

22nd session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Draft of Intervention
By Mr. Huot Synead
Secretary of State
Ministry of Civil Service, Cambodia

Application of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (Item 6)

Recovering from civil wars and genocide, Cambodia has made significant achievements in state rehabilitation and socio-economic development during the last forty years. With the success of the United Nations-sponsored election in 1993, the Country has rebuilt its public administration system by establishing a number of necessary laws and regulations related to public administration and civil service management in order to put in place the public institutions and mechanism at both national and subnational levels. In the meantime, the Country strongly promoted an effective governance in the public sector aimed at maintaining peace, strengthening political stability, promoting economic development and poverty alleviation.

To realize these objectives, the democratically established government adopted a number of interrelated and conclusive reform programs to enhance good governance in the government's public administration and machinery. The reform programs included the public administration reform program, public financial reform program, legal and judicial reform program, and anti-corruption program. In this connection, the good governance has since 1998 become a core component of the Royal Government of Cambodia's reform programs, policies and strategies, as defined in the Governance Action Plans, Triangle and Rectangular Strategies of the Government for its respective mandates since 1993 that *"Good governance is the most pre-condition to economic development with sustainability, equity and social justice. Good governance requires wide participation, enhanced sharing of information, accountability, transparency, equality, inclusiveness, and the rule of law. Good governance requires that the corruption be reduced to the minimum, the views of the minorities, and voices of the vulnerable in society be fully heard and considered in decision-making process."* As result, the public sector reform has strengthened effectiveness of the public institutions, promoted democracy and civic participation, and contributed significantly to socio-economic development and dramatic poverty reduction in the last thirty years. Furthermore, the reform has played a critical role in achieving Cambodian Millennium Development Goals.

With strong record of achievements on the Millennium Development Goals, Cambodia in 2015 supported the agenda set out by the Sustainable Development Goals 2016-2030 by endorsing the set 17 goals, and added its own nationalized goal as the 18th goal: the clearance of landmines and unexpected ordinance. Based on the first Voluntary National Review prepared by the Government of Cambodia in 2018, the report finds that Cambodia is on the right track to reach its Sustainable Development Goal targets.

As a member state of the United Nations, the Southeast Asian country has committed to implement the principles of effective governance for sustainable development for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. As stipulated in the Constitution in 1993 and related laws

and regulations, Cambodia is intended to promote the principle of public participation in the public service delivery, development process, policy formulation and decision-making process. Different mechanisms and institutional arrangement are developed to create an enabling environment for public participation.

At the national level, the Government adopted a “whole of government approach” in order to draw all line ministries and agencies and local administrations; and a “whole of society approach” to open to the civil society, private sector, and citizens including minority people to participate actively in the government’s activities such as the public service provision, consultation on critical development policy planning and law on public budget preparation, and so on.

Recognizing the important role of the youth in shaping the society, the Government has created a favorable environment for the youth to take part in the social, political, and economic activities aimed at enhancing civic engagement with the government. In this participatory process, the young population are given more opportunities to access to the public information and their voices are heard and their problems are addressed timely.

At the subnational level, the Government decided to put in place the decentralization and deconcentration reform program in 1998 aimed at promoting local democracy, introducing the principle of effective governance and moving the public entities closer to the people. The subnational administration reform initiative paved the way for direct elections for all the three echelons of the local administration: the province, district and commune. Through this mechanism, the local citizens are given the political right to choose their own representatives at their discretion. The local people moreover are given more opportunities to take part in the process of policy implementation, decision-making and access to the development agenda at the locality. Since 2009 the Government has taken a further step by establishing the Ombudsman Office in line with the One Window Service Office that was created in 2003 at the subnational administration. The Ombudsman Office has actively performed a critical role to receive and resolve all the complaints from the public, coordinate to send all the conflicts to the relevant authorities for final resolution in particular the conflicts related to public service delivery and administrative management, etc. The mechanism acts as the alternation dispute resolution and guarantees that the complaints are handled effectively at the locality.