and provision of services to save drug users and addicts, so that they have the right choice in line with technical standards.

## **Access to education (Recommendations No. 140, 142-146, 161-170, 187)**

22. The RGC draws close attention to the education sector by providing free preschool, primary and secondary education to all citizens in public schools, determining that citizens have to receive education for at least nine years and providing training in human resources and training teachers to be of high quality in terms of capabilities, technicalities and ethics. In addition to providing access to education, the RGC also pays attention to improving the quality of education, introducing four key measures. In response to these key measures, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has identified eight core priorities, including (1) strengthening school governance, (2) reviewing and preparing curriculum and extracurricular activities in line with the need to strengthen the knowledge, discipline, ethics and students' behaviour, (3) promoting student-centred learning health through child nutrition programmes and school-based food quality control, (4) urging and encouraging the participation of parents, guardians and the community in education in line with the slogan of the state and community partnerships for education, (5) digital education, (6) establishment of Centres of Excellence in Higher Education, (7) system building and capacity development, and (8) developing physical education and sport.

23. Since April 2019, the RGC has increased the salaries and allowances according to the categories and hierarchies for state teachers; as for new teachers, they receive a minimum salary of between USD300 and USD350 and an allowance for disadvantaged or remote areas between USD20 and USD30 per month.

24. In order to provide access to education for all, the RGC has called attention to expanding school infrastructure closer to people's homes. As a result, there are 8,607 kindergartens in all parts of the country, 8,067 primary schools, 1,340 junior high schools, 816 senior high schools, 19 general and technical high schools, and 110 higher education institutions. There are 5,868 kindergarten teachers, 57,608 primary school teachers, 33,653 basic school teachers, 18,454 higher education teachers and 16,471 teachers in public higher education institutions.

25. In order to improve the quality of education, the Royal Government has promoted the training of trainers of subject teachers on methods to evaluate students' learning outcomes, teaching methods and information technology. Videos are made for teaching and distance learning; worksheets are prepared for self-study students and assessment of learning; series of events are organised, focusing on the promotion of digital education. The capital/provinces implement 25 professional literacy programmes, 15 post-literacy programmes, 21 re-enrolment programmes, 25 community learning centre-based income-generating programmes, 24 primary school equivalents, and 18 supplementary education programmes.

26. Over the course of the COVID-19 epidemic, the Royal Government still continued to launch online learning and teaching at all levels from kindergarten to high schools in various forms, including the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport website, YouTube, and distance learning programmes through various technology systems (Zoom, Microsoft Team, etc.). The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport also cooperated with the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications to broadcast live lectures on television and radio, depending on the availability and satisfaction of each school. In addition, in April 2021, the Ministry established a distance education platform to support online student learning with the support of the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications and launched the Kit Kou Kon programme to facilitate children's education and provide useful information to parents. The Ministry also worked with the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, with the support of UNESCO, to provide BEEP programme for additional resources to lower secondary school students. In early 2021, the Royal Government authorised the use of two types of software systems for Internet users: Primero and OSCaR to support the education of learners and students.

## **Land reform (Recommendations No. 20-23, 49, 130, 131, 148)**

27. As of November 2023, the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction issued 7,163,764 land titles, of which 7 million plots (100%) were completed in the first phase and has started second phase with 163,764 plots (3.28%), and set up 65

permanent land surveying stations in the capital/provinces throughout the country. At the same time, the Ministry resolved a total of 12,676 cases of all types of land disputes and is solving other 2,636 cases.

28. Along with the efforts to provide land titles to the people, the Royal Government has also set policies such as (1) the policy of granting social land concessions to those who lacked housing land, providing a total land area of 1,356,752.14 hectares to a total of 487,457 families and building a total of 8,141 houses for them and (2) the policy on land registration and land use rights of indigenous communities, issued collective land titles for 42 communities (1,105 titles, with 41,538.82 hectares for 4,159 families) and revised the form and the procedures for applying for collective land registration to make it easier and faster.

29. In order to achieve gender equality in the land sector and to receive equitable benefits in the land sector, the Royal Government has set out the principles and actions: (1) women are ensured to receive equal benefits from all activities or programmes of the land sector; (2) women and men have equal access to information on policies and laws related to the land sector; (3) the registration of land or the issuance of a certificate of identification of the real estate owner must be defined as joint property of the spouses or separate property of the husband or wife and must be made with the participation of women based on legal and social aspects; (4) women who are the household heads with land titles may put them up as collateral; (5) women and men should obtain equal opportunities to participate in the provision of comments on the implementation, development and receipt of equitable, inclusive and transparent benefits in the land sector; (6) women representation in all committees on the land sector is encouraged and their leadership roles at all levels must be promoted step by step; (7) strengthening the capacity of authorities at all levels and raising, especially for women, general awareness; (8) all stakeholders, especially citizens of both sexes, must get involved in land management planning, land use master plan, land use plan and development plans; (9) land allocation through the implementation of social land concessions or land allocation for the purpose of reducing poverty must be done equitably and equally; and (10) strategic plans for gender mainstreaming in the land sector for all terms period must include capacity development strategies. The implementation of these plans needs to be monitored, reviewed and evaluated by relevant ministries/institutions.

