

Joint Statement of Civil Society Organizations

on

the Draft Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organization (LANGO)

April 07, 2015: We, 80 civil society organizations (CSOs), representatives from umbrella organizations, solidarity house, youth networks, gender and women's networks, human rights and development organizations in Cambodia, discussed the call of the Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia recently that the draft Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (LANGO) will be sent to the Council of Ministers in May 2015, and will be allegedly submitted to the National Assembly for promulgation.

Civil Society Organizations have been working in partnership with the government for over thirty years in rehabilitation, reconciliation, peace building, social economic development, and many others. For instance, just only in 2012, 1,130 NGO/CSOs contributed between US\$600-700 million¹ to the programs supporting Cambodian development.

In 2010, CSOs highly appreciated the opportunity to provide comments and input on the draft law, which the Prime Minister publicly postponed passing in December 2011. We recently learned that the Prime Minister has restated the need to have this legislation passed urgently, and so far without further consultation.

We are concerned about the lack of consultation in the last two years and strongly request the Royal Government of Cambodia to:

- *Restart a transparent consultation legislative process by making the official draft on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (LANGO) available to the public and remove speculation and confusion on the objectives and implications of this new law.*
- *Conduct broad based, meaningful and transparent dialogue with different stakeholders, resuming the past practice of considering concerns, views and perceptions of civil society and other Cambodian citizens on draft legislation.*

We believe this is an opportunity to promote an inclusive and accountable partnership between government and civil society organizations, and other concerned stakeholders. We request the commitment of government towards a culture of dialogue, the protection of human rights, democracy, and socio-economic and child development in Cambodia. This is in line with the UN Human Rights Committee's Concluding Observations on the second Periodic Report of Cambodia under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which also called for transparency in the legislative process in Cambodia, and called on Cambodia to make public all draft legislation in order to facilitate public consultation, and dialogue by citizens with their representatives.

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¹ Report on **CSO Contributions to the Development of Cambodia 2012** by Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (published May 2013)