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2020 Annual Narrative Report

COMFREL

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COMFREL

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I. Executive Summary

During the project implementation in 2020, COMFREL faced different difficult situations, including political pressure, and the Covid-19 epidemic. Due to the Covid-19, some activities, including debates in the provinces and monitoring the voter registration were rescheduled. However, COMFREL, its staff members, its board members, and member organizations at all levels worked flexibly to achieve its expectation based on the project plan and achieved multiple significant achievements as planned.

Program 1. Education for Democracy and Elections Program

In 2020, COMFREL conducted 6 debates on “Principles of Democracy and genuine elections” in 6 provinces, including Kampong Chhang, Siem Reap, Kampong Cham, Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, and Kandal province. These debates were to give a chance to participants to learn about the principles of democracy and genuine elections, provide recommendations regarding genuine elections to submit to the government, political parties, CSOs, and other relevant stakeholders. It was attended by 248 participants (136 female) from university students, CSOs, its network, farmers and community people and 13 speakers shared about democracy in Cambodia and elections. Participants gained knowledge about civic rights, democratic principles, understanding of the mechanisms of free and fair elections, the rule of law, and the peaceful transfer of power. There were some recommendations regarding elections collected from the participants. This debate was taken as a video to serve for the VOC radio program.

Although COMFREL staff required to work at home during the Covid-19 epidemic, the radio

program kept broadcasting as scheduled. 365 (225 live and 140 rebroadcast) sessions of “VOC” radio programs were hosted with a total of 499 speakers (23% female), facilitating outreach and public awareness on a multitude of issues. Also, 315 people (22% female) still called into the program to express opinions, make requests, and direct questions to the speakers. COMFREL's radio program also contributed to this change, with a number of controversial issues being raised, particularly one that allowed uncertainty over the timing of the state of emergency.

In addition to radio programming, COMFREL has a Facebook page to disseminate information regarding society, politics, and economics. 6,589 articles on democracy, elections, and good governance and 8 press statements were released, and 19 video animation spots, including 7 from gender unit were produced and uploaded on its Facebook page. COMFREL's Facebook page reached 31,595 ‘likes’. 52 electoral digest segments were released to its network through the mailing list. Furthermore, COMFREL also conducted a total of 7 online surveys through its page to assess the quality of its radio program, satisfaction with COMFREL video animation, the importance of the radio program, useful of COMFREL Facebook page.

Program 2: Strengthening Genuine Democratic Elections Program

9 meetings were conducted to talk and discuss the LANGOs and findings on the audit voter list report 2019 with key stakeholders including independent analysts, technical group, NEC, CSOs. COMFREL continued to meet with its technical team and other CSOs to collect the recommendations to improve LANGOs as a

controversial law. After meetings among CSOs groups, two key points were agreed together to raise to the MoI: 1) detailed discussion of the road map and submitted to the MoI to clarify the time to amend the law and 2) ask the Ministry to discuss only among the working groups that have already made the recommendations. 6 recommendations regarding the MoI's implementation were also proposed by this technical team to the MoI in the meeting. Although it did not show any results as a formal letter, the MoI warmly welcomed the CSOs' recommendations, and in the practice of the MoI, it showed any positive changes regarding organizational registration and local authorities' interruption.

There were two workshops conducted related to the update of the draft access to information law and proposed amendments to LANGOs CSOs' challenges and recommendations on LANGOs enforcement. These were attended by the CSOs, a legal consultant and legal specialist, and key stakeholders. This was to improve some articles including article 3, article 19, article 29 of access to information law. This draft law will be enforced after submitted to the National Assembly and the Senate for decision. CSOs once again strongly urged the Royal Government working group led by the MoI as the following: 1) to amend the 14 articles of LANGO which are proposed and concerned by CSOs groups. They included Article 1, Article 7, Article 8, Article 9, Article 10, Article 11, Article 20, Article 24, Article 25, Article 26, Article 30, Article 31, Article 32, and Article 35. 2) to speed up the process with a clear roadmap to finish the draft amendment law to LANGO as soon as possible. 3) to provide CSOs an opportunity to further study the content to be drafted in the draft amendments law and 4) to continue to cooperate and inclusively discuss the transparent content of

the draft amendment law with CSOs in further steps till the draft law is adopted by the legislations.

For findings of audit voter list report 2019, COMFREL technical team also had a meeting with the NEC technical team to present COMFREL's findings report on the audit voter list. As a result, the NEC acknowledged these findings and agreed to review them. The NEC representative added that technical requirements for migrant registration had been made, but the NEC was only waiting for permission. The NEC changed the procedure for collecting estimated statistics in villages, communes, Sangkat, with village chiefs and the chief of police post as collaborators.

For the law on political parties, COMFREL staff completed the preparation of procedures, action plans for the study on the proposed amendment of the law. COMFREL staff collected and studied information from stakeholders who have made recommendations regarding the law on political parties.

A meeting with 10 provincial secretariats (4female) was organized at Siem Reap province to orient the 2021 work plan COMFREL, and to discuss challenges and lessons learned over mobilizing network for joining sodality activities for electoral support. The meeting produced the result as follows: the challenges for COMFREL to mobilize its networks and participants in the meeting also share that in the past COMFREL was successful in mobilizing its networks through CSOs members, Communities, and teachers of public schools. Following the discussions, there are some possible solutions to effectively mobilize the network.

Program 3. Women's Empowerment in Politics Program

The Education and Gender unit studied LEMNA and LEMCC and shared its findings through the radio programme and in events or public forum. This unit provides the recommendation through direct meetings with the MoWA and email.

An annual report on Political Gender Watch, “Assembly and Female Members of Parliament and Empowerment of Female Commune/Sangkat Councilors in their performance at the Local Level,” was produced as a soft and uploaded on its Website and COMFREL’s Facebook page and the unit’s Facebook page namely “Women in Politics”. 8 key points of Recommendation were produced in the annual report. Meanwhile, a brief report was released to all media outlets. 100 copies of the annual report were printed and sent to key stakeholders including CSOs, Donors, MoWA, NEC, NCDD, Office of the Council of Ministers, Ministry of the interior, target provinces of education and gender unit, Chief of Sangkat Vilvong, Chief of Sangkat Tiek Laok and Chief of Sombour Meas Commune.

The “Women Can Do it” radio broadcasted 51 sessions (36 live and 16 rebroadcasts) were hosted on FM 105 and COMFREL’s online in cooperation with ADHOC, GADC, SILAKA, CIPO, CDPO, CCHR, Khlahan, and NGO-CEDAW...etc. 69 speakers (82% female and some of them have attended the program from 2 times to 6 times). 61 (26% female and some female callers were engaged with the program many times.

7 video/audio animation spots were produced and broadcasted/disseminated to the public through radio/online WCDI program and Facebook Page. It was proposing an amendment to LEMNA articles to increase gender equality and women’s participation in politics and decision-making positions to mainstream gender equality and women's participation in politics. These animation spots received 5,309 views, 300 likes, 50 shares, and 15 comments.

Moreover, this unit conducted one survey on women's political activists' participation in politics in Kampong Chhnang province and Battambang province, and Phnom Penh city. The survey report will be finished by early 2021.

Program 4. Democratic Governance Reform Program

2019 annual reports on Democracy and election reform in Cambodia, on the first year fulfillment of the political platform of the sixth mandate government, government watch, and parliamentary watch were produced and uploaded on the website. These reports were also sent to its stakeholders through the mailing list including domestic and international journalists, independent analysis, domestic and international CSOs, and Embassy and were also covered by media outlets through articles papers and discussions.

