

24th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration
Written statement by Ministry of Civil Service of the Kingdom of Cambodia

Agenda item number 8: Strategies for changing mindsets in the public sector, retaining talent and attracting younger workers”

With the full peace and stability across the country, Cambodia has been trying its best to rehabilitate and develop its society and economy with the achievement of 7 percent gross domestic product growth rate within the last three decades. Public administration has always been considered by the Royal Government of Cambodia as one of the key actors to realize its social and economic development blueprints, particularly the Pentagonal Strategy 2024-2028.

With the new leadership of Samdach Moha Bovor Tepadei Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the government put in place three key measures to build modern public service and improve quality of public service delivery. These measures, so far, have been seen as changing the mindsets in the public sector, retaining talent and attracting young leaders. The three key measure include:

1. Implementation of new recruitment procedure which upheld the principles of merit, transparent, justice, inclusiveness and efficient,
2. Strengthening capacity and performance of public institution in order to improve working quality, discipline, ethic, professionalism, efficiency and effectiveness,
3. Introducing in public administration a new incentive system based on principles of consistency, equity, efficiency and sustainability.

In implementing the first key measure, Ministry of Civil Service upheld the slogan guided by the Prime Minister, **“Pass with pride, fail is accepted!”** and its Minister’s slogan **“no need to have connections, no need to know the higher-ups and no more cases of intervening in the civil service examination”**. Four clusters of activities are implemented including:

- Develop and implement civil servant strategic recruitment plan 2024-2028,
- Reform the civil servant recruitment examination procedure,
- Reform recruitment and employment of contracting staff and expert,
- Develop information technology platform for supporting the recruitment of civil servants.

The second key principle is realized through the implementation of the following cluster of activities:

- Develop and implement strategic plan to improve public institution and civil servant service delivery quality,
- Conducting functional and structural review across ministries and institutions,
- Strengthening operational efficiency of public institution,
- Develop civil servant capacity and leadership.

Two clusters of activities are set to achieve the third key measure including:

- Develop and implement strategic plan on building performance based incentive system in public administration 2024-2028;
- Develop and implement programs to incentivize civil servant performance.

Within in one and a half year of implementation, the key three measures provide significant results in changing the mindsets in the public sector, retaining talent and attracting young leaders as follow:

- Public trust on the civil servant recruitment examination is largely gained through the implementation of new standard operating procedure with clear and transparent process, and the participation of medias, volunteers, and Anti-Corruption Unit. Young leaders and potential youth has been attracted to entry into public administration. Approximately 12 thousand applicants

from the general public, particularly private sector employees and students apply for 16 different civil servant recruitment examinations carried out by the Ministry of Civil Service in 2024 for the vacant of 4 447. This application number is largely increased compared to the recruitment examination before the reform. Based on the televised interviews with the applicants and applicants' parents, and various comments from the public in the social media page of the Ministry of Civil Service, the public, particularly the applicants, it shows that the public satisfy with new recruitment examination system, and acknowledge the realization of the above mention slogan ““Pass with pride, fail is accepted!””.

- Mindset in public sector is changing from “willing to stay in the comfort zone” to “willing and committing to adopt the change and strive for the better”. Through the government campaign to conduct the functional and structural review in across the public administration, ministry and institutions are now conducting analysis and review the function, structure and operation with the guidance to delete the duplication of function between institutions of the government, clarify the authority of all public institution, slim the organizational structure, and improve the quality and efficiency of the public service delivery.
- Talents and young leader are attracted and retain through the implementation as following:
 - **Provide job guarantee:** Job are secured for Cambodian civil servants once they become permanent staff.
 - **Establishment of a favorable pay scheme:** Minimum wage of newly recruited civil servants is now comparable to the private sector. In addition, the government has upheld policy to increase the salary annually for all civil servant with the principles of consistency, equity, productivity and affordability of national budget.
 - **Recognition and valuation:** Civil Servant career received a good public recognition in Cambodian society. It has been seen that becoming a civil servant is an opportunity to directly contribute to the society development. In addition, the government also has regulation to award civil servant with certificate of recognition as well as implementing the monetary incentive scheme to retain and attract talent and young leader through allowing ministries and institutions to use a proportion of the budget revenue collecting in their service to support the staff incentive program. Recently, the government, through the implement of the third key measures implement the evaluation and recognition of model public institutions in health and education sectors, and on the way to implement the sub-decree on the implementation of performance based incentive system in public administration. These two new mechanisms aim to create movement to change the mindset in the public administration as well as attracting talent to stay in the public sector.
 - **Favorable qualifications and career advancement:** Cambodian Civil servants are provided opportunities to develop their capacity through the programs organized by their organization, government programs, and scholarship program provided by the development and regional partners. This capacity development is implemented along with the career advancement policy stipulated in accordance with the law on the common statute of civil servant of the Kingdom of Cambodia.
 - **Contribution to the society's development:** Through the implementation of Human Resource Policy in Public Sector as well as the second key measure indicated above, civil servant are being obligated to serve the citizen within their positions. This gives opportunity for both younger leader, and talents to exercise knowledge to contribute to the country development directly. Ministry of Civil Service has introduced the performance management system as well as providing training through the programs at the Royal School of Administration to build the capacity of manager to ensure that right civil servants are put in the right place and the right time so that they can perform, stay and contribute to realize government policy serve the nation with all their talents.