### **Gender equality and sexual discrimination (Recommendations No. 45, 46, 50, 53, 54, 173-179)**

30. The RGC launched the Rectangular Strategy-Phase IV (2019-2023) for “Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency,” defining “strengthening gender equality” with a view to strengthening the role of women as the backbone of the economy and society, in which the rights and status of women continue to be promoted by increasing investment in gender equality in policies, implementation plans in all areas, including increasing the proportion and empowerment of women in leadership, promoting women’s entrepreneurship and the family economy, women’s health and education, preventing trafficking, sexual abuse and violence against women and children, and raising women’s awareness of climate resilience and promoting social morality, values of women and Cambodian families.

31. Pursuant to the Rectangular Strategy-Phase IV, the Royal Government continues to enhance the status of women, focusing on accelerating progress towards achieving gender equality and promoting women’s empowerment, including the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in order to increase the equality conditions and recognition of equality between women and men in all aspects, as well as the right to equal participation and indispensable partnership with men in the development of the nation.

32. The RGC has set out key policies, including the Third National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women (2019-2023) and the strategic plan of Neary Rattanak V (2019-2023) to promote women’s rights and eliminate all forms of discrimination against them, and introduced four specific measures, including (1) increasing investment in gender equality, (2) ensuring the protection of women’s rights and the full and equal participation of women in decision-making at all levels, (3) strengthening accountability mechanisms for gender

equality, and (4) continue to promote women's participation in the economy and financial inclusion for women.

### **Violence against women and children (Recommendations No. 132, 180, 182-186)**

33. The Ministry of Women's Affairs organised and led a campaign to raise public awareness and change social attitudes, mobilise participation, encourage women's empowerment and men's participation in preventing violence against women and children throughout the country via various social media and activities. To implement the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women 2019-2023, relevant ministries/institutions launched work programmes in their respective sectors. The result of the Demographic and Health Survey 2021-2022 shows that violence from close partners decreased from 29% in 2014 to 21% in 2021.

34. The Cambodian National Council for Women has provided two services of legal assistance to poor women and girls affected by violence, i.e. intervention services provided by the Ministry/Departments of Women's Affairs throughout the country and defence services at all courts. In addition, the Samdech Techo Sen Volunteer Lawyer's Group, the CHRC, and the Bar Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia (BAKC) have provided free legal services to poor victim women and girls. For example, in the last five years, the BAKC has conducted free legal consultations of 2,376 cases in total and assigned lawyers for the poor to defend 23,656 cases, with a total of 36,610 clients (12,352 women and minors).

35. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has included reproductive and sexual health education, reproductive and sexual rights in the national curriculum, health education from grades 5 to 12 and lessons on gender-based violence in the life skills curriculum for lower secondary schools. Meanwhile, 56 factories and enterprises are implementing the policies to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.

36. The RGC introduced the Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Children composed of seven strategies of the Global Alliance for ending violence against children in line with Cambodia's and ASEAN's responses to violence against children. In addition, the RGC has incorporated 16.2 of 16<sup>th</sup> Goal into the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) on Ending Violence against Children.

37. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) implemented the Cambodia PROTECT strategy for raising awareness and change attitudes through a "Strong Family" campaign to end violence against children and prevent the separation from their families. At the same time, in 2019, the Ministry was granted by the Royal Government a membership of the Pathfinding Countries to End Violence Against Children. From 2019 to 2021, 780 out of 789 cases of domestic violence were resolved, (in which 399 were resolved in the judiciary and 381 by non-judicial measures).

38. The Cambodian National Council for Children, the staff of the RGC, introduced National Policy for the Child Protection System (NPCPS) in May 2020. The NPCPS aims to strengthen existing mechanisms and continues to implement them systematically in order to provide consistent services for children and their families, with the aim of ensuring that child issues are included in all relevant areas. The NPCPS identifies three pillars, namely the prevention and protection, intervention and provision of response services, each of which focuses on four angles: education awareness and training, child welfare, justice and health systems.

39. In order to promote the implementation of the NPCPS 2019-2029, the Cambodian National Council for Children has prepared an implementation plan, including (1) action plan 2021-2025; (2) human resources development plan and budget; and (3) monitoring and evaluation plan. Meanwhile, it has also developed an action plan to protect and prevent, and respond to child sexual exploitation online (2021-2025), which was officially promulgated in July 2021.

## **Marriage of women and children (Recommendations No. 172, 190)**

40. Article 950 of the Civil Code states that, “A woman may not remarry until 120 days have elapsed from the day of the dissolution or annulment of her previous marriage.” In no way is this provision a discriminatory prohibition against her remarriage within 120 days after divorce. It aims to protect the interests of the woman or man or an unborn child in the event that the woman is pregnant, as stated in the second paragraph of the same Article 950 that, “The provisions of the aforesaid paragraph shall not apply if the woman was already pregnant from before the dissolution or annulment of the previous marriage and has given birth, or if she has a doctor’s certificate that she is not pregnant.”

41. Article 948 of the Civil Code states that, “Neither men nor women may marry until they have reached the age of 18. However, if one of the parties has attained the age of majority and the other party is a minor at least 16 years of age, the parties may marry with the consent of the parental power holders or guardian of the minor.”

42. Articles 21 and 22 of the Civil Code also stipulate that, “(1) Where a minor who has reached the age of sixteen completely supports himself, the court may, upon a petition from the minor, declare the emancipation of the minor. (2) A married minor shall be deemed emancipated without a declaration of the court. (3) An emancipated minor shall have the same capacity to act as an adult.”

43. Article 953 of the Civil Code stipulates that, “If one of the parties wishing to marry is a minor, the consent of parental power holders or guardian must be obtained. If one of the parental power holders does not consent, the consent of the other parental power holder shall be sufficient. If the parental power holders or guardian unreasonably refuse consent, the minor wishing to marry may apply to the court for adjudication in place of consent.”

44. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs has provided support to the Ratanakkiri Women and Children Consultative Committee in piloting Prevention of Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancy by providing technical support after receiving the emancipation from the court. The Ministry has implemented the action plan on Prevention of Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancy in Ratanakkiri (2017-2021). The action plan has been incorporated into the provincial development plan by the Ratanakkiri Provincial Administration and budget has been allocated for implementation.

## **Child labour (Recommendations No. 192, 193)**

45. The Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia continues to strengthen the implementation of the National Action Plan on the Reduction of Child Labour and the Elimination of the Worse Forms of Child Labour (2016-2025), focusing on four areas: (1) strengthen the monitoring and implementation of policies on child labour such as the International Labour Convention to which Cambodia has ratified, promote the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 8.7 to end child labour, forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, monitor the implementation of labour laws and 13 proclamations related to child labour; (2) strengthen mechanisms and build the capacity of labour inspectors such as the mechanism of the National and Sub-national Committee on Combating Child Labour, the Cambodia National Council for Children, the Cambodian National Council for Women, the National Committee for Counter Trafficking, and the Early Childhood Care and Development Commission. From 2019 to October 2023, 17 training sessions related to the prevention of child labour were organised, with a total of 2,316 participants, including labour inspectors; (3) core interventions and law enforcement such as unannounced labour inspections in all occupations which are priority sectors and highly risky, labour inspections of factories, enterprises, institutions that have requested to employ young workers, and core interventions to prevent, protect and continue to care about children. For example, from 2019 to October 2023, 1,550 vulnerable children were prevented and educated, trained and additional occupations were created for their families. According to the Socio-Economic Survey (2012-2019/20), the percentage of children participating in employment decreased from 24% in 2012 to 17% in 2021. In addition, according to the International Labour Organisation Better Factories Project (ILO-BFC), cases of child labour

in factories and enterprises in the textile and garment industries, footwear, bags and manufacturing of travel products decreased from one case in 2019 to zero in 2022; (4) promote and raise awareness of preventing the use of child labour in high-risk industries such as textiles, garments, manufacturing of footwear, travel products and bags, brick making, cassava and sugarcane plantations. From 2019 to October 2023, 544 campaigns to prevent the use of child labour were organised with the participation of 14,135 employers, workers, parents, guardians and children and short video clips were produced for educational outreach; and World Day Against Child Labour are observed every year across the country.

### **Birth registration (Recommendations No. 135, 136)**

46. Based on the Law on Nationality 2018, any child born to foreign parents shall acquire Cambodian citizenship only if the father and mother were born and legally reside or any child born to unknown parents or newly-born child who is found in the Kingdom of Cambodia. In particular, any child who is fully adopted by a Cambodian spouse shall obtain Cambodian citizenship when the full adoption is established in accordance with the law in force.

47. In 2000, the RGC issued Sub-Decree No. 103 on the Civil Registration to provide Cambodian citizens and infants born to foreign parents who reside legally over the territories of the Kingdom of Cambodia with birth registration. All Cambodian citizens have the right to apply for birth registration at the commune/Sangkat of his/her residence or that of his/her parents. Birth registration is carried out fairly, without discrimination, and free of charge. Overall, the acquisition of Khmer citizenship must comply with the relevant legal documents in force.

### **Juvenile justice (Recommendation No. 194)**

48. Based on the Law on Juvenile Justice, the RGC launched a three-year strategic plan and action plan (2018-2020), focusing on raising awareness of the benefits of implementing diversion measures and other measures other than juvenile detention, by establishing an inter-ministerial working group composed of the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the MoSVY and the Court of Appeal. The working group, in collaboration with UNICEF, has been studying the possibility of promoting alternative punishment for minor offences committed by minors.

49. On 1 February 2021, the Royal Government issued Guidelines on Juvenile Justice Procedure vs Conventional Criminal Procedure, (2) Juvenile Justice System in Court Proceedings in Cambodia, and (3) Diversion of Minors in Conflict with the Law. In addition, in 2023, the MoSVY issued Prakas No. 128 on the Implementation of Standard Operating Procedures for the Management of Youth Rehabilitation Centres. In early 2023, MoSVY piloted a plan to divert minors in conflict with the law and a report form on the assessment of the welfare and social status of minors in conflict with the law. The Ministry also established a youth rehabilitation centre and inaugurated it at the end of 2021, which can accommodate more than 1,000 minors. Currently, plans, measures and relevant documents are being prepared to transfer the management of all juvenile detainees from the Ministry of Interior to the MoSVY, to be placed in the youth rehabilitation centre, in line with the Law on Juvenile Justice. Moreover, the MoSVY has been preparing a law on child protection in order to ensure the protection of children based on the desperate need of children in Cambodia.