6 people forums were conducted at Banteay Meanchey, Prey Veng, Siem Reap, Kampoung Chhnang, Kompot, and Kratie province. The forums were held with 2 representatives of the commune council and about 30 participants of each one. Participants and commune representatives had a friendly dialogue and discussed the process of development and good governance implementation in their community. Participants learned about good governance.

Program 5: Organizational Capacity Development Program

COMFREL formed an M&E team to help the reporting officer to produce comprehensive reports with quality for the donors. There were 4 people from different units, including Education and Gender unit, Media unit, Monitoring unit, and reporting officer. three monthly meetings were conducted at COMFREL’s office to update the activities of each unit to all staff. There were also weekly meetings of the management team to update or discuss the important issue of its project.

II. About COMFREL

1. Vision

A democratic society that bring benefits to citizen

2. Mission

COMFREL, as a neutral non-governmental organization, empowers Cambodian citizens to exercise their rights in politics and decision-making, through civic education, and constructive engagement with government and elected officials, for policy reforms, free and fair elections, and increased accountabilities in service delivery

3. Program objectives

External Organization:

To empower citizens, especially women, youth, and marginalized groups, to participate in social and political development processes

To improve some articles of controversial law/policies to have an acceptable policy for people benefit

To increase the number of women's participation in politics and in decision-making

To improve democratic accountability of the elected officials and political transparency

Internal Organization:

The capability and the professionalism of the organization is improved, with a strong structure to support the success of the organization

III. Completed Activities

Program 1. Education for Democracy and Elections Program

1.1 Debates on Democratic Rights and Civic Duties

COMFREL conducted 6 debates in 6 provinces, including Kampong Chhang, Siem Reap, Kampong Cham, Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, and Kandal province. These debates were to give a chance to participants to learn about the principles of democracy and genuine elections, discuss the recommendations regarding genuine elections to submit to the government, political parties, CSOs, and other relevant stakeholders. It was attended by 248 participants (136 female) from university students, CSOs, its network, farmers and community people and 13 speakers shared about democracy in Cambodia and elections. Participants gained knowledge about civic rights, democratic principles, understanding of the mechanisms of free and fair elections, the rule of law, and the peaceful transfer of power. There were some recommendations regarding elections collected from the participants. This debate was taken as a video to serve for the VoC radio program.

For example, COMFREL conducted the debate on “Principle of Democracy and Genuine Elections” in Battambang province on 15th October 2020 to give a chance to participants to learn about the principles of democracy and genuine elections, discuss the recommendations

regarding genuine elections to submit to the government, political parties, CSOs, and other relevant stakeholders. It was attended by 42 participants (22 female) from university students, CSOs, its network, farmers and community people and 2 speakers shared about democracy in Cambodia and elections. The participants not only learned the principle of democracy and genuine election but also their role in a democratic society. There were some recommendations regarding elections collected from the participants. This debate was taken as a video to serve for the VoC radio program. The M&E team monitored this debate and found that it ran smoothly and effectively. The environment of the debate was convenient and safe for discussing the political issue because it took place in an isolated hall, no interrupted voice, big space, and the seat of participants is opposite with the speaker. There was the active participation of participants in the debate. They paid attention to the speakers sharing on the topic and asked many questions back to them. They were also active in discussing the recommendations of the election. At the end of the debate, two participants expressed their joy with this event and learned a lot about the principle of democracy and genuine elections. They also requested COMFREL to organize more debates in Battambang province to give other people’ opportunity to learn about democracy and elections and expand the hour for discussion.



1-2. Radio program broadcast and Live on Facebook Page

COMFREL media unit activities are as follows:

- Live broadcasting of COMFREL’s radio programme the Voice of Civil Society (VoC) via FM105 Radio station, ensured every day from 7:30 to 8:30 am, Monday to Friday. The Voice of Civil Society consists of daily programmes on differing topics:
- Monday : Voter’s Voice
- Tuesday : Human Rights and Democracy
- Wednesday : Congress, Government, and Governance

- Thursday : Women Can Do It
- Friday : Weekly Watch
- Saturday : To go to vote or not
- Sunday : Re-broadcast of Kloam Meul Prarcham Sapada (Weekly Watch) and Youth Public Forum.

The total number of aired live and rebroadcast radio programs during this period was 365 (225 live and 140 rebroadcast). The table below shows the number of times VoC programs were broadcast, both live and rebroadcast, each month, via FM 105 station in Phnom Penh. Here is a list of the topic of the radio program. The radio program is also in cooperation with ADHOC in the “Human Right” radio program and Multi-sectors organization in the “Multi-sectors” radio program



Daily radio programmes were broadcasted on the FM105 radio station.

	Sub Total (January-December 2020)	
	Live	Re-br.1
Voter Voice	46	8
Congress, Government, and Governance	45	9
Human Rights and Democracy	42	11
Women Can Do It	38	24
Weekly Watch	25	24
To Go Or Not to Go	35	12
Sunday	0	52
TOTAL (each month)	225	140

The VoC Programme table and broadcast stations:

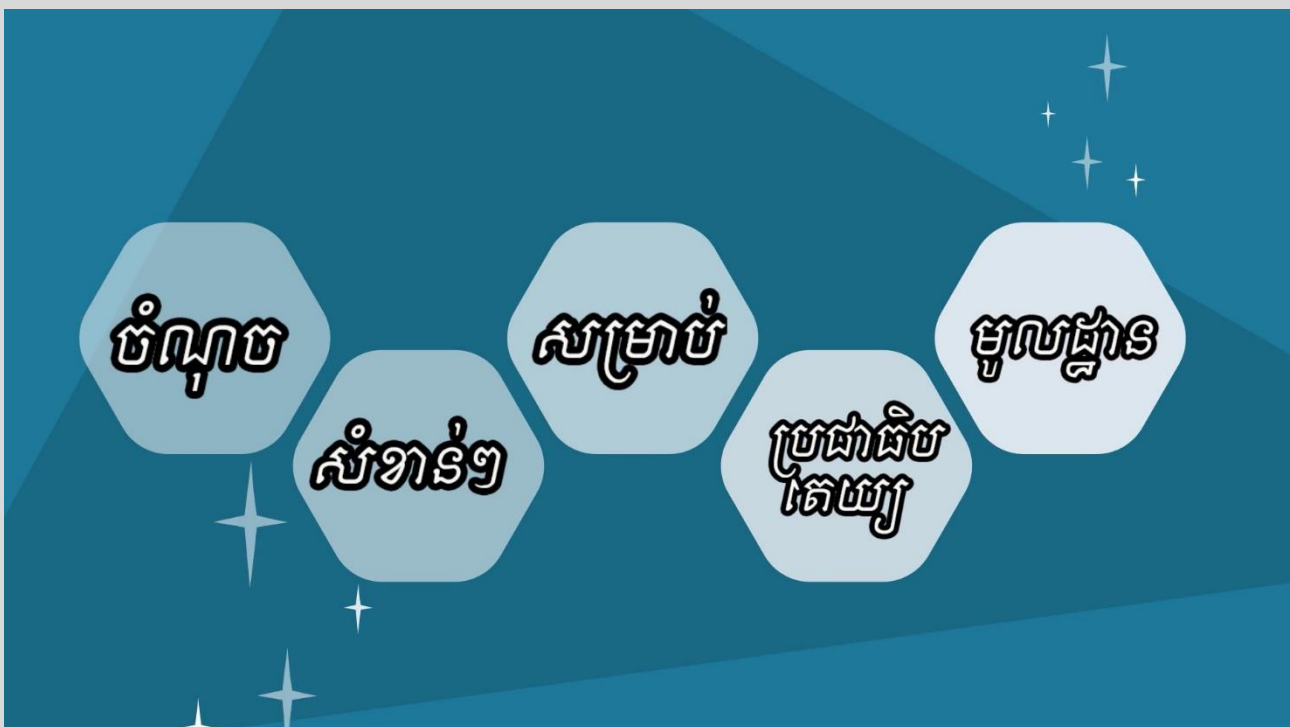
N	Radio Station	Location	No. of Broadcasts/Live		Hours	Speakers				Organizers/Facilitators		No. of Callers/Discussants	
						CSOs		BoD					
						F	M	F	M				
			Re-Broadcast	Live		115	360	0	24	94	137	71	244
1	FM 105	PNH	140 Times	225 Times	365 Hrs								
Total			140 Times	225 Times	365 Hours	475 Persons	24 Persons	231 Persons	315 Callers				

¹ Re-br. is an abbreviation of Rebroadcast.

