

# PONLOK CHOMNES PROVINCIAL POLICY FORUM BOOKLET 2026







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The Asia Foundation would like to thank its innovation partners and GEDSI Consortium for their input and collaboration in designing the panel discussion; the guest speakers and moderators for their insights during the discussion; and the Australian Government for its funding support.

## **ABOUT PONLOK CHOMNES**

Building on the achievements of Ponlok Chomnes I (2019-2023) which aimed to strengthen the capacity of Cambodian knowledge sector institutions for quality research, The Asia Foundation is currently implementing the Ponlok Chomnes II: Data and Dialogue for Development in Cambodia Program (2023-2027). Supported by the Australian Government, this program's goal is to contribute to public policy decisions. Based on evidence and informed by inclusive dialogue, are operationalised, and become the norm in Cambodia.

## **ABOUT THE ASIA FOUNDATION**

The Asia Foundation is an international non-profit organisation working to solve the toughest social and economic challenges in Asia and the Pacific. Informed by more than 70 years of experience and deep local knowledge, The Foundation works with partners across more than 20 countries to improve lives and expand opportunities.

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## DISCLAIMER

Ponlok Chomnes Provincial Policy Forum 2026 **“Connecting Communities, Evidence, and Policy: Strengthening Subnational Decisions for Cambodia’s Future”** is supported by the Australian government through The Asia Foundation’s Ponlok Chomnes II: Data and Dialogue for Development in Cambodia Program. The views expressed in this booklet are the authors alone and are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government or The Asia Foundation.



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Dr. Lok Chhanna  
Head of the Institute  
of Health Economics  
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# INTRODUCTION

Across Cambodia, local communities, researchers, and development practitioners have been generating a growing body of knowledge that reflects the lived realities, aspirations, and challenges of citizens. From community-driven development projects to participatory research on livelihoods, environment, and social inclusion, these local insights represent invaluable evidence base for shaping policies that are relevant and responsive to people's needs.

However, despite increasing research efforts and donor-supported initiatives in the knowledge sector, policy dialogue and decision-making processes often remain concentrated at the national level. Provincial and community-level perspectives, especially those from marginalised groups such as women, youth, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities, are frequently underrepresented in policy discussions. This gap limits the ability of policies to address the specific social, economic, and environmental contexts of Cambodia's diverse provinces.

The Ponlok Chomnes II (PCII): Data and Dialogue for Development in Cambodia Program (2023-2027), funded by the Australia Government and implemented by The Asia Foundation, has been working with various actors both at the subnational and national levels. Between 2024 and 2025, the Program's partners held 2,614 consultations with individuals, household heads, business owners, and schools from 16 provinces across Cambodia to inform their research on rural development, climate change, migration, the business environment, social protection, and education.

In September 2025, Ponlok Chomnes and its partners convened the National Policy Forum with the theme "Inclusive Policymaking in the Age of Uncertainty: Connecting Knowledge, Policy and People." The Forum brought together more than 200 participants from government, research institutions, civil society, and communities to discuss the future of Cambodia's knowledge sector and explore priority issues such as climate-induced migration, social protection, and rural development at the national level. One of the strongest messages from the Forum was the need to ensure that national commitments to use evidence and promote inclusive dialogue are reflected in practice at the subnational level.

The Ponlok Chomnes Provincial Policy Forum (PPF) aims to support this shift. The PPF brings local evidence and community experiences into policy discussions and creates a space where civil society organisations, local universities, community researchers, and practitioners can share what they are seeing on the ground. It also enables provincial and national policymakers to discuss these findings together. The goal is simple: ensure that local knowledge is heard and can help shape better, more inclusive decisions for Cambodia's provinces.



Ms. Meloney C. Lindberg  
Country Representative  
*The Asia Foundation*

  
**SOKHA**  
*Angkor*  
**RESORT**

# WELCOME REMARKS



On behalf of The Asia Foundation and the Ponlok Chomnes program, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the Provincial Policy Forum 2026 in Siem Reap Province, Cambodia's major tourist hub and house of the world's famous temples of Angkor.

I would like to begin by sincerely acknowledging the support of the Australian Government and the partnership of the Royal Government of Cambodia at both national and subnational levels. Your leadership and collaboration are essential to this work.

I would also like to thank our Ponlok Chomnes partners, who have co-designed today's Forum and helped bring participants from across provinces to be part of this conversation. Today's agenda reflects collaboration and the commitment to locally led dialogue.

When Ponlok Chomnes began in 2019, the Policy Forums were created as a space where governments, researchers, and civil society come together to discuss evidence and policy. Over time, these forums helped strengthen trust and collaboration across Cambodia's knowledge sector.

Today's Provincial Policy Forum is a natural next step, bringing that same spirit of dialogue to the subnational level. It responds to a message we heard strongly at last year's National Policy Forum: that inclusive, evidence-informed policymaking must be practised not only at the national level, but also in provinces, districts, and communes, where policies are implemented and where their impacts are most visible.



During Phase 1, Ponlok Chomnes Program laid important foundations for inclusion, such as the creation of the SheThinks Network, Cambodia’s first network of women researchers, which continues to address gender disparity in research and amplify women’s voices in policymaking.

In Phase II (2023–2027), Ponlok Chomnes is expanding this work. We are collaborating with more than 20 Cambodian research institutions, universities, and civil society organisations on issues that matter deeply to Cambodia’s future, from climate change and rural development to social protection, inclusive governance and open data, and gender equality, disability and social inclusion.

Over the past two years, our partners have engaged more than 2,600 people across 16 provinces. What they have shared is clear: local evidence exists, local solutions exist, but they need stronger links to decision-making processes. This Forum is one step toward strengthening those links.

The theme of today’s Forum “Connecting Communities, Evidence, and Policy” is especially timely. Provincial authorities and communities are facing increasing uncertainty, from climate impacts and economic pressures to migration and demographic change. In this context, the ability to use local knowledge, and to engage communities meaningfully in decision-making, becomes even more important.

That’s why throughout the Forum, we will be exploring a simple but important question “How can subnational policy making process in Cambodia become more inclusive, evidence-based, and responsive to local realities?”

**As such, the Forum objectives are simple:**

- To create space for connection between provincial authorities, national institutions, researchers, civil society, and communities.
- To share provincial cases that show how local evidence and experience can inform policy decisions.
- And to promote inclusive dialogue, ensuring that the perspectives of women, youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other underrepresented groups are part of policy discussions and solutions.

The agenda has been designed around these objectives. Rather than broad sector discussions, you will hear concrete provincial cases, followed by opportunities for deeper exchange in parallel sessions.

I would also like to highlight the inclusive dialogue session, where practical facilitation approaches will be shared, including tools that participants can adapt and use in their own provincial consultations and planning processes, particularly the co-designed Guidelines for Inclusive Dialogue.

Today's Forum is not only about discussion. It is about connection, connecting people who do not often sit together, and connecting evidence with the decisions that shape people's lives.

I encourage all of you to share openly, listen carefully, and engage with curiosity and respect. The value of this forum lies not only in what is said on stage, but in the conversations, you have with one another throughout the day.

Finally, I would like to thank the Provincial Government of Siem Reap for hosting us, the Ponlok Chomnes partners who helped organise this forum, and all of you for taking the time to participate, especially our distinguished speakers and community representatives who have travelled from different provinces to share your experiences.

I am confident that today's discussions will be both practical and relevant, and that the insights generated here will continue to inform policy process beyond this forum.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH, AND I WISH YOU A PRODUCTIVE AND MEANINGFUL DAY.**





**Ms. Kirsty Harris**  
**Development Counsellor**  
*Australian Ambassador to Cambodia*

# OPENING REMARKS

“

It is a pleasure to join you today at the Ponlok Chomnes Provincial Policy Forum 2026.

I would like to thank the Royal Government of Cambodia, provincial authorities, research institutions, civil society partners, and community representatives for coming together today. I would like to begin by thanking The Asia Foundation and the Ponlok Chomnes Program, along with all partners, for convening this important forum.

As mentioned earlier in Ms. Meloney Lindberg’s remarks, last year in September, many of us gathered at the Ponlok Chomnes National Policy Forum in Phnom Penh, where a strong message emerged that *evidence-informed and inclusive policymaking must extend beyond national discussions and be reflected in practice at the subnational level*. Today’s Forum is a direct response to that call.

Across Cambodia, provinces are navigating a complex and evolving set of challenges. These include climate-related risks, economic pressures, demographic change, migration, and growing needs for responsive public services.

When provincial evidence and community experiences are not part of policy conversations, we risk designing solutions that do not fully reflect local realities.

Therefore, this Forum recognises that provincial actors are not just implementers of policy. They are also knowledge holders, innovators, and decision-makers.

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From Australia's perspective, this principle is central to our long-standing development partnership with Cambodia. Australia has supported Cambodia's development journey for many decades, working across sectors such as education, health, agriculture, governance, social protection, and economic development. Throughout this partnership, we have seen that strong policies do not emerge from data alone, nor from consultation alone, but from the combination of evidence, dialogue, and local insight.

This is why, since 2019, Australia has supported the Ponlok Chomnes: Data and Dialogue for Development in Cambodia Program. In its first phase, Ponlok Chomnes strengthened the capacity of Cambodian knowledge institutions: think tanks, research organisations, and policy groups, to conduct high-quality research and to share it in ways that can influence policy. This work laid an important foundation of inclusive research, networks, and credibility.

Now, in its second phase, Ponlok Chomnes is building on that foundation with a clear shift in focus. The focus is beyond producing good research, on embedding evidence and inclusive dialogue into the way policies are developed and implemented. This shift recognises that evidence must be usable, timely, and connected to decision-making processes at both national and subnational levels.

Today's Forum reflects that shift very clearly. Rather than organising discussions around individual policy sectors, the Forum focuses on how inclusive and evidence-informed policymaking is practised in provinces, and what enables or constrains that practice. While provinces face different issues, they often encounter similar challenges in using data, coordinating across institutions, engaging communities meaningfully, and translating insights into action.

At the heart of this work is inclusion. Policies are stronger when they reflect how different groups experience challenges and opportunities in practice. Ensuring that women, youth, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, and other marginalised communities can contribute meaningfully helps improve the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of policy decisions.

Australia's own experience reinforces this lesson. We continue to learn how inclusive approaches strengthen policy outcomes, whether in research, service delivery, or governance. This is why Australia's development cooperation is guided by strong commitments to gender equality and disability inclusion, including through our International Gender Equality Strategy and International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy. These strategies emphasize systemic change and the removal of barriers to participation, not just symbolic inclusion.

This Forum comes at an important time. Provinces across Cambodia are facing increasingly complex and interconnected challenges, including climate impacts, economic change, demographic shifts, technological developments, and growing expectations for responsive local services.

The Local Solutions That Work plenary session this morning is an excellent example of how these principles can be applied in practice. By highlighting concrete experiences from provinces, the session moves beyond theory to show how local actors use evidence, participation, and dialogue to address real challenges.

These experiences are particularly valuable for policymakers, as they highlight where systems support local action and where adjustments may be needed to make evidence and participation easier in practice.





**Mr. Ing Kimleang**  
**Deputy Governor**  
***Siem Reap Province***

# KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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It is a great honour for Siem Reap Province to host the Ponlok Chomnes Provincial Policy Forum 2026, and I am pleased to attend and deliver this keynote address in this Forum with all of you.

Allow me to extend a warm welcome to all participants who have travelled from different provinces and Phnom Penh to join today's forum. It is our pleasure to host all of you here in Siem Reap.

Siem Reap is widely known for its cultural heritage and tourism, but it is also a place where communities are adapting to change. Today, the province is navigating the recovery of tourism, the diversification of livelihoods, pressures on natural resources, and the need to ensure that development benefits reach local communities.

Historically, Siem Reap was not only a political centre of the Khmer Empire, but also a centre of learning, where knowledge, administration, and public life were closely connected. In that sense, gathering here today to discuss how evidence and dialogue can inform policymaking is especially meaningful.

Also, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Australian Government and The Asia Foundation, as well as the Ponlok Chomnes Program, for their continued partnership with the Cambodian government, research institutions, and communities across Cambodia. I appreciate and support the Program's ongoing efforts to strengthen the link between local knowledge, inclusive dialogue, and policy decision-making.

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## EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

We are living in a period of profound change and uncertainty. For instance, economic transformation and digitalisation are shaping labour markets and social relations. Migration, whether internal and cross-border, continues to affect families and communities. At the same time, global and regional developments increasingly influence local realities in ways that are often unpredictable.

In this context, effective policymaking depends on evidence that is relevant, timely, grounded, and informed by the experiences of those directly affected. Subsequently, the policy solutions effectively address and improve local challenges.

For provinces like Siem Reap, it is clear that local evidence is important. Policy frameworks are necessary to guide national development, but local conditions often differ from one province to another. Without evidence from the ground, policies risk overlooking these differences and failing to respond effectively to local realities.

Local knowledge can show, for example, how social protection programs are experienced by households, not just how they are designed. It reveals barriers faced by women, youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalised groups, barriers that may not be visible in aggregated data.