### **Rights of persons with disabilities (Recommendations No. 181, 195-198)**

50. The RGC has launched the National Disability Strategic Plan 2019-2023 in order in response to the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” as well as other development policies. The goals of this strategic plan are to (1) improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities and the livelihood of their families, respect inherent dignity and independent living, including comprehensive welfare, and (2) promote equality

before the law and access to justice, freedom from torture, abuse, exploitation and violence, and obtain solutions in emergency situations, as well as promote equality for women, children and persons with all forms of disabilities. The strategic plan also sets out nine strategic objectives which are to (1) increase employment and economic security, (2) increase access to health services and labour rehabilitation, (3) access technical and vocational education and training, (4) facilitate, (5) participate equally, (6) access justice services and freedoms, (7) assure gender equality, (8) reduce the risk and impact of disaster, and (9) strengthen national and international cooperation.

51. The RGC has encouraged persons with disabilities to work in ministries/institutions at a fixed rate of 2% and in the private sector at a fixed rate of 1%. As of 2022, there are 3,748 civil servants with disabilities, and in the private sector, there are 5,839 persons with disabilities working in 291 institutions, factories and enterprises.

52. The MoSVY has cooperated with national and international NGOs to implement programmes and projects with the aim of helping children with disabilities and persons with all kinds of disabilities have access to the necessary education and social services, and provided a policy regime for poor people with disabilities in the communities across 25 capital/provinces (60 Krongs/districts/Khans), with a total of 19,874 people with disabilities benefiting from this programme. In 2023, a total of 35 people with disabilities were vocationally trained in the field of electronics, tailoring, machines and mobile phone repair; a total of 6,349 capital, provincial, Krong, district trainers and commune/Sangkat resource persons were trained in the implementation of the programme to identify 260,004 people with disabilities according to the social model and basic rights; and 200,454 cards were produced to identify them. To ensure better welfare of people with disabilities, especially for them to be eligible for free health care, the Royal Government has been implementing the Identification of Poor Household Programme, providing a means to assist all persons with disabilities and poor families to receive health-care services by using the equity fund.

53. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has paid attention to promoting the right to education for children with disabilities, (1) printing 1,792 Braille textbooks and sign language books, (2) providing education services to 1,094 children with disabilities at six special education high schools for visually-impaired, deaf, intellectually-disabled and autistic pupils, (3) providing subsistence allowance for food, lodging and travel expenses to visually-impaired, deaf, intellectually-disabled and autistic pupils and funds to public schools, special education high schools, (4) opening visually-impaired, deaf, intellectually-disabled and autistic integrated classes—47 schools, 802 pupils, (5) training specialised teachers for teaching visually-impaired, deaf and intellectually-disabled pupils at the National Institute of Special Education, (6) building capacity on inclusive and special education for teachers of inclusive education classes, integrated classes, and special education high schools, and (7) organising National Forum on Inclusive Education.

54. The Australia-Cambodia Cooperation for Equitable Sustainable Services (ACCESS) programme implemented by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the MoSVY, and the Disability Action Council developed documents and provided 52 training sessions to trainers on gender equality and disability inclusion, with a total of 1,773 participants, including 420 people with disabilities from seven target provinces.

### **Rights of same-sex couples (Recommendations No. 45, 47, 50-55)**

55. The provisions against all forms of discrimination are set out in the Criminal Code of the Kingdom of Cambodia from Articles 265 to 270. The RGC has paid attention to strengthening the enforcement of laws and regulations in the fight against all forms of discrimination, as well as LGBT discrimination, and expanding individual, family, community and social education for greater recognition of LGBT rights.

56. The Ministry of Women's Affairs has included lesbian, bisexual and transgender women as a priority group in the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Action Plan on Violence against Women. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has introduced a comprehensive curriculum on sex education in schools, incorporating gender equality content and concepts, gender tendencies, gender identity, gender expression and gender characteristics in accordance with the level of

education and language for students. Relevant ministries/institutions have collaborated with CSOs, associations and LGBT communities to ensure that they have the same rights, freedoms and equality as other men and women in society.

57. Although Cambodia does not have laws or regulations recognising the marriage and transgender identities of LGBT people, Cambodia does not prohibit, restrict or punish them. On the contrary, the efforts made by the Royal Government and all stakeholders, especially after having accepted all the recommendations regarding LGBT rights, have become an important message to motivate them to have the courage to show their faces and advocate for the rights and freedoms of their group. According to the assessment of the Rainbow Community Kampuchea Organisation (ROCK), since 2019, the number of the public and their families who have valued, respected and socially recognised the status of LGBT rights has significantly augmented.

### **Fighting discrimination against indigenous people and minorities (Recommendation No. 48)**

58. In the Kingdom of Cambodia, indigenous people account for 22 clans and over 60 ethnic races. As of September 2020, there were a total of 455 indigenous communities living in 15 capital/provinces, in which the Ministry of Rural Development issued self-identification certificates to 177 indigenous communities and participated in the plenary session of the preparation of internal regulations on the collective land use and management of 99 indigenous communities in the 15 target provinces. The preparation of these internal regulations is a procedure for obtaining a collective land title. All indigenous peoples have maintained their ethnic, social, cultural and traditional unity, customs, beliefs, languages, and lifestyles and are living harmoniously in society.