1.3. Multimedia education for democracy and elections

In addition to the radio program, COMFREL has its Facebook page to disseminate information regarding society, politics, and economics. COMFREL's Facebook page reached 31,595 'likes'. There were 6,589 articles on democracy, elections, and good governance released and 19 video animation spots, including 7 from gender unit produced and

uploaded on COMFREL its Facebook page. 52 electoral digest was released to its network through the mailing list. COMFREL conducted 7 online surveys including is the VoC radio programme important for you, do you satisfy the VoC radio programme of COMFREL, and do you think whether COMFREL's video animation spots were important for public people or not?



Program 2: Strengthening Genuine Democratic Elections Program

2.1 Constitutional and legal framework review and report

During the reporting period, COMFREL did many activities regarding the advocacy with key stakeholders to improve LANGOs, the law on political party and the law on elections:

On 25 August 2020, COMFREL in cooperation with PDP Center and other CSOs organized a national workshop on Proposed Amendments to LANGOs CSOs' challenges and recommendations on LANGOs

enforcement at Phnom Penh with about 100 participants. CSOs once again strongly urged the Royal Government working group led by the MoI as the following: 1) to amend the 14 articles of LANGO proposed and concerned by CSOs groups. They include Article 1, Article 7, Article 8, Article 9, Article 10, Article 11, Article 20, Article 24, Article 25, Article 26, Article 30, Article 31, Article 32, and Article 35, 2) to speed up the process with clear a roadmap to finish the draft amendment law to LANGO as soon as possible, 3) to provide CSOs an opportunity to further study on the content to be drafted in the draft amendments law, and 4)

to continue to cooperate and inclusively discuss the transparent content of the draft amendment law with CSOs in further steps till the draft law is adopted by the legislations. On 6th July 2020, COMFREL staff and other CSOs partners working on LANGOs had a meeting with the MoI about LANGOs amendment at the Ministry office. four key articles were proposed by the technical team to the MoI in the meeting. The challenges of the CSOs were listed to five points and presented to the MoI and the soft copy was sent to the MoI on 07th July 2020. The five challenges to CSOs were submitted to the MoI on 07th July 2020. They include registration and notification, the establishment of feedback mechanism, the establishment of the MoI's workshop or training to CSO, CSOs' conducting activities, and report submission. Following the meeting, a joint statement was made between CSOs and the MoI on completion of the consultation on the LANGO amendment. the statement says that the output of consultation will be respectably sent to the government to make the decision. COMFREL continued making comments and presentations on LANGOs amendment through media outlets. On 23rd June 2020, COMFREL with cooperating with PDP Center, continued organizing a workshop on CSO's challenges and recommendations on LANGO enforcement in Kampong Cham province with participants from 17 provincial CSOs attended. As a result, there were 4 recommendations related to registration, conducting activities, neutrality, report, and taxation produced. On 11 February 2020, COMFREL and CSOs joined in a meeting at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. As a result of the meeting, COMFREL updated advocacy work specially related to advocacy of LANGO law. On 10 February 2020, the technical team of civil society organizations (LANGO) had a meeting with MoI at the MoI office. As a result of the talking, three articles were finalized: Article 10, Article 11, and Article 20. During the meeting, the team cited the Situation Room as an example of discussion related to Article 11, and his excellency Prak Sam Oeun said that

the MoI did not say that the Situation Room was illegal, but the Situation Room should be informed before action. On 07 February 2020, COMFREL staff and PDP Centre had a meeting with EWMI at EWMI on the LANGO Advocacy Plan by requesting funding for further activities. As a result, EWMI provided funding to us to carry out our activities. On 06 February 2020, COMFREL staff joined in CCHR's radio on the topic of "Challenges and Progress of Law Amendment of Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations." On that day, the press statement was also released to request for a roadmap and highlight 6 key points, which was presented to the MoI in the previous forum. On January 17, 2020, A technical group including COMFREL and other CSOs working to advocate for the LANGO had a meeting together to talk about the recommendations of LANGO that took place at the Tonle Bassac II Restaurant. This meeting was to draw the roadmap for the amendment of LANGO, consolidate the recommendations from different groups, including 19 CSOs and CCC, NGOs forum, and other CSOs, and discuss what agenda need to put for a meeting with the MoI on August 20, 2020, which would be held by the COMFREL. This meeting was attended by 16 participants facilitated by COMFREL and CCC. On 09 January 2020, COMFREL staff attended a meeting to discuss the recommendations of LANGO, organized by the EWMI at the Phnom Penh ERA Hotel. During the meeting, COMFREL staff presented the recommendations of LANGO collected from 19 CSOs to the member of the EWMI. The existing challenges were deeply discussed among participants. COMFREL also asked for further recommendations of LANGO. As a result, the participants agreed on two key points together: 1) prepared a detailed discussion of the road map and submitted to the MoI to clarify the time to amend the law and 2) ask the Ministry to discuss only among the working groups that have already made the recommendations. COMFREL produced 5 video animation spot about LANGOs. These were uploaded on its

Facebook page to make the public understand about articles, which COMFREL provided the

recommendations.



COMFREL in cooperation with PDP Center and other CSOs organized a national consultation workshop on Proposed Amendment to LANGOs, which was attended by 86 civil society organizations from 75 institutions.

COMFREL staff completed the preparation of procedures, action plans for the study, and requests for amendments to the Law on Political Parties. COMFREL staff collected and studied information from stakeholders who have made recommendations regarding the law on political parties and continued debate on the LANGOs through the radio programs and video animation spots.

On 07th July 2020, COMFREL staff attended the meeting on DPWG prepared by NGO Forum in Phnom Penh. The working group was just reactivated and facilitated by the NGO Forum. The group consisted of several sectors among 27 CSOs who were still running their programs. Others CSOs were also expected to become a member of the group. The working

group continued working on the CSDG and NSDP. During the covid-19 pandemic, a new platform with the innovative idea was developed for the working group to collect CSOs' input to review/track the development policy implementation or issue.