Let me share a real example why local knowledge and data is important for not only national governments but also subnational governments. During the Covid-19 outbreak, in response to the pandemic, the national government, along with the local government, used the Commune Database, ID-Poor Database, and others with data provided by the subnational government to understand the local situation, financial status, immigration, and others, which is valuable for the government to intervene promptly. Furthermore, the local data was essential to identify the newly poor household due to COVID-19 who were eligible for the government's cash transfer program. Additionally, this data played a crucial role in supporting the government in rolling out vaccination campaigns at the local level, contributing to the prevention of the spread of COVID-19, and opening up the country for economic recovery.

For these reasons, local evidence is not only relevant for provincial decision-making. It is a crucial input for national policymaking.

Currently Siem Reap is focusing on key strategies and goal to drive socio-economic development and enhance the livelihoods of our citizens by providing public services that respond to local needs and address current challenges with efficiency and inclusivity. We are looking forward to sharing more about these policy goals and how we're using evidence and voices from our residents in shaping these goals and implementing them on the ground.

I also want to mention that Cambodia has made important progress in decentralisation and deconcentration reforms. Provincial, district, and commune authorities now play a more active role in development planning, service delivery, and local governance. With this increased responsibility comes a greater need for evidence that reflects local realities. At the provincial level, evidence supports better decisions in several ways:

First, it helps identify priorities. Local data and community insights allow authorities to focus resources where they are most needed.



Second, evidence improves policy implementation. Understanding how policies are received and applied at the local level helps identify gaps, unintended consequences, and opportunities for improvement.

Third, evidence strengthens accountability and trust. When communities see that their experiences and perspectives inform decisions, confidence in public institutions grows.

For example, we use commune databases to identify areas for provincial, district, and commune development initiatives, while sharing with the national government. We see the importance of commune databases and hope development programs like Ponlok Chomnes can support the provinces' efforts in strengthening the reliability of the data and including more important information such as on climate change, impact on communities and more granular data on the conditions of marginalised groups.

However, the value of local evidence does not stop at the provincial level. When systematically documented, analysed, and communicated, provincial experiences can also inform national strategies, sectoral policies, and reform processes.

Therefore, national policies are strongest when they are informed by realities and experiences from provinces, districts, and communes.

To this end, the Royal Government of Cambodia has demonstrated a strong commitment to evidence-based policymaking, as reflected in the Pentagonal Strategy Phase I, and other national policy frameworks, like social protection, commune database, rural development, and others. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these frameworks depends on how well they reflect local conditions and how flexibly they respond to emerging challenges.

I think this is where platforms such as the Ponlok Chomnes Provincial Policy Forum play a role, complementing other existing platforms that not only connect subnational and national governments but also civil society organisations, academic institutions, and communities.



I learn that Ponlok Chomnes also works with some partners on promoting scholarship, inclusive research and dialogue in Siem Reap provinces, including the Center for Khmer Studies' library, which is valuable in Siem Reap in promoting research activities, Cambodia Children and Youth Movements for Child Rights and Chhloh Theater's works highlight the importance of making research and evidence more accessible and closer to communities. This whole business of evidence to policy requires such a broad range of people and organisations with different skills and visions to come together and create synergies. Then we can expect knowledge to translate to policies then to impact.

They create structured spaces for local evidence moving upward into national dialogue while also allowing national priorities to be discussed and refined at the subnational level.

From a provincial perspective, several enabling factors are important to strengthen this linkage:

First, credible local research and data must be supported. This includes collaboration between universities, research institutes, relevant government institutions, and civil society organisations that have access to communities and can generate policy-relevant insights.

Second, mechanisms for dialogue between provincial and national actors must be sustained. Evidence has a limited impact if it is not discussed and translated into policy options.

Third, capacity at the subnational level must continue to be strengthened, not only to collect data, but also to analyse, interpret, and use it strategically in planning and coordination with line ministries and departments.

In addition to this, I want to share that local evidence is most powerful when it is also inclusive. It is important to ensure the voices of women, youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalised groups are included in policy processes, because they often experience the greatest impacts of policy decisions.

When we embed inclusive evidence into policymaking, we not only improve outcomes, but we also strengthen social cohesion and shared ownership of development processes.

Lastly, I want to highlight three broader lessons that emerge from provincial experience here in Siem Reap:

First, policymaking is an iterative process. Evidence should inform not only policy formulation, but also implementation, monitoring, and improvement. Second, local context matters. What works in one province may not work in another. I think national policies should therefore allow flexibility for local adaptation, informed by provincial evidence.

Third, partnerships are key. Provincial governments cannot generate and use evidence alone. Collaboration with national ministries, research institutions, civil society, communities, and development partners is important.

I welcome colleagues and local authority representatives from other provinces to collaborate with us in delivering and for programs like Ponlok Chomnes to contribute to our efforts to promote the use of diverse data for inclusive policymaking to achieve sustainable development in Cambodia.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasise that strengthening the role of local evidence in subnational and national policymaking is about building governance that listens, makes inclusive decisions, and ensures that our policies are responsive to the local context.

On behalf of Siem Reap Governor, I would like to mention that we welcome collaboration with colleagues from other provinces and value the contribution of programs such as Ponlok Chomnes, which help connect local knowledge, inclusive dialogue, and policy decision-making.

In today's Forum, I encourage all of you to engage openly, share experiences honestly, and reflect on how we can better connect community knowledge, provincial evidence, and national policy decisions.

I once again thank the Australian Government, The Asia Foundation, and participants for your commitment to strengthening inclusive and evidence-informed policy process in Cambodia.



# “Local Solutions That Work: How Communities Turn Evidence and Participation into Action”

*Organised by the GEDSI Consortium*



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## BACKGROUND

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A strong policy is built by listening to different perspectives and considering all sides of the issue. To make sure a policy really works, it is important to learn from the experiences of people at the community level. By sharing local solutions and best practices, we can understand what works in real-life situations and use that knowledge to design policies that are practical, relevant, and beneficial for everyone.

While there are gaps in the policymaking process<sup>1</sup>, there is an opportunity to improve by involving local initiatives that are open to listening to local voices. When communities, including marginalised groups, are engaged in the process, this helps create policies that better reflect local needs and leads to more effective outcomes. Therefore, these initiatives are important to share more widely.

This plenary session is designed to provide a platform for communities to come together, share their experiences, and highlight the best practices that have worked in their context. By learning from each other, we can strengthen local solutions and ensure that policies and actions truly respond to the needs of the people. Panellists will share their real-life experience in contributing to local solutions within their communities, using their unique approaches such as research, dialogue, advocacy, and more.

This will help develop solutions that are practical, inclusive, and sustainable. Ultimately, this plenary session highlights the importance of community-led approaches, where real change begins with those directly affected.

Local authorities will share examples of good practices where their communities have successfully addressed local challenges. This will be followed by group discussion, and then gallery walk. Instead of panellist presentations, the speakers will showcase the solutions and initiatives that they have implemented.

The session aligns with the overall objective of the Provincial Policy Forum to bring provincial experiences into policy dialogue and to demonstrate how local knowledge can inform more responsive and inclusive policymaking.

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<sup>1</sup> Yalirozy, T. (2025, September 9). *Cambodia Struggles to Build Research Capacity as Evidence-Based Policy Lags Behind*. Cambodianess. [Cambodia Struggles to Build Research Capacity as Evidence-Based Policy Lags Behind | Cambodianess](#)

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## OBJECTIVES

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The plenary session “Local Solutions That Work” aimed to showcase concrete examples of how communities and local actors respond to local challenges by using evidence, participation, communications, and dialogue. It sought to illustrate the different pathways through which local evidence and community voices inform decision-making, while identifying common enabling factors and barriers to inclusive and evidence-informed action at the local level. Through a focus on using inclusive data, ensuring meaningful participation in research processes, sharing information effectively with communities, and conducting inclusive dialogue, the session highlighted practical approaches that strengthen locally grounded and responsive solutions.

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## DISCUSSIONS

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The discussion highlighted that inclusive and effective community development is grounded in accurate data, ethical engagement, accessible communication, and participatory dialogue, with a strong focus on addressing the needs of vulnerable groups. Across the four thematic areas, panellists and participants shared practical experiences and approaches that demonstrate how inclusive methods can lead to more responsive and sustainable local solutions.

Using inclusive data and data-driven decision-making that supported by regular field visits and community consultations is essential to enable local authorities to identify real needs and implement targeted solutions. Localised data, drawn from experiences addressing drought, improving water access, and strengthening climate resilience, illustrates how accurate data—especially on vulnerable groups—can directly inform effective service delivery and long-term planning. The panellists drew on a strong track record in public service delivery and community engagement, supported by systematic data collection and direct engagement with residents. These efforts inform coordinated planning with councils, stakeholders, and higher-level authorities. Examples include disaster response during floods and droughts in 2022, 2024, and 2025, which strengthened climate resilience through infrastructure such as community ponds and expanded access to clean water. In addition, effective community development requires



inclusive participation, strong coordination, and the integration of community needs into formal planning frameworks, including for instance, the 3-Year Rolling Investment Program and annual action plans.

To ensure meaningful participation in research, engagement must go beyond data collection to ensure ethical integrity, trust, and respect for participants. Key elements include: 1) transparency regarding purpose, funding, and data use; 2) informed consent and ethical safeguards; 3) flexibility and emotional support during interviews; 4) safe, private, and non-judgmental settings; and 5) follow-up and respect for anonymity, including validation of findings. These practices ensure that research reflects authentic community voices and

contributes to credible and impactful outcomes. In conclusion, meaningful participation relies on strong ethical standards, respect for participants, and transparency in how research is conducted and shared.

Regarding effective information sharing, accessible, multi-channel communication is essential to ensure that no one is left behind. Combining traditional methods, such as community meetings, loudspeakers, and home visits, with digital platforms, like social media and messaging apps, helps reach broader audiences. However, persistent gaps remain for people with severe disabilities and those in remote areas, highlighting the need for more inclusive formats and targeted outreach

strategies. One panellist has been a strong advocate for accessible community communication for people with disabilities. She emphasises the importance of sharing information on legal rights, government programs, and disaster updates, while noting that those with severe disabilities or living in remote areas are often excluded. Improved outreach and platforms that amplify the voices of the most vulnerable—including women, children, the elderly, and indigenous communities—to ensure equitable access to information and services are crucial and necessary.

With regards to inclusive dialogue, reflective community theatre and creative approaches are designed to empower marginalised groups by turning lived experiences into performances that highlight challenges and foster collaborative solutions. This participatory method builds trust, raises awareness of rights and services, and connects communities with stakeholders to co-create actionable solutions, reinforcing the importance of safe and inclusive spaces for expression. By maintaining ongoing engagement—both in person and online—it ensures all voices are heard, supporting equitable and effective problem-solving.

The group discussions further reinforced these themes by identifying adaptable practices, success factors, and areas for improvement. Key practices include improving data categorisation and village-level registries, conducting home visits, applying ethical research standards, and using diverse communication channels. Success factors centre on trust-building, strong collaboration, community participation, skilled facilitation, and adequate resources.

Participants also highlighted critical gaps, including the need to enhance physical and informational accessibility, strengthen the capacity of local institutions and facilitators, better align government and partner initiatives, and ensure sustained follow-up and support. The importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration—including authorities, civil society organisations (CSOs), organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), and community members—was consistently emphasised.

Overall, the discussion underscored that inclusive data, ethical research practices, effective communication, and participatory dialogue are mutually reinforcing pillars of community development. Strengthening these elements through continuous collaboration, adequate resources, and innovative approaches—such as digital tools and creative methods—will be essential to ensure that development processes remain inclusive, responsive, and sustainable, leaving no one behind.



## SPEAKERS & MODERATOR

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### Panellists

**Ms. Pen Sophea**

*Svay Chuk Commune Chief, Kampong Chhnang*

**Ms. Kum Somaly**

*Project Officer, and member of SheThinks Network, Phnom Penh*

**Ms. Cheat Sokha**

*OPD, Director of Spinal Cord Rehabilitation Center in Battambang*

**Ms. Nov Sreyleap**

*Lead, Chhloh Theater, Siem Reap*

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### Moderator

**Ms. Pheng Pharozin**

*Gender Program Officer, Women Peace Maker*

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### Co-facilitator

**Ms. Rimphat Bophaphoung**

*Advocacy and Networking Program Manager, Gender and Development for Cambodia*



## Highlight 1

# Using inclusive data to solve a community issue

Ms. Pen began her career in 2009 as the official in charge of women's and children's affairs, and she has served as Commune Chief from 2012 to the present. Her notable achievements include public service delivery and conducting community visits to monitor the well-being of residents, advancing early childhood education, improving access to clean water and sanitation, and facilitating out-of-court dispute resolutions. Some highlights from her dialogue include:

- In my capacity as Commune Chief, I consistently collect data, listen to their various challenges, and seek solutions for community members. Frequently, I conduct field visits to meet with them directly; after receiving information from them, I and my team hold consultative meetings with the commune council and various stakeholders, including partner organisations and the private sector. Furthermore, I prepare formal proposals for the district and provincial levels to request support and intervention.
- In cases of floods or droughts, I always collect data from all stakeholders and citizens, with a specific focus on vulnerable groups, namely persons with disabilities, the elderly, and children. In such situations, my team and I evacuate them to safe grounds. Once there, we ensure essential preparations are met, including food, clean water, sanitation facilities, and other necessary supplies. Additionally, we carefully allocate development budgets and work in close coordination with our team.

