

**Joint Statement of Trade Unions, Associations and NGOs
On Priority Needs of Women Workers and Farmers During COVID-19 Crisis
and Request for Urgent Interventions from the Government and Corporates**

Phnom Penh, 9 December 2020

In 1991, a consortium of women jointly organized “16-Day Campaign of Activism to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence” from 25 November to 10 December, to call for actions to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls at national and international levels. The campaign has annually been organized ever since and has been participated by UN agencies, government agencies, feminist activist groups, trade unions and civil society organizations, that are working to promote women’s rights and gender equality in 187 countries. During this 16-Day Campaign, we, representatives of 9 trade unions, associations, and civil society organizations, operating in Cambodia, would like to present the **challenges faced by women workers and farmers during global crisis of COVID-19** to the government, corporates and development agencies and to propose for urgent interventions in response to those challenges.

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has affected physical and mental wellbeing and livelihood of all citizens and has seen the national economy fall into a regression. Ten of thousands of women workers in formal and informal economy are having their work suspended or lost their jobs altogether. Farmers and street vendors have lost their income, while at the same time situation of gender-based violence against women and girls is on the rise during this COVID-19 pandemic. We acknowledge the difficulties and efforts by the government to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to stabilize the country’s economy through measures responding to the economic loss of private sectors. We also acknowledge the attention by the government on workers in textile and footwear industry and tourism through a social assistant allowance of USD40/month and the distribution of food or protective materials against COVID-19 to some low-income families.

We would like to take this 16-day campaign to demonstrate gaps in the government policies responding to this COVID-19 crisis, as many women workers in formal and informal economy including small-holder women farmers who have been most severely affected during this time have not been included in the measures. Because their livelihood and their family depend on their daily and monthly income and when they lost their jobs or have their jobs suspended, they have no choice but fall below poverty line and it only gets worse due to their indebtedness to banks, private microfinance institutions or private money lenders. Women workers and farmers are the backbone of national economy. When the government and corporates failed to respond to their priority needs, it seems to mean that they have been ignored or left behind.

We would therefore like to **propose to the government and corporates to increase their investment in social protection and take measures to respond to the following 7 priority needs raised by women workers and farmers** to ensure that no one is left behind:

1. The government should provide monthly allowance of USD40 to all workers in all sectors both in formal and informal economy who have lost their jobs or jobs got suspended during COVID-19 outbreak.
2. Local authority including Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Economy and Finance should facilitate for social security registration, so that health equity card can be issued for workers in informal economy and small-holder farmers, particularly ensuring that pregnant workers have access to free health care service, as well as receive financial support to ease burden over their daily livelihood.
3. The government and employers should take actions to prevent and eliminate sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination in the world of work and to take steps to ratify the ILO Convention to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (ILO C190).
4. The government should strictly enforce laws to eliminate intimate partner violence and all other forms of violence to provide responsive services that focus on physical and mental wellbeing and to ensure access to justice for survivors.
5. The government should protect farmers' land rights by taking immediate actions to resolve long-term and chronic land disputes, and to put an end to the use of court system to pressure the farmers to stop their land right protests.
6. The government should include farmer groups into Law on Social Protection.
7. Purchasing companies and suppliers should allocate emergency budget to provide USD76 per month in addition to the USD40 provided by the government to suspended workers in textile and footwear industry.

This joint statement is endorsed by:

1. Cambodian Food and Service Workers Federation (CFSWF)
2. Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU)
3. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
4. Building and Wood Workers Trade Union of Cambodia (BWTUC)
5. Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (Central)
6. Coalition of Cambodian Farmer Community (CCFC)
7. Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)
8. Klahaan Organization (Klahaan)
9. ActionAid Cambodia