



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA



REPORT

On

Violence against Women and Girls

Prepared by:

Ministry of Women's Affairs

Royal Government of Cambodia

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Part 1: Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls

A. Policies and laws

Policies:

During the reporting period, key policies to address Violence Against Women and Girls, including sexual harassment and Trafficking in Women and Girls, have been implemented by the Royal Government of Cambodia on an ongoing basis in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, such as civil society organizations (CSOs) and development partners:

- The National Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2019-2023 (**Neary Rattanak V**) is the five-year overarching policy to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Cambodia and to guide efforts for gender mainstreaming across Government. This policy was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and in cooperation with line ministries, CSOs and development partners. This policy includes 9 key strategies to end Violence Against Women and Girls which are under the Strategic Area of Legal Protection for Women and Girls. The Neary Rattanak V has been used to activate the implementation of sectoral policies and action plans to address Violence Against Women and Girls such as the Third National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (2019-2023).
- The **Third National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (NAPVAW3 2019-2023)** which consists of 4 strategies (Prevention; Legal protection and coordinated services; Formulation and implementation of laws and policies; and Monitoring and Evaluation), 12 sub-strategies, 88 expected outcomes, 131 indicators, is a road map for ministries, institutions, operators at national and subnational levels, CSOs, private sector, social media and all stakeholders to implement the prevention work, respond and address violence against women and girls more effectively and efficiently in order to reduce all forms of violence against women and girls in a bid to promote equity and inclusive society which is in line with the motto of the Sustainable Development Goals, "Do not leave anyone behind". The NAPVAW3 was developed in a unique participatory process comprised by multiple consultations at sub-national level and a number of consultations at national level. This consultative process engaged a wide variety of actors, including line ministries, NGOs, women survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) themselves and civil society

organizations working with groups which are especially vulnerable to GBV, such as women with disabilities, women working in men's entertainment sector, women engaged in prostitution, women workers in the garment industry and women migrant workers. The diversity of the groups involved in the consultation is reflected in the policy document's recognition that some groups of women and girls face particular vulnerability to violence and therefore need targeted interventions.

The Third NAPVAW builds on the lessons learnt from the Second NAPVAW 2014-2018 which was implemented and monitored through a high-level technical working group to address Violence against Women led by the Ministry of Women's Affairs which was established in 2012 and includes line ministries, CSOs, and international development partners.

- The **Third National Plan of Action for Counter-Trafficking in Persons** (2019-2023) is the key policy and roadmap developed by the National Committee for Counter Trafficking in a joint consultative process involving line ministries, CSOs, development partners and private sector. The Plan is based on the findings of the assessment and lessons learnt of the Second Plan of Action. The Third Plan of Action targets the '4 Ps' (Policy, Prevention, Prosecution and Protection) and sets up 6 core values for its implementation: 1) government ownership; 2) human rights-based approach; 3) gender-based programming; 4) active civil society and stakeholders participation; 5) integrated multi-sector approach; and 6) systemic monitoring, evaluation and sustainability.

The Third Plan of Action pays special attention to improvement of the '4 Ps' through development and implementation of guidelines or standards procedures, improvement of data collection systems, enhancement of cooperation between stakeholders, implementation of capacity development measures for involved authorities, enhancement of impact of primary prevention campaigns and activities, and increase efforts in research and evidence-based policy making.

- The **Village/Commune Safety Policy**, which served as a top priority policy for the sub-national administration and was implemented for the last 10 years (2010 until 2020) to promote public safety, security and social order, is revised in response to the current situation and rapid societal changes. In January 2021, the Royal Government of Cambodia issued a new Village/Commune/Sangkat Safety Policy which eliminating

sexual exploitation, trafficking in persons especially women and children and domestic violence or other crimes is still a core component of the policy.

- The Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Children 2017-2021, developed in joint collaboration between MoWA and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSAVY), is the five-year action plan on the elimination all forms of violence against children in Cambodia. MoSAVY coordinates the implementation of action plan.
- the Positive Parenting Strategy and Toolkit developed in 2015 and piloted from 2016-2018 by MoWA and development partners, to promote non-violent forms of child discipline and protect children from violence practices is an opportunity to influence the gender norms of parents, men and boys and provide alternatives to violence.
- In 2016, A Minimum Standard for Basic Counselling for Women and Girl Survivors of Gender-Based Violence document was finalized to ensure the application of a client-centred human rights approach in delivering services to GBV survivors. The rollout of the guidelines and training for service providers has been ongoing to reach nationwide.
- In addition, Cambodia has enacted legal and policy frameworks focusing victim-centered approach including The National Guidelines for Managing Violence Against Women and Children in the Health System and the Clinical Handbook for Health Care for Women Subjected to Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence, the Minimum Standards of Basic Counseling for Women and Girl Survivors of GBV, and the Referral Guidelines for Women and Girl Survivors of GBV.in order to provide guidance to service providers to ensure the compliance with the victim-centered approach.

