

GENDER ANALYSIS (SUMMARY)¹

1. Cambodia has achieved progress in a number of areas, but challenges remain. Although the overall rates are low, gaps in access to education at the elementary and lower secondary levels have been eliminated with increasing enrollment rates for girls. Labor force participation rates for women are high, and there have been increases in the number of women with jobs in wholesale and retail trade and services, and manufacturing. Good progress has been achieved in integrating gender concerns in economic development strategies. However, a large number of women are still in vulnerable employment, rates of maternal malnutrition and mortality are high, and women's participation in public decision making remains low. Cambodia is in the medium human development category and ranks 138th of 187 countries. Cambodia's 2012 gender inequality index value of 0.473 ranks it 96th of 148 countries, a deterioration from 95th of 138 countries in 2008.

2. **Economic empowerment.** Cambodian women have the highest labor force participation rate (LFPR) in the region at 79.7%, but a gender gap remains (the male LFPR is 89.1%). Three sectors account for 89% of all women's employment: (i) agriculture, forestry, and fisheries (66.3%); (ii) wholesale and retail trade and services (12.7%); and (iii) manufacturing (10.3%). For men, these sectors account for 75% of employment, indicating that women's employment is more concentrated. The shift in employment from agriculture to industry has also been greater for men than for women. Despite high levels of participation, 70% of employed women are in vulnerable employment (own-account and unpaid contributing family workers) compared with 59% of employed men. While agriculture dominates employment, it accounted for just over 35% of the country's gross domestic product in 2012. This reflects low productivity, low returns to labor, and low economic security. Women farmers are particularly constrained because of their limited access to and ownership of land. Households headed by women comprised 20% of agricultural households in 2008. These households had access to 1.1 hectares of land on average, compared to 1.5 hectares for households headed by men, the difference being more pronounced in the plateau and mountain areas. Households headed by women also had less access to extension and financial services, markets, and technology.²

3. While women run 65% of all businesses, on average their enterprises are smaller than those run by men. Most are microenterprises. Women's businesses are less profitable than businesses run by men, and they are more highly concentrated in the wholesale and retail trade, and services.³ Women are less likely than men to have a registered business.⁴ However, women are benefiting from greater access to financial services: 80% of microfinance institutions' clients are women. Obstacles to the growth of businesses run by women include a lack of access to infrastructure (such as roads and electricity), cultural biases (which lead to discrimination and the undervaluing of women entrepreneurs), and an inability to access finance (especially long-term finance) because of limited collateral and low levels of formal education.

4. Wage employment for women represents only a small share of women's paid work, at 30.1%. Manufacturing, particularly garments and footwear, accounts for 45% of women's wage

¹ This summary is based on: Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Women's Affairs. 2014. *Country Gender Assessment 2014* (forthcoming); ADB. 2014. *Country Performance Assessment*; and ADB. 2014.

² About 31% of households headed by women had access to ploughs compared with 48% of those headed by men, and the gender gap was more than 23% in the plateau and mountain areas (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Government of Cambodia, National Institute of Statistics and Ministry of Planning. 2010. *National Gender Profile of Agricultural Households 2010. Report Based on the 2008 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey*. Phnom Penh.

³ Women's businesses account for only 40% of total business revenue and 51% of total business profits.

⁴ Only 1.7% of women's businesses are registered, compared to 6.6% of men's businesses.

employment. Women benefit less than men from wage work, with average monthly wages equal to less than 81% of men's earnings. Thus, while wage work offers the potential for better working conditions, such as access to social security and an employment contract, having a waged job does not necessarily result in a low gender wage gap and high absolute wages. Despite improvements in compliance with the labor code promoted through the International Labour Organization's Better Factories Cambodia factory monitoring program, working conditions remain poor.

5. Young rural women aged 15–19 are much more likely to be working than women of the same age living in Phnom Penh.⁵ This reflects the demand for women's agricultural labor in rural areas and the greater education opportunities in Phnom Penh. Women in the labor force have low levels of education: in 2013, 84% of employed women aged 15 years and older had primary school education or less, compared with 76% of employed men.