59. In order to combat discrimination against indigenous peoples, the RGC has launched indigenous development policies through development programmes and projects in collaboration with national and international development partners and CSOs, making their economic, social, cultural and traditional situations and native languages in all areas gradually improve, including infrastructure such as roads, schools, clean water, electricity, on-site and mobile health centres and so on.

60. Based on the aforesaid policies, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has promoted the right to education for indigenous children, establishing multilingual education programmes and providing multilingual education services to indigenous children at 142 kindergartens and 96 primary schools, printing multilingual textbooks for grades 1-3, and training teachers for teaching them. Indigenous learners, students have the opportunity to study up to higher education through scholarships and other support programmes.

### **Disaster risk management (Recommendation No. 68)**

61. The National Committee for Disaster Management has been implementing the National Action Plan on Disaster Management, i.e. (1) continuing to strengthen and implement the Law on Disaster Management and 2019 Decision No. 001; (2) establishing a gender working group to strengthen the capacity and pay attention to women in order for them to participate in activities to reduce disaster management risks; and (3) incorporating the promotion of and the focus on women, children and persons with disabilities into the National Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction 2019-2023. At the same time, the RGC has been paying close attention to the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response.

### **Judicial reforms (Recommendations No. 124, 127)**

62. The RGC has enacted laws related to the judiciary, taking into account the fundamental principles of justice to ensure the independence of the judiciary. The Ministry of Justice has launched Judicial Administration Unit, in charge of personnel, administration and finance of the judiciary and the prosecution at all levels of the Court of First Instance,

the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. The Judicial Administration Unit has no power to interfere in the affairs of and effect on the judges' right to trial. Judges conduct their trials independently, at their own discretion, within the legal framework. The RGC has introduced a programme to reform laws and the judicial system towards achieving its vision for obtaining justice for all by improving the quality and efficiency of justice services and the people's right to justice through (1) strengthening law enforcement properly; (2) strengthening cleanliness and professional code of ethics of law enforcement officials; (3) strengthening the mechanism of labour discipline and modernising the administration of justice; (4) promoting the provision of legal services; and (5) strengthening and improving dispute resolution mechanisms that may respond effectively to social realities.

63. The Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with the OHCHR in Cambodia, is in the process of reviewing three fundamental laws, i.e. Law on the Organisation of the Judiciary; Law on the Statute of Judges and Prosecutors; and Law on the Organisation and Functioning of the Supreme Council of the Magistracy, taking into account various recommendations of national and international partners. It has also recommended the use of a number of examples and procedures of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) for improving the efficiency of the judiciary at all levels. The form of provisional detention order has been used so far, following the pattern of the ECCC one.

### **Independence of the judiciary (Recommendations No. 118, 122, 123, 125)**

64. The Supreme Council of the Magistracy has been implementing the principle of changing the workplace of judges every four years, punishing judges or prosecutors who do not respect professionalism and code of ethics, strengthening the discipline of judges and prosecutors, reaching out to inspect the courts and prosecutors at all levels and reviewing the code of ethics for judges and prosecutors in order to enable judges to exercise their discretion in accordance with the law, making decisions independently and fairly.

### **Establishment of regional appeals courts (Recommendation No. 120)**

65. In addition to the Phnom Penh Court of Appeal, on 17 February 2020, the King of the Kingdom of Cambodia issued a Royal Decree, proclaiming the opening of appeals courts and prosecutors general of appeals courts in three provinces: Battambang Court of Appeal, Tbong Khmum Court of Appeal and Sihanoukville Court of Appeal that commenced work from 1 April 2020 onwards. The Ministry of Justice has also been considering the establishment of more regional appeals courts as needed.

### **Reduction of the time spent by persons in pre-trial detention (Recommendation No. 126)**

66. The Ministry of Justice has launched a campaign to resolve the backlog of case-files at the capital/provincial courts of first instance, setting out guidelines to be implemented during the prosecutorial, investigating and trial phases to ensure the effectiveness of the campaign for clearing the backlog.

67. From 18 May 2020 to 17 June 2021, the capital/provincial courts of first instance throughout the country resolved 37,900 criminal cases out of over 39,500 cases, which had been congested during the prosecutorial, investigating and trial phases, in which over 12,600 cases out of over 13,000 cases, were tried; and over 62,800 new criminal cases of a total of over 80,400 cases, were resolved.

### **Extraordinary chambers in the courts of Cambodia (Recommendation No. 134)**

68. At the ECCC, victims have the right to apply to be Civil Parties and to seek “collective and moral” reparations in order to restore their human dignity by establishing collective remembrance and providing them with official recognition. 22 projects in Case 002/02 were submitted to the Trial Chamber; however, only 13 were endorsed. These reparation projects are divided into three main areas: education, remembrance, and rehabilitation.

