



World Bank Group Consultations on Cambodia's Development Challenges and Opportunities
Consultation with Civil Society Groups
July 13, 2015
SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

The World Bank Group (WBG) met with 56 representatives of civil society groups in Cambodia on July 13, 2015 in Phnom Penh. These representatives were selected by four NGO networks: the Cooperation Committee of Cambodia (CCC), NGO Forum, Community Peacebuilding Network and Khmer Youth Association.

The discussion focused on three guiding questions:

1. What are Cambodia's development opportunities in the next 2-3 years?
2. What are Cambodia's most pressing challenges to be addressed in the next 2-3 years?
3. What policies, reforms and investments will be most important for Cambodia over the next 2-3 years to realize these opportunities and overcome these challenges?

1. What are Cambodia's development opportunities in the next 2-3 years?

- Natural resources endowment (river, water system, forest, land, fisheries, marketing, natural capital).
- Human resources (young population growing).
- Youth: existing youth networks and associations, chance for accessing scholarships in country and abroad, opportunity for volunteer work, and availability of IT.
- Cambodia has adopted laws, policies, and strategies such as decentralization policy, national development plans, strategies development for education and health, good governance, Law on the Environment Impact Assessment, Law on Disaster Management, and Youth Development Policy, policy on the development of ethnic minority groups.
- ASEAN Economic Community Integration (investment and market: skills and trade).



- Cambodia has increased investment from foreign direct investments (FDIs) particularly in garment factories.
- International community provides financial support for Cambodia's development.
- Increasing development of physical infrastructure.

2. What are Cambodia's most pressing development challenges to be addressed in the next 2-3 years?

- Natural resources management challenges (Forestry, fisheries, land, and mines) and climate change.
- Agriculture: inadequate irrigation, particularly small-scale irrigation systems, technical skills, and market linkages.
- Governance, weak public administration capacity and incentives (low salaries), unfair distribution of resources, lack of skills development, inadequate national budget allocation
- Civic space is limited and CSO voices are silenced by burdensome laws and legal requirements.
- Unclear roles and responsibility of line ministries (roles overlap, competition between line ministries).
- Poor standards on investment, corruption, lack of social protection and social service delivery.
- Slow reform of public financial management.
- Unclear land rights, and forced evictions.
- Long-term provision of economic land concessions affect people lives (agriculture and housing).
- Poor quality of education (corruption, poor quality of teaching, low salaries, high student drop-out rate, lack of teaching materials).
- Despite poor people now having access to the health equity fund and that more health centers have been built in the community level, health issues remain a challenge. For example, malnutrition remains high; identification/selection of the poor to receive health services is problematic; lack of quality nurses and ethical health staff.



- Cambodia's youth facing lack of incentives, lack of skills, poor education, drug use, HIV/AIDs, illegal migration to find opportunities, lack of safety, particularly for young women and girls.

- Building a hydropower dam and commercial sand-dragging operations negatively affect the livelihoods of people and natural resources.

3. What policies, reforms and investments will be most important for Cambodia over the next 2-3 years to realize these opportunities and overcome these challenges?

- Implementation, enforcement, or reactivation of existing laws, policies, strategies, and reform (including skill development policies, social accountability framework, skills development policies, public financial management reform).

- Invest in agriculture, irrigation, and reforestation; find markets for local products and stop imported products; and build a green economy.

- Accelerate land titling and faster processes for communal land titles.

- Resolve all existing land petitioner cases (Beung Kak and others) before starting new investments.

- Strengthen natural resource management and stop providing land, forest, and mine concessions.

- Support community fisheries and include them in the water resources development plan.

- Hold free and fair elections.

- Pass access to information law.

- Repeal laws that limit or pressure NGOs and associations.

- Support improved benefits to farmers.

- Youth: consider youth as partner for development rather than labeling youth, provide scholarships and bilingual support for indigenous youth, create more volunteer opportunities for youth, and provide vocational skills training.

- Increase/expand the Health Equity Fund.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The WBG should review its investment policy and safeguards that could impact human rights, natural resources, and indigenous people. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• World Bank lending to Cambodia should be mostly in the form of grants (i.e., 70 percent grants, 30 percent loans). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Donors should set conditions with the government and include the voice of all stakeholders in the design of new projects, and make their participation open and transparent. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide support for Decentralization and Deconcentration reform to increase and improve local and community decision-making processes. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue support for public administration reform. Functions of civil servants should be clear and implemented; ensure a living wage for civil servants and members of the armed forces. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the government in developing a migration policy. |