

## FWF GENDER FACT SHEET - CAMBODIA

### FACTS & FIGURES

- Human Development Index: 146 of 189 countries (UNPD 2019)
- Gender Inequality Index: 146 of 189 countries (UNDP 2019)
- Global Gender Gap Index: 89 of 153 countries (WEF 2020)
- Population with at least some secondary education: female (aged 25+): 15.1% - male: 28.1%
- Share of seats in parliament held by women: 19.3%
- Labour force participation rate: female: 75.2 - male: 87.6
- Vulnerable employment: 50.8%
- Median age population: 25.6 years old
- Child labour (aged 5-17): 48,6%
- Violence against women ever experienced, intimate partner: 20.9%
- Violence against women ever experienced, non-intimate partner: 3.8%
- Child Marriage: 19%
- Adolescent birth rate: 50.2%
- Maternal mortality rate: 161 deaths per 100,000 live births
- Infant mortality rate: 25.1 per 1,000 births
- Mandatory paid maternity leave: 90 days
- Sex ratio at birth (male to female births): 1.05
- Ethnic groups: Khmer 90%, Vietnamese 5%, Chinese 1%, other 4%
- Language: Khmer 95%, French, English

### COUNTRY CONTEXT:

- Cambodia gained full independence from France in 1953.
- **During the Khmer Rouge dictatorship over 1.7 million Cambodians died** of torture, execution, disease, exhaustion, and starvation. **The Khmer Rouge eliminated most of the educated and business class, destroying the economy in the process.** In 1979, the Vietnamese ended the genocidal “killing fields” of the Khmer Rouge forces, then 10 years of intermittent civil war followed; as a consequence, the social, economic and infrastructural development ceased.
- In the last two decades, **Cambodia achieved high economic growth:** tourism, garment, construction and real estate, and agriculture sectors accounted for the bulk of growth.
- **Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in Asia,** and its economic development is threatened by corruption, limited human resources, high income inequality, poor education and job prospects.

### Garment industry:

- **Around 700,000 people, mostly women (80%), are employed in the 600 garment and footwear factories in the country.**
- **These factories** are almost exclusively **foreign-owned (90.5% are owned by China);**
- **Textile exports,** which accounted for 68% of total exports in 2017, have driven much of **Cambodia’s growth over the past several years.**
- **The garment industry accounts for 16% of GDP and 80% of Cambodia’s export earnings.**

- Textile products are mainly exported to the United States and the European Union.
- The garment industry is essentially based on **low-skilled and labour-intensive activities**.
- **Women working in the garment sector are minimum skilled and earn low living wages.**
- A study from ILO in 2012 revealed that **one in five women working in garment factories felt they had been sexually harassed or sexually humiliated**. When they leave the workplace are at risk of rape, verbal abuse and sexual harassment from men who go around the factories.
- The Ministry in charge of Labour has set the minimum wage only for the garment, textile and footwear industries.
- **In 2019, the minimum wage for piece-rate employees in the garment, textile and footwear industries, working regular hours (48 hours per week), was set at \$182 per month.**
- A small proportion of the workforce is higher skilled: these are managers, supervisors, or members of the operations departments; most of them are men.
- Cambodia is a member of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) which is an agreement that reduces or eliminates tariffs on the good trades among the 10 ASEAN countries.

