

Follow up the Promises of the 1998 Election Political Parties and the Achievement of the Coalition Government

Part I - Political Platform of the Elected Parties in the 1998 National Election

Promises of the 1998 Elected Parties:

A look at how the Royal Government is fulfilling political platforms

I. Part One – Statement of the Cambodian People's Party and Funcinpec's Political Platform in the 1998 National Election, Assessment of Progress Made Towards Fulfilling Promises, and Suggestions for Improvement.

Introduction

During the 1998 national election, many promises were made by the Funcinpec Party (FCP) and the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) to improve the lives of the Cambodian people. The Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (Comfrel), in addition to monitoring pre-election activity and the election day itself, believes it is imperative to examine the activities that achieve, or fall short of, the promises made by the newly elected officials. Although the two parties at times made different promises, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) is comprised of both parties. Therefore, it is difficult to discern how one of the two can uphold its promise while working with a different political party.

This report will state the platforms of the CPP and Funcinpec parties, the actual progress that has occurred, and recommendations to improve the accountability of the legal framework of the Cambodian government. Specifically, this report will examine each of the political party's platform in five major areas: agriculture, education, health care, military operations, and the rule of law. The second section will appraise the sentiments of the Cambodian people towards the government. This information is based on a survey that Comfrel conducted in 2001. A final section will summarize the crucial activities that Comfrel performs in strengthening civic society.

1. Agriculture

Introduction: Agriculture and access to food was a driving issue in the 1998 national election. The majority of Cambodians lack proper nutrition, and the increasing population (at a rate of 2.4% a year) is aggravating the existing myriad of poverty related problems. Farmers have not been given adequate education about agricultural technology that could increase food production. Recent floods in 2000 and 2001 and droughts have exasperated the situation causing rising rates of malnutrition and diseases related to lack of sustenance. However, production of rice has increased and some improvements have been made. Unfortunately, those most vulnerable and in need have not benefited from these gains.

A. CPP 1998 Political Platform: The CPP ran on a platform promising enough food for all Cambodians, as well as enough rice to create a food reserve, and expand exportation. To achieve this ambitious goal, the CPP assured voters that rice production would increase 6.5% a year.

A. Funcinpec 1998 Political Platform: Funcinpec sought to increase rice yield through the information and technology at the International Rice Research.

Assessment: Numbers do suggest that rice production has increased. From 1998 to 2002 Cambodia produced rice surpluses that grew from 30,000 to 364,148 metric tons and studies indicate that there is enough food produced in Cambodia to feed each

person. However, the CPP has been unable to achieve the platform goal of feeding all Cambodians and creating a food reserve, and the problem continues to grow. Reliable data on the export of rice has yet to be conducted.

Yet, various studies suggest that between 1.5 to 2 million Cambodians, 90% of whom live in rural areas, are food insecure. Nearly half of the population of rural children do not have access to the needed amount of nutritious food, and protein energy malnutrition (PEM), the most destructive form of malnutrition, is present in 45% of children under the age of 5. Additionally, 20% of women suffer from PEM as well.

From October 2001 to May 2002 the Royal Government of Cambodia has made a significant effort, with the support of development partners, to review the 1998 – 2007 Cambodian Nutrition Investment Plan (CNIP). The CNIP has been amended with a proposed budget of \$41 million dollars and will soon be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval.

Conclusion: This striking contradiction that the amount of food produced is increasing while numbers of those going hungry are increasing as well needs to be investigated. The lack of transparency of the government's activities directly produces a poor quality of life for the Cambodian citizen. Clearly those benefiting from this system are able to act with impunity, as there is no clear methodology for holding power accountable

B. CPP 1998 Political Platform: The CPP stated a dedication to progress to a free market economy and help this transition through giving tax-free policy to farmers.

B. Funcinpec 1998 Political Platform: The Funcinpec party promoted expanding production of rice and other food crops by encouraging a competitive market pricing. Funcinpec also promised to help poor farmers obtain low interest loans.

Assessment: The development of a private enterprise system faces several fundamental problems. Only about 10% of applicants for ownership of land are given certificates of ownership and often these titles are only temporary. This lack of regulations has several consequences. The transient nature of ownership leads to land disputes and anger between officials and citizens. Moreover, studies have shown that farmers who are given ownership of land are able to establish long-term development, which creates a sustainable and more productive workforce. The inconsistent and often unneeded regulation for ownership of land implemented by the RGC in fact discourages economic growth and increased stability.