- During 2022, my commune faced a severe drought that resulted in a shortage of water for both daily use and irrigation. At that time, the village leadership and I worked closely with the Water Supply Authority. We realised that the water supply would be insufficient if we tried to provide for all 11 villages simultaneously. Therefore, we held meetings to explain the situation to the residents. We implemented a rotation where we supplied four villages per day. We also encouraged citizens to increase their water storage capacity and supplement their needs by using wells.
- In 2024, to respond to climate challenges, we submitted proposals through all levels of government, including the Provincial Department of Rural Development and the Ministry. As a result, we were able to dig community ponds to store water as a preventative measure for citizens during future droughts.
- In 2025, our operations have continued smoothly. The commune administration, council, and village leaders have met to raise requests based on our direct visits to citizens. Our goal is to ensure every resident receives equal access to services. We recently coordinated for 137 families to ensure vulnerable citizens could access clean water services. While the connection fee is over 300,000 Riels, the commune administration played a key role in coordinating between the residents, NGOs, and the water authority to ensure a successful outcome.
- In conclusion, to successfully address community issues, we require the involvement of all stakeholders. As mentioned earlier, this involves collective consultation between the national and sub-national levels, partner organisations, the private sector, and the citizens—especially those who are vulnerable. Because they are the only ones who truly understand the challenges they face, we take their proposals and requests and integrate them into the 3-Year Rolling Investment Program and our annual action plans.

 Plenary Discussion 2

# “Inclusive Dialogue in Practice”

*Organised by the GEDSI Consortium*



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## BACKGROUND

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Building on the success of Ponlok Chomnes I (2019-2023), which aimed to strengthen the capacity of Cambodian knowledge sector institutions to produce research that informs public policy, Ponlok Chomnes II (2023-2027) seeks to ensure that these decisions are grounded in evidence and inclusive dialogue. The program emphasises the importance of providing Cambodian policymakers with high quality information to support this process. Ultimately, it aspires to garner wide acceptance and appreciation among policymakers and stakeholders of the value of inclusive dialogues and evidence-based decision-making, establishing this as standard practice in Cambodia.

Ponlok Chomnes II defines “dialogue” as an exchange of information, ideas, or opinions between parties through spoken or written means. Its goals can range from mutual understanding to exploring topics. It is versatile and useful for clarity, learning, or building relationships. In a policy context, dialogue refers to a structured and purposeful conversation or discussion among various stakeholders, including government officials, experts, researchers, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and the public, aimed at sharing knowledge, identifying ways to address specific policy issues or opportunities and ultimately inform the development, implementation, or revision of policies and initiatives. However, not all dialogue meaningfully engages or includes all relevant parties. This is where inclusive dialogue comes in.

“Inclusive dialogue” in the context of Ponlok Chomnes II involves fostering open and participatory conversations among diverse stakeholders, including women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, sexual minorities (LGBTQIA+ individuals), and other underrepresented groups. It aims to ensure that all voices are heard, respected, and are able to actively contribute to policy discussions. Inclusive dialogue promotes collaborative decision-making and enabling diverse perspectives to be able to be incorporated into policy processes.

Recognising the importance of inclusive dialogue, PCII initiated the development of the “Guidelines for Inclusive Dialogue”<sup>2</sup> with its partners, including the Strategic Partners<sup>3</sup> and the GEDSI Consortium<sup>4</sup> to offer clear, practical steps and approaches for fostering such dialogues.

On 5 September 2025, the “Guidelines for Inclusive Dialogue” was officially launched during the Ponlok Chomnes National Policy Forum.<sup>5</sup> These guidelines aim to assist stakeholders in creating and facilitating conversations that are not only inclusive but also productive, ensuring that the diverse needs and insights of all relevant parties are integrated into the decision-making process. The goal is to promote collaborative decision-making and the incorporation of diverse perspectives into policy processes, thereby enhancing the overall quality and relevance of public policies in Cambodia.

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## OBJECTIVES

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The discussion aimed to deepen understanding of inclusive dialogue as both a principle and a practical approach within research, policymaking, and community development. It sought to clarify how inclusive dialogue—grounded in ownership, accessibility, respect for diversity, and equity—can be applied throughout the entire research and policy cycle, from problem identification and data collection to analysis, dissemination, and decision-making. The discussion also aimed to promote ethical and rights based practices, including informed consent, confidentiality, and meaningful

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<sup>2</sup> Guidelines for Inclusive Dialogue: <https://policypulse.org/publications/references/guidelines-for-inclusive-dialogue/>

<sup>3</sup> Strategic Partners, including Cambodia Development Resource Institute, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (former Strategic Partner), Center for Khmer Studies, Centre for Policy Studies, and Future Forum <https://policypulse.org/ponlok-chomnes/strategic-partners/>

<sup>4</sup> Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Consortium: <https://policypulse.org/ponlok-chomnes/gedsi-consortium/>

<sup>5</sup> Highlights from the Ponlok Chomnes National Policy Forum 2025: <https://policypulse.org/events/policy-forum/highlights-from-the-ponlok-chomnes-national-policy-forum-2025/>

participation of underrepresented groups such as women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and LGBTQIA+ communities. In addition, it aimed to introduce and operationalise the Guidelines for Inclusive Dialogue as a practical tool for planning, budgeting, and facilitation, highlighting how accessible design, inclusive budgeting, and sustained capacity building can help shift power relations, remove participation barriers, and ensure that diverse voices genuinely influence policies and development outcomes.

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## DISCUSSIONS

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The session focused on the concept and practice of inclusive dialogue, particularly within research, policymaking, and community development, guided by the Ponlok Chomnes program. Inclusive dialogue was defined through four key pillars: ownership, accessibility, respect for diversity, and equity, ensuring that all individuals—especially underrepresented groups such as women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and LGBTQIA+ communities—are recognised and empowered to participate meaningfully.

Panellist highlighted that inclusive dialogue is essential throughout the research process, from topic identification and data collection to dissemination, emphasising ethical standards, informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants’ rights and perspectives.

Inclusive dialogue in research integrates diverse perspectives, voices, and knowledge throughout all stages of research, including topic identification, data collection and analysis, research team composition, and dissemination. It emphasises respecting diversity and empowering underrepresented groups such as women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, and the LGBTQIA+ community. Findings must reflect the true realities of participants, with openness to feedback to ensure policy recommendations address practical needs. Central to this approach is the principle of “nothing about us without us,” which underscores the importance of including all identity groups in decision-making and consultation processes.



Inclusive dialogue in policymaking serves as the foundation for sustainable and meaningful development. Through Ponlok Chomnes Phase II, supported by the Australian Government, The Asia Foundation has placed a strong emphasis on integrating inclusion across all activities in this phase. The program actively encourages partners and relevant institutions to embed inclusive practices into their research and

discussions. Recognising that promotion alone is insufficient, the initiative also prioritises the creation of formal guidance and documentation to ensure inclusion is systematically applied and operationalised.



Therefore, the discussion further explored the Guidelines for Inclusive Dialogue, developed by a specialised working group integrating expertise in Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI). The guidelines outline five core principles: ‘Do No Harm’, GEDSI, feminist principles, intersectionality, and human rights, with a practical emphasis on ‘Do No Harm’ and GEDSI. Researchers and development practitioners are encouraged to use these guidelines to plan, assess, and continuously

improve the inclusivity of their dialogues, including accessibility considerations for persons with disabilities, caregivers, and other marginalised groups. Tools such as checklists, scoring systems, and levels of participation enable organisers to measure inclusivity, aiming for meaningful engagement where participants contribute from problem definition to final decision-making.

Inclusive dialogue extends beyond participation to budgeting that removes barriers for underrepresented groups, emphasizing the planning of budgets in advance to ensure accessibility, such as booking venues with ramps, elevators, and wide bathrooms for persons with disabilities (PWDs), providing extra transportation allowances, and accommodating participants from remote areas. It also includes provisions for sign language interpreters, Braille materials, translation services, and even logistical considerations such as respecting the schedules of specific participants, including monks.

To facilitate practical application, in addition to the comprehensive Guidelines for Inclusive Dialogue, the Ponlok Chomnes program has produced an eight-page summary brochure outlining step-by-step guidance for inclusive planning, budgeting, and activity preparation. Trainings have been conducted for working groups and program partners, with ongoing plans to expand capacity-building to civil society organisations, educational institutions, and national and sub-national stakeholders.

The panellists emphasised that inclusion involves achieving meaningful changes in power relations, guaranteeing equitable access to resources, and enabling genuine participation in decision-making. The book and its tools are intended for researchers, development practitioners, and all stakeholders to reflect critically on whether their discussions, data collection, and actions truly align with inclusive principles, ensuring that all voices are represented and empowered.

In closing, the panellists affirmed the importance of continuous promotion, training, and application of these principles across research, policymaking, and community initiatives. The resources from the Ponlok Chomnes program, in particular the Guidelines for Inclusive Dialogue, serve as practical tools for researchers, civil society organisations, institutions, and policymakers, reinforcing that inclusive dialogue is not merely procedural but a means to ensure meaningful representation, equitable access, and real decision-making authority for underrepresented groups.



## SPEAKERS & MODERATOR

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### Panellists

**Ms. Chey Maramy**

*Senior Program Officer, Ponlok Chomnes Program the Asia Foundation*

**Mr. Mean Vibolratanak**

*Project Coordinator and Disability Inclusion Trainer, the Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation*

**Ms. Chhaing Marong**

*Former member of the inclusive Dialogue Guideline Working group under Ponlok Chomnes Program*

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### Moderator

**Ms. Eng Chandy**

*Executive Director, Gender and Development for Cambodia*



## Highlight 2

# Meaningful participation in a research process

Ms. Kum Somaly is a Project Coordinator at Youth for Peace and a member of the Women in Research Network (CC Network). She has worked in the fields of human rights, justice, and administration since 2010. She holds a master's degree in human Rights and Democracy from the European University Global Campus framework.

I have been involved in various interviews—both as a researcher and an interviewee—on topics such as gender (focusing on women in the legal and education sectors) and colourism within communities. Additionally, much of my work involves transitional justice, where my contributions have focused on the participation of civil parties in the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, history education, and peacebuilding. Among all these projects, two stand out as my favourites: first, a study on colourism in Cambodia involving women who have experienced discrimination; and second, the participation of civil parties in the Khmer Rouge Tribunal.

Why do I consider my participation in these two projects to be truly meaningful? It comes down to five key points:

1

**TRANSPARENCY:**

When the researchers contacted me, they provided clear information about the project. They explained the funding source, how the interview would be used, and exactly what they needed from me.

2

**INFORMED CONSENT AND ETHICS:**

They clearly outlined my rights, including asking for permission to record and using consent forms. They specified that the audio would be used for transcription and then deleted once the report was finished. This demonstrated a strong code of ethics.

3

**FLEXIBILITY AND SUPPORT:**

During the interview, they told me I could skip any question I didn't want to answer or take a break whenever needed. When discussing sensitive or traumatic topics, they provided emotional support and encouragement.

4

**A SAFE ENVIRONMENT:**

The interview took place in a quiet setting without third-party interruptions. I felt free to express my opinions because the researcher did not judge whether what I said was 'right' or 'wrong.'

5

**FOLLOW-UP AND ANONYMITY:**

After the data analysis, they contacted me again to ask whether I wanted to use my real name or remain anonymous in the report. They even sent the report for me to review before it was officially published.

In short, meaningful participation depends on researchers having clear ethical codes, valuing informants, providing emotional support, and that we are informed of where or which platform the research is published.



## Parallel Session 1A

# “Climate Change Adaptation Through a Cash-Transfer Program in Cambodia”

Organised by the National Institute of Social Affairs



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## BACKGROUND

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The Royal Government has launched the Shock-Responsive Social Protection Policy Framework 2025–2030. This framework aims to strengthen mechanisms to protect and support the most vulnerable populations, especially in times of crisis and climate-related shocks. Cambodia’s social protection framework plays a critical role in supporting vulnerable populations and building resilience against climate-related risks through targeted assistance, social security programs, and climate-adaptive measures.

Regarding the Social Protection and Climate Change Adaptation Response in Cambodia, the Royal Government emphasises social solidarity and rapid response in times of crisis, particularly for vulnerable populations affected by emergencies and climate-related disasters. Cambodia’s social protection system comprises two main components: social security and social assistance, which provide timely support through mechanisms such as emergency cash transfers and targeted aid for children, women, the elderly, and other at-risk groups. During floods and similar disasters, the government prioritises assistance to children and women, including pregnant women and children under two years old. Maternal and child health receives special attention, with financial support for antenatal care visits and full coverage for medical necessities. Social security coverage is increasingly extended to informal sector workers, while social assistance helps households avoid deeper poverty due to occupational risks or family crises. Social protection programs are closely integrated with climate change adaptation measures to reduce vulnerability and prevent climate-induced poverty.