On 30 June 2020, COMFREL staff attended a workshop on “the Update of the Draft Access to Information Law” held by the Ministry of Information. This workshop was also attended by the CSOs, a legal consultant, and API legal specialist. This law was amended to improve some articles, including article 3, article 19, article 29. This draft law will be enforced after submitted to the National Assembly and the Senate for decision. On 27 January 2020, COMFREL staff attended an ADHOC

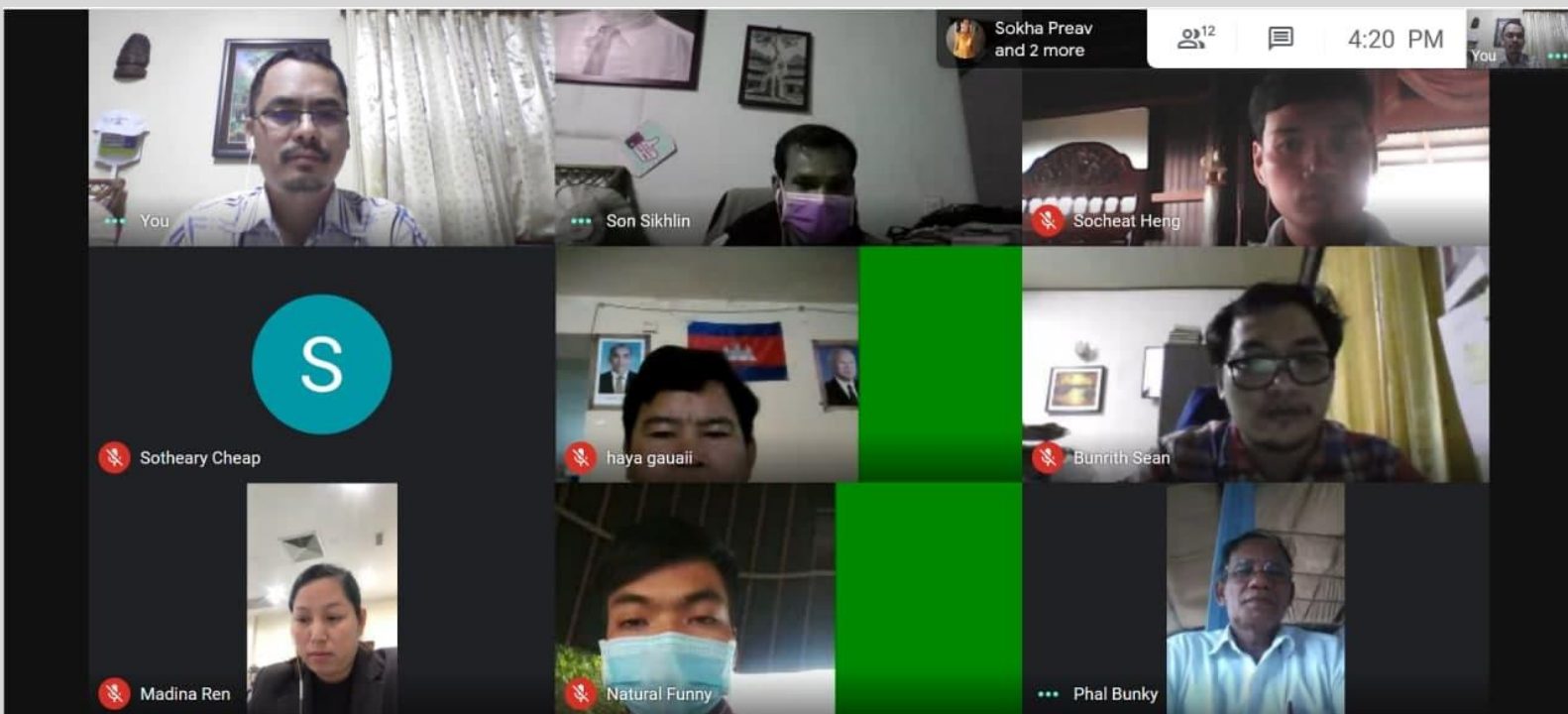
consultative meeting on finding analysis on last updated access to information law updated Nov 2019, organized by API at the Tonle Basac I Restaurant. The meeting was I have learned the keys challenges in the last updated A2I law and discussed on way forward to do the advocacy.

2.2 Interparty dialogue/Sodality electoral support

COMFREL continued to organize weekly meetings for civil society organizations working to advocate policy reform and social work. There were less than 20 participants (ethnic divisions/generations). As a result of our monthly and annual meetings, we shared information and the social development process. On 30th July 2020, COMFREL organized the monthly meeting with 12

COMFREL provincial secretaries to update the general situation and its activities to share with them. On 30th August 2020, COMFREL organized the monthly meeting with 12 COMFREL provincial secretariats to update the general situation and further activities.

COMFREL, on 23 December 2020 at Siem Reap province, organized a meeting with 10 provincial secretariats (4 female) to orient the 2021 work plan and to discussed challenges and lessons learned over mobilizing network for joining sodality activities for electoral support. The meeting produced the result as follows. The challenges for COMFREL to mobilize its networks and participants also share that in the past COMFREL successfully mobilized its networks through CSOs members, Communities, and teachers of public schools.



Online meeting with provincial secretaries

2.3 Electoral Monitoring

On 27-31 January 2020: COMFREL staff completed the draft 2019 audit voter list report and a draft letter to the NEC to submit a summary report of the findings and recommendations and request for the meet with the technical working group to present and talk deeply to COMFREL's findings. In

March 2020: COMFREL staff produced the report on the voter registration monitoring and audit in Khmer and English. This report was uploaded on its website and sent to its relevant stakeholders through the mailing list. This report was uploaded on 04 June 2020 unit now. There were 352 views and 32 downloads from COMFREL's website. According to the voter registration monitoring and voter list audition

from 2016 to 2019, COMFREL proposes the following recommendations:

- ✓ The NEC should continue its effort to create a new mechanism or to propose to the National Assembly to amend the election laws to register migrant eligible voters outside the country.
- ✓ The NEC should join an effort with the Ministry of Interior to foster providing Khmer Identity Card to all eligible citizens or voters.
- ✓ The 2019 Voter List Audition and Voter Registration Report COMFREL

- ✓ The NEC should inform voters registered with ID version I to update their registry data accordingly to their in-hand ID, and the NEC should also encourage the MoI to update voter's expired ID.
- ✓ The NEC should strengthen the registration team's component in filling and updating information of applicants to reduce the unintentional fault as much as possible.



Activity of COMFREL observer to monitor the voter registration process

On 21 February, the COMFREL technical team had a meeting with the NEC technical team from all departments led by the Deputy Secretary-General of the NEC at the NEC's office. This meeting discussed COMFREL's findings report on the audit voter list. As a result, the NEC acknowledged these findings and agreed to review them. The NEC representative added that technical requirements for migrant registration had been made, but the NEC was only waiting for permission. The NEC changed the procedure for collecting estimated statistics in villages,

communes, Sangkat, with village chiefs and the chief of police post as collaborators.

On 01-19 October 2020, COMFREL deployed 13 observers (6 female) to monitor the voter list and voter registration in 2020 in some provinces, including Katie, Siem Reap, Mondulhiri, Pursat, and Stung Treng province. In December, COMFREL staff deployed 92 observers (32 female) to audit the vote list in some provinces, including Battambang, Kep, Katie, Kompong Thom, Kompong Speu, Takeo, Pursat, Siem Reap, Stung Treng, and Sihanoukville province.

COMFREL conducted observation in the NEC event on the destruction/shred of 22 million ballot papers used for elections in 2012, 2014, 2017. This took place at the NEC's office.

COMFREL collected the data input on polling station code and location for voter list audit in 2020. COMFREL attended the NEC's dissemination meeting for 2 times. They were about the distribution of voter information cards and the voter registration process.