The structure of privatization also neglects those most in need; the poor do not have access to needed resources such as economic services, technical education, and equipment. Again, those who are most in need and could most benefit from a stronger economic system are isolated from the shifting structure of the economy towards privatization. In most cases a farmer is unable to defend his/her rights because of a lack of education about the laws that directly effect him/her. Land grabbing and an inability to access loans are common problems, as the vulnerable group does not have access to programs that could help or an understanding of their rights.

The Prakas of the Royal Government of Cambodia was adopted in May of 2001 and a new Land Law was passed on August 30, 2001. International funding from the German and Finnish government and aid from the World Bank established a Land Management and Administration project. This was a successful consultative approach initiated by the Ministry for Land Management, Urban Planning, and Construction (MLMUPC) and continues under the auspices of the Council for Land Policy. The collaborative effort is an important success as it works within the existing structure of the Cambodian Government and is a successful collaboration between the donor groups and the government. This significant step to increase clear regulations and transparency of

law is imperative to make actual progress to solve the prevalence of poverty and mistrust between the vulnerable citizen and the government.

Conclusion: The shift to a private enterprise system is a long process. There have been some successful programs to support the new structure of the economy. However, vulnerable groups lack access to a variety of factors that would strengthen their economic standing, such as low interest loans and training, thus their marginalized status is maintained.

C. CPP and FUNCINPEC 1998 Political Platforms: Both parties acknowledged the need to rehabilitate the farmland and expand irrigation systems.

Assessment: In 2000, only 13% of the land was arable and only 3.9% of farmland was irrigated. There is indeed a strong need to strengthen the agricultural infrastructure. It is estimated that Cambodia spent around \$50 million dollars on fertilizer and pesticides annually in 2000 and 2001. However, there are grave concerns about the environmental impact of this tactic. The use of agricultural chemicals without proper education not only endangers the short-term production of crops but also leads to a long-term destruction to the environment.

Conclusion: Environmental and civic groups have conducted on-site visits in rural areas that are in need of improved agricultural infrastructure. These groups have concluded through assessment of existing facilities and hearing the concerns voiced by people that little improvements have been made to the working conditions of the irrigation system and the quality of the farmland.

2. Education

Introduction: As seen in the two political platforms, both parties recognized a need to overhaul the structure and quality of the educational system. Illiteracy rates and varying quality of education hinder the capacity of the Cambodian people. Higher educational standards and access to learning will empower vulnerable groups and foster an understanding of civic duties and rights.

CPP 1998 Political Platform (access to education): The party promised to increase access to education, especially for the poor population of Cambodia. The Cambodian People's Party stated a need for free education for all children who are old enough and promoted their informal education agenda, "Education for All" to eliminate illiteracy. Finally, they pledged to build 1,200 schools each year.

FUNCINPEC 1998 Political Platform (access to education): The Funcinpec platform on education also highlighted the need to revitalize the entire system. Funcinpec stated that there was a need to require 65% of 12 year olds to be literate and numerate and would provide every Cambodian child should be provided with free education that was of high quality.

Assessment (access to education): There has been a sharp increase in the number of students enrolled in public schools. There have been 380,000 newly enrolled students nationwide since the beginning of the September 2001 school year. A report from the Ministry of Education released in 2001 stated that registration in primary schools rose 14% and 19% in secondary schools. The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) and the Educational Sector Support Program (ESSP) established by the RGC in 2001 have had a sustained success and have received positive assessments from a wide group of donors.

On average, since 1998, 600 schools have been made, about half of the CPP's political platform.[6] The numbers of schools built increase around times of the commune elections as well. Although the RGC should be commended for creating 600 schools a year, one must question not only the political motivation but the quality of

these institutions as well.

Conclusion (access to education): Although registration has improved, Cambodian schools must address ways to improve the low retention and matriculation rates. Often times, farmers and poor families must withdraw their children from schools as the child's labor in maintaining a livelihood is seen as more imperative than his/her education. Another complex problem that needs attention from the government is the formulation of a methodology to decrease the low literacy predominance in the 15-to-24-year-old age group, located primarily in rural areas.