As of December 2025, the Social Assistance Fund reached over 725,000 families, provided support to 439,492 elderly individuals, and allocated significant funding for maternal, child, and other vulnerable groups. At the international level, Cambodia aligns with the Paris Agreement, focusing on strengthening preparedness and adaptation for vulnerable populations and enhancing adaptive capacity and public service delivery to respond effectively to climate change.

Looking ahead to 2025–2035, Cambodia plans to significantly expand social protection coverage, targeting 95% of poor families, over 1,111 schools under the home-grown school feeding program, and 85% enrolment in the social health protection package. Expanding social protection is crucial for equity, sustainability, and economic resilience, ensuring that women, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly are not left behind while building a stable and climate-resilient society.

The National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF), established through Sub-decree No. 68 ANKr.BK (31 March 2022), functions as a Public Administrative Institution with provincial branches to ensure nationwide coverage. NSAF operates under dual guardianship: the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) as Technical Guardian and the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) as Financial Guardian. At the provincial level, the Koh Kong Branch implements national social assistance programs and selected social security schemes, providing cash transfers, subsidies, and services to poor households, vulnerable groups, former civil servants, and veterans.

### Key NSAF Programs include:

- **National Social Assistance Program – Family Package (since 2023):** Supports pregnant women, children under two, elderly Equity Card holders, persons with disabilities, and people living with HIV.
- **Cash Transfer Program for Pregnant Women and Children under 2 (from April 2024):** Promotes maternal and child welfare through antenatal care and vaccination support.
- **Vocational and Technical Training for Youth:** Provides free training and monthly stipends to at-risk youth, enhancing employability and reducing poverty.
- **Assistance for Female Inmates:** Supports pregnant women and children under two in prison, particularly Equity Card holders.
- **Support for People Living with HIV and At-Risk Families:** Provides monthly cash allowances and childbirth support for mothers and young children.
- **Social Security Regime (NSSF):** Offers healthcare, retirement pensions, and occupational risk coverage for public and private sector workers.
- **Disaster Response Mechanisms:** Delivers food aid, cash support, clean water, and healthcare services during floods, droughts, and other climate-related emergencies.

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## OBJECTIVES

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The discussion aimed to examine how Cambodia’s social protection framework—particularly the Family Package under the Social Assistance pillar—supports poor and climate vulnerable households in responding to climate related shocks. It sought to assess how the Equity Card (IDPoor) system delivers targeted, tiered assistance to families exposed to floods, storms, droughts, and coastal impacts, and how cash transfers contribute to both immediate crisis response and longer-term resilience. The discussion also aimed to highlight practical provincial level experiences, including how combining financial assistance with vocational training and livelihood diversification strengthens households’ adaptive capacity. In addition, it explored community level climate impacts, beneficiary perspectives on the use of assistance, and the role of local authorities in program dissemination and implementation, with the objective of identifying lessons to strengthen, expand, and improve climate responsive social protection for vulnerable populations.

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## DISCUSSIONS

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The panel explored how Cambodia’s social protection framework—particularly the Family Package under the Social Assistance pillar—supports households in responding to climate-related shocks. The discussion emphasised that the framework is built on two primary pillars: Social Security and Social Assistance, with particular focus on the Family Package program, which uses the Equity Card (IDPoor) system to deliver tiered subsidies based on household vulnerability. The session examined how these mechanisms contribute to resilience-building among families living in poverty and exposed to climate risks such as floods, storms, droughts, and sea-level rise.





In regard to practical implementation at the provincial level, the Family Package plays a critical role in improving household resilience. One example from Koh Kong Province involved a farming family displaced due to water shortages caused by climate change. As Equity Card holders, they received Family Package assistance and enrolled in vocational training. The father completed construction skills training, increasing his daily income from 30,000 riels as an unskilled worker to 80,000 riels after certification. His children later followed the same pathway, stabilising the family's livelihood and enabling them to better prepare for flood risks by stocking food and essential supplies. This example illustrated how combining cash assistance with skills development strengthens long-term resilience rather than providing only short-term relief.

Climate Change impacts are felt at the community level. In Bak Khlong Commune, Koh Kong Province, residents face rising sea levels, flooding, strong winds, storm surges, and coastal erosion. Saltwater intrusion disrupts transportation and damages infrastructure. Fishing is the primary livelihood, but storm seasons prevent fishermen from going to sea, resulting in unstable income. Extreme weather also damages homes. The Family Package program helps cover essential daily needs and improves living standards for many residents.

Pertaining to a beneficiary perspective, a household beneficiary explained how cash assistance is used for essential medicines, food reserves during income disruptions, and emergency support during climate-related shocks. While the budget is limited, it fills critical income gaps, meeting approximately 50% of household needs during difficult times. Information about the program was disseminated via village and commune authorities.

Reflecting on implementation in Preah Sihanouk Province, this coastal province faces windstorms and flooding. Many families rely on fishing, and prolonged storms can halt income for weeks. Financial assistance under the Family Package, though modest, allows households to diversify livelihoods—for example, by running small businesses selling souvenirs to tourists. The program has supported over 50% of affected households, enhancing climate adaptation at the local level.

The discussion reflects that the Equity Card (IDPoor) system provides targeted, tiered support to the most vulnerable households, ensuring that assistance reaches those who need it most. Cash transfers serve not only as immediate emergency relief but also as a foundation for strengthening long-term livelihoods. When combined with vocational training, financial assistance enhances households' adaptive capacity, helping them better withstand future shocks. Effective community-level dissemination through local authorities ensures broad program access, while even modest support plays a crucial role in stabilising households during climate-related crises. Overall, Cambodia's social protection framework—particularly the Family Package program—makes a significant contribution to building resilience among climate-affected communities. Expanding and strengthening coverage further can enhance protection for vulnerable populations in the face of increasing environmental risks.



## SPEAKERS & MODERATOR

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### Presenters

**H.E. Sar Boriraks**

*Director of the National Institute of Social Affairs*

**Mr. Kong Somony**

*Head of the National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF) Branch, Koh Kong Province*

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### Panelists

**Mr. Kong Somony**

*Head of the National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF) Branch, Koh Kong Province*

**Ms. Sam Dyna**

*Head of the NSAF Branch, Preah Sihanouk Province*

**Ms. Dim Sokthida**

*Member of the Bak Khlong Commune Council, Koh Kong Province*

**Ms. Say Chantha**

*Community Representative*

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### Moderator

**Dr. Sam Chanthy**

*Research Team Leader, the National Institute of Social Affairs*



### Highlight 3

## Effective sharing of information with the community

Ms. Cheat Sokha is a person with a spinal cord disability and uses a wheelchair. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Cambodia Spinal Cord Injury Association in Battambang Province and is a representative of the Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPD). She has worked for many years in the field of disability rights and has advocated with policymakers and civil society organisations at both national and international levels, drawing from her extensive personal experience.

- Since 2011, I've faced many difficulties with travel and accessibility. Today, I work as the Director of the Cambodian Spinal Cord Association in Battambang, and I am very happy to share my experiences regarding effective community communication.
- Sharing information is about more than just talking; it's a lifeline for the community, especially for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities. It is so important that we communicate the legal protections provided by the government—such as the CRPD, the Incheon Strategy, and our National Disability Strategic Plan. Right now, many people still don't know these laws exist to protect them, so we need to improve how we get this information into their hands.

- I also want to highlight the great work being done by local authorities. By using village meetings to discuss things like the three-year investment plan, disaster alerts, and social systems like the M-Drive, they are keeping citizens informed. Most importantly, when a person with a disability cannot make it to a meeting, the authorities are going directly to their homes to share that information.
- As representative organisations (OPDs), we are doing our part too. We hold training sessions and workshops to share 'good practices' and the latest policy updates. Whether it is through online meetings, annual forums, or responding to a crisis like COVID-19, our goal is to make sure the disability community is never out of the loop.
- Information is being shared, but it isn't reaching everyone who needs it. Right now, we see that people with milder disabilities can attend meetings and stay informed, but those with severe disabilities or those living far away are being left in the dark.
- Because this information is limited, people are losing out on life-changing benefits. They are missing the chance to apply for IDPoor equity cards, which means they lose access to cash subsidies and public health services.
- We need to change how we work. We must find ways to bring this information directly to those who cannot leave their homes. We need to make sure they understand government policies and, more importantly, we need to give them a platform to speak. We need to hear their problems and their needs so that we can solve them together.
- As a woman with a disability and an advocate, I hope we can make information truly accessible. By focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable—our women, children, the elderly, and indigenous communities—we can build a future where everyone has the information they need to thrive.



Parallel Session 1B

# “Commune Budget Allocation for Climate Change and Its Impacts on Marginalised Communities”

*Organised by My Village Organization*



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## BACKGROUND

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Cambodia faces high disaster risk levels, ranked 55 out of 191 countries by the 2019. Climate change impacts Cambodia, for instance 90,000 Cambodians were estimated to be annually affected by flooding, while USD\$105 million worth of urban damage was expected. Economic development and climate change are both expected to increase these figures. The affected people and urban damage were expected to increase annually to USD\$226 million by 2030. Provincial, district, commune, and Sangkat councils play a key role to build community resilience. Local administration has intervened to address climate change but is not always addressing the immediate needs due to climate change faced by marginalised communities.

Interest in addressing climate change at the commune level is increasing in Cambodia, as communities experience more frequent droughts, floods, and storms. These environmental pressures are affecting rural livelihoods and impacting marginalised groups, including women, children people with disabilities, the elderly, and indigenous communities.

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## OBJECTIVES

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The discussion aimed to examine how climate-related shocks affect daily life and livelihoods in communities, particularly for vulnerable groups, and to explore the roles of local administrations in responding to these challenges through disaster preparedness, recovery, and service delivery. It sought to assess existing local response practices, coordination mechanisms, and planning tools used at village, commune, and district levels, while identifying gaps in budget allocation, technical capacity, and information dissemination. The discussion also aimed to explore opportunities created by recent policy guidance to improve budget flexibility, strengthen the integration of climate resilience into local development planning, and enhance collaboration with line departments.

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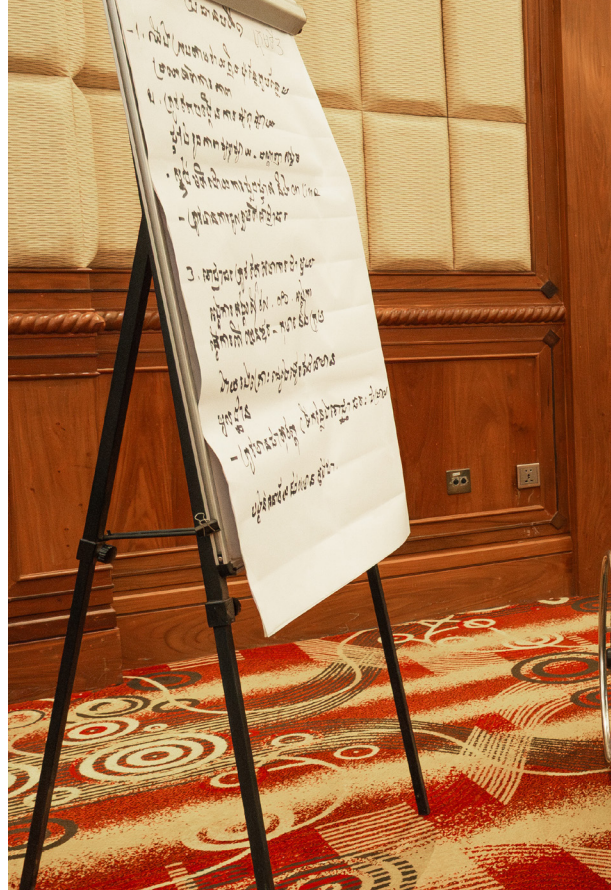
## DISCUSSIONS

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Climate related impacts to communities: Community representatives described how climate related events directly affect daily life. Flooding can destroy rice crops within days and reduce hygiene, while drought reduces water availability for farming and household use. In remote and island communities, limited transportation infrastructure makes it difficult to access services during emergencies. For people with disabilities and pregnant women, disasters can create additional barriers to mobility, health care, and livelihoods. Climate shocks also affect children's education, as flooding or damaged roads can prevent them from traveling to school.

### **The role of local administrations in responding to disasters:**

Local administrations play an important role in responding to these challenges. Village chiefs often collect information about disasters and report to commune councils, which coordinate responses and request support from relevant departments when necessary. Interventions have included providing seeds to farmers after floods damage crops, requesting technical assistance from agricultural departments to address pests, and rural development department to improve water access through wells, ponds, and small-scale irrigation systems. These efforts aim to help communities recover and maintain agricultural production.



### **Coordination of emergency response:**

At the district level, disaster management structures have been established to coordinate emergency responses. Operational teams are typically organised to handle search and rescue, hygiene and clean water, information dissemination, and emergency assistance. Local authorities also collaborate with health centres and other government departments to support vulnerable households during disasters.