Program 3. Women's Empowerment in Politics Program

3.1. Campaigning and lobbying to demand gender equality

Education and Gender Unit finished studying existing articles of Law on Elections of Members of the National Assembly (LEMNA) and Law on Elections of Members of the Commune Council (LEMCC) to ensure gender equality as National Assembly (NA) and Commune Council candidates in accord with the Constitution in Cambodia. After finish the study, the unit shared its findings through the radio/online programme; 'Women Can Do It' and in the events or/and public forums and consultation meetings regarding gender issues.

On 22nd September 2020: COMFREL staff (the unit coordinator) attended the 2nd consultation meeting on "National Policy on Gender Equality" at the Dara Airport Hotel. The meeting was to give space for every sector, such as the private sector, development partners, NGOs, and institutions, to give national policy input. Also, the inputs and comments would be provided by line ministries. The national policy on gender equality has been formulated based on the experiences from the implementation of the programmes, and strategies using the finding of the Cambodia Gender Assessment (CGA). This reflects the discrimination and violence against women and other vulnerable people, as well as the lack of special measures that make them lack opportunity and lack of support equal participation with men in all areas. This national policy provides a long-term policy framework for and further enhances the principles of gender equality in the national policies, National Strategic Development Plan,

and sectoral strategic plans to achieve the gender equality that aligns with the sustainable development goals, aiming at "Leave no one behind", and the principles of CEDAW in the development agenda, and to contribute to inclusive and equitable human resources development for building a foundation to achieve the Cambodia vision 2050.

COMFREL staff has actively engaged in this process of draft National Policy on Gender Equality at both the first and the second draft with contributed some inputs and comments in both written and verbal as following:

- Adding the issues by resisting the conservatism and culture that is marked by the lower value it places on women than men across society as a whole on social norm area affected women.
- Adding "The implementation of the obligations of the States Parties to the CEDAW is still incomplete and rigorous including lack of special measures for supporting and providing opportunities for women's equal participation with men as barrier factors for them to exercise their rights and potentials comprehensively in economic, public affairs and politic fields."
- Adding sentence "Sexual harassment and eliminating a culture of victims-blaming" on the violence against women and girl's area: The violence against women and girls especially sexual harassment is still happened, required all ministries and authority cooperate in implementing measures to stop, respond, eliminating a culture of victims-blaming and protect the victims effectively and timely.
- More importantly, COMFREL asked for including political field by putting the political party actor in the National Policy because the political party is playing a vital role to promote women's equal participation in politics and decision-making position at all levels. As we know, this time as global "Leave no one behind" so the party has to respect and implement this policy and under the CEDAW convention as well as try do

together to achieve CSDG by 2030. Critical thinking about Special measures or affirmative action and Gender Responsive Election Laws (LEMNA & LEMCC) are very important to increase the number and empowerment of women in political positions at the high level from national to sub-national level.

- Provided new initiative: Increase women's and girl's participation in politics through capacity development on political affairs, violence against women in politics, and understanding and practice their political rights under the constitution of Cambodia and CEDAW convention. Also, enforce all

political parties to strictly implement a national policy on gender equality and gender-responsive laws.

- Provided new initiative: Establish Women's Network

Women's Network will be a driving force to put women's challenges, and women's political issues on the agenda (women's network in selecting, training, encouraging all women of ministry-institution, private sector, political party sector, especially leading position) and the women will be allowed to participate in the women's network. This women's network will eliminate the gender gap.



A Consultation Meeting on draft National Policy on Gender Equality at the Ministry of Women Affair

On 27 August 2020, COMFREL in cooperation with partner GADNet and NGO-CEDAW together made a joint-statement on “DRAFT LAW ON PUBLIC ORDER VIOLATES WOMEN’S HUMAN RIGHTS” that related to gender perspective concerning, published through the Facebook page of all partners and on COMFREL’s the radio/online show and another channel. In the statement, it expressed deep concern regarding numerous articles within the Draft Law on Public Order

(DLPO), provisions of which violated women’s human rights. Also, CSOs were disturbed by the DLPO’s potential to subject women to criminal sanctions for dress and behavior that allegedly violate arbitrary and discriminatory social norms related to women’s dress and conduct. CSOs also endorsed and echoed the call made to the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) in a Joint Civil Society Statement on 13 August 2020, to scrap the draft law. The proposed legislation undermines

women's capacity to enjoy their rights in two main ways:

- ✓ Firstly, the DPLO restricts women's right to freedom of expression and reinforces harmful gender stereotypes. Secondly, the DLPO discriminates against at-risk groups in society, in particular women. The DPLO disproportionately criminalizes domestic, social, and economic activities mainly conducted by Cambodian women.
- ✓ Our concern about Article 36 that prohibits women from wearing clothes that are "too short" or "too revealing." This provision violates women's freedom of expression, undermines personal autonomy, and exacerbates discrimination against women who already face gender stereotypes and entrenched societal norms

On 04th March 2020: COMFREL staff joined and actively involved in the International Women's Day celebration on the topic of "Building Society for Women and Build Women for the Development of Society" which took place at CKCC. The objective for this year was to raise public awareness of women's potential for sustainable development, to share women's experiences on the road to leadership and social participation with confidence, and to increase Participants' Confidence in Women Leadership for Social Development. COMFREL staff joined to promote and mainstream gender equality and also displayed some materials in that event including display video animation spots and its annual reports.

On 06th March 2020: COMFREL celebrated International Women's Day in COMFREL office with all COMFREL staff. This event's objective was to build more capacity on organizational Culture in Promoting Gender Equality" to motivate female staff who worked hard for COMFREL and build a close relationship among COMFREL staff. In the event, it was invited a key speaker (Gender Specialist) from the World Bank to share the topic, and the last session was to give a motivational souvenir to COMFREL female staff and had a snack together.

On 06th-9th March 2020: COMFREL staff participated and actively involved in the National Women Camp (NWC) for the International Women's Day celebration held by SILAKA Cambodia at Kampot province, Kdat Sannaka Resort. This event was to build a community of women activists, strengthen their capacity on feminist concepts and practice through exchange learning, and strengthen solidarity and networks between different generations of women activists.

On 6th January 2020, After COMFREL's staff (Head of Education and Gender Unit) attended a consultation meeting on draft National Policy on Gender Equality, hosted by the MoWA and verbally requested directly to the MoWA's Minister, ENG KhanthaPhavy to check again about the number of women participation in politics and decision-making level (the number of women in the introduction of the draft Gender Policy has mentioned that the number of women was increasing; however, it was not increasing in Cambodian Gender Assessment (CGA). Moreover, she requested MoWA to check the meaning of the introduction in the draft Gender Policy, it has mentioned more positive /progress about women, but it does not show more about negative and challenges of women. To make the National Gender Policy better, she suggested the Ministry should mention more about challenges of women participation in politics and public affairs then work together to solve those challenges. She also introduced to MoWA to use Gender analysis at Work or PESTEL tool to do gender analysis in Cambodia. She mentioned that to increase the number of women in politics and decision-making, MoWA must be thinking about special measures by amending election laws (gender-responsive election laws) and must attend to merit. As a result, MoWA accepted these comments, and thanks for your useful input. As the deadline on 6th January 2020, COMFREL's staff work hard with gender/women working group namely GADNet and CPWP, and then COMFREL staff sent a paper of two recommendations as input for the draft national policy on gender equality:

- 1) **Determining Affirmative Action in Electoral Laws**

“Affirmative action” is an effective solution to encourage all political parties to place female candidates on the party lists. The political parties should be encouraged to implement reforms in the legal framework by amending electoral laws. The law can be improved by adding criteria to the political party’s candidate registration procedure that requires a sandwich system from the top to bottom rank in the political party candidate list. There should also be an amendment to the Law on Elections of Members of National Assembly (LEMNA) Chapter 4, new Article 37 “the list of candidates in each constituency and the Law on Elections of Members of Commune Council (LEMCC) Chapter 7, new Article 49 “candidate list of each political party. The system needs to alternate female candidates and male candidates from the top to bottom ranking” that can ensure the achievement of the 50% women candidates from all political parties. This can be an effective affirmative action to achieve real gender equality.