CPP 1998 Political Platform (quality of education): The CPP stated a need for modernization of education and for increasing the quality through encouraging scientific research, modernizing textbooks, and increased access to materials and equipment. The CCP also called upon education officials to do volunteer work in remote rural areas

FUNCINPEC 1998 Political Platform (quality of education):

Funcinpec stated the need to eradicate nepotism and favoritism, reduce corruption such as paying teachers to pass students. From increasing enrolment of female students to encouraging capacity building and training systems, they called for at least 15% of the national budget to be spent on education. A declaration to establish a curriculum that would prepare students for the emerging free market economy was also stated.

Assessment (quality of education): Funcinpec was able to increase the amount of the national budget allocated to education from 16% in 2001 to 18.2% in 2002. The money designated to education is higher than the 15% promised, however, distribution of this money continues to be inadequate. Furthermore, revenue policies and collection of the money are unregulated and ineffective making the fiscal functioning impossible. However, some experts in the education field do believe that the quality of the books and other educational tools used in schools is slowly improving.

Conclusion (quality of education): Other social factors, institutional weakness', and a lack of uniform standards of learning however hamper the momentum for educational reform. The quality of education is diverse and at times quite ineffectual. For instance, there are no uniform standards of accreditation for universities. Therefore, it is possible to get a university degree from a vastly inadequate program and consequently it is difficult to discern what level of knowledge an individual has. The facilities at schools are deficient and teachers receive insufficient salaries. Increasing the salaries of teachers would demonstrate the government's investment in education and encourage teachers to increase their level of commitment to their students. Late or even non-distribution of salaries to teachers is a critical problem. The Priority Action Plan (PAP) was established to regulate the flow and distribution of money in the government. PAP is an important idea because it can support the movements towards decentralization of power through creating a solid governmental institution that is responsible for the funding of programs. Several problems arise from the inadequate distribution of PAP funds. By April of 2002, 65% of the 2001 PAP funds were distributed. However, PAP has yet to distribute any funds from the 2002 budget.

Conclusion: The agricultural sector and the preponderance of poverty clearly effect the educational system. Without economic stability, education will be a lower priority to the disadvantaged. Economic and educational reform must work together. For a strong civil society there must be a stable legal, social, and economic environment. Proper functioning of the Cambodian society is impossible without rule of law and transparency of the government. Improvements have been made to the economic and educational system in Cambodia; however, these efforts are futile without proper distribution of funds. A possible solution is a shift from top heavy reform that involves the national government to ideas and programs that are locally orchestrated and directly involve the interest group. A direct, community based system would create a more

manageable program and would be easier to adapt to the diverse needs of vulnerable communities. Regional differences, from environmental to ethnic differences, could be taken into account and a stronger formula for reform could be created.

3. Health Care

Introduction: Cambodia suffers from high levels of infant mortality, 95 per 1,000 children die and under-five mortality rates, 124 children die out of 1,000, malnutrition. The poor, particularly in rural areas, often do not have access to any health facilities.

CPP 1998 Political Platform: The CPP promised to upgrade the quality of public health care, especially in rural areas. Education about prevention of infectious and chronic diseases and improving distribution of medication to the public was highlighted during the campaign. A pledge they also made was to improve the health of women and children and provide access to necessary public health services for the elderly and the handicapped. Developing a stronger human resource system, in terms of quality and quantity of health care practitioners was also a stated priority.

FUNCINPEC 1998 Political Platform: Funcinpec made a commitment to all Cambodians, that primary health services would be available to all citizens by the year 2000, and all children would be vaccinated against tuberculosis, polio, and measles. Education for the at-risk population for HIV/AIDS would also be implemented. A community-based approach to care for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families was also promised. Regulation and control of the illegal distribution of fake and expired medications was seen as a priority as was increasing the quality of health care centers and their staff. Funcinpec declared that 5% of the national budget would go to the health sector by 2000.

Assessment: There have been strides made in the health sector since 1998. Local communities and health care staff now have a channel for communication through feedback committees and health care management groups. More time and examination is needed to see the effectiveness of these groups. New health care facilities have been constructed, but concerns have been raised about lack of modern facilities and moreover, at times the new locations do not open at all.

