



Press Release

31 May 2013

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Embassy of Sweden, Advocacy and Policy Institute (API), Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM), and United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) organized a national conference on Access to Information from 30-31 May 2013. The aim of the conference was to engender dialogue among government, civil society, and development partners about the issues and challenges involved in passing an international-standard Access to Information law in Cambodia, and catalyze efforts in moving forward the legislation.

Over 200 people from provincial government officials, student groups, NGO members, and media professionals participated in the conference and formulated a recommendation paper to present to the Royal Government of Cambodia in the presence of H.E. Ms. Men Sam An, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Assembly, Senate Relations and Inspections.

On 31 May, a dynamic discussion took place about the roles and responsibilities of the government, civil society, private sector and development partners in promoting Access to Information in Cambodia. The following are the recommendations formulated by the government, civil society and media at the conference:

1. The government should adopt an Access to Information (A2I) law, according to the Cambodian constitution. The drafting process should be participatory and inclusive, taking into account diverse perspectives and expertise from all stakeholders.
2. Better information disclosure practices must be practiced to increase public information flow.
3. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) should work with the government to support A2I. A2I disclosure at the sub-national level should include all sectoral issues including public services, economic land concessions, and national budget.
4. Private sector and development partners should continue to support efforts to adopt an A2I law and provide technical support.
5. The A2I law should include protection for Cambodian journalists and media professionals. The A2I Law should be implemented with the Press Law to increase protection for journalists.
6. Once the law is passed, it should be enforced by an independent institution and the media must act as a watchdog, monitor the implementation of the law.
7. The government should provide and disseminate public information to the people at the sub-national level. The government must support sub-national and local government institutions to implement the A2I law once it is in place.

UNESCO, CCIM and API aim to promote participatory lawmaking through informed debate in the establishment of the right to information, and encourage the Royal Government of Cambodia to ensure that Cambodian citizens can exercise their right to know. H.E. Ms. Men Sam An, Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia, promised to share with the Prime Minister the recommendations which was formulated during the conference.

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