



## DEMOCRACY DIALOGUE SERIES

on

### THE ROLES OF POLITICIANS IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

#### Speakers

- 1) TAK Meng Heang, Member of State Parliament in Victoria, Australia
- 2) MEAS Nee, Social Development Researcher
- 3) BUN Vanna, Social Researcher

#### Moderator

Chanroeun Pa, President of CID

**Date:** 15 July 2023

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

#### Questions for Discussion

- 1) What does politics really mean?
- 2) How can someone become a politician?
- 3) What should be the roles of politicians in a democratic society?
- 4) What is your observation of the current practices of politicians in Cambodia today?

#### Summary

The dialogue clarified the many aspects of politics and their ramifications. It was determined that serving the public interest and making judgements that advance society are just as important to politics as having authority and power. The talk stressed that anyone may become a politician if they have a great desire to make positive changes in the world and a strong love for serving the public good. Representative of the people's interests, advancement of social welfare, stimulation of economic progress, and adherence to the values of fairness and equality were noted as the primary responsibilities of politicians in a democratic society. Nonetheless, a cursory examination of contemporary Cambodian political practices reveals a mixed bag, with some politicians putting their own interests ahead of the public good, which erodes popular confidence and disenchantment. Voter turnout has decreased and there is a rising apathy towards politics because of this. Politicians must priorities the demands of the populace and strive to improve society if they hope to rebuild trust in the democratic system and guarantee a brighter future. Politicians should be guided by the values of integrity, accountability, and transparency as they work to build a just and fair society for all. Then and only then will politicians be able to win back the public's trust and carry out their duties in a democratic society.

The paths that people can take to become politicians were also discussed. Political party membership, local office campaigns, and grassroots involvement are a few recommended routes for people who want to work in politics. Aspiring politicians should be well-versed in the problems facing their communities and possess the ability to successfully communicate their thoughts and goals. Furthermore, to obtain support and lay a solid basis for their political career, people should place a high priority on networking and forming ties with other like-minded people. People may help rebuild trust in the political system and ultimately create a brighter future for everybody by actively participating in the political process and striving for good change. Aspiring politicians should also be ready to deal with obstacles and criticism from supporters and rivals. They must possess the fortitude and tenacity to overcome these setbacks and maintain their focus on their objectives. Politicians must also keep up to date on current affairs and policy to adjust to the ever-changing requirements of their constituents. Politicians can make sure they are making informed judgements that benefit the people who elected them to office by remaining involved and never stopping learning.

The discussion focused on the fundamental duties that elected officials have in a democracy. In addition to becoming involved in their communities, politicians need to actively listen to the worries and viewpoints of the people who elect them. They have an obligation to speak for the various viewpoints and concerns of the clients they assist. Politicians should also place a high priority on accountability and transparency to ensure that the people they represent are informed and participating in the decision-making process. To increase trust and fortify democracy in their communities, politicians should encourage candid communication and teamwork.

The conversation also emphasized how politicians in Cambodia today frequently fail to uphold these objectives in their actions. Many politicians in Cambodia are accused of putting their own or their political party's interests ahead of the worries and opinions of their voters. The legitimacy of the government is questioned, and confidence in the democratic process is weakened by this lack of accountability and transparency. Most participants concur that politicians must actively engage with their citizens and put their needs and concerns ahead of their own political goals to strengthen democracy in Cambodia.