

The impact of the Economic Crisis on women workers in Cambodia's Garment Sector

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1. Introduction

Cambodia's impressive economic growth in recent years has largely been driven by the country's garment sector¹. Owing to a favourable international trade environment in the nineties, the country's openness to foreign investment and its available cheap low skilled female labour, the garment industry has grown as a predominantly export-orientated sector. The major destination markets are the US and the EU and the industry is one of the largest employers in the country with about 350000 workers in June 2008. Over 90 percent of this workforce are women- mostly young and mostly internal migrants from the countryside. This has resulted in a significant feminisation of Cambodia's industrial workforce and these women workers have been the main drivers of the country's recent growth. But the current global economic crisis has also illustrated the vulnerability of the garment sector and the shortcomings of its low skill, low productivity kind of growth. Decline in foreign demand and decline in foreign investment have prompted enterprise closures and layoffs. GDP growth has declined and several hundred jobs have been lost, resulting in distress and hardship for several families.

Confirming much of what had been previously thought, a labour market and economic rapid assessment conducted by the ILO in January 2009 provided solid indications that the garment industry in Cambodia would be the country's hardest hit economic sector, being as it is almost wholly reliant on external demand and investment for its growth. In 2008, 27,000 workers were retrenched from the sector, and in 2009 it is estimated that this figure has now reached 70,000². In addition to retrenchment, many garment manufacturing firms have also resorted to a range of other structural and adjustment mechanisms in a bid to ride out the economic downturn. These include work suspensions, bans on overtime, and reduced working hours, all of which have had an acute financial impact on the sector's majority-female workforce –the majority of whom are poor, have little savings and large financial obligations to dependents in the provinces (i.e. children, parents, grandparents). In this respect, therefore, the crisis can be seen to be having a negative impact on household welfare and decision making not only in urban production centres like Phnom Penh, but also among rural communities reliant on remittances from family members in the factories.

Cambodia is now widely expected to deliver the largest percentage point drop in GDP growth of any ASEAN country in 2009. Although observers disagree over the extent of this slump, there remains general consensus internationally at least (among the World Bank, ADB, and IMF, for instance) that Cambodia will grow by no more than 2 percent this year -down from 10.2 percent in 2007. The Cambodian government, however, disagrees, arguing that the country can sustain at least five percent growth this year on the back of improved agricultural performance. There is general agreement however that the impact on the garment sector has been severe. And women, who were being drawn into the garment workforce fuelling its growth, are now bearing the brunt of job losses in the garment sector.

This paper focuses primarily on the impact of the global economic downturn on women workers in Cambodia and draws gender specific policy implications. It is based on a survey that the ILO has carried out among workers in the garment sector in collaboration with the research institute CIDS.³

2. Cambodia: background, and growth of the garment industry

¹ GDP growth has remained consistently above 6 percent over the last ten years, with several consecutive years of double digit growth in the period 2004 to 2007.

² Estimates of the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC), June 2009.

³ Cambodia Institute for Development Study

Cambodia is a predominantly agricultural based country of approximately 14 million. Much of the workforce remains rural based and engaged in agricultural activities –the sector generates 32 percent of GDP and employs more than half the country's labour force.⁴ Although economic growth for much of the last decade has been impressive (above ten percent in the 2004 to 2007 period) and per capita incomes have more than doubled since 1997, poverty still afflicts nearly a third of the population and income inequality, particularly between rural and urban areas, is on the rise.⁵

Cambodia is also a post-war nation, having only truly emerged from civil conflict in 1998, following the death of its now infamous former leader Pol Pot and the demise of his political movement, the Khmer Rouge. Having ruled the country between 1976 and 1979, during which it oversaw one of modern history's worst genocides and the near total destruction of the country's physical and economic infrastructure, the Khmer Rouge continued to fight both Vietnamese occupation in the 1980s and then later, the internationally-backed government in Phnom Penh following a UN-run election in 1993.⁶ Pol Pot's death spelled the end of nearly three decades of war, following which Cambodia has struggled to rebuild from virtual devastation its economic, social, and political spheres.

