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The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)  
Mekong Region (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam)

Embassy of Switzerland

# Cambodia: Promoting gender equality in state building – SDC's support to Democratic Development Reform



*Presentation  
F2F – Conflict and  
Human Rights and  
Gender*

*Lausanne 2016*

*Rahel Boesch, Swiss Cooperation  
Office Phnom Penh/Cambodia*

# A recent history of violent conflicts...

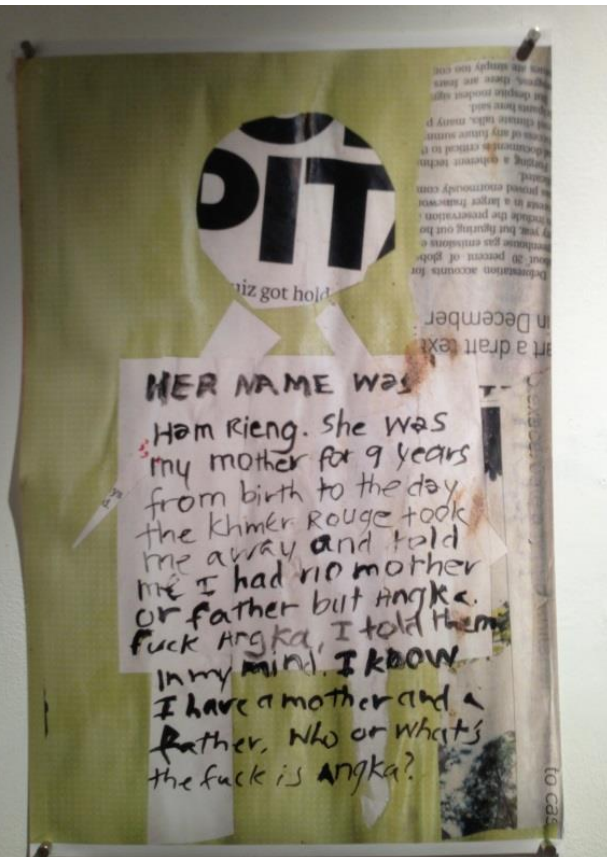
- 40 Years violent conflicts:
- American War 1968 – Lon Nol Regime 1970 – 1975
- Genocide under Pol Pot/Khmer Rouge regime 1975 – 1979
- Vietnamese occupation – civil war continued
- Paris Peace agreement only in 1993
- But continued violent conflicts until 1998 natural death of Pol Pot
- Destruction of infrastructure, systems; Elimination of educated people – women and children most vulnerable
- Destruction of social fabric and trust – deep trauma – wide spread violence