2) Gender Equality Policy within Political Party

A proposal to develop gender equality policy within the political party as an immediate mechanism to increase the number of female candidates and the number of women on party internal governing boards and other decision-making structures within the parties. The candidate list of each political party has to alternate female candidates and male candidates from the top to bottom ranking.

On 14th February 2020: COMFREL staff joined in a consultation meeting on “Gender Terminology” at the Ministry of Women Affairs. The objective of the meeting was to discuss and collect input on the final draft of the gender terminology from stakeholders then use this gender terminology effectively. During the meeting, COMFREL staff commented/request to MoWA to change a word in the Khmer language such as “Affirmative/Positive Action” means in Khmer from «សកម្មភាពវិជ្ជមាន» change to «វិធានការពិសេស» ឬ «វិធានការវិជ្ជមាន» Age discrimination terminology should be added ‘young age workers (18-25)’ as well. Also, COMFREL’s staff requested to add the word ‘Politics’ on the terminology word

“Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in Politics”, asked to correct Khmer translation on CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), and adding “Gender Integration”, not only “Gender Mainstreaming” etc.

On 22nd January 2020: COMFREL staff attended a GADNet learning about “Understanding Gender Equality and Gender Machinery in Cambodia”, at the Dara Airport Hotel. This workshop aimed to gain further understanding of gender mechanisms and the process of applying gender principles to get experience sharing, gender-responsive budgeting, and practices, and get updates on gender-related laws and policies. On 23rd January 2020: It was a GADNet strategic consultative workshop (GADNet 5-year strategic plan 2020-2024). This strategy focused on the three thematic areas: 1) advocacy, 2) capacity development, and 3) gender watch. These areas were based on the current expertise of our members. More importantly, these priorities were in line with the existing government’s policies and strategies and consistent with Cambodia’s political, economic, social, technological, and legal contexts.

3.2. Political Gender Watch

Education and Gender Unit, in cooperation with Monitoring Unit and COMFREL provincial secretaries, monitored the NA session and commune councilors’ performance in the community. This monitoring was served for producing an annual political gender watch report.

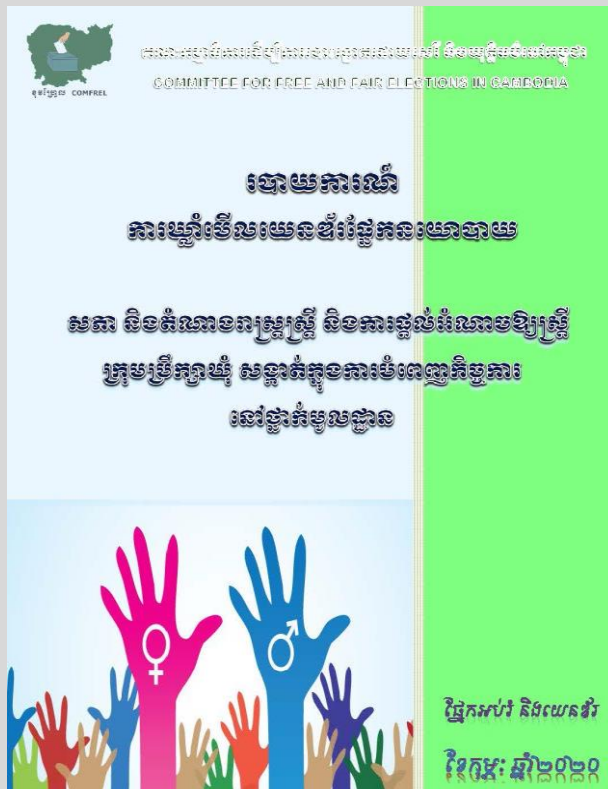
COMFREL staff produced an annual report on Political Gender Watch “Assembly and Female Members of Parliament and Empowerment of Female Commune/Sangkat Councilors in their performance at the local level” and uploaded it on its Website. According to a political gender watch report, women’s support, women’s motivation, women’s value, and cooperation with women have increased from 82.92% in 2015 (3rd mandate) to 97.22% in 2019 (4th mandate), while discrimination has decreased from 12.19% in 2015 to 2.77% in 2019 compared to the 3rd mandate of 2015. In the report, it indicated that it is better to fully participate with both male and female

commune councilors' opinion and decision making, although the number of men is much higher than women. Women expressed their potential, self-confidence and exercised the right to express their opinion in work and in meetings, which mostly focused on issues of women, children, and elderly people, including development. Key Recommendations in the report included:

1. More attention should be paid by Female MPs and male MPs related to intervene and resolve issues of the electorate.
2. Female MPs and male MPs should show the results of their field visits to the public.
3. All discussion and approval at the plenary session of the National Assembly (NA) shall be included gender-responsive in the law and national development strategic plan.
4. The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) must respect the political rights of women and ensure the exercise of this right by making it easier for women to discuss the political affair and other issues, especially for women politicians from the opposition party and other parties to support and provide opportunities for more women to

participate in politics and decision-making level under the CEDAW Convention and Cambodia's Sustainable Development Goals.

5. RGC has to review and pay more attention to women politicians of the elected government or other women politicians who are vocal and active or who are willing to be involved in politics, by encouraging, protecting, providing opportunities, and ensuring women's full participation in the political affair.
6. The Ministry of Interior, including the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD), have to ensure that all commune councilors, especially women, are given full roles, duties, and power under the law on "Commune/Sangkat Administration Management."
7. All support should be provided to elected women and women leaders, such as providing budgets in line with the issues that women are working on, material and human resources, and ways to facilitate and optimize women's work to enable women to participate with quality in a representative and leadership role.



COMFREL staff produced an annual report on Political Gender Watch "Assembly and Female Members of Parliament and Empowerment of Female Commune/Sangkat Councilors in their performance at the local level" and uploaded on its Website.

100 copies of the annual political gender watch report in Khmer and Press release in English were printed and sent to key stakeholders including media outlets and public, CSOs, Donors, MoWA, NEC, NCDD, Office of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of the Interior, target provinces of education and gender unit, Chief of Sangkat Vilvong, Chief of Sangkat Toek Laak and Chief of Sombour Meas Commune. This report was also uploaded on its website and Facebook page. There were 887 views and 336 downloads from the website, counting from 31 March 2020 until now. This report (soft copy) was also sent to its relevant stakeholders through the mailing list (680 people in the mailing list, including domestic and international journalists, independent analysts, domestic and international CSOs, and Embassy). The report was also talked about by COMFREL's Education and Gender Coordinator on the radio/online program "Women Can Do it" to share COMFREL's findings to the public and rebroadcast 3 times as well as disseminate the report on the Facebook page "women in politics".