The garment industry in Cambodia emerged in the ostensibly post-conflict period that followed the UNTAC election of 1993. Although the Khmer Rouge continued to wage guerrilla war in the provinces (they had refused to participate in the elections), the presence of a nominally new political environment in Phnom Penh and a wave of donor-backed privatisation and market reforms encouraged the rapid entry of foreign investors, mostly East Asian in origin, into a fledgling "for-export" garment sector. Aside from its abundance of low wage labour, the principal attraction to Cambodia at this time was the preferential trade access it had to key Western markets (particularly the US), being as it was excluded from the quota restrictions faced by other East Asian garment exporters like Thailand, China and Indonesia.⁷ These factors gave Cambodia a considerable competitive advantage in the early years, something that helped spur the subsequent rapid growth and expansion of the industry, later helping it become Cambodia's single biggest export earner and manufacturing employer.

In 1998, the US government began negotiations with Cambodia to establish quotas for garment exports. What followed was a trade agreement in which quotas were set but their levels were allowed significant annual growth if Cambodia adopted sound labour policies and demonstrated progress in labour conditions.⁸ Accordingly, the ILO's Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) Programme was initiated to help Cambodia conform to these conditions, namely through independent monitoring and a range of services aimed at improving labour conditions and management in the garment sector. To date, Cambodia is the only country in which such a programme has been made mandatory. Through its ongoing presence, the ILO has since helped Cambodia set the bar for labour compliance in the garment industry, something that has appealed to international clothing brands keen to avoid "sweat shop" labour scandals –common in the 1990s- and embrace new more ethical approaches to garment production in the third world.

Following the establishment of BFC, the industry also established a formal employers' organisation, the Garment Manufacturer's Association in Cambodia (GMAC). At the outset GMAC was formed as a pressure group to lobby the Ministry of Commerce on issues that affected the general interests of its members. Later, though, this lobbying role was extended

⁴ UNDP (2009) "Cambodia Country Competitiveness: Driving Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction." Insights for Action.

⁵ UN (2009) "Common Country Assessment Cambodia."

⁶ This election was the hallmark of an ambitious UN mission –the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia, UNTAC- that was charged not only with restoring peace and reconciliation among warring factions but also overseeing the establishment of a new democratically elected government and market economy in the country.

⁷ Arnold (2006)

⁸ USAID (2007) "Factory-Level Value Chain Analysis of Cambodia's Apparel Industry." September 2007. Available at: http://gipc.org.kh/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=13

to include the Royal Government more broadly, and covered issues of wider importance such as national trade policy and mechanisms to ensure industry competitiveness in global markets. As the industry grew in importance in the early years of this decade, so too did the influence of GMAC. Accordingly, recent years have seen the association assume a more prevalent role in high level policy discussions and strategic development planning: today it is a member of a number of government-donor working groups and is a regular discussant in UN and IFI forums.

Against the backdrop of the aforementioned conditions, garment manufacturing in Cambodia fast evolved into the country's single most important economic sector after agriculture (where the bulk of the population are still employed). Exports from the sector grew from nothing in 1994 to US\$1.9 billion in 2004, with the bulk of these products going to the US and EU. Today, garments make up almost 90 percent of Cambodia's exports and some 16 percent of GDP. At its peak (i.e. pre-October 2008), the industry employed more than 320,000 workers, nearly 90 percent of whom were young women aged 18 to 25 years old. The vast majority of factories in the country remain foreign owned, with East Asian ethnic Chinese interests continuing to dominate.⁹

The garment sector's development has played an important role in both human development terms and in enhancing women's participation in the labour market. As mentioned earlier, the industry has in many ways been a boon for women's employment in Cambodia, even though this employment has been overwhelmingly low skilled and low income in nature. Nevertheless, the jobs created for these workers has played an important part not only in furthering the economic empowerment of women workers, but also in facilitating income flows (namely, remittances) to and the economic development of some of the poorest rural areas in the country.

Most of the garment sector's workforce come from rural provinces where poverty is widespread and gainful employment scarce. These include. For the vast majority of workers (around three-quarters), the factory is their first formal job. Moreover, most are young – typically, those most mobile and most able to work to support other family members such as children, parents and grandparents in the provinces.