Laws:

During the reporting period, the laws which explicitly address Violence Against Women and Girls, including sexual harassment and Trafficking in Women and Girls, have been implemented and used by judicial and police officials. These include:

- The **Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Protection of Victims (2005)**, which establishes the responsibility of local authorities to intervene in cases of domestic

violence and provides for protection orders to be issued by the courts to protect the victim from any further violence.

- The **Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation** (2008) is a comprehensive law addressing trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation crimes in Cambodia in compliance with Cambodia's obligations under the Palermo Protocol. It provides the definitions and sentences applicable to unlawful recruitment, cross border transfer of persons and the act of buying, selling or exchanging a human being for the purposes of exploitation.
- The **Cambodian Labour Law**, which prohibits sexual harassment and indecent behaviour in the workplace (Article 172) and prohibits forced or compulsory labour and provides for a fine of 61-90 days' reference wages or imprisonment ranging from 6 days to 1 month (Article 15). It also prohibits the hiring of people for work to pay off debts (Article 16).
- The **Civil Code** (completed in 2006) and the **Civil Procedure Code** (2007).
- The **Criminal Code** and the **Criminal Procedure Code** (completed in 2010).
- The **Law on Regulating Concentrated Acid** (2011).

Other relevant legal frameworks related to Violence Against Women and Girls in Cambodia include:

- The **Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia** stipulates as follows:
 - Article 31 provides that the Kingdom of Cambodia shall recognize and respect human rights as stipulated in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human rights, the covenants and conventions related to human rights, women's and children's rights.
 - Article 32 provides that Khmer citizens residing abroad shall receive the protection of the state.
 - Article 38 states that the detention of a person shall not be done unless in accordance with the law.

- Article 45 calls for the abolition of all forms of discrimination against women.
- The Convention on the **Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, ratified by Cambodia in 1992, and its Optional Protocol, ratified in 2010.
- The **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** –ratified by Cambodia in 1992- and its optional protocols, which set out the basic human rights of boys and girls, including the right to protection from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse (Article 19).

Legal reinforcement to intervene in VAWG:

Over the last 5 years, the Royal Government has significantly increased the budget allocation for justice services including legal aid for poor women and girls. The national budget for legal aid services increased from USD 125,000 in 2014 to USD 350,000 in 2019. In 2021, the Cambodian National Council for Women revised and signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Bar Association of the Kingdom of Cambodia to expand the delivery of legal aid services for poor women. Moreover, in 2019 our Prime Minister established a lawyer group to provide pro-bono services for women and girl victims of violence. The forthcoming Legal Aid Policy includes specific provisions to ensure adequate, specialized legal aid for women, and is to be adopted by the end of this year.

The Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) has cooperated proactively with line ministries to strengthen the implementation of VAW related laws. MoWA has a close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) to provide training course on VAW related laws and legal procedure for local authorities in 25 provinces/municipalities and between 2018 and 2019, 1,284 participants (1,124 females) attended these trainings. In addition, Minimum Standards for Basic Counselling for Women and Girls Survivors of GBV and other gender sensitive approaches for supporting VAW survivors are being incorporated into the new curriculum at the Royal Police Academy. Both Operational Standards and Codes of Conduct for police have been implemented, which include ethical codes that are reflective of CEDAW and UNSCR 1325.

In total, 94 of MoWA’s and PDoWA’s were assigned as Judicial Police Officers (JPOs) by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ)’s inter-ministerial Prakas No. 165 issued on 17 July 2016; and at the provincial level they play a crucial role in directly supporting survivors. The Judicial Police of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, which was created according to the Law on Domestic Violence

(passed in 2005), is responsible for protecting survivors and assisting them in seeking justice through the legal system. MoWA trained the JPOs on legal procedures and multi-sectoral reconciliation processes to legally protect women's rights. From 2018-2019, CNCW provided assistance to 237 female survivors of gender-based violence through MoWA JPOs. The JPOs effectively coordinated with local authorities and court officials to speed up the procedure on cases of violence against women and children, particularly juvenile cases by referring the cases to the court for legal action.