3.3 Survey on women political activist's participation in politics

Concept Note and Terms of Reference (ToR) of the survey on Women Political Activist's Participation in Politics in Cambodia were made by the Head of Education and Gender Unit of COMFREL and It's conducting by the external survey consultant team. The political situation in Cambodia has drastically changed, particularly during the 6th legislature of the National Assembly (NA) Elections 2018 period, including shrinking democratic space for citizens, the closure of several media outlets, shrink and intimidation to human rights defenders and civil society actors and the dissolution of the main opposition party (Cambodian National Rescue Party-CNRP), women politicians and activists of the main opposition party were disempowered and obstructed from engaging in the political process and the elections, ban of women opposition politicians to participate in the 2018 elections. Also between the beginning of the year and the middle of 2019, female politicians who used their political rights and women's rights to participate in the democratic process

in Cambodia are subject to judicial prosecution, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and restrictions by authorities, even the meetings and discussions on women's politics were also interrupted, and Women are hardest hit by the current COVID-19 pandemic. Because of these challenges, COMFREL wishes to know whether women are willing to involve in politic or not in the next 2-year to 3 years in the future. Therefore, COMFREL commits to survey "women political activist's participation in politics in Cambodia". This survey is based on the belief of COMFREL that a fair and democratic society requires the social and political participation of all social groups, including women, especially women, political activists.

The survey aims:

- To uncover opinions and perspectives of women to participate in politics in the context of the 6th legislature of the National Assembly Elections 2018 including post-election situation and impact of COVID-19 pandemic and make projections of the involvement of women in the future political activism;
- To better understanding the nature, breadth, and root causes of violence against politically actives women in Cambodia;
- To provide a series of recommendations on how political parties, public institutions, and CSO can mitigate violence against politically active women;
- To develop an action plan to eradicate this practice so that more women can participate in the political process without fear.

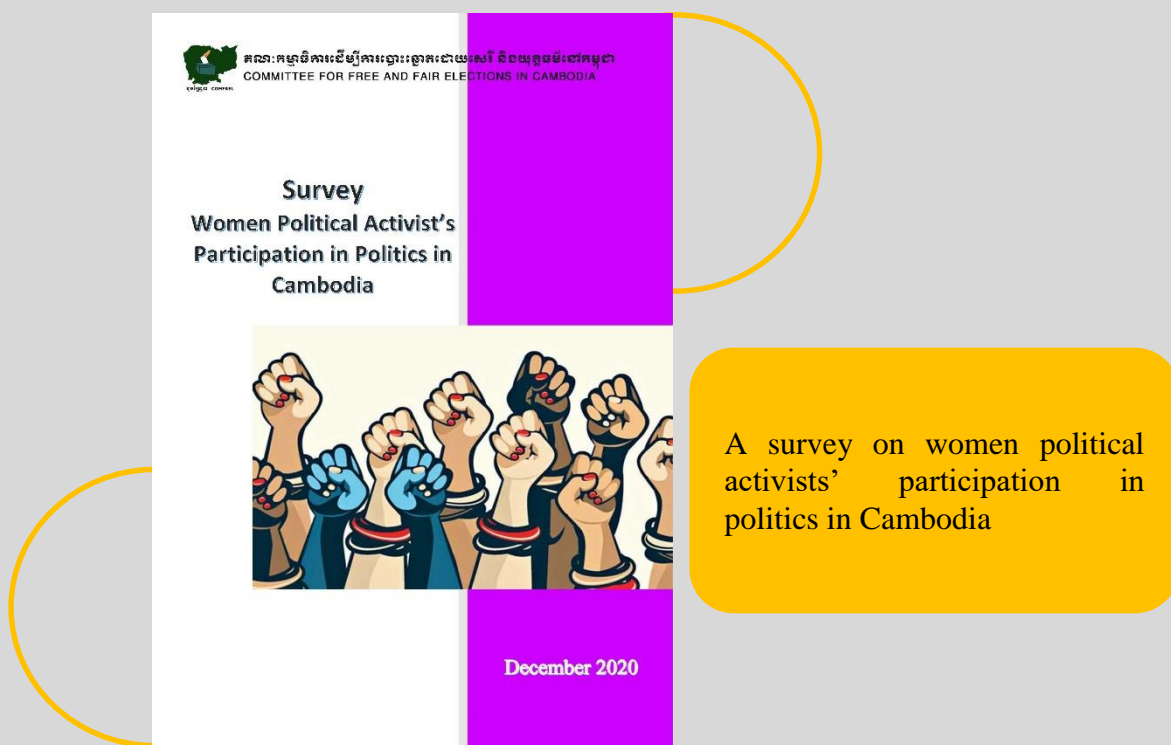
Regarding the scope of the survey, there are 100 persons from 20 political parties representing politicians who serve in both the government, the opposition, and former main opposition party (CNRP) as well as Civil Society Organization (CSO)'s women leaders volunteered to be part of this survey such as:

- ✓ Female political activists and women politicians (2 focus groups)

- ✓ Women/Men leaders at the national level (Presidents, Vice presidents and Secretary-General of the party, president of women movement around 20 persons)
- ✓ Women members
- ✓ Women MPs (former CNRP and current women MPs): 6 women MPs

- ✓ Women Commune Councilors (former CNRP, CPP, LDP, FUN, BSDP...): 20 persons
- ✓ (focus group)
- ✓ CSO's women leaders: 3 persons (SILAKA, GADC, COMFREL who is working on women in politics)

COMFREL staff finished a survey on women political activist's participation in politics completely.



3.4 Radio call-in show ‘Women Can Do It’ broadcast and disseminated online

In cooperation with the media unit, the Education and Gender unit hosted 51 sessions (36 live and 16 rebroadcasts) were hosted on FM 105 and COMFREL’s online of the 60-minute of Women Can Do It program in cooperation with ADHOC, GADC, SILAKA, CIPO, CDPO, CCHR, Khlahan, and NGO-CEDAW...etc. There were 69 speakers (82% female) and 61 callers (26% female) in the radio program.

The objectives of the discussions were to strengthen women’s confidence in their job performance, enhance gender equality, and motivate all political parties to consider placing women on their candidate lists. The online/radio shows featured feedback and interaction by allowing listeners to call-in and

make comments on Facebook live and share their ideas, experiences, and/or raise questions. These topics were:

- ✓ Gender and Covid-19
- ✓ Men's views on Rape of women and girls
- ✓ Women in Leadership
- ✓ Men's support for women as a leader
- ✓ End violence against women in politics
- ✓ Reflections on the political program of the elected party on the current social situation Heroism of sex worker
- ✓ Modern Women
- ✓ How do policies and laws affect traditional culture?"
- ✓ A collective voice to end violence against women: One Billion Voices Campaign

- ✓ One Billion Voices Campaign: The Importance of Transforming Victims into Activists
- ✓ Consequences of migrant workers
- ✓ Positive and Negative Impacts of Government Action
- ✓ Consequences of returning workers due to the Covid-19 pandemic
- ✓ Women in the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic
- ✓ Concerns of women in the situation of the Covid-19 on economic and family issues
- ✓ Impact of gender-based violence during the Covid-19 pandemic
- ✓ When people in society talk about women, why they raised the negative point of women?
- ✓ Reflections on how and the quality of leadership between women and men
- ✓ 2019 Political Gender Watch Report
- ✓ Challenges of Missing Families by Overseas Migration
- ✓ Gender and community development decisions

Three round table discussions were conducted on online/radio call-in show in cooperation with SILAKA, Khlahann, GADC, CVS, and freelance consultants and participated by students. The table discusses: (1) Men's participation to promote gender equality in leadership, (2) Feminism for gender equality, and (3) Ending violence against women in politics. The roundtable discussion. The round table discussion plays a central and advocacy role to provide knowledge or awareness of Cambodian people, decision-makers, law-makers, and political leaders to positively change their behavior and attitude in supporting and providing opportunities for women's equal participation in politics and decision-making level.