Challenges to garment sector growth

To date, the garment sector in Cambodia retains only a limited share of the potential value-added possible in this type of manufacturing. This is because factories in the country remain limited to the basic "cut-make-trim" (CMT) stage of the value chain –the stage with the lowest level of economic value-added. Moreover, in the absence of a domestic textiles industry like in countries like China and Thailand, Cambodian factories still have to import nearly all the raw materials used in production –a severe drag on both lead times and cost competitiveness. The sector also relies heavily on FDI for its growth, the downside with this being that a significant proportion of the profits generated are repatriated abroad rather than re-invested in the country. Of course, garment manufacturing firms would –and often do-dispute this, arguing that they have played a significant, if not the most significant, role in the country's post-war economic resurgence.

3. Impact of the economic crisis on garment manufacturing

Perhaps understandably given its heavy reliance on FDI and external demand, Cambodia's garment sector has fared particularly badly amid the recent global economic downturn. As US and EU retail sales plummeted during the last quarter of 2008 and into 2009, many factories in the country were faced not only with collapsing orders but also new pressures from major buyers, most notably, demands for shorter lead-times (i.e. between order and delivery) and increased credit terms (i.e. from forty days to three months). Amid these tightening conditions, industry analysts suggest as many as 70 factories have closed and

⁹ According to Ministry of Commerce figures there were 262 registered garment factories in Cambodia as of May 2009.

70,000 jobs have been lost since autumn 2008.¹⁰ In addition, many other factories have been forced to slash overtime and introduce temporary work suspensions –both of which have had a depressive effect on real wages rates in the sector.

In early 2009, an ILO-commissioned rapid assessment in Cambodia identified the garment sector as the most vulnerable of the country's four growth pillars to the impacts of the global economic downturn. For the reasons mentioned above –namely, its heavy reliance on overseas demand and FDI- this is perhaps not surprising. The assessment predicted job losses in the sector to top 46,000 in 2009¹¹ -a figure that has already been surpassed due to further recent contractions in export orders. Furthermore, after shrinking 4 percent in 2008, the assessment forecast a further contraction of the garment sector in 2009 to the tune of 3 percent.¹²

The real economy impacts of this contraction, while not yet adequately understood, are likely to be severe for Cambodia. This is true not just in the short run, but also longer term. There is no guarantee, for example, that all those who have been retrenched in recent months will be reabsorbed in the sector in the near-future, nor when the expected rebound of the sector will actually come. Indeed, while most analysts agree that garment manufacturing will remain a major contributor to the Cambodian economy for the foreseeable future (indeed, there are few signs of economic diversification as yet), many also expect a period of substantial post-crisis restructuring after 2009, with the likely result being a significant downsizing of the industry and its workforce.

In recent months, the Cambodian government and development partners have expressed concerns about the welfare of both current and recently laid-off garment sector workers impacted by the global economic downturn. With garment workers already often considered vulnerable to economic hardship even in good economic times, there are strong indications now that Cambodia's recent economic slide has placed increased pressures on the ability of these workers to meet basic needs such as food, healthcare, housing, and children's education. In addition, as job losses from the garment sector have peaked and real incomes have fallen, questions have also been raised about the vulnerability of female factory workers to various forms of risky employment, exploitation, unsafe migration and trafficking. Research over the past decade, for example, has revealed long-standing, often cyclical, labour flows between the garment sector and various forms of sex work (both direct and indirect), and so in light of the current downturn there has been both widespread speculation and some empirical evidence to suggest that increasing numbers of women are now leaving the garment sector –either voluntarily or through retrenchment- and entering these kinds of occupations. The implications for the health and safety of such workers, not least with regard to infections such as HIV and AIDS, are potentially very severe.

Garment Manufacturing in Global Context

It is interesting and instructive also to briefly digress from Cambodia to examine the regional garment manufacturing context in Asia, and how similar industries in nearby countries are responding to the pressures of the global economic downturn. Cambodia's oft-cited largest "competitors" in garment manufacturing are near neighbours, Vietnam, China and Bangladesh, although there are several other ASEAN states also with sizeable garment manufacturing bases (Thailand and Indonesia, for example). The former three tend to be most closely associated as competitors with Cambodia though due to the typically low-end, low-cost nature of their produce, and their destination markets –typically, the major high street retailers in the US and Western Europe.

Bangladesh is a particularly interesting case to note in this regard. Garment manufacturing there generates approximately US\$12 billion per annum in export revenues (around 75

¹⁰ Ministry of Commerce data suggest a lower figure of 62,000.

