



# The Face of Women's Political Participation and 5<sup>th</sup> mandate National Assembly Election 2013

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Women's Political participation in the 2013 National Assembly Election for the 5<sup>th</sup> Mandate facing shortage of funds and written policy on promoting women's political participation as well as the barrier of women voters from the voter list revision and voter registration process, opportunity to stand as a candidate and voting participation.

Political activities are still in the narrow and challenges for women having an opportunity to stand as a candidate in the coming elections. Some political parties contesting the 5<sup>th</sup> Mandate National Assembly Elections have raised concerns about the financial needs of the parties regarding candidate nomination. If members of a party have adequate financial support (be able to), they then have the opportunity to stand as a candidate along with showing that they have the ability, popularity, level of commitment and established political background. Additionally, the lack of mechanisms in supporting and providing opportunities that is affirmative action to promote women's participation in politics, such as having no clear written policy in party and election law. The entire problem is a huge barrier for women candidates aiming to stand for elections. Recently, the results of the registration of political parties and list of candidates listed a total of 886 titular candidates, of which 168 (18.96%) were women candidates and only 12.16% at the top of the party list from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> ranking for all 8 political parties. The number of women candidates increased slightly, by **4.16%** from 14.80% in the 4<sup>th</sup> mandate of 2008 to 18.96% in the 5<sup>th</sup> mandate of 2013. Even though the number of women candidates has gradually increased over time, the numbers are still low. Two of the most popular parties; Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) included fewer female candidates than the smaller parties. The CPP had 20 (16.26%), same as during 4<sup>th</sup> mandate of 2008 and the CNRP had 12 (9.75%), a smaller number that is far from what civil society asked of the political parties, which is to place women candidates in at least 30% for the 5<sup>th</sup> mandate National elections.

According to a recent case study completed by COMFREL, it was found that during the voter list revision and voter registration there was irregularities related to disrespect the procedures such as disrespect working time that affected some women. For instance, in the case at Sangkat Veal Vong, Kampong Cham Municipal, Kampong Cham Province most of the women are sellers and are busy working in the market,

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

ចក្ខុវិស័យ ៖ សង្គមប្រជាធិបតេយ្យមួយដែលដំណើរការប្រជាធិបតេយ្យប្រជាធិបតេយ្យស្របច្បាប់ និងមានគុណភាពខ្ពស់ ដែលនាំមកនូវផលប្រយោជន៍ដល់ប្រជាពលរដ្ឋ

with less free time usually between 16:00 to 17:00 PM, they go and check their name in the voter list and register to vote. However, when they arrived at the Office of Voter List Revision and Voter Registration, the officers had already closed the office. Therefore, it was very difficult for them to ask for information related to the voter list revision and some did not register for the year 2012 which is also a reason to prevent women from participating in elections that affect the political rights of the voters. Monitoring reports and case studies of women during voter list revision and voter registration in 2012 revealed that some women in 10 Communes/Sangkats and Municipals/Districts; *Baray and Rokaknong Sangkat* (Doun Keo Municipal, Takeo Province), *Kampong Branaak and Palhal Sangkat* (Preah Vihear Municipal, Preah Vihear Province), *Kdeydong Commune*(Kampong Svay District) and *Domrey Chhornkla Sangkat* (Stung Sen Munciple, Kampong Thom Province), *Veal Vong and Sambormeas Sangkat* (Kampong Cham Munciple, Kampong Cham Province), *Phaa and Phasa Chhnang Sangkat* (Kampong Chhnang Municipal, Kampong Chhnang Province), did not have enough time to obtain sufficient information on Voter List Revision and Voter Registration in 2012. The housewife is mostly busy with housework and some are busy with small business. They all are also occupied with taking care of children and families, as well as to go working in their respective roles, and less considering or concerning on their rights to participate in the election process from voter list revision and voter registration, which is an important stage for them having rights to vote on election day.

According to the results SVRA Plus, COMFREL found that voter list were not quality and voter deletion showcased errors in the implementation of the procedures. There are 13.50% of registered voters had no data recorded on the voter list for the 2013 national election (Their name could not be found or their name had been changed entirely). This means that some 1.25 million registered (62.80% was women) voters are likely to lose their right to vote in the 2013 upcoming election.

So COMFREL can predictively assume on the women's participation that the coming 5<sup>th</sup> mandate National Assembly Election 2013, the number of women elected as member of parliament (MP) **might be decreased** and, hence, will not reach Cambodia's Millennium Development Goals (CMDG) that stipulate that by 2015 at least 30% of elected officials should be women at the national level (According to the fewer number of women candidates of two most popular political parties, political situation, the case study and research were found recently). Furthermore, COMFREL anticipates that if on election-day still there is missing-name or cannot find the name of the voters in the official voter list; we can estimate that the challenges of loss voting right of women voters more than male voters due to the number of women voters in the official voter list is 52.50%.

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