In 2001, PAP effectively distributed funds for health care to the provinces. However, 2002 was not as successful, only 3% of the health section of the PAP budget was distributed. The mismanagement of money seriously restrained health care activities in the provinces. In fact, in some provinces outreach programs, such as vaccination services, closed due to lack of funds. The NGO community is not involved in the workings of PAP and is unable to assist in improving the program. The lack of transparency in the government is detrimental to the health of their people, again adversely affecting those most in need.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has the correct theories for improving the health care system. However, the financial limitations will not allow for significant progress. Health workers are paid insufficient salaries and thus qualified health practitioners are lost. PAP had distributed no funds of the health section of Chapter 11 in 2002. Through monitoring and external assessments and education for workers combined with appropriate salaries would greatly improve the quality of health care. Increased salaries would also help alleviate poverty and encourage a higher capacity of the worker. However, positive changes and increasing the quality of life for the Cambodian is impossible without access to information about the workings of the fiscal system, a commitment to the individuals that provide health care, and a revamping of the health care institutions.

Education about infectious diseases, especially in regards to the spread of HIV/AIDS, is improving. The NGO community is working closely with the National AIDS

Association (NAA) established by the Royal Government of Cambodia. Lobbying government officials, often including the interest group, has resulted in some positive changes. There has been some confusion within the government between the NAA and the NCHADS (National Council HIV/AIDS and Sexually transmitted diseases). NCHADS was established in the early 1990's and the NAA was created in 2000. At times communication between the two government groups working on HIV/AIDS related issues is confused. Clear distinctions about responsibilities and authority at times slow the work to help those infected with HIV/AIDS and educate people about the disease. However, the HACC (HIV/AIDS Coordinating Committee), an umbrella organization that facilitates communication within the NGO community working on HIV/AIDS, is working well with NAA and is an excellent example of civic groups working with the government to improve policies and practices.

Conclusion: Important strides have been made in lobbying government officials in selected areas. However, although funding does exist to immunize children and to improve the quality of the health care institutions, many bureaucratic restrictions limit the concrete success of programs. The agricultural, educational, and health institutions must work together to strengthen civic society. Coordination among interest groups, donors, and the government and a consideration for the multi-faceted problems facing the population will lead to success that will in turn empower vulnerable groups.

4. Military Operation and Promises of Peace

Introduction: Cambodia is emerging from an incredibly violent and turbulent three decades of wars and conflicts. The continued violence with the Khmer Rouge was still a real threat in 1998. Later, demobilization and shifting the structure of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces was seen as important.

A. CPP 1998 Political Platform: The CPP was dedicated to outlawing the Khmer Rouge (KR) and ending the violence between the Khmer Rouge and the government.

Assessment: The Royal Government was successful in ending violence with the Khmer Rouge in 1999.

B. CPP 1998 Political Platform: The CPP stated in their political platform that they would continue to strengthen the armed forces through training and education reform. The Royal Cambodia Armed Forces was to be unified and composed of disciplined, moral, and respectable soldiers.

B. FUNCIPPEC 1998 Commitment: Funcipec did not have a platform policy on the military, rather a commitment to protect and defend the sovereignty of Cambodia and to build a peaceful and prosperous nation.

Assessment: After the violence had ended with the KR, the government shifted its attention to demobilization. International donors encouraged the Royal Government of Cambodia to start demobilization. There were several programs implemented and it is difficult to discern the level of success of reintegration of the soldier into civil life.

In 1999 the RGC presented a new plan for demobilization named the Cambodian Veterans Assistance Program (CVAP). It sought to examine the process of demobilization in four stages: registration, demobilization, reinsertion, and reintegration. The RGC claimed to identify 15,551 ghost soldiers and 163,346 ghost dependants. However, external groups were not involved in this part of the process. The second stage, in 2000, demobilized 1,500 soldiers from four provinces as a pilot project. From this, a full-scale demobilization program was implemented. The RGC projects that 30,000 soldiers will be demobilized in a 3-year program and to date 15,000 have completed the program, with the NGO community participating in the final stages of the program.

Despite these positive results, the Royal Government of Cambodia also implemented a donor-driven demobilization program in 2002 that was heavily criticized by the groups that supported the \$42 million process. After a meeting between the Council for the Demobilization of Armed Forces (CDAF) and the World Bank the existence of extensive corruption was discovered. Concrete figures on the amount of money lost is still not known. Such activities as officers creating fictitious soldiers under their command and retaining the initial severance payment of \$240 and accepting bribes from actual soldiers that wanted to leave the army indicates grave flaws in the implementation and monitoring of the program.