69. Three out of the 13 projects implemented in the common interest were designed specifically for the benefit of victims of genocide, including Community Media Project (the Cham People and the former Khmer Rouge); Voices from Ethnic Minorities; Legal and Civic Education for Minority Civil Parties. Currently, the ECCC has been performing its residual functions, especially in relation to the protection of victims and witnesses, the inspection of the implementation of reparations provided to Civil Parties, the wide dissemination of the ECCC achievements to the general public, and the preservation and management of archives.

### **The fight against corruption (Recommendation No. 129)**

70. Through the National Strategic Plan of Anti-Corruption-Phase III, 2020-2025, the Anti-Corruption Unit has been implementing three priority tasks, i.e. education, prevention, and the enforcement of repressive law. This work will be supplemented by a number of other priorities such as efficiency of law enforcement, promotion of cleanliness of the public administration and the private sector, and joined by stakeholders concerned and international community in the fight against corruption and money laundering, governance and effective internal inspections. The priority activities being implemented are (1) improving existing policies, laws and provisions for the purpose of ensuring the effectiveness of anti-corruption; (2) strengthening governance and public procurement efficiency; (3) providing good services within the public framework and clean businesses in the private sector; (4) promoting national and international cooperation in the fight against corruption, money laundering and criminal confiscation; and (5) promoting the integrity of public institutions, reviewing and evaluating the implementation of the National Strategic Plan of Anti-Corruption-Phase III.

### **The fight against human trafficking (Recommendations No. 69-77, 171, 191)**

71. In the fight against human trafficking, the RGC launched the National Strategic Plan for Counter Trafficking in Persons (2019-2023). The National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) has strengthened cooperation with relevant institutions, national and international NGOs, signing about 18 memoranda of understanding and agreements with various partners from 2019 to 2023.

72. The NCCT has reached out to hotels, guesthouses, entertainment venues and set up a hotline and Facebook page for receiving information, complaints and interventions to help victims and cooperating with international organisations and CSOs involved to prevent and control online child sexual abuse. From 2019 to the first half of 2023, the awareness of the prevention was raised 550,047 times, with a total of roughly 30,438,518 participants. The Capital/Provincial Police Commissariats patrolled suspected targets 1,791 times and strengthened the contract work prohibiting crime at 12,343 hotels, guesthouses, karaoke and massage parlours, with 98,511 people involved.

73. Through law enforcement from 2019 to the first half of 2023, the competent authorities cracked down on 936 cases related to trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation, arrested 1,258 suspects and sent them to court, and rescued 3,139 victims. Over this period, the courts had 1,616 cases involving 1,793 victims and a total of 2,453 defendants; 847 cases were handled; 791 offenders were sentenced in prison; and 769 cases were being dealt with. During the same period, 5,579 victims and vulnerable victims of all forms of trafficking in persons had been rehabilitated at partner organisations’ centres and 1,063 had been reintegrated into their communities.

74. The NCCT of the Royal Government, which is the only national mechanism composed of 22 ministries and 5 specialised units as members, plays a key role in formulating policies, national plans and measures to combat trafficking in persons in order for the relevant professional institutions to jointly implement, and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness, and facilitate cooperation with relevant countries in the sub-region, region and the world, as well as for CSOs and national and international partners, the United Nations for Counter Trafficking in Persons to jointly implement the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC), ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons (ACTIP), ASEAN Programme Plan, Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) through the ASEAN Working Group on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), including trafficking in persons, ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), the Working Group for Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons in the Greater Mekong Subregion (COMMIT). Cambodia is also a member of the UN and Regional Migration Network and a champion country in the implementation of the GCM.

75. The MoSVY will prepare guidelines on the mechanism for referring victims of trafficking in persons to relevant ministries/institutions, NGOs and the private sector for action in line with national policies and 2009 Minimum Standards for the Protection of the Rights of Victims of Trafficking in Persons.

76. In 2022, the MoSVY (a) received and sent approximately 2,218 victims for rehabilitation at partner organisations' centres, (b) received a total of 288 victims and vulnerable victims repatriating from various countries by air, and (c) received 10 local foreign victims and vulnerable victims.

### **National review [committee] (Recommendation No. 33)**

77. In 2019, the RGC issued Decision No. 92, increasing the composition of the National Review Committee to 23 members. The National Committee has the following roles and duties: reviewing and advising the Royal Government on ratification or withdrawal, monitoring, and advising the Royal Government to prepare reports to international institutions, preparing reports for clarification of complaints, reviewing and managing the investigation of facts and laws, collecting information and evidence of complaints, as well as coordinating and dealing with issues related to the implementation of international labour conventions and related international conventions.

### **Law on associations and NGOs (Recommendations No. 12, 24-29, 109)**

78. At the end of October 2022, to facilitate the resolution of requests and suggestions of CSOs, the working group of the Royal Government continued to hold the second phase of consultation with representatives of CSOs, with the participation of representatives of embassies and development partners in order to review and discuss the draft amendments to 16 articles of the Law on Associations and NGOs, including articles 1, 7-11, 20, 21, 24-26, 30-32, 35 and 36. As a result, nine articles were revised and other seven 9-11, 20, 21, 24 and 36 have been requested by civil society representatives for further internal review and discussion. In addition, Swiss Cooperation Office and Consular Agency in Cambodia has provided international experts for legal analysis within the framework of the amendment process.