On 06th-13th February 2020: COMFREL in cooperation with GADC, conducted an OBR event through online/radio show under the topic "Collective all voice and strength to end violence against women: One Billion Rising Campaign" and "One Billion Rising Campaign: The Importance of Turning from A Victim to an Activist" at COMFREL. The purpose of the event was to end rape and sexual violence against women and girls. One Billion Rising is

the biggest mass action to end violence against women (cisgender, transgender, and those who hold fluid identities that are subject to gender-based violence) in human history. The campaign, which launched on Valentine's Day 2012, began as a call to action based on the staggering statistic that 1 in 3 women on the planet will be beaten or raped during her lifetime. With the world population at 7 billion, this adds up to more than ONE BILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS.

This unit produced 7 video animation spots to mainstream gender equality and women's participation in politics. The topics of these videos were:

1. What is important of the Gender System?
2. What authority do women have to be equal to men?
3. Don't blame the woman for her sexy!
4. Why do we need the candidacy of female politicians?
5. What support do elected women and women leaders need?
6. Propose an amendment to the law on Elections of Member of Commune Council
7. Propose an amendment to the Law on Elections of Member of National Assembly

These video animation spots were uploaded on the COMFREL Facebook page: this video received 13,132 views, 1,783 likes, 317 shares, and 11 comments.

From 26 November to 10 December 2020, three online/radio call-in shows of the 16-day campaign are conducting by COMFREL in cooperating with GADC/GADNet related to topics "Men's supporting women in leadership", "Gender and COVID-19", and "Men's perspective on sexual harassment against women and girls". The purpose of 16 days campaign raises awareness about human rights and end all forms of violence against women and girls at Cambodia and the regional level.

Program 4. Democratic Governance Reform Program

4.1. Government Watch

COMFREL produced a 2019 annual report on the first year fulfillment of the political

platform of the sixth mandate government and uploaded on its website. This report also sent to its stakeholders through the mailing list (680 people in mailing list including domestic and

international journalists, independent analysis, domestic and international CSOs, and Embassy).

COMFREL produced a 2019 annual report on the first year fulfillment of the political platform of the sixth mandate government and uploaded on its website.



4.2. Parliamentary Watch

COMFREL also produced a 2019 annual report on first-year observation on the sixth mandate parliament and its members of the parliament and released the press statement on the report and uploaded it on its website. This

report was also sent to its stakeholders through the mailing list (680 people in the mailing list, including domestic and international journalists, independent analysis, domestic and international CSOs, and Embassy).

COMFREL produced a 2019 annual report on Parliamentary Watch and uploaded on its website.



COMFREL organized 6 people forums in the provinces, including Banteay Meanchey, Prey Veng, Siem Reap, Kampong Chhnang, Kampot, and Kratie province. 180 (58% female) participants including commune councilors. The forums were held with 2

representatives of the commune council and about 30 participants of each one. There were Participants and commune representatives who had a friendly dialogue and discuss the process of development and good governance implementation in their community.

Participants learned about good governance, for example, a man actively participating in the forum at Prey Veng said following the event that he was very glad to attend the forum because he was aware more about the principles of good local governance and they would help him to monitor the development in their commune. He was also committed to sharing what he had learned from the forum with other people.

4.3 Democracy Watch

COMFREL produced a 2019 annual report on Democracy, Elections, and Reform in Cambodia and uploaded it on its website. This report was also sent to its stakeholders through the mailing list (680 people in the mailing list, including domestic and international journalists, independent analysis, domestic and international CSOs, and Embassy).



2019 DEMOCRACY ELECTIONS AND REFORM IN CAMBODIA

COMFREL produced a 2018 annual report on Democracy, Elections and Reform in Cambodia. This report was uploaded on COMFREL Website.



APRIL 2020

IV. Staff Capacity and Organizational Development

On 02nd October 2020, COMFREL staff is studying ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME Gender Statistic online. This course is supported and organized by SIDA, and it will take almost 14 months to complete. The overall objective of the programme is to contribute to increased gender equality between women and men using statistics as a tool. The main objectives of the programme are to increase the capacity of participating organizations to:

- Compile, analyze, disseminate and communicate statistics on women and men in accordance with user needs;
- Implement gender statistics in the organization's work for gender equality;
- Establish and continuously develop a network in gender statistics between producers and users of statistics.

The specific objectives for the programme are that the participants:

- Develop and launch a change project to increase gender equality;
- Increase their capacity to produce gender statistics from existing statistics;
- Increase their capacity to use existing data to analyze gender equality issues;
- Transfer knowledge to colleagues and management within the organization;
- Establish an active network for gender statistics between participating organizations and other stakeholders.

On 28th October 2020, COMFREL staff was trained by Diakonia about the budget plan for the program. This session was to develop the

capacity of the management team and project staff learned more about the budget plan and how to read this data. This was attended by 9 people, including the management team, officers, and one report officer.

On 9th-13th November 2020, COMFREL staff attended a 5-day training session on “Mobilizing Support” at the Tonle Bassac I. The objective of the session was to increase the knowledge and skills for advocacy strategies/tactic and effective soft skill in their organization at both local and national levels, able to identify and analyze the stakeholders for solving the community issues and the organizations, increase skills development of facilitation, communication and negotiation, improve knowledge and skills for developing tools (i.e action-research) for collecting evidence and legal framework) and prepare the action plan for addressing concerns and challenges in the organizations. At the session, the COMFREL staff learned about mobilizing support.

V. Summary of Financial Statement

COMMITTEE FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN CAMBODIA												
Profit & Loss by Class												
January through December 2020												
										Accrual Basis		
Budget items		Expenditure by donors							TOTAL	Approved budget	Variance	
		NPA	UK Embassy	Netherland Embassy	Diakonia	FOSI	CRF	Other	TOTAL		Amount	%
Income												
	GRANT INCOME	69,461	22,926	45,202	160,327	50,000	0	0	347,916	338,808	(3,469)	-1%
	INTEREST INCOME	12	0	61	51	0	22	18	164		103	
	OTHER INCOMES	0	0	0	0	0	8,375	10,901	19,276		19,276	
	Total Income	69,472	22,926	45,263	160,378	50,000	8,397	10,919	367,356	338,808	15,910	5%
Expense												
	Core Cost	19,097	8,538	6,257	49,451	20,801	0	15	104,159	106,715	2,556	2%
	Education for Democracy	14,413	4,827	35,758	22,436	3,422	0	0	80,856	96,028	15,171	16%
	Strengthening Genuine Democrati	18,903	405	0	30,757	6,264	0	0	56,328	77,802	21,474	28%
	Women Empowerment in Politics	10,166	791	720	23,979	3,970	0	0	39,626	42,903	3,278	8%
	Democratic Governance Reform	5,110	0	0	21,866	12,658	0	0	39,634	41,951	2,316	6%
	Staff Capacity Development	0	0	0	138	0	0	0	138	500	362	72%
	Staff/Management/BOD Meeting	0	0	0	575	1,000	0	0	1,575	1,500	(75)	-5%
	Equipment/Furniture	0	0	1,745	3,182	799	0	0	5,726	5,770	44	1%
	Evaluation/Quality Assurance	2,272	0	0	4,862	0	0	0	7,134	8,500	1,366	16%
	Contingency & Risk Mitigation	0	0	0	0	240	0	3	243	1,000	757	76%
	Total Expense	69,961	14,562	44,480	157,245	49,154	0	18	335,420	382,669	47,250	12%
	Fund Balance at beginning of the year	568	(4,427)			44,094		10,553	50,789			
	Excess of income over expenditures	80	3,938	783	3,133	44,940	8,397	21,454	82,726			