In general, demobilization is a difficult process and reintegration into civic life is not easy. The RGC could take additional steps to ease the procedure. The military does not collect the weapons issued to soldiers. In turn, about one quarter of the former soldiers were concerned about their security upon returning home. Fear of being robbed of severance pay and violent acts against their families or properties created a desire for former military personnel to obtain personal weapons for protection. There was little faith that local authorities would maintain safety and enforce laws to protect them. This in turn exacerbates the emphasis on violence and little attention is given to peaceful conflict resolution. Also, poverty in Cambodia increases as many of the former soldiers are unable to provide for their families because they were denied proper training in vocational skills that would have allowed them higher employment rates.

Conclusion: The NGO community should be integrated into all levels of the demobilization process. Weapons should be publicly returned to the government and in turn the Royal Cambodian Government should destroy one weapon for every demobilized soldier. This would be an important step to enforcing the platform of an honest and reformed military. Moreover, such action would begin to alleviate some of the deep-seeded fear of violence that exists in society. The peace building and conflict resolution community should be invited to teach ways to avoid violence and promote non-violent solutions to disputes. Again, as the RCG acts in a more transparent manner to restore the public's faith in their officials, a stronger civic society will be created.

5. Rule of Law

Introduction: The four sectors examined are clearly linked and cannot fully be examined individually. Without alleviation of poverty, education and the health of people will not improve. If poor Cambodians do not have equal access to quality health care, the labor force is weakened and the economic system suffers. The mismanagement of demobilization enforces a very real fear of violence and again those vulnerable suffer from the resulting myriad of problems. However, the underlying structure of the Cambodian government, rule of law that enforces and encourages corruption must be transformed in order for the four other sectors to achieve capacity building for sustainable reform.

CPP 1998 Political Platform: The CPP did not specifically endorse the passage of the anti-corruption law in their 1998 political platform nor mention the reform of the judicial system. They did however state the need to eradicate corruption.

FUNCINPEC 1998 Political Platform: In the Funcinpec political platform they state the importance of preserving civil rights through an independent judicial system. They declare that they will establish a non-partisan court system and judges. Furthermore, they will rehabilitate tribunals and courts. The importance of educating citizens about their legal rights and civic obligations is stated.

Anti-Corruption Legislation: After the 1998 elections, the RGC has made many commitments to passing a law that aims to help end rampant corruption. Corruption and

lack of enforcement of laws makes the implementation of sustainable positive programs impossible and exacerbates the disparity between the rich and poor. A verbal commitment by the Cambodian government must be accompanied by concrete accomplishments. Through working with the international community, local NGOs, and stakeholders, sustainable reform that builds the capacity of the Cambodian people is possible. The most important factor in having ideas of reform become a reality is an overhaul to the judicial system and passing the draft of the anti-corruption legislation into law and enforcing these changes.

Assessment: The reform community applauds His Excellency Prime Minister Hun Sen's commitment to sign the anti-corruption legislation into law before the upcoming National Election in July 2003. The promise indicates a recognition of the destructive force of corruption in Cambodian society. Corruption is not a single idea; rather, it is a force that operates on all levels and significantly hinders any progress made to create a more equitable society. Corruption also leads to political violence and creates impunity for those with money and power. Corruption is a tremendous force that maintains and exacerbates the vulnerability of those without power and encourages the disparity between the wealthy and poor. The NGO community is eager to work with the RGC to assure the law is comprehensive and not susceptible to diverse interpretations. However, the draft of the law has been moving between the Inter-Ministerial Committee and the Council of Ministers, but has yet to be passed on to the National Assembly. It is unclear why this process has taken four years. Furthermore, initial evaluations of the draft law by monitoring groups have found the law to be lacking several important components and fear that the law could become a symbolic gesture opposed to actual reform.

Conclusion: Working with national groups, international donors, foreign governments, and vulnerable groups would help assure the success of the anti-corruption law. Recently, indications have been made from foreign groups that working within Cambodia and establishing humanitarian projects will not continue until a comprehensive anti-corruption law is passed and enforced. Moreover, the Cambodian people must be involved in this process as the flaws most directly effect them in the current system. Some donor groups working with the RGC lack transparency as well which confuses the process and alienates those groups that are most imperative to include in the process.

