UNESCO is making available to Cambodian journalists, media professionals, journalism students, academic institutions, and media development partners the Khmer language adaptation of the publication “Journalism, Fake News and Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training”. The publication will help journalists and journalism students enhance their reporting to counter disinformation, and can be used by the Government and local organizations to strengthen media and information literacy skills of Cambodians, to become resilient to disinformation and misinformation.

At the launching of the publication held on the 23rd of July in Phnom Penh by UNESCO, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and media stakeholders, UNESCO Representative to Cambodia, Mr. Sardar Umar Alam highlighted that “unfortunately, there is not a single magical formula or solution to address this challenge. However, through collaboration and trust-building among all parties and stakeholders, keeping freedom of expression and human rights on high-priority, it is possible to minimize the impact of disinformation”. Mr. Sardar, stressed the importance of the publication in the current health crisis. Referring to a recent global study, he said that “one-third of social media users have reported seeing false or misleading information about the coronavirus, and another international study notes that approximately 19 million out of nearly 50 million (38%) tweets related to COVID-19 analyzed using artificial intelligence were deemed to be manipulated content”.

Taking the opportunity that 100 representatives of the media, Government, NGOs and diplomats were present at the launching, the Minister of Information H.E. Mr. Khieu Kanharith, expressed his hopes that the handbook will serve to work collaboratively with all stakeholders in addressing together disinformation. “A few months ago there was a plan to pass a fake news law, but we did not consider it would be a good idea, as it could limit the right to freedom of expression” said H.E. Mr. Khieu Kanharith.

Ms. Chak Sopheap, Executive Director, Cambodian Center for Human Rights, referring to the words of the Minister, highlighted the importance to work towards the promotion of media and information literacy in opposition to enforcing legislation that limit the rights of Cambodians to free speech and access information.