### **Climate-related budgets:**

Despite these initiatives, budget allocations for climate related activities remain limited. Commune budgets are often prioritised for infrastructure development, while funding for social services or environmental responses is relatively small. Some communes allocate modest resources to support vulnerable households during disasters or provide agricultural inputs to affected farmers. Recent guidance from the

Ministry of Economy and Finance through Circular 007 has introduced more flexibility for communes to allocate funds to social services, hygiene, and environmental activities related to climate change. However, many local officials remain unfamiliar with the relevant budget codes and procedures.

### **Integration of climate activities into local plans:**

Local planning mechanisms such as the Commune Investment Program and the three-year rolling plan provide opportunities to incorporate climate related priorities. Authorities are beginning to integrate activities such as water infrastructure improvements, agricultural support, and disaster preparedness into local development planning. Maintaining data on vulnerable households also helps local authorities better target support during emergencies.

### **Successful initiatives:**

Some positive practices have emerged. Coordination between commune authorities and line departments enables communities to access agricultural support, vocational training, and other services when local budgets are insufficient. Information dissemination through village meetings and loudspeaker announcements has also helped increase awareness about disaster preparedness.

### **Remaining challenges:**

Budget resources for climate adaptation are limited, and information dissemination often reaches only a small number of villages each year, reducing the effectiveness of awareness efforts. Marginalised groups may also face difficulties participating in meetings or accessing support services during disasters.

### **The way forward:**

Strengthening climate resilience will require greater investment. Expanding water infrastructure such as wells and ponds can help address drought conditions, while improved agricultural support can assist farmers affected by floods. Increasing the allocation of commune and district budgets for climate related activities, along with stronger collaboration with technical departments, will be important for ensuring that climate responses are inclusive and responsive to the needs of vulnerable communities.



## SPEAKERS & MODERATOR

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### Panelists

#### **Ms. You Chanbopha**

*Commune Women and Children Officer, O'Maras Commune, Siem Bok district, Stung Treng Province*

#### **Ms. La Chenda**

*Deputy District Governor in Charge of finance and budget distribution for communes, Siem Bok District, Stung Treng Province*

#### **Ms. Hen Sovannara**

*Commune Council, O'Maras Commune Siem Bok District, Stung Treng Province*

#### **Mr. Chhneg Poern**

*A disabled Indigenous (Kouy) man live in Koh Chrem village, O'Maras Commune, Siem Bok District, Stung Treng Province*

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### Moderator

#### **Mr. Choun Virak**

*Project officer for Climate Change and Natural Resource Management, My Village Organisation*



## Highlight 4

# Conducting an inclusive dialogue in the community

Ms. Nov Sreyleap is a theatre artist, a director in Cambodia, and the founder of the Lakhon Chhloh group. With over 10 years of experience, she works in community theatre and engages in social activities focused on gender equality, women's empowerment, and human rights. Her work emphasises inclusive and participatory methods, using theatre as a tool for community dialogue and transformation.

- I am the founder and director of Lakhon Chhloh and I am honoured to have won the Inclusive Dialogue Award in late 2025 from the Ponlok Chomnes program.
- Lakhon Chhloh works directly with vulnerable or overlooked groups, such as women who have experienced violence, LGBTQ+ people, and ethnic minorities. It uses theatre as a tool to share and reflect on their unresolved challenges. By producing performances and presenting them to the public or relevant stakeholders, drama creates opportunities to work together to find solutions.
- Our method is to use theatre to present these challenges by transforming real-life experiences into performances. These performances are not happy endings or success stories; they portray real struggles. This is because real life, especially for vulnerable groups, is not easy. During the performance, both the audience and the performers—who are members of the vulnerable groups themselves—are encouraged to think together and explore possible solutions while watching the story unfold.

The second step is transforming discussion into concrete change:

- First, we use theatre to build trust and relationships with vulnerable groups. Once they begin to feel confident and connected, we introduce training sessions on education, legal rights, and access to public services. This knowledge becomes a foundation they can use in their daily lives, in communication, and as general awareness.

- After receiving this knowledge and education, we begin producing performances based on their real-life challenges. Reflective theatre invites members of the vulnerable groups to come together, share their experiences, identify common issues, and collectively define the challenges to be presented in a performance. The performance is then shared with stakeholders, including authorities, partner organisations, and community members who are responsible for addressing these issues.
- After the performance, everyone clearly understands the challenges faced by the vulnerable groups. While watching, stakeholders are encouraged to think about possible solutions. We then connect vulnerable individuals with experts and relevant stakeholders, such as local authorities, who are responsible for implementing solutions. We also link them to professionals in counselling, legal assistance, and other support services to help continue the process of resolving their problems.
- In addition to these connections, we do not leave them behind. We create Telegram or Facebook groups to maintain communication and support. Even when we are not physically active together, we continue sharing information and offering assistance whenever problems arise. Without this continued support, the activity would end and individuals might not know where to seek help. When facing mental health challenges or feeling blocked, they may feel lost or think short-term. Therefore, we maintain connections with experts, support groups, and authorities.
- Another important component is inclusive dialogue. This means creating a safe space or platform where everyone—literate or illiterate, young or old—can participate, share opinions, and express experiences. This space is safe, private, and free from discrimination or pressure. When their voices are heard and respected, they feel acknowledged and understood. Listening with respect, care, and attention creates the foundation for problem-solving.
- Inclusive dialogue is especially important for vulnerable and overlooked groups because it provides them with an opportunity to raise their issues, needs, and rights. It encourages participation in decision-making processes and promotes gender equality, equity, and social justice. When their voices are included, problems are clearly understood and solutions become more effective.
- Inclusive dialogue ensures that policies and programs respond appropriately to the real challenges people face. When their voices are heard, discussions become relevant and meaningful. No one is left behind because everyone is included. Inclusive dialogue is not just about talking; it is about ensuring that voices are genuinely heard and considered in decision-making so that actions taken are effective and responsive to their needs.



## Parallel Session 2A

# “Regional Innovation Systems: Collaboration between universities, provincial authorities, line departments, and industry in North-West Cambodia”

*Organised by National University of Battambang*



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## BACKGROUND

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Cambodia has low levels of linkages between universities and industries, even though these linkages can promote education quality and help develop, diffuse, and promote the utilisation of innovation. Using a sample of 46 participants from relevant institutions, Sam and Dahles (Sam and Dahles, 2017) found that even though stakeholder categories such as government, development partners, higher education institutions (HEIs), and industries are involved to a certain degree in developing the higher education sector, their collaboration is still weak. According to Sam et al. (Sam et al., 2016), Cambodia faces some challenges in orienting the higher education sector toward regional or global trends, which tend to support entrepreneurial endeavours. The weak linkages between universities and industries means that Cambodian universities lose the opportunity to diversify their income sources and to promote higher education and economic development.

Provincial-level policy development remains a relatively new concept; however, previous research conducted in Battambang Province has generated valuable findings on improving regional implementation systems. These studies emphasised the importance of collaborative engagement between universities, provincial departments, and industry actors to strengthen the capacity of local enterprises. Cambodia's domestic production capacity remains limited, particularly in transitioning from reliance on imported standards and raw materials toward locally produced inputs. While domestic production has grown, significant obstacles persist in terms of supply chain stability, cost structures, technological capacity, and institutional coordination.

Research findings suggest that the most effective strategy is to first identify systemic challenges faced by enterprises on a daily basis. Once these structural constraints are clearly mapped, targeted technological solutions and management capacity-building interventions can be designed accordingly.



## OBJECTIVES

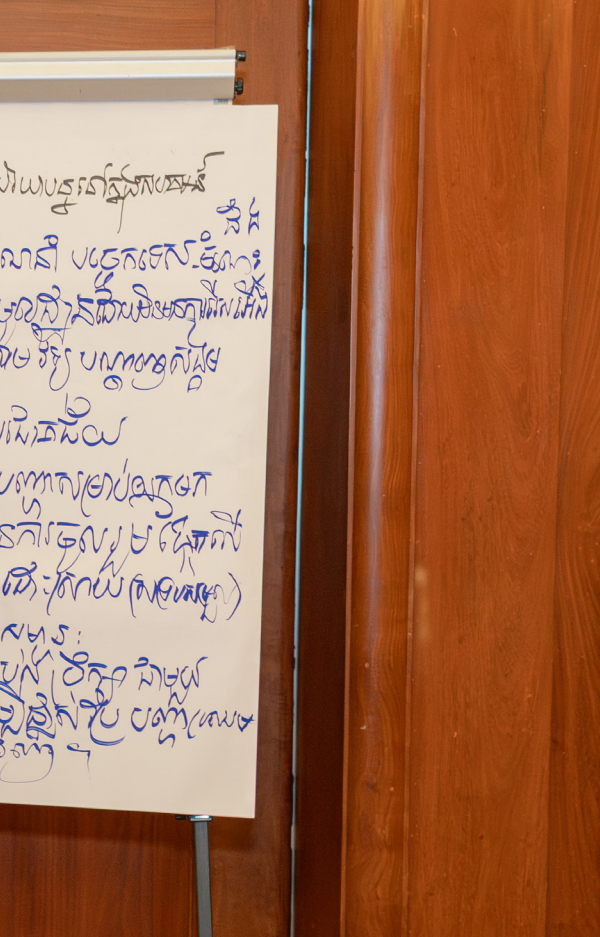
This panel discussion focused on strengthening regional innovation systems in Battambang Province through closer collaboration among universities, provincial authorities, technical departments, and local enterprises. The primary objective was to identify practical challenges faced by local businesses and explore coordinated solutions to enhance competitiveness, reduce production costs, and build a resilient domestic production base.

## DISCUSSIONS

The discussion underscored the interconnected systemic challenges facing Cambodia's agro-processing sector and the need for stronger, coordinated, cross-sectoral solutions that incorporate perspectives from enterprises, provincial governments, and the departments of industry and agriculture.

### The perspective of local enterprises:

From an enterprise perspective, local producers and enterprises face unstable raw material supply, climate-related disruptions, high electricity and logistics



costs, and reliance on imported inputs. These constraints limit scalability, prevent full utilisation of upgraded equipment, reduce competitiveness, and hinder progress toward export standards.

**The perspective of the provincial government:**

At the provincial government level and from a policy standpoint, there was broad consensus that these challenges are systemic and require integrated, cross-sectoral responses. Addressing structural

issues such as global instability, fluctuating energy costs, and ongoing supply chain disruptions demands coordinated planning. Key priorities include strengthening domestic production—particularly critical inputs like feed and fertilisers—enhancing linkages between agriculture and processing industries, and reducing reliance on imports. Equally important is the need to restore consumer confidence through rigorous quality control, improved hygiene standards, and greater transparency in production practices. Stabilising the domestic market remains the immediate focus, with the understanding that strong quality assurance and public trust are essential foundations for any future export expansion.

**The perspective of universities:**

Panelists from universities highlighted the importance of aligning research and innovation more closely with market demands. Universities can play a pivotal role by delivering demand-driven research, facilitating technology transfer, and developing a skilled workforce tailored to industry needs. However, stronger coordination mechanisms are essential to effectively match enterprise demands with existing research capacity and minimise duplication of efforts. The National University of Battambang aims to align research with real small and medium enterprise (SME) needs and serve as a hub for technology transfer. In this context, the development of a resource-mapping platform was proposed to better connect enterprise needs with academic expertise and enhance overall efficiency.

### **The perspective of industries:**

Industries also identified that SMEs continue to face persistent challenges, including limited access to finance, high logistics costs, and intense competition from larger firms. Although technical training and standards—such as GHP, GMP, GAP, and GAHP—are available, enterprise uptake remains uneven and underutilised. Institutional stakeholders emphasised the need to strengthen private sector engagement and foster closer collaboration with universities to enhance production capacity and compliance with standards. Promoting a culture of continuous learning and adaptation will be critical to improving productivity, product quality, and overall competitiveness.

### **The perspective of the Agriculture Department:**

The Agriculture Department discussed key strategies focus on strengthening production capacity through the adoption of standards such as GAP and GAHP, organizing farmers into structured communities, and expanding contract farming arrangements to ensure a stable supply of consistent quality for processors. These measures are critical for improving coordination across the value chain and enhancing overall sector performance. However, persistent challenges—including the impacts of climate change and infrastructure gaps—continue to constrain productivity and competitiveness. Addressing these risks will be essential to sustaining long-term growth and resilience in the agricultural sector.

Overall, the discussion emphasised that strengthening the domestic market must precede export expansion. Enhancing product quality, reducing production costs, and improving supply chain integration will require coordinated action among government agencies, universities, and the private sector. Ensuring food safety and compliance with standards, alongside fostering continuous learning and innovation, is essential to rebuilding consumer trust and competitiveness. In this regard, establishing a regional coordination mechanism—formal or informal—will be critical to better align agriculture, industry, research, and provincial development efforts, paving the way for sustainable growth and future export readiness.