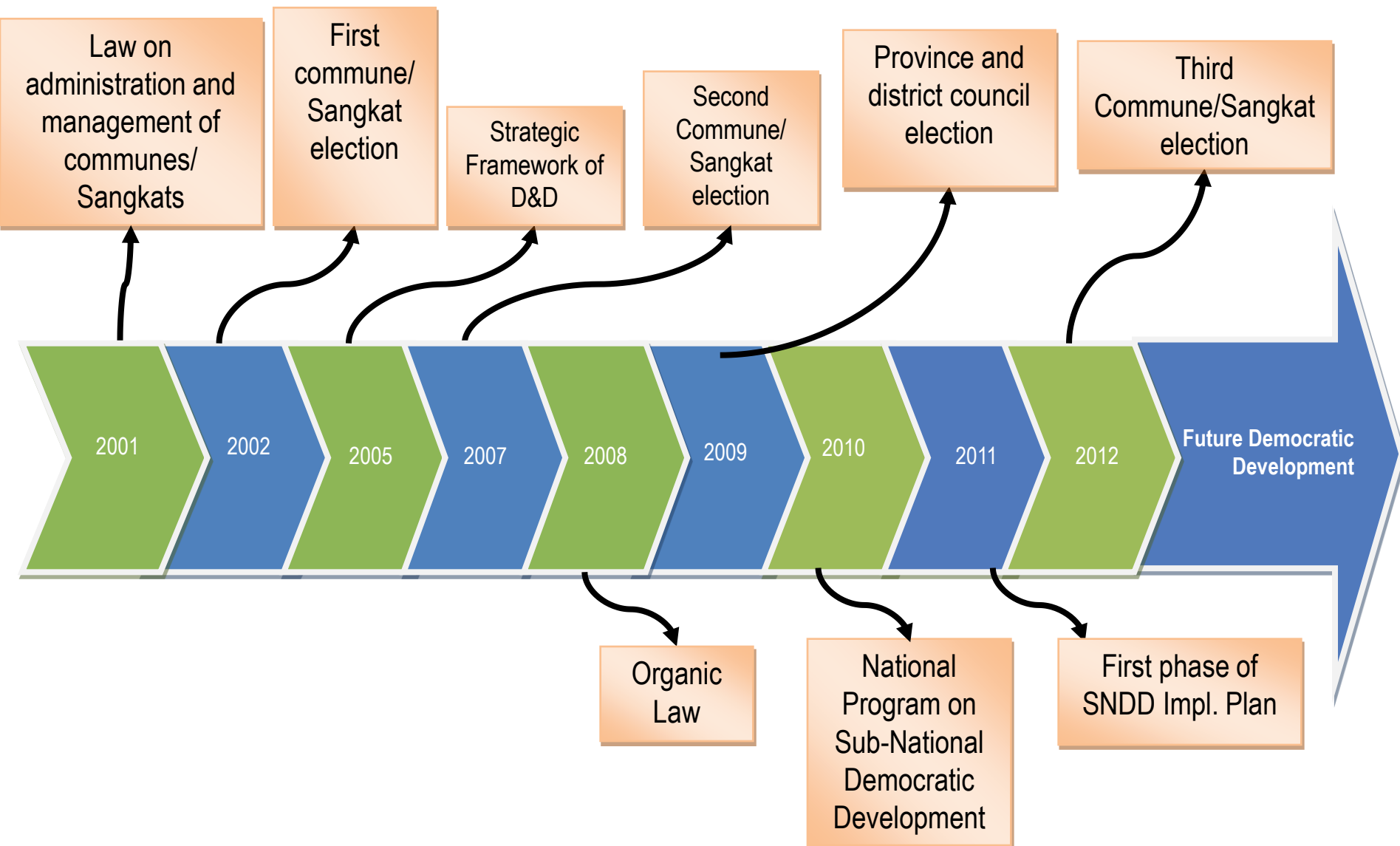


# Statebuilding and gender – key challenges and opportunities

- Building up governance structure – systems – rebuilding state legitimacy from the scratch
- Biggest UN Mission ever (90ties)
- World 4<sup>th</sup> best performer in MDG – poverty reduction, gender related MDGs
- Still: 96 out of 148 countries on the gender inequalities index.
- Women remain under-represented across all branches of government and across most sectors
- 22 percent of women have experienced physical violence in the past year and 25 percent had experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.
- Women engaged in subsistence agriculture and rural livelihoods lack access to and ownership over resources.
- Many women migrate from rural to urban areas, and to neighboring countries to find jobs - exposure to exploitation and abuse.