¹¹ Figures based on CIDS projections and government statistics (see ILO-CIDS, 2009).

¹² Ibid.

percent of total) and employs around 2.4 million mostly female workers.¹³ Like Cambodia, its key export markets are the US and EU, which account for about 90 percent of total RMG exports.¹⁴ However, unlike Cambodia, recent economic indications show that the Bangladeshi garment sector is likely to fare surprisingly well during the current economic downturn. While year-on-year exports in the former have plunged an average of 20 percent each month in 2009¹⁵, Bangladesh has actually seen its exports to the US –its largest market- actually grow during the same period.¹⁶

The reason for this, according to analysts, is because as a volume based producer with comparably lower wage rates and weaker employment and labour laws than most of its competitors (Cambodia included), Bangladesh has in recent months been able to capture orders from these other countries simply by producing more at a lower cost per unit. According to some factory owners quoted in the national press, this has been achieved by increasing overtime and productivity among workers, however concerns have been raised in other spheres over the conditions such workers have to endure and the payment –or rather insufficiency of such- they receive for overtime hours.

Garment manufacturers in Cambodia are well aware of these trends, and have often –even before the crisis- pointed to countries like Bangladesh as an example of where competitiveness based on low wages and poor labour standards is hurting the Cambodian garment sector. Perhaps not surprisingly, this has led some to question the importance of labor compliance as a comparative advantage for the country's industry –particularly during the current downturn, during which it buyers have been accused of ignoring Cambodia's enviable compliance record in favour of a low cost, at any cost, buying philosophy. Key industry representatives echo these concerns, noting that Cambodia has not been adequately rewarded for its labour compliance over the past several years, to the extent that what was once considered the key to market access and continued growth and expansion is now increasingly considered a burden to the sector's ongoing sustainability.

4. The economic role of women and the gender impact of the crisis

Women make up approximately half the Cambodian labour-force, and are as such a major contributor to the national economy.¹⁷ Indeed, throughout the 1980s and 90s, women were an even larger player in the labour force and economy, a product largely of the massive –and disproportionate- loss of male lives during the civil war. Despite the structural rebalancing that has taken place since then (which has boosted the economic role of men) women remain an integral part of Cambodia's current and future growth prospects, not least because they are the predominant group in the country's largest formal employer and export earner –the garment sector. Owing to the rapid growth of this sector in the last decade or so, women's share in total "formal" employment in Cambodia has soared from less than 27 percent in 1998 to more than 40 percent in 2004.¹⁸ Beyond this, women play a major role as household heads (responsible for domestic duties) and major breadwinners, particularly in rural areas. When "housework" such as washing, cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children, is included as an economic activity, research has shown that women in Cambodia tend to work more hours per day than their male counterparts.¹⁹

¹³ ILO (2009) "Impact of the Global Economic Crisis on the Employment and Labour Market in Bangladesh." Centre for Policy Dialogue / ILO, 29 June 2009.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Based on Ministry of Commerce figures, Jan-09 to Jul-09 (by USD value; percentage change)

¹⁶ US Department of Commerce, Office of Textiles and Apparel, Jul-09 (<http://otexa.ita.doc.gov/msrcty/v5380.htm>)

¹⁷ According to the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), women made up 49.4 percent of the labour force in 2004.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ ILO (2007: 38)

However, despite their importance, there are a number of factors that continue to constrain women's economic empowerment in Cambodia. One of the most critical of these is their unequal access to education, particularly in the rural areas, which has over several decades conspired to prevent many women from achieving their full economic potential. In recent years, notable improvements have been made in literacy and school enrolment among girls, particularly at the primary school level where female participation is now higher than males. However, the opposite remains true for secondary and post-secondary education, a fact that reinforces the need for much more work in this area to expand the rights and opportunities of women and girls vis-à-vis education, job-based training and skills development, and ultimately, employment.

Although women are nominally guaranteed equal rights with men in the Cambodian Constitution, the ability to claim these rights is subject to prevailing social ideals and attitudes about power and gender relations (CDRI, 1999). Partly as a result of these factors, fewer women in Cambodia today are in paid employment than their male counterparts, and on the whole, the wages they receive are lower. The garment sector is one major exception, since it employs mostly women in formal wage employment. The garment sector is also the only economic sector in Cambodia that has a legal minimum wage.