## SPEAKERS & MODERATOR

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### Panelists/ Speakers

**Mr. Tep Neavea**

*Vice Rector, National University of Battambang (NUBB)*

**H.E. Moul Thon**

*Deputy Governor of Battambang Province*

**Mrs. Ho Dany**

*Deputy Director, Provincial Department of Industry, Science, Technology, and Innovation*

**Dr. Ponh Oudom**

*Deputy Director, Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries*

**Mrs. Ouch Samaly**

*Owner, Seiha Maly Enterprise (Battambang-style fermented fish/meat snack –Nem producer)*

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### Moderator

**Dr. Thach Bunroeun**

*Vice Dean of National University of Battambang*



## Parallel Session 2B

# “Strengthening Social Protection for Cambodian Migrants at Home”

*Organised by the Analyzing Development Issues Centre*



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## BACKGROUND

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Cambodia has a strong labour force, but job opportunities in local communities are still limited. Because of this, many Cambodian workers decide to migrate to neighbouring countries, especially Thailand, to look for better income and more stable employment. Migration is often influenced by family members already working there, the hope of gaining new skills, and the opportunity to improve living conditions.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (2023), about 1.2 million Cambodians are working overseas, and around 92% of them are in Thailand. While migration helps families earn income, it also creates many social challenges, particularly for returning migrants and their children. Many migrant families, especially those without legal documents, face difficulties accessing social protection services such as healthcare, education, and government support programs like IDPoor or Equity Cards.

Qualitative research based on the in-depth interview at Purat, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey province in total 90 people found that most of immigrant haven't hold any IDPoor Card even though it is the documented to benefit them in their home country, Cambodia. In 2024-2025, ADIC worked with Vice Director and the student from Kamrieng High school around 30 Student in research design and digital data collection with the actual fieldworks. Youth group had interviewed around 319 families focused on Kamrieng district, specifically Ou Da and Boeng Reang communes. As a result, migration worker who has the boarding pass card still face with challenges while returning to Cambodia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, there are families who are poor but haven't received the IDPoor card or Equity card which creates impediments to accessing healthcare and other services.

In a period of one year with Ponlok Chomnes II, the Analyzing Development Issues Centre (ADIC) team focused on four stages: 1) preparing research design with youth, 2) actual fieldwork with youth and produce findings, 3) training youth from commune council on Commune Investment Plans (CIPs), and 4) using the research findings to present and advocate for community interests in in the Commune Council's monthly meeting and other forums.

Research conducted by ADIC showed that migrant children often experience limited access to education and proper care while living or working across the border. Some families are separated during migration which increases vulnerability for children and women. Youth-led research in Kamrieng district also revealed how young people can support local authorities by collecting data and helping bring migrant issues into Commune Investment Plan discussions.

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## OBJECTIVES

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This panel discussion focused on five main topics, including the issue of migration more broadly, how issues are addressed in the development plans, how migration is integrated into Commune Investment Plans, the role of research and youth-led research as it pertains to the Commune Investment Plan, and ways forward.

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## DISCUSSIONS

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### **Recognition of the problem:**

The Committee for Women and Children Affairs collects information about migrants, including gender, poverty status (Poor I and Poor II), and family composition. Many migrants are youth and children, and some parents migrate while leaving their children at home.

At the same time, Commune officials record migrants who return from Thailand and report the information to higher

administrative levels. In some cases, migrants are deported or imprisoned during border conflicts. Families returning to Cambodia report to the commune to access support such as Equity Cards. Vice village chief receives the information from migrants themselves to report to commune level, with special requirements for children under 5 in order to prepare basic necessities for them. The Kamrieng Migrant Reception Centre also received 3332 migrants in January 2026, including women, children, and the elderly. Recently, 200 migrants cross through natural routes, facing health and safety risks during the journey.



The Centre provides immediate assistance such as food, health check-ups, and first aid, and also supports migrants with information about legal documentation and education.

**Integration of Migrant Issues into the Commune Development Plan:**

The Committee for Women and Children follows a three-step process: collecting data, identifying citizens’ problems and needs, and prioritising key issues. Migrant issues are considered during the problem identification stage, but there are still gaps in fully integrating migrant information into commune planning. Some sectors,

particularly education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs, aim to include and address migrants’ needs.

The Kamrieng Migrant Centre supports migrants by providing vocational training. The Centre also highlighted the difference between returning migrants to their home communities and integrating migrants into broader support systems across provinces.



### **Integrating Migrant Worker Issues into the Commune Plan:**

There are no major challenges regarding migrants because the commune has already allocated budget and included these issues in the action plan. Migrants receive assistance such as food packages, Equity Cards, and monthly compensation (280,000 Riel) when participating in TVET programs. Authorities also help migrants obtain legal documents and provide information about safe and legal migration. Development partners also contribute by supporting livelihood opportunities, such as providing chickens and materials to help migrants start small businesses or agricultural activities.

### **The Role of Research and Youth-Led Research in Commune Planning:**

The vice school principal on the panel recognised the capability of the students who are involved in this research process which improved the accuracy of data. Many village chiefs have limited experience with digital tools, and youth can help bridge this gap by supporting digital data collection and information sharing through the Commune Investment Program (CIP). The Kamrieng Migrant Reception Centre also works closely with commune authorities through monthly meetings and data sharing. This collaboration helps strengthen communication and promotes inclusivity by connecting youth with local authorities.

### **Way Forward:**

One key concern is that many migrants lack proper legal documentation which creates challenges for protection and reintegration. Authorities were encouraged to be more flexible when supporting migrants without documents. Migrants should also be encouraged to participate in commune meetings so that their voices can be included in local planning.

Future efforts should focus on improving migrants' living standards by supporting sustainable livelihoods, such as vegetable farming and other income-generating activities.

The overall discussion provides key insight through the collaboration of the sub-national level which allow youth to experience and assisting in data collection. The discussion highlighted the need for legal protections for migrants returning home and other key areas of support. To strengthen social protection for Cambodian migrant, better coordination is needed between local authorities, communities, youth, and development partners.



## SPEAKERS & MODERATOR

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Panelists/  
Speakers:

**Mr. Long Chamroeun**

*Vice School Principal, Kamrieng High School*

**Mr. Rith Soteara**

*Vice village chief*

**Ms. Lorn Mala**

*Committee for Women and Children Affairs*

**Ms. Pen Pin**

*Commune Clerk*

**Mr. Hem Bunhean**

*Director, Kamrieng Migrant Reception Center*

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Moderator

**Mr. IL Oeur**

*Executive Director, Analyzing Development Issues Centre (ADIC)*

2026

គោលនយោបាយ  
សង្គម

# សំនួររត់ចាំបំផុត CLOSING REMARKS



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កម្ពុជា

H.E. Thong Sokun  
Director General of the General  
Affairs and Infrastructure, the O  
Member of the Ponlok Chamber



**H.E. Thong Sokun**  
*Director General of the General Department  
of Environment and Infrastructure Affairs of  
the Council of Ministers*

# CLOSING REMARKS

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Universities, national policymakers, sub-national authorities, community representatives, civil society organisations, and research partners have gathered here today to engage in meaningful dialogue and to learn from one another. The insights shared—ranging from climate change adaptation initiatives to inclusive local budgeting, social protection for migrant workers, and regional innovation systems—have demonstrated the richness of local experience and underscored the importance of listening carefully to what communities are telling us at this moment.

I would like to share a few personal reflections. When I first joined the Technical Advisory Committee of the Ponlok Chomnes Program, I was eager to better understand how research and dialogue could more effectively support the work of the Royal Government, particularly at the sub-national level. From the perspective of the Office of the Council of Ministers, our responsibility is to ensure policy coherence, effective coordination, and consistent implementation across sectors and administrative levels.

In this regard, the Pentagonal Strategy – Phase I provides the overarching national framework for Cambodia’s development. The Strategy places people at the centre of policy, emphasising good governance, institutional effectiveness, sustainability, and inclusive growth across all sectors and levels of administration.

The Provincial Policy Forum 2026 discussions have offered clearer and more concrete insights. We heard practical examples from the provinces about how local data are being used, how communities are engaged, and what challenges remain. These were not abstract reflections; they represented the lived realities of provincial, district, and commune administrations, as well as the communities they serve. What stood out most to me was the fact that provincial actors are addressing complex challenges that arise repeatedly in their daily work. In this context, data is not separate from governance; it is a critical tool that enables local authorities to make informed decisions, allocate resources effectively, and respond appropriately to citizens’ needs.

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From my experience, data-driven and inclusive policies that place people at the centre are essential to translating the Pentagonal Strategy – Phase I into tangible outcomes. A national strategy can only succeed if it receives input from all directions—especially from the grassroots—and if it is supported by constructive collaboration among communities, sub-national administrations, and national institutions.

The forum reaffirms that effective policy must be grounded in practical implementation. This requires not only a clear national direction but also continuous feedback from provinces and communities regarding what is working and what requires adjustment. Forums such as this provide an invaluable platform for mutual exchange and learning.

We have heard diverse approaches to participatory research, making information accessible to different target groups, and organizing inclusive dialogues across provinces and communities. The forum placed an emphasis on inclusive dialogue. Inclusivity is not simply about attending meetings; it is about understanding how different groups experience policy on the ground and ensuring that their perspectives inform decision-making. This is especially important for local governance, where trust between authorities and communities is fundamental.

In summary, under the leadership and coordination of the Office of the Council of Ministers, a strong synergy between today’s discussions and our ongoing efforts to strengthen coordination, advance decentralisation, and improve public service delivery is witnessed. Promoting the effective use of local data and fostering inclusive dialogue are essential to ensuring that national strategies deliver tangible benefits to every citizen and contribute to the achievement of the Royal Government’s development priorities.

**In this spirit, it is important to translate the Provincial Policy Forum discussions into concrete actions:**

- For Provincial Authorities: Continue to engage actively with communities, collect and analyse data systematically, and base decisions on clear evidence.
- For National Policymakers: Use the provincial insights shared today as valuable inputs for inclusive and context-responsive strategies and policy decisions.
- For Civil Society and Communities: Continue to amplify the voices of women, youth, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, those living in remote areas, and other vulnerable groups whose perspectives are often underrepresented.
- For Researchers and Research Institutions: Sustain your commitment to producing high-quality, practical research that policymakers can readily apply.

This forum is not an endpoint, but a milestone in an ongoing journey. The relationships established, the networks strengthened, and the lessons shared today are valuable assets for enhancing policy development, provincial planning, and national strategies in the years ahead.

Appreciation is conveyed to the Australian Government, The Asia Foundation, Cambodian research institutions, universities, and all partners who collaborated to organise this forum and special thanks to participants from the provinces and colleagues at the sub-national level for your openness, dedication, and commitment to building a Cambodia that is inclusive and guided by sound data and evidence.

Let us depart with a shared commitment to ensure that the voices, knowledge, and experiences from each province continue to inform and strengthen national policies for the benefit of all Cambodians. Together, we can make decisions that are not only effective, but also equitable, inclusive, and sustainable.



# CONCLUSION

The Ponlok Chomnes Provincial Policy Forum 2026, held in Siem Reap Province, marked an important step in Cambodia’s efforts to strengthen evidence-informed policymaking at the subnational level. Convened under the theme “Connecting Communities, Evidence, and Policy: Strengthening Subnational Decisions for Cambodia’s Future,” the forum highlighted the growing role of provincial actors not only as implementers of policy but also as critical knowledge holders and innovators. Participants reaffirmed that effective policy solutions must be grounded in the lived realities and diverse perspectives of communities across Cambodia.

Throughout the forum, discussions highlighted practical pathways for bridging the gap between local evidence and decision making. Sessions explored the use of inclusive data to address commune level challenges, approaches for strengthening meaningful participation in research processes, and opportunities to link climate resilience with shock responsive social protection systems. The forum also examined how collaboration between universities, local industries, and provincial authorities can support regional innovation and economic development. A key highlight of the event was the introduction of the Guidelines for Inclusive Dialogue, a practical tool aimed at ensuring that inclusion becomes a standard practice in policy discussions rather than a procedural requirement, enabling women, youth, persons with disabilities, and indigenous communities to contribute actively to policy solutions.

Several cross-cutting lessons emerged from the provincial dialogue. First, provincial authorities and local communities already hold valuable knowledge and practical solutions to address complex challenges such as climate change, economic transitions, and social protection. Strengthening the link between this local evidence and formal decision-making processes remains essential. Second, meaningful inclusion requires more than representation. It requires deliberate efforts to remove structural barriers through accessible infrastructure, inclusive budgeting, and communication approaches that respond to the needs of marginalised groups. Third, trust and collaboration between authorities, researchers, and communities remain fundamental for effective governance. Transparent data sharing and sustained dialogue help ensure that policies respond accurately to local priorities.

The forum reflected the continued commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Australian Government, and The Asia Foundation to strengthening a policy environment that values local insight, credible evidence, and inclusive participation. It also showed the growing capacity of provincial administrations, local researchers, and civil society organisations to contribute to policy discussions and development solutions.

