

Phnom Penh, June 02, 2017

**Statement  
Pre-Election Day Assessment  
For Commune Council Election of the Fourth Mandate**

Civil society member organizations of the Situation Room for the 2017 election found the technical management of election to be quite capable and improved. The political environment and security situation remained mostly non-violent and generally peaceful. As such, conflict did not detract from the electoral management process, from the freedom of political parties to compete, and the right to participate of civil society and voters. We sincerely hope and expect that all key stakeholders maintain mutual respect and emphasize non-violent dispute resolution, for the sake of the polling and counting processes and a constructive and democratic post-election period. The following are summary assessments of electoral management and the pre-election situation:

- **Legal Framework:**  
There are some positive and negative points regarding the Law on Elections and Law on Preparation and Functioning of National Election Committee, while the Law on Amendment of Political Party Law has received a negative evaluation
- **The National Election Committee (NEC):**  
NEC has better performed and showing capacities and practices to be improved in terms of election official recruitment, task fulfillment, preparation of workplans and conducting training, and enforcement of election regulations, and procedures.
- **Voter Registration:**  
The Voter List is improved in terms of quality and accuracy.
- **Political Party candidate Registration:**  
Political party candidate list registration is quite positive because 12 political parties have registered their candidates list to run for the election. Only Cambodian People Party (CPP) and Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) are able to fill their candidate's lists in every commune. It is noted that female candidates from CPP and CNRP have been seen in the top range of the candidate list.
- **Election Campaign:**  
The Electoral campaign has been conducted peacefully and without evidence of serious conflict. Tensions between supporters of distinct political parties did not rise to a level which inhibited the ability to conduct the campaign or limit candidates ability to campaign. Key problems detracting from the fairness of the election included restrictions on the exercise of freedom of expression by opposition party members, authority's blocking the use of public space and streets in some cases (where used in previous elections), and media to support the ruling party campaign. Moreover, it was found that private media, particular television stations, did not adhere to the NEC's principle on equitable access, non partisan and balanced news. Another area in urgent need of reform is campaign finance. None of the contesting parties has provided adequate financial disclosure and transparency regarding campaign financing and spending.
- **Polling Preparation**  
Polling and counting process preparation markedly improved through the application of measures to ensure one voter casts one vote, through electoral equipment and material preparation, through a large number of accreditation to observers, and in terms of posting the electoral result note (1102) at polling/counting stations, and Commune Election Commission (CEC) and NEC websites. The NEC fulfilled its requirement to ensure ballot paper reserves up to 20% of registered voter. However, this is a

large reserve and there is some concern from Situation Room members on high risk resulting from misuse of reserved ballot papers.

- **Political Environment**

The political environment was found to not be a state of open conflict or violence, but political messages from high ranking officials (about war and crackdown) did have an intimidation effect on voters.

The associations and civil society organizations of the Situation Room for the 2017 election call on contesting political parties to respect and follow election laws, procedures and regulations, and to accept the upcoming result. We also call on people to cast their ballot freely and to be witnesses of election result after votes are consolidated at counting stations on election day.

**For further inquiry, should you contact.**

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