#### **Women in the society:**

- **Cambodian social structure is based on a hierarchal ordered society**, and men are categorised as higher than women, with both genders expecting to adhere to different behavioural patterns.
- **Women are expected to be quiet and naïve**; they cannot leave their father's household before the wedding and cannot communicate with the future husband before the wedding day.
- **Women are meant to take care of their children, husbands, relatives and it is up to them to do household chores.**
- In Cambodia, there it is said that women are like pieces of wool or cotton, and men diamonds.
- **Women represent 51% of the country's population, but their participation in social, economic and political life is still limited.**
- **The political sphere is almost totally dominated by men**, and political women are often marginalized and not taken into account.
- In general, **men earn more than women**. This is also a direct consequence of the fact that the majority of young girls drop out of school because they are expected to help at home;
- **Abortion is legal upon request within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy**. After 12 weeks, abortions can be practiced only when they the woman's life is at risk or to preserve her health, when the pregnancy is the result of rape, or the child is afflicted by an incurable disease.
- **Gender-based violence:**
- The Constitution of Cambodia (1993) establishes that there cannot be any physical abuse of any individual (Article 38).
- Cambodia has a national legal and policy framework to protect women's rights, including the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims of 2005 and the Law on Suppression of Trafficking in Humans and Sexual Exploitation of 2008.

- According to the regional UN Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence survey, **32.8% of men reported perpetrating physical and/or sexual violence against an intimate partner in their lifetime; one out of five men reported having raped women or girls.**
- Cambodia is one of the south-Asian countries with the **higher number of gang rapes.**
- Rape and sexual violence are perpetrated by family members, acquaintances and sometimes strangers, and occur in the home, school, workplace and in the community.
- Rape is under-reported, and **marital rape was criminalized only in 2005.**
- According to a national survey in 2014, **two in five females aged 13 to 17 and one in three females aged 18 to 24 believe that it is acceptable for a husband to hit or beat his wife under one or more circumstances.**
- **High rates of sexual harassment in the workplace** were reported by women, including unwanted sexual touching (80%) and unwanted sex (38%).
- **Sexual harassment and indecent behaviour in the workplace are prohibited** by Article 172 of the Cambodian Labour Law.
- The Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims (2005) establishes that local authorities must intervene in cases of domestic violence and provide for protection orders.
- The second National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (NAPVAW II) 2014-2018 promotes prevention interventions, access to quality services, coordination and cooperation to reduce violence against women.

## LEGAL CONTEXT:

### National legislation:

- The Cambodian Constitution guarantees **all Khmer citizens equal treatment under the law.**
- **Cambodian Labour Law covers only private sectors**, including non-governmental organizations, but **it does not apply to domestic workers** and personnel serving in air and maritime transportation.
- The labour contract can be either verbal or non-verbal.
- **Wage differences on the basis of origin, sex, or age of an employee are prohibited.**
- **The minimum age for regular employment is 15**, and minors should not sign an employment contract without the consent of their parents or guardian. Nonetheless, **minors aged from 12 to 15 years can be hired to do light work provided that the work is not hazardous to their health or mental and physical development, and it will not affect their attendance at school or training programs.**
- **Overtime is only allowed for exceptional and urgent work**, and employees must be allowed to choose to work overtime or not. Employers are not allowed to impose any penalty on an employee who chooses not to work overtime.
- Employers must give employees who give birth **90 days (3 months) of paid maternity leave. An employer cannot terminate a contract because the worker is pregnant, while she is on maternity leave or immediately before taking maternity leave.**
- For the first year of a child's life, **mothers have the right to one hour per day of paid time-off for breast-feeding breaks during work hours**; a factory where 100 women or more are employed must set up a nursing room.

- Employees can go on strike only after all other methods of dispute resolution have failed, such as negotiation, conciliation and arbitration. **Employees on strike are not entitled to pay.**
- **Employees have the right to be members of a union of their choice;** unions cannot represent workers and employers at the same time; employers cannot interfere in workers union affair.

**International legislation:**

- **In 1999, Cambodia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW), and in 2010 signed its Optional Protocol.**

**SOURCES:**

UN Development Programme: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-1-human-development-index-and-its-components-1>;

Gender Gap Index World Economic Forum: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf);

UN Report Cambodia 2019: [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/nhdr\\_cambodia.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/nhdr_cambodia.pdf);

UN Report Fact Sheet Cambodia: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/KHM>;

The Asia Foundation in Cambodia: <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/CambodiaWEPFINAL.pdf>;

UN Women Cambodia: <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/fr/countries/asia/cambodia#>.