Moving forward, the insights and experiences shared in Siem Reap will contribute to strengthening provincial planning processes and informing national policy strategies. By strengthening the connections between communities, evidence, and policy, the Ponlok Chomnes Provincial Policy Forum 2026 has reinforced the foundation for a more responsive, inclusive, and locally grounded policy ecosystem that can support Cambodia's development aspirations.

# Annex 1: Speakers, Panelists, and Moderators



**Ms. Sokha CHEAT**

*Executive Director of the Spinal Cord Injury Association of Cambodia Battambang Province*



**Ms. Maramy CHEY**

*Senior Program Officer, Ponlok Chomnes II*

Ms. Cheat is a person with a spinal cord disability and uses a wheelchair as an assistive device. She is currently the Executive Director of the Spinal Cord Injury Association of Cambodia in Battambang Province, representing persons with disabilities. She has been actively working in the field of disability rights, as well as advocating and engaging with policymakers and civil society organisations at both national and international levels, drawing on her lived experience as a person with a disability.

Ms. Chey Maramy is a Senior Program Officer with the Ponlok Chomnes Program at The Asia Foundation. Her role involves close collaboration with program partners and coordination of activities related to Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI). She holds a master’s degree in law from Nagoya University, Japan.



**Ms. Marong CHHAING**

Ms. Chhaing Marong is a former member of the Inclusive Dialogue Guideline Working group under the Ponlok Chomnes Program II. She previously worked as a researcher at the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), where she undertook multiple responsibilities, including coordinating inclusive dialogues at both sub-national and national levels. Ms. Marong contributed substantive insights to the formulation of the Inclusive Dialogue Guideline and has authored publications that strengthen adaptive capacity in the context of climate change-induced gender migration. Marong graduated with a master's degree from Korea University (South Korea), majoring in social policy in 2023. She has a bachelor's degree from Royal University of Phnom Penh (Phnom Penh city), majoring in sociology in 2016.



**Mr. Poeurn CHHENG**

*Farmer and former soldier*

A disabled indigenous (Kouy) man lives in Koh Chrem village , O'Maras Commune, Siem Bok District, Stung Treng Province. Mr. Chheng was a former soldier. He was injured in his right hand due to multiple gunshot wounds and lost his sight in his left eye during the Khmer Rouge war. He comes from a poor family with a social security card. Now he a farmer in the Koh Chrem Village O'Maras Commune, Siem Bok District, Stung Treng Province



### **Mr. Virak CHOURN**

*Project Officer for Climate Change and Natural Resource Management. My Village (Mvi)*

Mr. Chourn Virak is the Project Officer for Climate Change and Nature Resource Management with My Village in Stung Treng Province. He has more than 7 years of experience as a Sale Supervisor to Equipment and Service Supplier. He also has 5 years of experience as a project officer improving the livelihoods of the most vulnerable communities through the creation of small businesses. Virak holds a degree in Public Law and has worked extensively with private companies, national organisations, and government entities to develop resilient community.



### **Ms. Sokthida DIM**

*Member of the Commune Council of Pak Khlang Commune, Koh Kong Province*

She was awarded a scholarship under the Hun Sen (AMT) Scholarship Program to pursue a bachelor's degree in human resource management at the University of Management and Economics. She is currently serving as a commune council member. She participated in training workshops in Phnom Penh on inclusive approaches related to climate change and persons with disabilities. She also joined experience-sharing sessions on establishing community networks for exchanging knowledge and best practices. In addition, she has carried out data collection, coordination, and disaster management activities at the village level within Pak Khlang Commune, focusing on the impacts on households affected by strong winds, storms, and other disasters in the commune.



### **Ms. Chandy ENG**

*Executive Director of Gender and Development for Cambodia*

Ms. Chandy Eng is a Cambodian feminist leader and Executive Director of Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC), with over a decade of experience advancing gender equality and feminist leadership across ASEAN. She holds degrees in Law and International Human Rights and is currently pursuing a PhD in Political Science focused on women's roles in peacebuilding along the Cambodia border. A member of the ASEAN People's Forum Committee since 2018, she is recognised for her transformative leadership and regional advocacy.



### **Mr. Bunheang HEM**

*Executive Director of the Kamrieng Migrant Reception Center*

Mr. Bunheang was born in Prey Khmer Village, Rolea B'ier Commune, Rolea B'ier District, Kampong Chhnang Province. In 2019, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in business administration from the National University of Management in Phnom Penh. He currently resides in Svay Village, Boeung Reang Commune, Kamrieng District, Battambang Province. Since 2017, he has been serving as the Deputy Officer of Social Affairs and Social Welfare (in charge of cults and religion at the district level) at Kamrieng District Administration. He is also the Executive Director of the Kamrieng Migrant Reception Center



### **Ms. Sovannara HEN**

*Commune Council, O'Maras Commune,  
Siem Bok District, Stung Treng Province*

Ms. Hen Sovannara is the Commune Council for O'Maras Communes, Siem Bok District, Stung Treng Province. She has more than 10 years of experience for Commune Women and Children Officer facilitating domestic violence issues and civil registration. Nowadays she is the head of the Commune Council.



### **Mrs. Dany HO**

*Deputy Director, Provincial Department of  
Industry, Science, Technology, and Innovation*

Mrs. Dany Ho is the Deputy Director of the Provincial Department of Industry, Science, Technology, and Innovation in Battambang Province. In this role, she supports the implementation of national industry, science, technology, and innovation policies at the provincial level, with a focus on SME development, innovation promotion, and institutional coordination. She has been actively involved in provincial and international initiatives related to science, technology, and innovation, including collaboration with universities, research institutions, and development partners. Mrs. Dany Ho has represented the provincial department in regional knowledge exchange programs and technical workshops aimed at strengthening innovation systems and linking research with local economic development.



### **Mr. OEUR II**

*Executive Director, Analyzing Development Issues Centre (ADIC), Cambodia*

II is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Analyzing Development Issues Centre (ADIC) since 2011, where he focuses on land and natural resources governance; and social changes, especially cross-border migration. He is deeply committed to promoting critical thinking and fostering participatory action research (PAR) within local communities in Cambodia, particularly with indigenous communities in Northeast Cambodia. His educational background includes a master of science (MSc) in Public Policy with a specialisation in Sustainable Development from Maastricht University in The Netherlands in 2010; a Post-Graduate Diploma on Policy Analysis Skills from the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University in The Netherlands in 2005; and a MBA from Norton University in Cambodia in 2002.



### **Mr. Somuni KONG**

*Deputy Chief of the Administrative Office*

Mr. Somuni has been serving in the social affairs office since 2014. He initially held the position of Administration Office, with responsibilities in including reviewing documents and organising and securely maintaining records. In 2017, he was promoted to Deputy Chief of the Administrative office. In this role, he was responsible for preparing official letter, reviewing legal document, and compiling monthly, nine months, and semi-annual reports. He was appointed as Chief of the Veterans Office in 2019. His duties included managing and organising documentation for veterans, persons with disabilities, deceased persons, and those who lost their livelihoods. In 2024, he was selected through an interview process to serve as Chief of the Provincial Branch of the National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF) in Koh Kong Province. In this role, he is responsible for overall management, coordination, and accountability of the provincial branch.



### **Ms. Somaly KUM**

*Project facilitator, Youth for Peace*

Somaly Kum is a Project Facilitator at the Youth for Peace Organization. She has been working in the human rights field, transitional justice, and administrative duties since 2010. Her articles and research papers focus on transitional justice in Cambodia, from a legal and gender perspective. She has experience across civil society, university students, and the community through the outreach and training project. She used to work as a fellow researcher at the RWI in the project “Rule of Law”. She was a consultant and project officer in the Cambodian program for the WSD Handa Centre for Human Rights and International Justice at Stanford University. She used to work for ADHOC as a project assistant. She holds a master’s degree in Human Rights and Democratization (Mahidol University). She also earned a Master of Public Administration from the Royal University of Law and Economics. She holds a Bachelor of Management from Preah Kossamak Polytechnic Institute (PPI) and an Accounting degree from the National University of Management.



### **Ms. Chenda LA**

*Deputy District Governor in charge of finance and budget distribution for communes, Siem Bok District, Stung Treng Province*

Ms. La Chenda is the Deputy District Governor in charge of finance and budget distribution for communes in Siem Bok District, Stung Treng Province. She has more than 3 years of experience as an Administrative Officer in District, as well as 6 years of experience for Deputy Head of Administration and Finance Office in District. She also spent 5 years as the District Administration Director. Now she is Deputy District Governor. Ms. Chenda holds a master’s degree of Public Law .



### **Ms. Mala LON**

*Focal person for the Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC) in O'Da Commune*

She currently resides in O'Da Village, O'Da Commune, Kamrieng District, Battambang Province. She served as a Commune Administrative Assistant at the O'Da Commune Office from 2016 to 2022. From 2020 to 2028, she has been serving as the focal person for the Commune Committee for Women and Children (CCWC) in O'Da Commune, focusing on issues related to women and children. Currently, she is a Member of the O'Da Commune Council in Kamrieng District. In addition to her current role, she is responsible for the identification of poor households and persons with disabilities at the commune level, including the classification of vulnerable and at-risk groups such as women, children, and youth. Furthermore, she is responsible for data collection and updates in collaboration with Caritas Switzerland, focusing on returned migrant workers and vulnerable migrants. She also serves as a focal officer for the National Social Assistance Program under the Family Package Program.



### **Mr. Chamroeun LONG**

*Deputy Director of Kamrieng High School*

He lives in O'Da Village, O'Da Commune, Kamrieng District, Battambang Province. He is currently the Deputy Director of Kamrieng High School. In addition to his role at the school, he is responsible for discipline management and also serves as a trainer with non-governmental organisations on values education and safe migration.



### **Mr. Vibolratanak MEAN**

*Mean Vibolratanak is a wheelchair user and is also a Project Coordinator and Trainer in Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation (CDPO)*

Mr. Vibolratanak is a disability trainer who has 6 years of experience in providing trainings on disability movement in Cambodia, including of Training of trainers on the Inclusion of Disability into the Governance (CIP), Training of trainers on WASH with Water Aid and Training of trainer on Sexual Health and Reproductive Health (GIZ), International Airport, ChildFund Cambodia, Marie Stopes Cambodia, Commune Investment Plan (CIP) and private sectors. He is also a co-facilitator on Disability Inclusive Development Master Class (DFAT and CBM), and as GEDSI Consortium member in PC II. He also helps to develop disability-inclusive strategies in society.



### **H.E. Thon MOUL**

*Deputy Governor of Battambang Province*

H.E. Thon Moul is the Deputy Governor of Battambang Province, where he plays a key role in supporting provincial administration, coordination with national line ministries, and implementation of sub national development priorities. He regularly represents the provincial government in official ceremonies, policy dialogues, and development initiatives across sectors including economic development, financial inclusion, social accountability, and public service delivery. His work emphasises collaboration with the private sector, development partners, and civil society to promote inclusive growth and strengthen governance at the provincial level.



**Ms. Sreyleab NOV**

Sreyleab Nov is a Cambodian theatre artist and stage director, and founder of Chhloh Theater (Reflection Theatre). With over 10 years of experience, she works in community-based and socially engaged theatre addressing gender equality, women’s empowerment, and human rights. She has collaborated with Phare Ponleu Selpak, Theatre du Soleil, and Global Art Corp, performing nationally and internationally. As a freelance consultant, she develops theatre projects, facilitates workshops, and mentors marginalised communities. Her work centres on inclusive, participatory approaches that use theatre as a tool for dialogue and social change.



**Mrs. Samaly OUCH**

Owner, Seiha Maly Enterprise  
(Battambang-style fermented fish/meat snack  
–Nem producer).



### **Ms. Pin PEN**

*Commune Administrative Assistant  
Kamrieng Commune, Kamrieng District,  
Battambang Province*

She lives in Kamrieng Village, Kamrieng Commune, Kamrieng District, Battambang Province. She is currently working at the Kamrieng Commune Office as a Commune Administrative Assistant.

In January 2024, she joined the Kamrieng Migrant Reception Center in conducting outreach and awareness activities on safe migration. In September 2024, she collaborated with ADIC (Agriculture Development and International Cooperation) to interview migrant workers who had returned from Thailand. In her current role as a Commune Administrative Assistant, she has been actively working with the Kamrieng Commune Administration to distribute food supplies to poor households, the elderly, orphans, and migrant workers returning from Thailand.



### **Ms. Sophea PEN**

*Commune Chief*

In 2012, with the trust and support of the leaders, she ran for commune chief and has served in this position to the present day. Her outstanding achievements include providing public services to citizens, visiting and supporting community members, contributing to early childhood education, improving water and sanitation, developing local infrastructure, and mediating disputes outside the court system. Ms. Pen Sophea has also volunteered as a village animal health agent, and her work was recognised and supported by local leaders. In 2009, she was selected to serve as the person in charge of women and children.