Owing both to the nature of the Cambodian economy and the traditional roles and limitations faced by women in the labour force, it is widely accepted that the current global economic downturn has had a disproportionately severe impact on women. This is not surprising given that women, particularly those in low skilled, low income occupations have long been considered among those most vulnerable to economic shocks.²⁰ In light of the current economic downturn, therefore, it has been garment sector workers in particular who have now been exposed to a variety of potential risks, including poverty, declining health, exploitation (both labour and sexual), unsafe migration and trafficking.

5. Understanding the impact of the crisis: background and methodology of tracking survey

To understand the impact of the crisis on the garment sector in Cambodia, especially its workers, the ILO has initiated a tracking survey of 2000 workers, based on a purposive but random sampling methodology. Interviewees are categorized into two groups: employed and unemployed. Employed workers refer to workers currently employed in the garment industry. Unemployed refers to workers who were retrenched from the garment industry as of January 1, 2009.

This group of workers are being interviewed and tracked for a period of six months, on the basis of detailed questionnaires that have been developed for those who continue to be employed to find out more about any changes they may have faced in their workplace, earnings and perceptions of vulnerability. Those who have lost their jobs in the current crisis are probed for their current coping strategies, including changes in household division of labour, return migration and entry into casual labour, or other forms of vulnerable work, multiple employment and their reentry into the labour market, either in garments or in other sectors and a comparison with the working conditions in their previous job in the garment sector.

6. Preliminary results

On 12 September the first baseline survey was started and the results presented in this paper are based on the initial findings. As a word of caution, the figures presented here are very preliminary (containing only 4% of the total sample size of 2000 workers); and therefore, do not provide a conclusive picture of the full impact of the financial and economic crises. However, they give us some signs of what is happening to workers.

²⁰ This can be true for a variety of reasons, including poor access to safety nets and social protection, small levels of savings, financial obligations to large families, and debt.

This preliminary presentation contains data of 80 workers, of which 53 are employed and 27 are unemployed. 73% are female and 27% are male. It represents 29 factories located in Phnom Penh and surrounding suburban areas. The survey data covers the period of January 1, 2009 to the present. The main preliminary findings are as follows:

- Among the 53 currently employed workers interviewed, 36% reported a **drop in their total effective income** (including bonuses and overtime compensation) in 2009 compared to 2008.
- The majority of employed workers mentioned that it is **more difficult to ask for days off**. From the perspective of employers, this is a cost-minimizing strategy because they have to pay for leave. It may also reflect a strategy to maintain their competitiveness and secure their markets by ensuring that their production is finished and delivered on time.
- Most workers also perceive that **safety and health services have deteriorated** in the factory since the crisis. Many workers experienced a **reduction in overtime**. Some workers have experienced **shorter work week, reduction in bonuses, work suspensions and late payment of salary**. **Only one interviewee mentioned more deductions in their salary by employers**.
- The decline in income, mostly due to the fall in overtime, has impacted the spending of workers. For almost all workers, their ultimate mission for entering the garment sector workforce is to earn cash income for their family. Thus, workers allocate a fixed portion of their income for remittances. Remittance is their first and obligatory expense item. They then spend the remaining amount on their personal basic needs such as food, health care, housing, and transport. **Compared to one year ago, more workers feel they don't have enough money to send home today**. Consequently, they have to reduce their own personal spending to cover the needs of their family. Thus, it is no surprise that more workers also complained that they don't have enough money for food, health care, housing, and transport today, compared to one year ago.
- At the household level, the findings indicate that the decline in garment workers' income has produced an **added worker effect**, in which household are choosing to send another member of the family to find additional income (30.2% of employed interviewees). In almost all cases, the added worker is a female sibling, with age ranging from 16-28 years old. Their first aim is to try and get a job in the garment sector. This direction may seem strange given that the garment industry is in an economic downturn, which is the reason for the decline in income and need for added worker. But for these jobseekers, they feel that entry into the garment industry is relatively easier than other sectors (i.e. little skill/education needed, existing networks) and the working hours is more safe (i.e. compared to restaurant industry where they would have to work late at night). While the duration of their employment in the garment sector is highly unsecure, that is, they might be retrenched in a few months, it will at least help reduce the family's financial burden for the duration.
- Among the 27 unemployed workers interviewed, the majority was terminated due to factory closure or slowdown in production.
- One main aspect of the survey is to collect data on the **termination process**, and to get a better picture of the compliance of employers with legal requirements. With the exception of a few, almost all of the workers interviewed had employment contracts. Most of them were terminated before the end of their contract. Six out of ten of the unemployed workers said they were not given advance notice. For those who got advance notice, it was usually less than 1 week (7 days). Eighty-five percent stated that other workers were also retrenched from their factory. In relations to their termination, 55.6% reported they received severance payment from their employer, while 44.4% did not. None of the interviewees received from their employer assistance in finding a new job, re-training for a new job, re-training for the garment sector or any other services. Seven out of ten unemployed interviewees feel that they were not treated fairly by management.

