Open Letter
to
Samdech Aka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia

Respected Samdech!

We, Women’s Groups from 6 Civil Society Organizations, working to promote gender equality in Cambodia, on behalf citizens and Cambodian women, would like to extend our appreciation to the Royal Government for the efforts to overcome all challenges to promote roles and the status of women in all sectors in Cambodia, especially through the introduction of a number of policies on gender mainstreaming including the Rectangular Strategy of the Royal Government, in which Angle No. 4 of the Rectangle 4 is on gender equality and the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals, which determine the number of women in leadership positions. In addition, Neary Ratanak 4, National Strategic Development Plan (2014-2018) and the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (2014-2018) also highlight the importance of women in society.

These policies are being implemented by relevant ministries and institutions including the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and the Cambodian National Council for Women and have yielded many positive results in promoting the status and roles of women in Cambodia. However, our mission has not been accomplished because we have observed there are still many obstacles which hinder the acceleration of achievements towards a real equality between women and men, and which are also a bottleneck in your efforts in the development of the country as a whole.

Therefore, please allow us to raise a number of concerns related to the Law on the Organization and Functioning of the National Election Committee (NEC) and the Law on Parliamentarian Election so that Samdech may be informed and take consideration for corrective actions as appropriate.

Some concerns related to the Law on the Organization and Functioning of the National Election Committee (NEC):

1. The law fails to require clearly the names of candidates in alternate order between women and men from the top to the bottom of the list in the names of candidates of each political party in all constituencies (Article 4).
2. The law fails to emphasize the participation of women, especially of young women, to take roles as Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the National Election Committee, Provincial Election Commission, Commune/Sangkat Election Commission and Election Office Commission as well as the roles as Secretary General or Deputy Secretary General and officers of the General Secretariat (Article 4, 5, 6, 14, 28, 34, 36, 53).
3. The law does not include representatives of disadvantaged groups including indigenous minorities and people with disabilities as members of the Provincial Election Commission, Commune/Sangkat Election Commission and Election Office (Article 16, 27).
4. The law does not clearly determine the number of women in Commissions established by the National Election Committee to recruit members of the Provincial Election Commission, Commune/Sangkat Election Commission and Election Office (Article 17, 26).

5. The law does not clearly emphasize the roles of disadvantaged people in the National Election Committee as follow: (Article 42)
   - There is no measure to ensure that disadvantaged groups including women, indigenous minorities and people with disabilities find it easy to take part in the election on the polling day.
   - Political parties are not encouraged to develop name lists of candidates, in which male and female candidates are alternated.
   - The law does not ensure awareness raising for disadvantaged groups including women, indigenous minorities, people with disabilities and youth on elections through public awareness program and other means.
   - The law does not determine the number of women to be selected and appointed as officers to help check the name list and voter registration according to the law, regulation and procedures for election.

6. The law does not mention clearly the budget for building capacity on gender issues to all staff members and leadership skills to women at all levels (Article 58).

There are also a number of concerns in the Law on Parliamentarian Election:

1. The law is silent on the minimum number of women taking seats in the National Assembly (Article 6) and name list of election candidates (Article 28) to ensure a proportionate number of female parliamentarians against the total number of female population in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

2. There is a serious impact on Freedom of Expression and there is a restriction on activities of NGOs or associations, especially organizations devoted to promoting women in politics (Article 84, 137, 147, 148, 159).

Samdech!

These are key and immediate concerns of all of us. We would like to kindly ask Samdech to take into consideration challenges facing female candidates which may emerge during the enforcement of the two laws. Samdech’s interventions to address these challenges will reflect high genuine attention on the promotion of gender equality and role of women and other groups in Cambodia.

Please, Samdech, accept the assurance of our highest attention.

Phnom Penh, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization and Contact Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Thida Khus</td>
<td>Executive Director of SILAKA and Chair of the Committee to Promote Women in Politics (CPWP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mobile: 012 838 464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Chan Kunthea</td>
<td>Southeast Asian Program Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mobile: 012 854 295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signature

[Signature]
[Signature]
3. Ms. Mak Chansitha  Program Coordinator, United Sisterhood Alliance of Workers’ Information Center (WIC)  
Mobile: 012 956 648

4. Ms. Chak Sopheap  Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)  
Mobile: 011 943 213

5. Ms. Chea Sundaneth  Executive Director of Women’s Media Center  
Mobile: 016 713 714

6. Ms. Ros Sopheap  Executive Director, Gender and Development for Cambodia and Secretary General of GADNet  
Mobile: 012 627 857