### **Ms. Pharozin PHENG**

*Gender Program Manager at Women Peace Makers (WPM)*

Pharozin Pheng is a committed development professional with nearly two decades of experience advancing gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) in Cambodia. She currently serves as Gender Program Manager at Women Peace Makers (WPM), where she leads inclusive strategies and initiatives focused on gender equality, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, access to local justice, network building, and other policy influence and public engagement related interventions. Her experience includes working at Abt Global/Harvest III, where she led strategic partnerships to enhance market access for women, youth, and other members of marginalised groups in agribusiness. She served as Equity & Inclusion (E&I) Program Manager at WaterAid Cambodia, where she developed national frameworks and led policy advocacy for inclusive WASH services. Her earlier leadership roles include Program Manager at the Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation (CDPO), Program Manager at the Cambodian People Living with HIV Network, and National Coordinator at the Cambodian Alliance for Combating HIV/AIDS (CACHA). She also served as National UNV Specialist with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), advocating for women living with HIV.



### **Dr. Oudom PONH**

*Deputy Director, Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries*

Dr. Oudom Pongh is the Deputy Director of the Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (PDAFF) in Battambang Province. He has extensive experience in agricultural development, climate resilient farming practices, and coordination of provincial agricultural programs. Dr. Pongh has played a key role in promoting climate adaptive crop management, strengthening agricultural value chains, and supporting farmer organisations through collaboration with national institutions and development partners. His work includes leading technical validation processes for climate smart agriculture, supporting organic and market oriented production, and contributing to provincial implementation of national agricultural policies.



### **Ms. Bophaphoung RIMPHAT**

*Advocacy and Networking Program Manager  
at Gender and Development for Cambodia  
(GADC)*

Bophaphoung Rimphat is the Advocacy and Networking Program Manager at Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC), a leading feminist organisation working to advance gender equality and women’s rights across Cambodia. GADC is a non-profit, non-political organisation founded in 2000 to promote gender equality as a human right. Through feminist education, community outreach, and advocacy, GADC empowers women and men to challenge gender norms, end violence, and participate equally in social, economic, and political life. With over six years at GADC, Bophaphoung supports diverse women and youth to become change agents in their communities, advocating for policy reform and gender justice, train CSOs network on feminist advocacy, and jointly developed inclusive guidelines and accessible communication guideline for researchers and practitioner.



### **Mr. Sotheara RITH**

*Deputy Village Chief of Lumphat Village, O’Da  
Commune, Kamrieng District, Battambang  
Province*

Mr. Sotheara Rith lives in Lumphat Village, O’Da Commune, Kamrieng District, Battambang Province. He is currently serving as the Deputy Village Chief of Lumphat Village. When he first moved to Kamrieng District in 2005, he and his wife worked as daily laborers, earning 5,000 riel per day. In 2007, he was appointed by the village chief as the Head of the Village Youth Group. Later, in 2012, he was appointed as a member of the Village Security Team. In 2022, due to the trust and support he received from the villagers and the commune authorities, he was appointed as the Deputy Village Chief of Lumphat Village, a position he continues to hold today.



### **Dr. Chanthy SAM**

*Research Team lead*

Dr. Chanthy Sam is currently a research team leader and senior lecturer and has more than eighteen years of professional experience, including in social protection, social work, climate change adaptation, water supply and sanitation, water resource management, energy, ecosystem services, environmental and social impact assessment, strategic environmental assessment, urban environmental management, solid waste management, project management and monitoring and evaluation, and social and finance accountability. He has also worked on the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), environment, social, and governance (ESG) issues, project management, resettlement, gender, Ombudsman and one-window service, public policy, good governance, administrative reform, and land degradation. He has five years of experience in national policy advocacy in environmental protection, hydropower development, public participation, mining, social media and communication, and other natural resources management.



### **Ms. Dina SAM**

*Chief of the Provincial Branch of the National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF),  
Preah Sihanouk Province*

She passed the civil service entrance exam and joined the Ministry of Interior in 2004. She worked for 7 years in Correctional Center II in the health sector. She continued her mission at the Temporary Detention Facility of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) for 11 years in the administrative field. In early 2021, she transferred to the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation. At the beginning of her career in the social sector, she worked for 2 years at the Voluntary and Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Center in Kaev Phos Commune, Stung Hav District, Preah Sihanouk Province, focusing on detoxification and treatment. In early 2023, she began working at the Provincial Department of Social Affairs in Preah Sihanouk as a joint officer in charge of the Social Services Office. In early 2024, she was successfully selected as Chief of the Provincial Branch of the National Social Assistance Fund.



### **H.E. Boriraks SAR**

*Rector of the National Institute of Social Affairs*

H.E. Boriraks Sar is currently the Rector of the National Institute of Social Affairs. He holds a master's degree in business administration, majoring in International Business and Marketing from Hawaii Pacific University, USA, along with many other business and public related certifications in Cambodia. He joined the army with the rank of commander under the Ministry of National Defence and later transitioned to a civil servant role, serving as Deputy Administrator for Prey Veng Province for two terms (8 years). In 2023, he became Chief of Cabinet of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation.



### **Ms. Chantha SAY**

*Community member and IDPoor Level 2 household*

She resides in Kampong Bay North Village, Kampong Bay Sangkat, Kampot City, Kampot Province.



### **Ms. Chanbopha YOU**

*Commune Women and Children Officer  
O'Maras Commune, Siem Bok District, Stung Treng Province*

Ms. You Chanbopha is the Commune Council for O'Maras Communes, Siem Bok District, Stung Treng Province. She works as a Commune Women and Children Officer, facilitating domestic violence and civil registration.



### **Mr. Neavea TEP**

*Vice Rector*

*National University of Battambang*

Mr. Tep Neavea is the Vice-Rector of the National University of Battambang (NUBB) and a senior figure in Cambodia's higher education and quality assurance landscape. He has extensive experience in academic leadership, research development, and higher education quality assurance, and has represented Cambodian universities in national, regional, and international forums. In addition to his academic leadership role, Mr. Tep Neavea is actively involved in accreditation and quality assurance initiatives, including work with ASEAN-level higher education quality networks. He has contributed to strengthening institutional standards, research capacity, and evidence-based approaches in education governance.



### **Dr. Bunroeun THACH**

*Vice Dean of National University of*

*Battambang*

Dr. Thach Bunroeun is an economist and senior academic leader with extensive experience in higher education, research management, and institutional development in Cambodia. He currently serves as Vice Dean of Sociology and Community Development at the National University of Battambang, where he oversees research, academic affairs, and development projects. Previously, he held long standing leadership roles as Vice Dean of the Faculty of Business Administration and Tourism and Director of the Postgraduate School, coordinating master's and PhD programs and managing partnerships with national and international organisations. Dr. Bunroeun holds a PhD in Economics from the University of L'Aquila, Italy, with research interests in innovation economics, national and regional innovation systems, and strategic management. He has also earned master's degrees in economics and business administration, and a bachelor's degree in economics.

# ANNEX 2: AGENDA

Ponlok Chomnes Provincial Policy Forum 2026

*“Connecting Communities, Evidence, and Policy: Strengthening Subnational Decisions for Cambodia’s Future”*

5 February 2026

Sokha Angkor Resort, Siem Reap Province

Language Medium: Khmer Language with English Interpretation

## MORNING

● 7:30 – 8:15 am	<b>Registration</b> The Asia Foundation, Ponlok Chomnes Team
● 8:30 – 8:40 am	<b>National Anthem</b> MC
● 8:40 – 8:50 am	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> Ms. Meloney Lindberg, Country Representative, The Asia Foundation
● 8:50 – 9:00 am	<b>Opening Remarks</b> Ms. Kirsty Harris, Development Counsellor, Australian Embassy in Cambodia
● 9:00 – 9:30 am	<b>Keynote and Opening Remarks: The use of local evidence in sub-national policymaking</b> H.E. Sok Thol, Deputy Provincial Governor Siem Reap Province
● 9:30 – 10:00 am	<b>Group photos and coffee and tea break</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All participants</li></ul>

## MORNING

● 10:00 – 11:30 am

### Plenary: Local Solutions that Work

- **Topic 1:** “Using inclusive data to solve a community issue”

**Speaker:** Ms. Pen Sophea, Svay Chuk Commune Chief, Kampong Chhnang

- **Topic 2:** “Meaningful participation in a research process”

**Speaker:** Ms. Kum Somaly, Project Coordinator, Youth for Peace, and member of SheThinks Network, Phnom Penh

- **Topic 3:** “Effective sharing of information with the community”

**Speaker:** Ms. Cheat Sokha, OPD, Director of Spinal Cord Injury Association of Cambodia in Battambang

- **Topic 4:** “Conducting an inclusive dialogue at the community”

**Speaker:** Ms. Nov Sreyleab, Lead, Chhloh Theater, Siem Reap

### Groups Discussion and Report back

#### Moderator:

- Ms. Pheng Pharoazin, Gender Program Manager, Women Peace Makers

● 11:30 am – 12:00 pm

### Plenary: Inclusive Dialogue in Practice: Participatory approaches in local policymaking

*Brief demonstrations of inclusive facilitation tools that empower marginalised voices by three speakers*

#### Panelists:

- Mr. Mean Vibolratanak, Project Coordinator, Cambodian Disabled People’s Organisation
- Ms. Chhaing Marong, member of SheThinks Network
- Ms. Chey Maramy, Senior Program Officer, The Asia Foundation

#### Facilitated by

Ms. Eng Chandy, Executive Director, Gender and Development for Cambodia

## AFTERNOON

12:00 – 1:00 pm

### Lunch

All participants

1:10 – 2:40 pm

### Parallel 1A: Climate Change Adaptation Through a Cash-Transfer Program in Cambodia

#### Guest speakers:

- Mr. Kong Somony, Social Assistance Fund from Koh Kong
- Mrs. Sam Dyna, Social Assistance Fund from Sihanoukville
- Mrs. Dim Sokthida, Paklong Commune Council Member from Koh Kong
- Mrs. Say Chantha, Poor II Household Head from Kompot

#### Moderator:

- **Dr. Sam Chanthy, National Institute of Social Affairs (NISA)**
- 

### Parallel 1B: Commune Budget Allocation for Climate Change and Its Impacts on Marginalised Communities

#### Guest speakers:

- Mrs. La Chenda, Siem Bok district vice governor
- Mrs. Hin Sovannara, O'Moras commune council
- Mrs. You Chanbopha, Indigenous woman community leader
- Mr. Chheng Peurn, Community representative with disability

#### Moderator:

- Mr. Choun Virak, My Village Organization (MVi)

2:40 – 2:50 pm

### Coffee and Tea Break

All participants

## AFTERNOON

2:50 – 4:10 pm

### **Parallel 2A: Regional Innovation Systems:**

*Collaboration between universities, provincial authorities, line departments, and industry in North-West Cambodia*

- H.E. Moul Thon, Deputy Provincial Governor Battambang Province
- Dr. Ponh Oudam, Deputy Director of Battambang Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
- Mrs. Ho Dany, Deputy Director of Battambang Provincial Department of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation
- Mrs. Ouch Somaly, owner of Seyha-Maly Nem Trey Battambang

#### **Moderator:**

- Dr. Thach Bunroeun, National University of Battambang
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### **Parallel 2B: Strengthening Social Protection for Cambodian Migrants at Home**

#### **Guest speakers:**

- Mr. Long Chamroeun, Vice School Principal, Kamrieng High School
- Mr. Rith Soteara, Vice village chief
- Ms. Lorn Mala, Committee for Women and Children Affairs
- Ms. Pen Pin, Commune Clerk
- Mr. Hem Bunhean, Director, Kamrieng Migrant Reception Center

#### **Moderator:**

- Mr. Il Oeur, Executive Director, Analyzing Development Issues Centre (ADIC)

4:40 – 5:00 pm

#### **Closing remarks**

H.E. Thong Sokun, Director General of the General Department of Environmental Affairs and Infrastructure, the Office of Council of Ministers, and member of the Ponlok Chomnes Technical Steering

# ANNEX 3: MEDIA COVERAGES

1. [វិស័យដឹកជញ្ជូន ត្រូវបានចាត់ទុកជាសក្តានុពលខ្លាំងក្លាមួយរបស់ខេត្តសៀមរាប ក្រៅពីវិស័យទេសចរណ៍ និងកសិកម្ម - CNC News](#)
2. [អង្គការមូលនិធិអាស៊ី រៀបចំវេទិកាគោលនយោបាយថ្នាក់ខេត្ត ផ្តោតពង្រឹងការសម្រេចចិត្តនៅ ថ្នាក់ក្រោមជាតិ - Khmer Times](#)
3. [Australia and The Asia Foundation Support Inclusive Policymaking in Cambodia's Provinces - The Asia Foundation](#)
4. [Cambodia pushes evidence-based policymaking to provincial level | The Phnom Penh Post](#)



Building on the achievements of Ponlok Chomnes I (2019-2023) which aimed to strengthen the capacity of Cambodian knowledge sector institutions for quality research, The Asia Foundation is implementing the Ponlok Chomnes II: Data and Dialogue for Development in Cambodia Program (2023- 2027). Supported by the Australian Government, this program's goal is to contribute to public policy decisions, based on evidence and informed by inclusive dialogue, are operationalised and become the norm in Cambodia.

## CONTACT US

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