Judicial Reform: With consideration of an anti-corruption law, the judicial system must also be examined. The need for judicial reform must be enacted to establish an impartial legal system. Without a sound legal system that is unbiased and committed to justice, reform is impossible. Presently, the judicial system lacks independence and is completely without transparency in the creation and upholding of laws. Recently a draft strategy was submitted to donors for comments in April of 2002 about a code of ethics for judges. The judicial branch must be the foundation for a strong Cambodian society. Working to uphold the anti-corruption law and enforcement of all laws would ensure money spent to help those in need would go to the intended groups and the rights of the people would be protected. It would directly empower those groups that are vulnerable to the ill effects of present day corruption.

Assessment: There is a staggering amount of reform that must occur within the judicial institutions. Fundamentally, judges at all levels, from the Supreme Council of the Magistracy to local courts, must preside in a fair and non-partisan manner. Simple actions such as resigning from other positions he/she may hold in the legislative, executive, or judicial branch is imperative for a non-partisan judge. Without impartial assessment of disputes and the proper examination of laws, justice and equality will not exist. The present system encourages the rich to act with impunity, as they are able to bribe members of the legal system.

The judicial system also suffers from insufficient salaries that are paid to those who work in the legal branch. As with teachers and health care workers, the lack of respectable salaries encourages corruption and promotes dissatisfaction with the

workings of the Royal Government of Cambodia. The Ministry of Justice and Court receives a grievously inadequate 0.3% of the national budget. Basic operations are impossible with such low funding and reinforce corruption as the only viable source of income. Furthermore, regulations to assess the qualifications of judges and clear standards to articulate the quality of work needs to be established. With the creation of a methodology of evaluation and monitoring of judicial activity, it is imperative that these standards are upheld and enforced.

Conclusion: Without the commitment to irradiation of corruption and the establishment of a legal system that protects all citizens equally, democracy, justice, and protection of human rights is impossible. All efforts to help those in need and to give the disenfranchised a voice will continue to fail as the power of corruption and impunity maintain a fatally flawed system.

II. Assessment of Cambodian People's Perception of Promises Made by Political Parties in the 1998 National Election

Comfrel conducted a survey in 2001 to discern the voter's feelings about the 1998 election, with a particular focus on the promises that composed the political platforms. Comfrel interviewed 170 people from diverse political and economic backgrounds as well as varied geographic locations. Those interviewed were located in 8 different communes in 8 different provinces.

Out of the group interviewed, 72% had participated in the 1998 political parties' campaigns. This participation was through attending forums, listening to the speeches made by candidates, or learning through pre-election activities. From this group, a considerable amount of 88% could no longer remember the platforms of the political parties.

The vast majority of people surveyed, 80.58%, (137 people) went to the election feeling optimistic and only 19.42%, (33 people), considered themselves to be pessimistic about the voting process. The majority of the people, 68.23%, (116 people) were satisfied with the election results. While 18.83% (32 people) indicated that they were slightly satisfied and the remaining 12.94% (22 people) were not satisfied with the newly elected officials.

After the 1998 election, their elected representative had direct contact with 32.35% (55 people) of the 170 interviewed. It is important to note that this figure is composed mainly of 32 civil servants. The remaining 67.75%, (115 people) had not seen their representatives. However, 15.88%, (27 people) have never know who their representative is and that 50.01% (85 people) indicated that they knew only some of their representatives. The final group of 34.11% (58 people) stated that they knew all of their elected officials.

For the most part, 62.94% (107 people) of the group interviewed felt as though local authorities had not been threatened during the election period. 22.35% (38 people) believed that threats had been made while the remaining 14.71% (25 people), found the

atmosphere around the election to be, what they considered, normal.

The survey unearthed a feeling from the voters that during the three-year time span since the election the government had implemented some changes. Overwhelmingly the sample group felt as though the elected officials were far more concerned with the implementation of a plan, opposed to the quality of the program. Voters did not see the government interested in maintaining or following up projects. This finding of the survey reflects concerns raised that at times hospitals were built but without equipment or staff. Or in the educational sector, that initial enrollment rose, but these numbers were not sustained.

Clearly, the elected officials are not interested in maintaining contact or becoming invested in the people they are meant to represent. The low numbers of officials visiting their constituents or their disinterest in attending forums after elections indicates a multifaceted problem. For instance, Comfrel held eight public forums in six provinces such as: Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Kampong Cham, two in Kandal, two in Svay Rieng and Takeo with roughly 3,800 people in attendance. While these forums concentrated on commune council election many important issues and ideas were discussed. It is these ideas that must be understood and valued in the national election as well. No elected officials, out of the many invited, attended the forums.