6. **Education.**⁶ Cambodia will achieve its Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target on primary school enrollment, but will miss the secondary education target. The drop-out and repetition rate, and out-of-school children remain persistent challenges. The net enrollment rate of primary school is 95.6% for both boys and girls, but the completion rate for primary school is low at 87%–88%, implying that 9.6% of children either dropped out or repeated in that year. There are also major issues at lower secondary and higher education levels. In 2012–2013, 87.4% children passed out of primary school, but only 53.6% joined the lower secondary school stream. Therefore, almost 34% of children discontinued education. The lower secondary completion rates were 10%–14% lower than enrollment during school year [SY] 2008/09–SY2012/13, with rural schools faring worse than urban ones. Poverty pushes many students out of school. Among children aged 6–17 years, 11.9% of girls and 10.5% of boys report that they are not attending school because the family is too poor. Indicative of social norms that value boys' education over that of girls, a higher percentage of girls than boys report that they are not attending school because they must contribute to household income or help with household chores. Lack of quality education also leads to high rates of repetition and over-age students who are often unwilling to complete education.

7. The formal technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system remains in its infancy, with gender gaps in TVET access, quality, and institutional capacity. Less than 1% of those enrolled in secondary education progress to formal TVET, which requires grade 9 completion.⁷ Key issues for women at the tertiary level include gender imbalances in types of study, lack of correlation between women's vocational education and labor market demands, financial barriers, lack of housing, and limited part-time programs. These gender gaps in basic education and TVET curtail the nature of girls' participation in and benefits from the labor market and thus the potential for economic empowerment.

8. **Health.** Women of reproductive age experience substantial risks associated with pregnancy and child birth. Maternal mortality rates continue to be high at 206 per 100,000 live births. Women in rural areas and poor households are at greater risk. In 2012, only 13% of births in rural areas were attended by a doctor, compared to 32% in Phnom Penh. Cambodia is off track for the MDG target on maternal malnutrition. Malnutrition is considered the underlying cause in 20% of maternal deaths, accounting for nearly 300 maternal deaths annually in

⁵ The LFPR of young women is 71% in the rural areas and 40% in the capital city.

⁶ This section is based on Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning, 2014. *Annual Progress Report: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. Phnom Penh.

⁷ Annually, 230,000 students drop out before grade 9, and 100,000 school dropouts enter the labor market. In SY2009/10, 908,698 students were enrolled in secondary education and 746 were enrolled in formal TVET.

Cambodia.⁸ The rate of anemia among pregnant women is 53%. About 6% of women have a height of less than 145 centimeters, which indicates they were malnourished as children. These women are also likely to give birth to small children.

9. **Demographic trends and emerging issues.** Two clear demographic trends are emerging: Cambodians are on the move and they are aging. The vast majority of the population—78.6%—still lives in rural areas, but the share has fallen from 80.5% in 2008 as urbanization has increased, in part due to high rates of rural–urban migration. Out-migration, primarily of young adults, is resulting in a slow “graying” of the rural population. An emerging social issue is the phenomenon of children left behind, mostly with grandparents. Cambodia’s population is young, but the proportion of elderly people will be significant by 2030. Fertility and mortality are falling while life expectancy increases. Young adults (aged 15–29 years) comprise 33% of the Cambodian population. Another 32% of the population is less than 15 years old. The large working-age population represents a significant potential demographic dividend, but the dependency ratio is changing. The proportion of elderly Cambodians (aged 65 and over) has begun to increase and will reach about 6%, or about 1.2 million, by 2030. The United Nations projects a sharp increase after that, with significant policy implications for health and social protection, as the elderly are among the most vulnerable members of society. Elderly women are particularly vulnerable given their longer life expectancy (75 [2012], compared to 70 [2012] for men).⁹

10. **Public decision making and politics.**¹⁰ Women’s participation in public decision making remains low. While the proportion of female civil servants increased from 32% in 2007 to 35% in 2012, the proportion of women elected to the National Assembly decreased from 22.0% in 2008 to 20.3% in 2013 (25 of 123 seats). There was no change in the percentage of female senators from 2007 to 2012 (9 of 61 seats [15%]). As of 2013, there is only 1 female deputy prime minister, 2 female ministers, 16 female secretaries of state, and 40 female undersecretaries of state or holders of equal ranks. At the subnational level, there are no woman governors at the capital or province level. The proportion of female deputy governors in the provincial level was 21% in 2013. The proportion of female members of *Sangkats* (communes) increased from 14.6% in 2007 to 17.8% in 2012. In 2012, there were 69 (4.2%) women *Sangkat* chiefs, 189 (11.6%) first vice-chiefs, 151 (9.24%) second vice-chiefs, and 30% of village leadership positions held by women.

