

Joint Statement of the Cambodia Indigenous Peoples Alliance
On occasion
28th International Day of Indigenous Peoples and 18th in Cambodia
Under the theme " The Role of Indigenous Women in the Preservation and
Transmission of Traditional Knowledge"

We are indigenous peoples of the land of the Kingdom of Cambodia, whose ethnic, sociocultural, and economic unity is expressed via customs, traditions, identities, and collective practices. The Government of Cambodia has made significant efforts and shown considerable concern for indigenous peoples in order to develop a national framework and sign and ratify international instruments for the applicability of indigenous peoples in Cambodia, particularly the 1993 Constitution of Cambodia, which is the supreme law of the nation, Articles 31, 45, and 47. Some laws outline the status and the rights of indigenous peoples. These laws include the Forestry Law of 2002, the Law on Protected Areas of 2008, and the Land Law of 2001. In accordance with the 2009 national policy on the development of indigenous peoples, the government has 11 ministries engaged in and working on the development and conservation of indigenous peoples through:

- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, September 3, 1981.
- ILO Convention No. 111 on "Discrimination in Employment and Occupation" in 1999 indicates the traditional tenure of land and natural resources of indigenous peoples.
- International Labor Convention (ILO) No. 169 On Indigenous Peoples And tribes discussed in Cambodia for many years since 1996.

Women's potential and challenges

In the context of indigenous societies, women are crucial to the development efforts in the family, community, and society in the setting of indigenous societies. Indigenous communities' collective cultural identity, land, and natural resources, as well as society at large, are best led, managed, and preserved by women. Indigenous women's knowledge is not only being preserved but also being transmitted every second through practical activities associated with everyday roles in the family, community, and wider society. Indigenous women are pioneers in traditional farming, gathering firewood, finding and managing water sources, and gathering food for the family from the forest, including fruits, vegetables, and medicinal plants. Indigenous women also provide for the family's health, security, and economy as well as knowledge about how to care for all types of crops, use farming techniques, and sustainably harvest non-timber forest products.

Indigenous women have a variety of important roles in their families, communities, and society, including income-generating, caregivers, leaders, human rights advocates, and many more. Despite this, they frequently face discrimination on the basis of their gender, class, color, and socioeconomic status. Long-standing violations of the rights to self-determination, self-governance, and management of natural resources and ancestral lands exist. Indigenous women are leaders in defending their lands, cultures, and communities, serving as leaders at the local, regional, and national levels. Indigenous women are frequently reflected in a variety of decisions, expressions, and frequent acts that are adversely affecting them more and more, including victimization, discrimination, and violence. Over time, indigenous women's knowledge of and commitment to protecting their cultural identities, traditions, beliefs, communities, collective lands, and natural resources have presented many difficulties. Women who take the lead to protect the identity of the land and natural resources, for instance, are vulnerable to social threats that discriminate against them in decision-making and the application of unfair laws, which can result in lawsuits, imprisonment, family separation, living in poverty, insecurity, and fear, the decline and loss of NTFP jobs, and not only that, but it has also put the identity of women at risk because their basic resources are destroyed, and women's rights are violated. Due to the inflow of outsiders into indigenous communities, women are also experiencing a loss of identity, language, cultural heritage, and security. As a result, indigenous women and girls have been sexually raped and killed, and drug usage is on the rise. There are still very few safe villages and communes covered by the national policy.

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We are a Cambodia Indigenous Peoples Alliance consisting of representatives of Indigenous Community Networks: Sa'Och, Chong, Suy, Por, Kui, Brao, Kachak, Lun, Kreung, Tampaun, Kavet, Jarai, Stieng, Thmoun, Bunong, and Krol, and Cambodia Indigenous Women Association, Cambodia Indigenous Youth Association, and Indigenous Peoples Organizations.

We encourage indigenous women all across the nation to keep up the good work of strengthening the capacity of self-help networks and their voices in all trends and mechanisms to guarantee that they are included in all decisions pertaining to the leadership of the conservation, transmission of traditional knowledge, and sustainable development of indigenous peoples in compliance with the right to self-determination enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

At the same time, we urge national and international development agencies to pay attention to work and offer women real support in the development and conservation of local communities.

In particular, we urge the Royal Government to pay attention to the conservation and development of indigenous peoples in a sustainable manner in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. And urge the Royal Government to promote the political will to put in place laws to recognize and guarantee the knowledge of the rights of indigenous women and the collective rights of indigenous communities, and moreover, the Royal Government shall put into effect the recognized law with respect to the rights and traditional culture of indigenous peoples, as enshrined in national and international instruments to ensure that indigenous women and indigenous communities have the right to make informed decisions, collective land ownership according to the demands or needs of indigenous peoples. We, the Indigenous Peoples, expect that there will be no discriminatory content and law enforcement practices that will deprive indigenous people of their land, natural resources, culture, society, and economy.

Additionally, the Royal Government and the courts are urged to stop any acts of arbitrary detention, framing, intimidation, restrictions, and violence against indigenous peoples by state authorities at all levels. We demand a drug-free, safe society that is especially free from rape and murder of indigenous women and girls. In cases of rape and murder of indigenous girls and women, the Royal Government shall support and intensify the investigation and arrest of the perpetrators to be punished in accordance with the law that is in effect in the most efficient and just manner.

At the same time, we implore the Royal Government to enhance and develop indigenous communities' markets in order to help lower bank debt and improve the economic stability of indigenous communities.

We also compel the Ministry of Justice and Judges to strengthen law enforcement and recognize the legal rights that respect the rights of indigenous peoples in order to guarantee that we, as the victims, receive a fair trial.