



## Concept Note

### National Women Forum

### “End Discrimination Against Women in Politics”

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015



**Organized By: Committee to Promote Women in Politics (CPWP)**

**Supported By: Oxfam**

**Venue: Tonle Bassak II Restaurant**

## I. Background:

Since 2005, the Committee to Promote Women in Politics (CPWP) has been committed to promoting women’s equal participation and representation in public office through active campaign and mobilizing Cambodian Women for the cause. CPWP, led by the Steering Committee, comprised of seven core member organizations. They are: SILAKA, Gender and Development Cambodia (GADC), Committee for Free & Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL), Neutral & Impartial Committee for Free & Fair Elections in Cambodia (NICFEC), Women Media Center (WMC), Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK), Development and Partnership in Action (DPA) and four associate members (Strey Khmer, Khmer Association for Development of Countryside (KAFDOC), Kratie Women’s Welfare Association (KWWA) and AMARA). CPWP has been active in facilitating women’s participation and representation in politics with a focus on strengthening the capacity of women leaders as well as collective lobbying and advocacy. Our current strategic plan (2012 – 2015) was built on our experiences and achievements, with the renewed emphasis on grass-roots empowerment, local women leadership, public engagement, knowledge building, networking, advocacy, and strengthening the capacity of women leaders. As of 2013, CPWP has included young women activists in our core target groups at the provinces. Target provinces operating in 15 districts of the 10 provinces: Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Prey Veng, Kampong Chhnang, Kandal, Kratie, Takeo, Mondulkiri, Thboung Khmom and Stung Treng. Claiming Rights for Ours Sister (CROC) got support from Oxfam, CPWP with the goal to contribute to the improvement of women’s human rights through the collaboration among the key stakeholders, women stakeholders, young women groups, and Women leaders at the national and sub national level, with the purpose to increase women representation in decision making at all level.

## II. Rational

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia is the supreme law of the State. It ensures that all citizens are equal under the law, and are free to participate in politics, economics, society

and culture (Article 35). Article 45 states that: “All forms of discrimination against women shall be eliminated; the exploitation of women’s work shall be prohibited; men and women have equal rights in all fields, especially with respect to the marriage and family; marriage shall be carried out according to the conditions set by the law and based on the principle of mutual consent, and in a monogamy relationship.” Women political participation as member of parliament, policy makers, government officers, public civil servant, and leaders play a uniquely increasing leadership role in shaping a new development framework and the subsequent implementation of policies, particularly to strengthen accountability and democratic governance which are all integral for a just and sustainable future. We believe that involving women in these decision-making processes is the only way to ensure that development is both inclusive and responsive to the needs of women from the ground.

Unfortunately, reality of the implementation of law and policies in promoting women participation in politics has been slow, couple with many challenges. Gender concept are not widely understood or discussed with full understanding especially at the sub-national level. Gender Equality was seen as women issue not for men or mostly this agenda was not welcome by male leaders or team. Gender stereotypes, social norm, lack of policy and law to promote women participation plus less support from family and society have lead women to lose chance to get meaningful opportunity to participation in political life. The practice that expects women role is only at home and that politics is not for women. This has restricted women role in society as it put more burden on women as she need to manage both family and working life. Women play active role at the ground level with people and earn the popularity for political parties but male leaders somehow do not trust that put women at high level candidate list will not bring success to their party, and also they found it difficult to find capable women candidates. They got stuck with stereotyping women: women are weak, cannot solve security issue and cannot travel to outreach people in remote area. These concepts must be change in order to ended discrimination against women and see the real contribution to women to society through their political participation in all processes and all level.

With this regards, Committee to Promote Women in Politics in collaboration with Women for All network and other women organizations under supported by Oxfam will conduct the National Women Forum under the theme “End Discrimination Against Women in Politics” on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015 from 8:00am to 5:00pm at Tonle Basak Resturant II.

### III. Objectives:

1. To deeply the awareness of the analysis of the root cause of discrimination against women in decision making, leadership and politics.
2. To open space for women from different sectors to have their voice and recommendations to policy makers

3. To establish linkage between women leader, women parliamentarians and women's movement to promote women participation in politics

#### IV. Expected Outputs:

1. Participation understand more clearly on the root causes and importance of the significant role of women participation in politics;
2. Young women has a platform where they will be seen and heard in the national fora;
3. Women's voice are being heard in the public through mass and social media;
4. Concrete recommendations in a joint statement against women discrimination in politics and on how to increase women's participation and leadership at all levels of decision making in the new development agenda.

#### V. Participant:

Around 200 people such as:

- Representative from National Assembly
- Representative from National Election Committee
- Representative from government institute
- Representative from political parties
- Civil Society
- Students and young women from target province
- Community