11. **Gender and poverty.** Cambodia has experienced rapid poverty reduction from 47.8% of the population in 2007 to 18.9% in 2012. A World Bank analysis of 2011 data found only a small difference in the overall income poverty rates of households headed by women (22.5%) and those headed by men (20.1%).¹¹ The dramatic reduction in poverty incidence masks the fact that many households have moved only just above the poverty line and remain highly vulnerable to shocks. Households headed by women are likely to be more vulnerable, and are also likely to experience shocks differently than households headed by men. Reasons include (i) social norms and women’s more limited economic opportunities and income, (ii) their higher share of vulnerable employment compared with that of men, and (iii) women’s higher concentration in microenterprises. It is also important to note that a decline in the income poverty rate does not necessarily translate into improvements in well-being for women and girls

⁸ Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2014. *Annual Progress Report 2013: Achieving Cambodia’s Millennium Development Goals*. Phnom Penh.

⁹ World Health Organization. Global Health Observatory Data Repository. <http://www.who.int/countries/khm/en/>

¹⁰ Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Planning. 2014. *Annual Progress Report 2013: Achieving Cambodia’s Millennium Development Goals*. Phnom Penh.

¹¹ Households headed by women comprised 22% of all households in 2012.

if resources are not shared equally within the household. Evidence of high rates of malnutrition and anemia among women and a high incidence of domestic violence are indicative of women's inferior position and disadvantaged access to resources.¹²

12. **Recent ADB experience in Cambodia.** In Cambodia, ADB promotes gender equity and women's empowerment through gender action plans that mainstream gender targets in project design and adopt monitoring frameworks across a range of sectors, as well as focused technical assistance and policy dialogue. Under the completed ADB country partnership strategy, 2011–2013, ADB implemented gender action plans to promote women's participation and more equal access to benefits in operations in agriculture, rural development, irrigation and water resources, education and TVET, health, rural water supply and sanitation, governance, and social protection.

13. **ADB's gender strategy in Cambodia, 2014–2018.** Through the country partnership strategy, 2014–2018, ADB will invest in gender equity in Cambodia in both core and non-core areas (Table).

Proposed area	Anticipated contributions to gender equity and women's empowerment
Agriculture and natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address productivity constraints in agriculture—the sector in which most Cambodian women work. • Increase women's farming income through enhanced efficiency and climate resilience of irrigation systems and other infrastructure, and improved water resource management. • Promote women's access to economic and financial resources and opportunities, and enhance their voice through representation in decision-making bodies.
Education and technical and vocational education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address women's enrollment, retention, and completion of formal technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and promote workplace readiness. • Ensure women's access to stipends for TVET levels 2–4 training courses. • Promote women's participation in courses in nontraditional areas. • Provide women with access to dormitories and career mentorship.
Secondary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help girls complete grade 9 and progress to upper secondary education. • Integrate employability skills into the upper secondary curriculum in partnership with the private sector. • Ensure equal access for poor girls to social safety net schemes for education.
Governance and public sector management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase women's participation in planning and administrative functions in district and municipal structures. • Integrate women's needs and priorities in the development of legislation, policies, and programs related to subnational democratic development, and support gender-sensitive development planning and resource allocation for the delivery of basic services.
Infrastructure Tourism infrastructure for inclusive growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand tourism markets. • Promote women's access to tourism-related jobs created by the project, as well as participation in community consultations and training.
Transport Rural roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure women's access to jobs created by the construction and maintenance of 1,000 kilometers of rural roads and facilitate faster, year-round access to markets and services through upgraded and paved all-weather rural roads.
Water supply and sanitation Urban water supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access for women in provincial towns to safe water, saving time and promoting better hygiene and health for increased productivity. • Ensure women's participation in consultations and training.
Rural water supply and sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct benefits to women through time savings and improved health and hygiene. • Promote women's participation in village water and sanitation user groups and as peer-to-peer facilitators. • Reduce risks of harassment and assault through convenient access to water and sanitation facilities.

Source: Cambodia country operations business plan, 2015–2017 and project design documents.

¹² In 2009, 35,408 cases of domestic violence were reported (footnote 6).