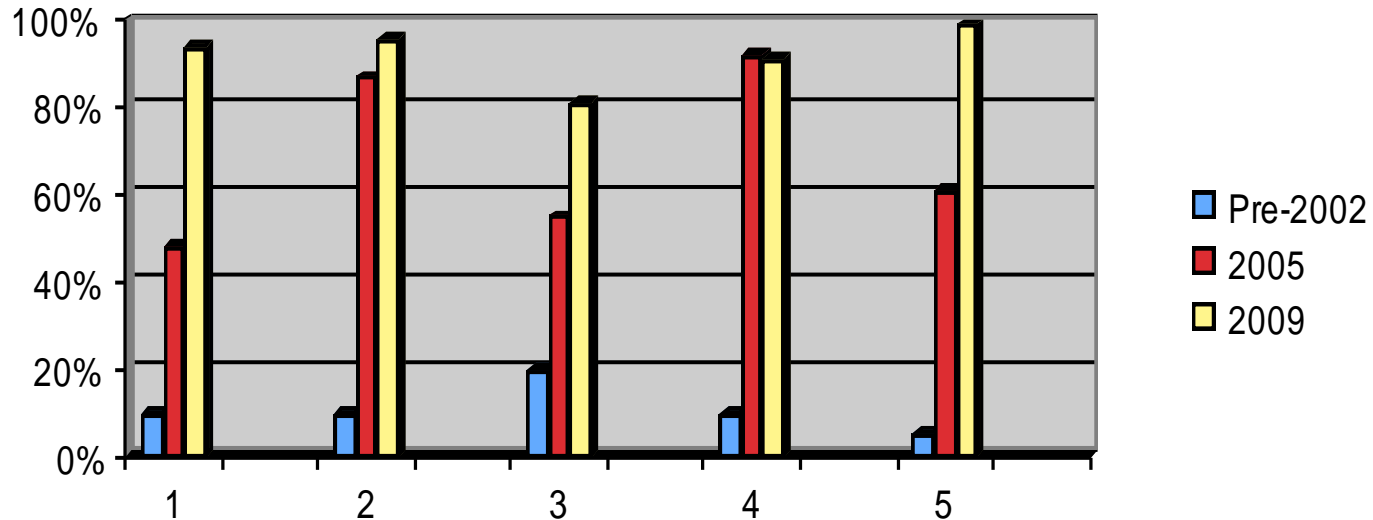
# Democratic Development-Overview





# Achievements

**Legitimacy and trust at decentralised level being rebuilt - Villagers perceptions on atmosphere and attitudes**



1=Harmony in village; 2= CC respect villagers; 3=CC solve conflicts; 4=CC take complaints seriously; 5=Villagers being comfortable to approach CC



# Sub-National Democratic Development Program (SNDD) 2010-2020

**Goal:** Improve the welfare and quality of life of all local residents of Sub-National Administrations (SNAs); to locally empower citizens (from all social groups) through political and other processes to ensure equality, fairness and the protection of basic rights.

SDC – outcomes:

- Poor and vulnerable women and men use equitable and responsive public services
- Citizens, in particular women and vulnerable groups voice their needs, exercise their rights and participate in local decision making

*Reform  
management*

*Democratic  
accountability*

*HR management  
& development*

*SNA service  
delivery & functions*

*Fiscal  
decentralization*

Specific focus on promoting gender equality, empowerment of women, further political participation of women, furthering bottom up democracy

# Key Achievements

- ☺ Commune & Sangkat Structure in place (1633 C/S)
- ☺ District, Municipality & Khan Structures in place (197 DMKs)
- ☺ Capital and Provincial Structures in place (1 Capital, 23 Provinces)
- ☺ C/S and D/M funds established
- ☺ Substantial legal Instruments adopted
- ☺ Improved social orders and safety
- ☺ Local participation increased (C/S level) – trust increased
- ☺ One-window service at the district level introduced and scaled up



Commune Women and Children Committees set up and functioning (193 communes) and scaled up country wide (UNICEF Seth Koma)

# SDC - Policy Dialog in SNDD



- ☹ Ownership and political commitment are still low
- ☹ Inconsistent progress in all key reform components (political, administrative and fiscal)
- ☹ Weak Citizen participation, transparency and accountability
- ☹ Gender Inequalities
- ☹ Weak women representation

## SDC Focus and Action

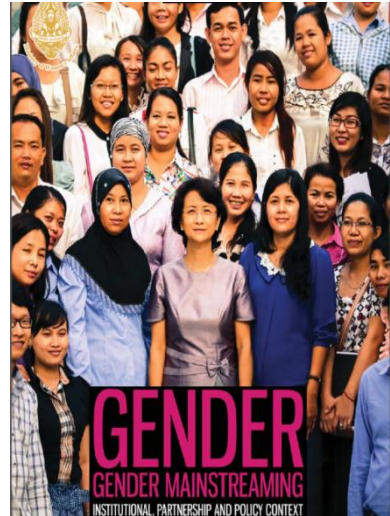


European Joint Development Cooperation Strategy – Gender focus and Gender Action Plan;  
Advocacy for budget allocation for gender capacity building in national plan  
Advocacy for Women Commune Councillors  
Facilitation for implementation – connection with National Action Plan for Women’s Empowerment –  
Support to MOWA  
Facilitation of link to CEDAW recommendations





## NEARY RATTANAK IV *Five-Year Strategic Plan (2014-2018)* for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment



### 1. Economic Growth

Women's Economic Empowerment

### 2. Access to Social Services & Protection

Education of Women and Girls, and Behavioral Change

Health, HIV and Nutrition for Women and Girls

Legal protection for Women and Girls

### 3. Cross Cutting Issues

Women in Public Decision-Making and Politics; Government Policies and Programs are Gender Responsive

Gender and Climate Change, Green Growth and Disaster Management

### 4. Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Development toward Gender Equality





## Making policies work – use international framework working together accross sectors – working for change ....