For the purpose of improving availability and accessibility of services to women victims/survivors of GBV and better enforce VAW related laws, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) formulated a Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan (GMAP) which also became part of the strategic plan of the MoJ (2014-2018). In this strategic plan, MoJ aims to focus on the training of both national and international laws on VAW to be widely disseminated for practical application among jurists across Cambodia. As a process to implementing its GMAP, the MoJ has intensified efforts to train judges and prosecutors, and organized a number of training courses on CEDAW and the Domestic Violence Law.

The MoJ created a mechanism for meetings between judges, prosecutors and judicial police commissioners. They also developed forms for protection orders and instructed the court and prosecution offices throughout the country to use the formula on the 'temporary protection order' and 'protection order' as stipulated in the DV Law and the regulation issued in July 2011.

B. Prevention (including addressing the root and structural causes and social norms)

MoWA has placed primacy on public behavioural change in recognition of the fact that social constructs such as gender bias and stereotypes underpin remaining gaps across all sectors. The education system, mass media and social media are considered the main vectors for influencing change in attitudes, which inform and influence behaviour.

Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls in the Context of COVID-19

It is currently globally recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic is starting to directly impact and hence increase the risk of domestic violence, due to the restrictions imposed on persons movement and prolonged confinement measures across individual homes. In the meantime, the continuity of

providing essential services and protection to gender-based violence survivors are still one of the government's priorities during this crisis.

The Royal Government of Cambodia, through the Ministry of Women's Affairs in closed collaboration with national and international partners, has undertaken special measures to ensure that women and girls who are at risk of violence have access to relevant COVID-19 prevention messages, protective items, and where/how to access relevant information and services.

The key interventions have been carried out through 3 different approaches:

1. Ensuring continuity of essential GBV services provision

- Support provincial departments of women's affairs (PDOWA) in operating online counseling by developing succinct guiding notes
- Equip PDOWA with adequate material (smart phone or tablets) to run online services
- Online psychosocial consultation and online coaching for trained local providers.

2. Communication and prevention message

- Share information on existing hotline and through social media such as Facebook, Telegram application
- Message through social media on anger management, psychosocial support
- Print leaflets and distribute hand fans with GBV hotline and service information in targeted provinces

3. Humanitarian response

- Provide hand sanitizers and Kromar with designed information on GBV
- Distribute masks and sanitizing gel for local authorities in targeted provinces
- Document information and evidence on impact of COVID 19 in GBV cases and demand for services

Since 2020, due to the global pandemic, the Ministry undertook the digital media campaign to engage with public audiences and spread-out gender-based violence

prevention messages which reached out almost 1 million views especially young people.

To continue address violence against women in the short and medium term in the context of Covid19 and beyond, we will adapt five strategic approaches, which are 1) increased prevention efforts utilizing digital platform, 2) ensuring the continuity strengthening multi-sectoral and coordinated services, 3) collecting and analysing data from a gender lens to measure the impact of Covid-19 and to response appropriately 4) advocating to increase additional resources 5) putting women at the centre of policy change, solutions and recovery.

Prevention of VAWG

Annually -including during the reporting period-, MoWA in cooperation with line ministries, civil society organizations and development partners, is carrying out campaigns and activities for public awareness and mobilization to promote gender equality and prevent Violence Against Women and Girls both at national and sub-national level:

- A number of activities were organized by the Government and related partners at national and sub-national level as part of the **International Women's Day Campaign-8 March**, which is celebrated since 1980 and even recognized as a national public holiday in Cambodia; and the **16 Days Campaign** (from 25th November to 10th December). The main event of the 8 March campaign is presided over by the Cambodian Prime Minister every year. Since 2011, the Ministry of Women's Affairs is also leading the **Good Men Campaign**, which is mobilizing men and boys across our country and engaging them to promote gender equality, prevent violence and reinforce positive masculinities. This campaign has targeted over 3 million men and young men through media and social mobilization activities such as theatre performances, arts exhibitions and sports.

In 2018, the 16 Days Campaign of Activism to End Violence Against Women, was organized in 15 provinces under the theme "Ending violence against women and girls starts from you" engaging in total 4,027 participants (3030 females) who were teachers, students, local authorities and villagers. The awareness raising activities including walking parade, television broadcasting covered over 924 villages and radio programs covered over 6,574 villages. In 2019, the campaign was carried out under the theme "Think equal, act together, to end violence against women and girls" involving 6,422

participants (4,113 females) to increase awareness raising and promote positive behavioural change and engage young people as change agents to end violence against women and girls.

