

Factsheet Gender-Responsive Budget

Summary of previous cycles

During previous UPR cycles, member states have made numerous recommendations to combat discrimination against women and girls, and Cambodia accepted these recommendations. However, none specifically addressed integrating gender into financing and the national budget. The closest recommendations were 110.173 “Continue ongoing mechanisms for gender parity and women’s empowerment” in the 3rd cycle made by India and the recommendation by Cuba in the 1st cycle to “Continue the implementation of the necessary affirmative measures to achieve gender parity.”

National Context

Cambodia has made repeated general commitments to gender equality, including ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and referencing it in the Constitution, as well as adopting the SDG goals, including Goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030. Yet, few practical steps have been taken in the law to dispel the negative gender stereotypes that persist throughout Cambodian society. While Cambodia does have a Ministry devoted to Women’s Affairs, that institution has the second lowest allocation of funds from the national budget of any ministry. The UN CEDAW Committee in November 2019 noted that mechanisms for gender parity are largely ineffective in part because the government does not provide sufficient direct funding to it. The Cambodian delegation to the CEDAW review in 2019 reported that 3 percent of the national budget had been allocated toward gender-responsive programming. The Committee recommended that Cambodia ensure that the Cambodian National Council for Women has sufficient financial and technical resources and that Cambodia “Allocate sufficient resources and funding from the national budget for the implementation of action plans and policies for gender equality, including the fifth national strategic plan for gender equality and the empowerment of women (2019–2023).”¹

Key Challenges

Cambodia has been overly reliant on international aid funding before it will commit to any action relevant to promoting gender equality. Such aid decreases each year, while the size of Cambodia’s national budget has grown. The growth of the national budget can be attributed both to the economic successes of Cambodia and to larger percentages of the population using banks, documenting spending, and paying taxes, even from populations who were long part of the informal economy. Yet, the allocation of funds to government ministries is not subject to gender impact reviews, and local governments seeking funds are ill-equipped to request funds that sufficiently address programs that affect women. For example, local governments often have funds to build infrastructure, but not to provide emergency services to survivors of gender-based violence. In order to address this problem, it is important to integrate gender-responsive budget fully into all line ministries and local governments, rather than relying on the (insufficient) allocation of funds to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs to address all gender mainstreaming and programs within the country.

¹ Paragraphs 14-15 of the Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Cambodia, 12 November 2019. CEDAW/C/KHM/CO/6

Recommendations

- > Establish a budget line for a gender-responsive budget for every line ministry/agency to be funded from the Royal Government of Cambodia's national budget by 2025 and allocate 5 percent of the total national budget to these budget lines in addition to continued funding for the Ministry of Women's Affairs.
- > Enact all necessary measures, including regulations and policies, by the next review session requiring local commune governments to allocate 20 percent of their annual development budgets to support the administration and activities of the Commune Committees for Women and Children and support services, including housing and income, to those fleeing domestic violence.

Questions and inquiries may be made to:

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Recommendations made by:

