



Vision : A democratic society that democratization in particular democratic elections are promoted and qualified to bring benefits to people.

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## Recommendations for Reforming the Composition of the National Election Commission To Build Trust Among Political Parties Contesting the Elections

For building trust among competitive political parties in election administration, to increase transparency and to reduce electoral-related disputes, the election commissions at all levels must be neutral and independent. In Cambodia, the state’s institutions, particularly the Electoral Management Body, is not independent and neutral even though there is existing law to ensure that they are. In empirical studies, competitive political parties have expressed a lack of trust in the composition and electoral management of the National Election Committee (NEC). This is because members of the NEC were selected by the government and the Ministry of Interior only with approval from the National Assembly, which political parties believed was influenced by the incumbent party. For the next election, the selection of members of the NEC must be done through a new transparent process of establishing an independent selective commission trusted by the political parties.

It is necessary to build trust among competitive political parties, NGOs and other concerned stakeholders to make the 2012 election successful. The signatories of this policy, including representatives of political parties and other individuals, recommend the NEC to reform the selective procedure for all levels of the NEC to have at least one member from each political party which has a seat in the National Assembly. The selection process must comply with the regulations and procedures of the NEC. All members of these commissions have to abide by NEC’s general conditions.

This recommendation is based on:

1. Public forums about electoral reform and democracy organized by COMFREL and other civil society organizations, with financial support from UNDP, in four provinces from June to December 2010. In those forums, recommendations regarding election commissions were prioritized. The participants recommended that the composition of those commissions should be selected from all parties that have representation in the National Assembly or commune/Sangkat councils.

2. In July 2010, meetings were held with COMFREL and other CSO delegates and political parties who hold seats in the parliament in which the representatives of those parties expressed their lack of trust with the NEC and its sub-national level election commissions. They also indicated a lack of confidence that election management is free and fair. In case the neutrality and independence of election commissions cannot be ensured, these political parties recommended for the NEC to be of a mixed composition and for all levels to come from political parties which hold a seat in the National Assembly or commune/ Sangkat recently.

3. According to the above parameters, if the selection of the NEC composition at the national level was done through the party quota, five members of the NEC would be from the CPP, two members would be from the Sam Rainsy Party and the other two would be from the FUNCINPEC Party, totaling the nine members of the NEC.

Overall, the recommendation of reforming the Provincial Electoral Commission, the Commune/ Sangkat Electoral Commission and Polling Station Officers who directly manage the election can earn trust from the political parties. Then, competitive political parties would have faith in electoral management and promote active participation in electoral administration.

**Mission** : COMFREL mission is to help to create an informed and favourable climate 1)- *for free and fair elections* through lobbying and advocacy for a suitable legal framework, education to inform voters of their rights and monitoring activities that both discourage irregularities and provide comprehensive monitoring data to enable an objective, non-partisan assessment of the election process, and 2)- *for meaningfulness of post elections* through education and public forums to encourage citizens to participate in politics and decision-making, advocacy/lobby for electoral reforms that increase accountability of elected officials and provide comprehensive monitoring data to enable an objective, non-partisan assessment of the fulfilment of political platform and performance of elected officials.