A media advisory group under the leadership of MoWA and the Ministry of Information with support from the Club of Cambodian Journalists was formed to improve media responses to VAW. A joint ministerial Prakas on the Media Code of Conduct for reporting VAW signed in 2017 by MoWA and the Ministry of Information was developed to prevent wrongdoing in reporting of violence against women, including depiction of cases with entertainment or comical purposes, and to change social attitudes toward the elimination of violence against women. In addition, MoWA developed an Information and Communication Strategy for primary prevention in 2017 for all stakeholders involved in the media. The multi-stakeholder working group including government agencies, media and NGOs was created in 2020 to monitor the implementation of the code. In 2019, MoWA in collaboration with the relevant partners organised 6 workshops to disseminate this media code of conduct attended by 498 participants (291 females) who were media reporters, actors, editors, comedians and current media students.

To specifically enhance knowledge and skills of youth and adolescents to promote and build gender equitable, non-violent relationships and to improve their attitudes, behaviour and practices on women's human rights, MoWA organized public forums on "youth together to end violence against women" to raise awareness among young students in formal education at secondary and tertiary education. Between 2018-2019 the public forums reached 3,780 students and teachers (2,073 females). In the meantime, public forums on eliminating violence against women and girls, rape, trafficking in women and children were also conducted at sub-national level and reached 5,756 villagers (3,455 females).

Other efforts toward prevention of violence are the Strategy on Positive Parenting (2017) which focuses on teaching parents' methods of parenting that are non-violent. From 2018-2019, MoWA provided trainings on skills and techniques of how to use Positive Parenting materials to 246 communal workers (173 females) who were from provincial departments of women's affairs, commune committee for women and children, commune councils, village volunteering groups. Public forums to promote awareness raising on positive parenting at communal level were also carried out involving 8,713 villagers (6,902 females).

Since 2016 the MoEYS has launched a life skill curriculum for primary school (Grades 5–6), lower secondary school (Grades 7–8), upper secondary school (Grades 10–11), and for youth out of school.

The curriculums for each level include: basic reproductive, sexual and health education, including HIV/AIDS, hygiene and gender concepts (Grades 5–6); gender roles, sexuality and gender expression (Grades 7–8); human rights, gender equality, gender roles, sexual harassment and gender-based violence (Grades 10–11).

Five percent of women reported having experienced at least one form of sexual harassment in their lifetime. The most common form of sexual harassment reported was electronic sexual harassment that includes on-line harassment, or acts such as how pornography on cellphones, followed by groping or unwanted sexual contact in public.¹ The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications set up a technical working group to regularly monitor the spread of pornography and negative information and images of women on the Internet. The group has requested Internet users and website owners to close the accounts and remove pornographic content from social media and other communication technologies.²

Notable progress has also been made to address VAW in the workplace led by the Ministry of Labor Vocational Training (MoLVT); with the adoption of a Prakas No. 194 in August 2014 titled “Working conditions, occupational safety and health rules for entertainment service enterprises, establishment and companies”. Article 8 of the MoLVT Prakas prohibits violence or indecent acts against entertainment workers by any person. From 2014-2016, MoWA, MoLVT, and CSO partners reached over 16,000 female hospitality and tourism (HT) and entertainment workers and over 250 HT outlets signed commitments to safe workplaces. Since 2017, the MoLVT has trained almost 350 participants in the HT sector on relevant labour law information to HT and entertainment establishments including Prakas No. 194. For HT outlets, training sessions on labour law and workplace protections by government ministries resulted in increased adherence to workplace safety protections for female workers while peer education sessions with female HT workers have led to increased confidence to deal with and report sexual harassment at the workplace.

Other Recent and current milestones related to prevention of and respond to Violence Against Women and Girls:

- In cooperation with line ministries, NGOs and private sector, awareness raising activities were carry out to promote safety at workplace and end of discrimination, exploitation and

¹ MoWA (2016) *Women's Experience of Domestic Violence and Other Forms of Violence: Secondary data analysis report of Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey*. Phnom Penh

² CEDAW/C/KHM/6, paragraph 54

sexual harassment at the workplace.

- Established One Stop Service Place in two provinces (Steung Treng and Kampong Cham) in order to allow that survivors of GBV benefit from services which are more harmonized and responsive to their needs and rights.
- A Media Code of Conduct for Reporting on Violence Against Women was approved and trained to reporters;
- The Commune Alcohol Notification System was piloted targeting alcohol abuse and violence against women;
- The “Positive Parenting” Strategy was developed to target prevention of violence to parents.
- Referral Guidelines for Women and Girl Survivors of Gender Based Violence completed;
- Minimum Standards of Basic Counselling for Women and Girl Survivors of Gender Based Violence completed;
- A Sexual Harassment Workplace Policy and Prevention Package was developed and implemented in garment factories;
- National Guidelines for Managing Violence Against Women and Children in the Health System and a Clinical Handbook for Responding to Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence were developed;
- By the end of 2018, 101 public health facilities received training on health sector response to VAW in line with the National Guidelines and providing services to victims of violence¹
- Discussions leading to a planned review of the Domestic Violence Law were initiated
- The Technical Working Group on Gender -Gender Based Violence (TWGG-GBV) re-organized its structure, held regular coordinating meetings and developed and initiated a joint Annual Operational Plan between five key ministries;
- Sub-Working Groups on Gender Based Violence were initiated in at least eight provinces to improve coordination between key service providers;