### **Trade Union Law (Recommendations No. 26, 27, 29, 109, 151-153)**

79. In order to simplify and expedite the process of union registration, ten articles of the Trade Union Law were amended in 2020. The amendment is a synthesis of inputs provided by stakeholders, including unions, employers and International Labour Organisation. A small minority of the unions' rights and duties in representing their members in resolving collective labour disputes that did not arise from the implementation of the joint convention were also further clarified.

80. As of November 2023, the registration of professional organisations continued to increase, with 6,253 registered professional organisations, including 5,921 local unions, 278 union federations, 42 trade unions, and 12 employers' associations. Prior to the 2016 Trade Union Law, there were only 3,624 registered professional organisations; in 2017, the number of professional organisations increased to 4,307 (18.78%) and after the amendment of the 2020 Trade Union Law, the number of professional organisations increased to 5,484 (27.33%). As of November 2023, if the Trade Union Law before 2016 and after its existence was compared, the number of professional organisations increased by 72.40%.

### **Telecommunications Law (Recommendations No. 26, 29, 96)**

81. The 2015 Law on Telecommunications was developed through several consultations with the participation of CSOs and relevant stakeholders; and inputs from internal experts of the ministry, inter-ministries, the private sector, representatives of the Embassy of Japan to Cambodia, JICA, and the International Telecommunication Union, were contributed; and its contents were compared to and quoted from many countries in ASEAN, Japan and South Korea, which makes it in line with Cambodia's international obligations.

### **Law on access to information (Recommendation No. 96)**

82. After organising meetings with CSOs and relevant ministries/institutions such as the Council of Jurists of the Office of the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Information has finally revised the draft law with 10 chapters and 42 articles and is accelerating other procedures for its adoption in the near future.

### **Law on political parties (Recommendations No. 25-27, 109)**

83. The Law on Political Parties has been amended three times. The first and second amendment was made in March 2017 and in July 2017 respectively. These two amendments provide the Supreme Court with the power to suspend activities of a political party or dissolve it, following a complaint of the Ministry of Interior, when it violates Articles 6 new (two), 7, 29 new and 38 new. The third amendment was made in January 2019 for the purpose of providing the right to any person who has been banned by the court from political activities to obtain full political rights and resume his or her political activities after the Supreme Court-imposed ban expires and in the event that the person has been reinstated to engage in political activities by the King, at the Prime Minister's request.

### **Freedom of expression (Recommendations No. 81, 83, 86, 87, 93-95, 98, 99, 101, 105-107, 110)**

84. The 2018 Inter-Ministerial Prakas No. 170 on the Management of Websites and Social Media in the Kingdom of Cambodia defines the management measures to prevent the dissemination or distribution of news contents or written messages, audio messages, images, video and/or other forms on websites and social media that are intended to cause social unrest, harming the national defence sector, national security, relationships with other countries, national economy and public order, causing discrimination and affecting national culture and traditions. All of these are not attempts to restrict the access to information and freedom of expression via the news media and the Internet at all. Within the legal framework, freedom of expression in Cambodia is protected and promoted by law. According to Article 41 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the right to freedom of expression is guaranteed to all citizens. The Law on the Press also stipulates that freedom of writing and publishing shall not infringe on the honour and dignity of others.

85. In order to improve the activities of CSOs, the Royal Government has organised forums on the partnership between the Royal Government and CSOs and established a working group of the Royal Government to deal with their requests and suggestions with the aim of showing a sincere and genuine partnership.

86. At the same time, the Ministry of Interior has instructed the Capital/Provincial Administration to support the implementation of the activities of CSOs, issuing Directive No. 040 and Letter No. 2006 in 2018 to ensure associations, NGOs and local communities have the full right to operate in the Kingdom of Cambodia in accordance with the laws and regulations in force and their statutes kept at the Ministry of Interior, without notice to the local authorities. The Ministry also requires the Capital/Provincial Administration to hold consultative forums with CSOs operating within its jurisdiction on a regular basis, every semester, or as necessary.

87. The Royal Government, as well as the Ministry of Interior, remains committed to organising the CSOs and Government Partnership Forum twice a year in order to jointly strengthen the democratic process, the promotion of human rights and sustainable socio-economic development with the participation of all stakeholders. For example, after the situation of the COVID-19 epidemic eased and was under control, the Ministry of Interior rescheduled the partnership forum on 10 January 2023. At the same time, the Capital/Provincial Administration has also started to organise consultative forums with associations, NGOs and local communities, and they have been resuming their local activities. As of December 2023, there are a total of 6,279 local associations and NGOs (2,747 associations and 3,532 NGOs).

88. The Ministry of Interior continues to accept all concerns, requests and suggestions of CSOs in order to discuss, coordinate and find solutions to issues and has collaborated with UNDP to implement a 3-year project entitled “Building Capacity for Civic Engagement, Peacebuilding and Inclusive Dialogue: Towards Inclusive and Participatory Governance” (2020-2023). This project would help further develop the capacity of civil servants at national and sub-national administrations and CSOs so as to enhance the partnership between civil servants and CSOs.