The government is creating laws and deciding on important civic issues without any input from the interest groups. Without a dedication of the government to include their people and feel responsible to their needs assures that fatally flawed laws will be created that will further marginalized the vulnerable groups. Through grassroots education to lobbying of high-ranking officials a system must be established that answers the needs of the Cambodian people, not those with money and power. Fundamentally, the structure of elections for a political party and the lack of direct elections must be changed.

It is the Cambodian people, particularly those groups at risk, which must be included in the electoral process and the workings of the government. Through education about the rule of law and the workings of the government vulnerable groups can become empowered.

III. Comfrel's Role in the Upcoming National Election and Beyond

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Comfrel answers the imperative need to monitor the activities of the Royal Government of Cambodia in a non-partisan manner. Without a clear understanding of the policies and practices of the government and their institutions, it is impossible to create sustainable reform that builds the capacity of the Cambodian citizen. Through Comfrel's activities that strengthen the civic society and citizen engagement, such as gathering data on the government's budget (allocation and service of distribution), establishing a national monitoring system, and education of vulnerable groups, an

important shift will occur. With a clearer knowledge of the actual practices of the government and as transparency becomes valued, reform can become truly effective. It is imperative that all government activities, from the electoral process, the improvement of elected officials accountability in the creation and implementation of promises, include the groups that are directly effected or vulnerable.

Comfrel remains committed to their non-partisan reporting on the activities of the government and the electoral process. Increased networking within the NGO community and more effective communication with government officials indicate positive strides that can lead the Cambodian society towards increased justice and equity. Grassroots activities that were used in the Commune Election will continue in preparation for the 2003 National Election. Comfrel is committed to making positive change through education, monitoring, and a commitment to the Cambodian citizen.

IV. Grid for Follow up the 1998 Elected Parties' Promises and Government's Progress [Back](#)

	Political Platform	Progress Made	Problems Encountered
<u>CPP</u> <u>Agriculture</u> <u>(Rice production)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Enough food to feed all Cambodians · Create food reserve · Increase rice production by 6.5% a year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Creation of Cambodian Nutrition Investment Plan (CNIP) · From 1998 to 2002 Cambodia produced rice surpluses that grew from 30,000 to 364,148 metric tons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1.5 to 2 Million Cambodians are food insecure, thus increase in rice production is not benefiting those in need · 45% of children under the age of 5 and 20% of women suffer from Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM) · Unable to find reliable data on rice exportation

<p><u>FCP</u> <u>Agriculture</u> <u>(Rice production)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase rice yield 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Creation of Cambodian Nutrition Investment Plan (CNIP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 1.5 to 2 Million Cambodians are food insecure, thus increase in rice production is not benefiting those in need · 45% of children under the age of 5 and 20% of women suffer from PEM.
<p><u>FCP</u> <u>Agriculture (Financial)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Expand production of food through encouraging competitive market pricing · Low interest loans to farmers in need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Creation of Cambodian Nutrition Investment Plan (CNIP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Most vulnerable groups do not have access to loans, technology or education to help them benefit from a shift to a privatization of the economy.
<p><u>CPP</u> <u>Agriculture</u> <u>(Land Rights)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Defend and promote farmers ownership of land. · Continue the tax-free policy for family farmland. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · New Land Law passed in August 2001 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Land disputes continue to intensify · Most vulnerable groups do not have access to loans or information to build the capacity of those in need
<p><u>CPP and FUN</u> <u>Agriculture</u> <u>(Irrigation)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Both parties stated need to rehabilitate farmland and modernize irrigation systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · \$50 million dollars spent annually in 2000 and 2001 on pesticides and fertilizers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Concerns about environmental consequences of use of agro-chemicals · Little has been done to improve the irrigation and quality of farmland
	<p>Political Platform</p>	<p>Progress Made</p>	<p>Problems Encountered</p>

<p>CPP Education (access)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase access to education, especially for the poor population · Free education to for all. · Build 1,200 schools a year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increased numbers of student's enrollment – 14% to 19% in primary schools. · Average of 600 schools built a year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Low retention and matriculation rates
<p><u>FCP Education (access)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Free education for all Cambodians that is of high quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increased numbers of student's enrollment – 14% to 19% in primary schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Low retention and matriculation rates
<p><u>CPP Education (quality)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Modernization of textbooks and educational tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) and the Educational Sector Support Program (ESSP) · Some improvements have been made to educational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 36% of Cambodians are illiterate and 27% are semi-literate · Low literacy predominance in the 15 to 24 year old age group, located primarily in rural areas · Varying levels of quality of education