- Many of the interviewees were members of **trade union** (40.7%). With the exception of 1 person, none of the interviewees have received any supporting services from their trade unions linked with their termination.
- Most of the interviewees were retrenched very recently, in August 2009. Almost half of the unemployed interviewees said they were able to save some money from their factory job, more than half of these workers have already **used up all of their savings** to finance their living costs during the job-seeking period.
- Only 2 of 27 unemployed workers interviewed have found a new job. One is currently working in a tailor shop and another is working at a clothing retail shop. Both of them got information about the jobs through their friends. The most challenging thing for them during the job-seeking period was the lack of money to cover their living costs. To cope with this problem, they tried to spend thriftier.
- For the majority that are still looking for a job, most of them stated that they have to borrow money from home, and/or live off their spouse or relative during the job-seeking period.
- Most of the interviewees stated that they are looking for a new job through their friends and family. Only 1 person has sought information from the newspaper. None of the interviewees have referred to their trade unions for job information. Some explained that they have to spend a lot on transportation to find vacant jobs on their own.
- During this job-seeking period, interviewees expressed that their main difficulty is lack of finance. This is because most garment workers have very little savings. Typically, female garment workers can finance only 1 month of unemployment, while for males, it is usually 1-2 weeks.
- In the event that they cannot find a new job, many said they will return to their family home. Many of the other interviewees have not planned that far and are not sure what they will do.
- A majority of unemployed workers stated that they would consider **re-training** in both the garment sector and other sectors. For females, they are interested in getting new skills in beauty services (cosmetic and hair styling); while for males, they are interested in learning how to fix air conditioners, mobile phones, and motorcycles. Most of them stated that in order for them to attend such trainings, they would need a monthly stipend and accommodations, to ease the financial pressure at home. They prefer short courses of 3 months or less. However, the most important condition is that they will be able to get a new job after the training. Two interviewees said they are not interested in re-training because they have financial pressures at home and need to find a job as soon as possible.

7. Concluding remarks

As the garment sector in Cambodia has grown, it has drawn on its young low-skilled female labour force from the rural areas. This has resulted in several changes in the nature of women's work from largely rural to factory work, and has provided women with an access to income and formal employment in many cases. But at the same time the nature of work that women do in the garment sector has increased their vulnerability to the economic crisis. The preliminary results indicate significant loss of income and difficulties in coping with the current situation. While the preliminary results do not show yet that many of the workers are returning to the villages, it is likely to happen if the current situation continues. It is interesting to note

that to cope with income loss, many of households have sent **another worker into the workforce** to find income. In almost all cases, the added worker is also a young woman - either a wife or sister. Again, most of the added workers set their eyes on finding work in the garment sector, despite the obvious slowdown in the sector. They believe that their prospects of getting a job in the garment sector is relatively higher than in other sectors because the entry requirements are low (no need for high education, skills or foreign language), and they have networks in the sector already. Therefore, while the crisis in the garment sector may lead to different ways of doing business, the main issue for women remains access to education, skills and opportunities. And while growth in Cambodia has been largely based on the large low skilled flexible female workforce, the current crisis is also hitting these women the most, and affecting entire households that depend on this income. As the survey is completed, the picture may be clearer, but these preliminary results indicate that the economic crisis in Cambodia has been largely borne by its women workforce, and social protection measures need to put in place that address these specific gender needs.