### **Civil society actors, and members of the political opposition (Recommendations No. 85, 112-116, 133)**

89. Journalists, human rights defenders, land, environmental and trade union activists, and members of the opposition party, as well as the general population, have the rights, freedoms and responsibilities, especially, to perform their roles, duties and obligations in accordance with the law. For any activities taken refuge under the label of human rights and crimes committed in violation of the Constitution, criminal law and laws affecting national security, social order and public interest, perpetrators shall be held accountable before the law. Law enforcement against perpetrators is the strengthening of the rule of law in a liberal democratic society, ensuring equality before the law, social justice, without impunity, and respect for human rights.

90. In October 2021, a number of journalists, human rights defenders, land, environmental and trade union activists and members of the opposition party who had committed offences were granted bail, subject to judicial supervision, and some others were released after having served their sentences. The competent authorities have been making efforts to take legal action against those who violate all types of human rights.

### **Democratic and political space (Recommendations No. 80, 88, 90, 91, 102, 103)**

91. In 2022, the Ministry of Interior issued Letter No. 316, instructing the competent authorities at the sub-national administration to facilitate all registered political parties and to act in accordance with the law in order to compete in the election in a free, fair and just manner, in accordance with the principles of a liberal multi-party democracy.

92. As of the end of December 2023, 47 political parties registering with the Ministry of Interior were able to act freely and without intimidation, in accordance with the Law on Political Parties and the relevant legal documents; 17 political parties and 86,092 candidates in total competed in the 5<sup>th</sup> mandate commune/Sangkat council election in 2022. 7,394,427 people went to the polls, accounting for 80.32% of those on the voter list, and as a result,

nine political parties won a total of 11,622 seats in the 1,652 commune/Sangkat councils. Meanwhile, there are 18 political parties registering their political parties for the election and lists of candidates for the 7<sup>th</sup> National Assembly election in 2023.

93. The Supreme Consultative Council, established in 2018, has made significant contributions to the Royal Government. Therefore, in 2023, the Royal Government re-established this council, allowing the composition of political parties participated in the 2023 election and other parties that are properly registered in accordance with the law in force. This mechanism was established with the aim of promoting a liberal, democratic, multi-party-political system in order to gather inputs of pluralistic views for the benefit of nation-building.

### **Electoral reform (Recommendations No. 123, 138, 139)**

94. The National Election Committee (NEC), an independent body as stipulated in Article 150 new (two) of the Constitution, has exercised its authority independently and neutrally to ensure that the elections of senators, members of the National Assembly and other elections as provided for by law. The NEC has modernised the electoral process, developing voter registration through information technology and using information technology to assist in the organisation and management of elections; for example, the registration of political parties and the list of candidates, the issuance of identification documents for election, case-file management and reports related to complaints and inspections, verification and summary of election results; and all the information and documents related to the election results are posted on the NEC website [www.nec.gov.kh](http://www.nec.gov.kh) and Mobile App.

95. As regards the 7<sup>th</sup> National Assembly election in 2023, 18 political parties competed and 8,214,430 (84.59%) voters in total went to the polls. The 2023 election is considered by national and international opinion to be conducted in a peaceful, secure and safe environment, with good public order, non-violence, non-threatening, in a smooth, transparent, free, fair and just manner, in line with a liberal multi-party democracy; and it was well-organised even better in terms of legal and technical aspects.

## **III. Challenges**

96. The outbreak of COVID-19 and the complex evolutionary effects of the regional and international situation pose a great obstacle for the entire world, including Cambodia, in nation-building and development, especially, the implementation of human rights recommendations that have been accepted so far.

97. The quality of human resources is still limited, which requires the continuous acceleration of human resource development and the building of quality human capital that can ensure the strength of the national economy, economic and social development, technology adoption, technology adaptation and innovation.

98. Public institutions, gradually improved though, are not yet effective enough. Institutional quality and capacity are important in optimising the formulation and implementation of policies or action plans that need to be further enhanced and strengthened for the purpose of building strong institutions for development in all areas.

99. Despite major improvements, the health system still faces challenges that need addressing in a proactive, urgent, regular and continuous fashion, and further refining and developing in all aspects, including infrastructure, governance, human resources and professionalism in a highly moral manner.

100. As society progresses rapidly, it requires amendments of laws and revision of relevant legal documents, which makes it difficult for the public to monitor, understand and implement them properly, in accordance with the spirit of those legal documents. On the other hand, amending or making new laws in some areas involves traditional factors, customs, mindsets, regional and international trends that require the participation of all parties and more time.

## **IV. Conclusion**

101. The Kingdom of Cambodia primarily focuses on the implementation of the 173 human rights recommendations that it has accepted. They were distributed to competent ministries/institutions to be implemented effectively, in line with the provisions of the Constitution, laws, and international human rights covenants, conventions and instruments to which Cambodia is a State party. Despite the difficult situation caused by COVID-19 and other crises, both regionally and internationally, Cambodia still strives to overcome all obstacles in implementing all of them judiciously in order to promote and protect human rights in Cambodia. Overall, the majority are implemented by the competent ministries/institutions and the desired results are achieved; and only a few are implemented in stages and require more time. The few shortcomings are the human rights general principles, in which all rights are interdependent and interrelated; and, in reality, in no way can any country fully and perfectly implement or fulfil its international human rights obligations.

---