- The “Healthy and Happy Relationships” prevention project targeting young people was piloted;
 - Social norm change has been included on training for minimum service standards for state and non-state service providers;
 - Significant awareness raising continues especially around the 16 Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women;
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- National budget was increasingly allocated to support women’s access to legal aid;
 - Judicial police agents were trained in all provinces using the Legal Protection Guidelines;
 - A Data Collection for Services Provided and Referred was piloted;
 - Increased budget for legal aid services through Cambodia National Council for Women to support attorneys Bar Association;
 - Increased budget to meet the urgent needs of victims/survivors of violence against women.
 - Secondary analysis of data sets existing data sets was conducted identifying key areas for intervention: Media, Alcohol Abuse, Child Abuse, and Education.

C. Multisectoral services, programmes and responses

Multi-stakeholder coordination at national level:

- The Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) established a high-level mechanism for inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder coordination to address VAW/G at national level (called Technical Working Group on GBV) in 2012. The TWG-GBV is chaired by MoWA and involves 16-line ministries, 4 development partners, and 40 NGOs.

Multi-stakeholder coordination at sub-national level:

- MoWA has provided technical support in establishing working groups on gender-based violence in 9 provinces. These multi-sectoral networks bring police, health care providers, local authorities, legal and social service providers together to address gaps in services, in order to improve referral pathways and the response to violence against women. The principle is to build the capacity of all key actors so that ‘every door is the right door’.

- One-Stop Services Center (OSSC) model is also currently being piloted in two provincial hospitals.
- Criminal-justice coordination meetings, which are organized at provincial level 3 times a year to improve justice response to GBV cases. Prosecutors lead the meetings in cooperation with PDoWA/JPAs and NGOs' lawyers while other key stakeholders also participate (e.g. judges, Court officers, police and sub-national government officials from line ministries mainly interior (MoI), health (MoH) and social affairs (MoSAVVY).
- District service providers' coordination meetings, which are taking place monthly in 8 districts with facilitation support of Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC). Deputy district governors are normally leading these meetings while district officers of Women's Affairs and commune women and children's focal persons also participate.

D. Data and research

The Royal Government of Cambodia has given strong priority to the accomplishment of researches and internationally-recognized surveys in order to respond to Violence Against Women and Girls more effectively. These studies have helped the Government to understand the scope and magnitude of Violence Against Women and Girls as well as to facilitate evidence-based policy making.

During the reporting period, findings and data from a number of quantitative and qualitative studies have been used by the Royal Government of Cambodia for decision making and programming:

- The *National Survey on Women's Health and Life Experiences* (2015) was carried out by the National Institute of Statistics and the Ministry of Women's Affairs in cooperation with a number of line ministries and with support from development partners (WHO, UN Women and DFAT).
- The *Violence Against Children Survey* (2014) which was conducted by the National Institute of Statistics of the Ministry of Planning and coordinated with UNICEF and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It was possible through strong cooperation, partnership and commitment from a multi-sectoral steering committee comprising thirteen ministries and government agencies. A list of 89 Core Commitments

derived from the survey's findings was endorsed by the ten ministries and three government agencies. The process to develop a National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Children has been also initiated.

- The *Cambodia Demographic Health Survey 2014* –launched by end 2015- contains a module on domestic violence with data on marital violence prevalence. This survey was undertaken by the National Institute of Statistics (Ministry of Planning) in cooperation with key line ministries (such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Women's Affairs) and with support from development partners (such as UNFPA and DFAT).
- The *Cambodia Gender Assessment 2018* was undertaken by the Ministry of Women's Affairs with support from development partners and in cooperation with line ministries and NGOs to inform on the status of women in Cambodia and provide a comprehensive overview of gender in all sectors. One of its chapters is focused on Violence Against Women and Girls. The CGA 2018 contributed to build the evidence for the formulation process of the Neary Rattanak V.
- In 2015, a study undertaken by UN Women with support from the Ministry of Women's Affairs assessed the **practice of mediation in VAW cases**, which is used widespread in Cambodia. The study recognizes that mediation processes need to be substantially improved in order to better protect the rights and needs of women.

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