



DEMOCRACY DIALOGUE SERIES

on

RETHINKING THE ROLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

Speakers

- 1) SOEUNG Saroeun, Executive Director of the NGO Forum
- 2) LIM Solinn, Founder & CEO of Saddhā
- 3) PA Chanroeun, President of the Cambodian Institute for Democracy

Date: 26 August 2023

Time: 9:00-10:30 a.m

Questions for Discussion

- 1) What is the current situation of civil society organizations in Cambodia?
- 2) What are the key roles of civil society organizations in democratic development?
- 3) What are the challenges and opportunities for the participation of civil society organizations in democratic development in Cambodia?
- 4) How to promote the participation of civil society organizations in democratic development?

Summary

The discussion delves into the present state of civil society organisations in Cambodia and the obstacles they encounter while striving to contribute to the progress of democracy. During the dialogue, the participants shed light on the growing limitations and regulations enforced by the Cambodian government on civil society organisations. These restrictions have been identified as obstacles that impede the organisations' capacity to effectively carry out their work. During the event, the speakers highlighted the significance of establishing a conducive atmosphere that enables civil society organisations to function with freedom and autonomy. They emphasised that these organisations play a vital role in advocating for human rights, promoting effective governance, and encouraging citizen engagement in democratic processes. The event concluded with a comprehensive discussion on the need for increased collaboration among civil society organisations, governments, and international stakeholders. The participants emphasised the importance of addressing the existing challenges and enhancing democratic development in Cambodia.

During the event, the participants emphasised the significant contributions made by civil society organisations in Cambodia towards the advancement of social justice, economic development, and environmental sustainability. During the event, it was emphasised that the aforementioned organisations played a crucial role in tackling social inequalities, delivering vital services to marginalised communities, and promoting awareness regarding significant matters like gender equality and climate change. During the event, the participants expressed their recognition of the importance of providing ongoing support and safeguarding civil society organisations. They emphasised the significance of ensuring the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of these organisations in their efforts to bring about positive change in the country. During the event, the speakers placed significant emphasis on the significance of creating an inclusive and participatory atmosphere that encourages the recognition and appreciation of diverse voices and perspectives.

During the event, the participants discussed the challenges and opportunities faced by civil society organisations in Cambodia regarding their involvement in democratic development. They emphasised the importance of having a legal and regulatory framework that supports freedom of association and expression, which would create a more conducive environment for their participation. During the event, the participants emphasised the importance of enhancing partnerships between civil society organisations, the government, and international actors. The focus was on strengthening collaboration and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and resources. During the event, it was observed that the participants acknowledged the significant role that technology and social media platforms can play in amplifying the voices of civil society and involving a broader audience in the democratic process. The discussion centred around the significant contribution of civil society organisations in promoting democratic progress in Cambodia. It emphasised the necessity of continuous support and involvement to tackle the obstacles they encounter. One key challenge highlighted was the imperative for the government to enhance transparency and accountability.

The event focused on exploring strategies to promote civil society organisations in Cambodia. One of the key recommendations put forward was the need to strengthen partnerships between the government and civil society. This would involve fostering a more collaborative and cooperative relationship, where both parties work together towards common goals. Another important aspect discussed was the necessity to enhance access to funding and resources for civil society organisations. Participants emphasised the importance of creating mechanisms that facilitate the flow of financial support and necessary resources to these organisations. This would enable them to effectively carry out their work and contribute to the development of the country. Furthermore, the event highlighted the significance of promoting greater collaboration and information sharing among civil society organisations. Participants recognised that by sharing knowledge, experiences, and best practices, these organisations can learn from one another and collectively address common challenges. This would lead to a more cohesive and impactful civil society sector in Cambodia. In conclusion, the event shed light on several ways forward to promote civil society organisations in Cambodia. Strengthening partnerships between the government and civil society, enhancing access to funding and resources, and promoting greater collaboration and information sharing were identified as key strategies to support the growth and effectiveness of these organisations. During the event, it was highlighted that the implementation of capacity-building programmes and trainings can greatly contribute to empowering civil society

actors. These initiatives aim to equip individuals with the essential skills and knowledge required to effectively advocate for their causes. In the pursuit of a more inclusive and participatory democracy, Cambodia aims to overcome various challenges and extend support to civil society organisations. This approach seeks to prioritise the voices and perspectives of its citizens, ensuring that they are not only heard but also valued.