<p><u>FCP Education (quality)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 15% of national budget to education · 65% of 12 year olds to be literate and numerate · Eradicate nepotism and favoritism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 16% of national budget to education in 2000 and 18.2% of budget to education in 2001 · The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) and the Educational Sector Support Program (ESSP) · Some improvements have been made to educational materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 36% of Cambodians are illiterate and 27% are semi-literate · Low literacy predominance in the 15 to 24 year old age group, located primarily in rural areas · Unable to find reliable data on percentage of 12 year olds whom are literate and able to numerate · Varying levels of quality of education
	<p>Political Platform</p>	<p>Progress Made</p>	<p>Problems Encountered</p>
<p>CPP Health Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Upgrade quality of health care, especially in rural areas · Increased education about infectious diseases · Develop stronger human resource system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Communication feedback committees between health care practitioners and management groups · Increased communication between groups working with PLWHA (People Lives With HIV/AIDS) and prevention and government groups · 2001 distribution of Priority Action Plan (PAP) funds to health care successful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 2002 only 3% of PAP funds distributed in first quarter, thus shutting down immunization programs and halting pay of health care officials · Grievously inadequate salaries for health care workers · Inadequate number of health care centers lacking needed facilities · Many Cambodians, especially those poor and living in rural areas, have no access to health care

<p>FCP Health Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Primary health care available to all Cambodians by 2000 · Increase quality of health care facilities and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Communication feedback committees between health care practitioners and management groups · Increased communication between groups working with PLWHA and prevention and government groups · 2001 distribution of PAP funds to health care successful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 2002 only 3% of PAP funds distributed in first quarter, thus shutting down immunization programs and halting pay of health care officials · Grievously inadequate salaries for health care workers · Inadequate number of health care centers lacking needed facilities · Many Cambodians, especially those poor and living in rural areas, have no access to health care
<p>CPP <u>Military Operations</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Promise to rid Khmer Rouge (KR) from Cambodia and end all fighting with the group · Strengthen armed forces through training and educational reform · Military would be comprised of disciplined, moral, and respectable soldiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fighting with KR did end in 1999 · Implementation of a demobilization program CVAP that has returned 15,000 soldiers out of an expected 30,000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Poorly managed 45 million dollar demobilization project · Inadequate follow through with demobilization so soldiers are left with only little vocational training, if any at all · No commitment from the government to collect and destroy weapons
	<p>Political Platform</p>	<p>Progress Made</p>	<p>Problems Encountered</p>

<p><u>FCP</u> <u>Military Operations</u> <u>(Commitment)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · FCP did not have a political platform on military operations, rather a commitment to build peace and prosperity and defend Cambodia 		
<p><u>CPP</u> <u>Rule of Law</u> <u>(Anti-Corruption)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The CPP party made a commitment to eliminate corruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · H.E. the Prime Minister Hun Sen did make a commitment to sign a comprehensive anti-corruption law at the Consultative Group (CG) meeting in June of 2002. · Council for legal and judicial reform created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The draft of the anti-corruption law is stalled in the National Assembly and initial assessments indicate that the law is inadequate and a gesture of reform rather than meaningful change · 0.3% of the national budget is allocated to the Ministry of Justice
<p><u>FCP</u> <u>Rule of Law</u> <u>(Anti-Corruption)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · FCP promised to fight corruption through upgrading living standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Council for legal and judicial reform created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The draft of the anti-corruption law is stalled in the National Assembly and initial assessments indicate that the law is inadequate and rather a gesture of reform rather than meaningful change · 0.3% of the national budget is allocated to the Ministry of Justice
<p><u>CPP</u> <u>Rule of Law</u> <u>(Judicial)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · No political platform in regards to reforming the judicial system 		

<p>FCP</p> <p>Rule of Law</p> <p><u>(Judicial)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Create independent judiciary system · Rehabilitate tribunals and courts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Draft of code of ethics for judges submitted to donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Insufficient salaries to those who work in the legal system thus encouraging corruption · 0.3% of the national budget is allocated to the Ministry of Justice
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