

## The Goal, Mission, Roles and the Code of Ethics of NGOs and POs

### *PREFACE*

The Cambodian civil society was established many years ago, when the people worked together to organize pagoda committees, associations, and collective groups for their mutual benefit. The many years of civil war slowed – and, at times, even interrupted – this progress. However, since the Paris Accord in 1991, and the second rebirth of the Kingdom of Cambodia in 1993, civil society has rapidly re-emerged. So far, civil society has not had a spelled-out common goal or defined its mission or roles. Furthermore, it has not been consistent in its respect for the Code of Ethics of NGOs and People’s Organizations, which regulates the fundamental values of civil society. This lack of consistency is a threat to the progress of civil society and its ability to develop the country.

The first version of the Code of Ethics of NGOs and People’s Organizations was drafted in English by the board members of the Cambodian Committee for Cooperation (CCC) in 1995. This draft was then translated into Khmer by the Federation of Ponleu Khmer as an NGO umbrella organization, and distributed to other NGOs in the second NGO Fair in 1996. The Code of Ethics was then reviewed and adjusted by STAR Kampuchea (Former of Federation of Ponleu Khmer) in cooperation with its Cooperating Organizations. The new version was ratified by 200 NGOs participated in the third NGO Fair. In order to revive civil society’s commitment to the Code of Ethics, in 2003 STAR Kampuchea initiated the review and re-signing of the document which was then was turned into a book.

In addition to this review, STAR Kampuchea consulted with 22 prominent representatives of NGOs, with the aim of designing a common goal and establishing the role of civil society. The reviewed documents and the drafted goal, mission and roles were then submitted to NGOs and People’s Organizations for debate and approval during the Sixth NGO Fair.

The following Goal, Mission and Roles, and the Code of Ethics of NGOs and People’s Organizations, were ratified by 220 representatives of the NGOs and People Organizations attending the Sixth NGO Fair on April 07-08, 2003 at Chaktomuk Hall.

### **Goal, Mission and Roles of Associations, NGOs and People’s Organizations**

#### **Goal:**

To develop and sustain civil society in Cambodia **through filling gaps and being a counterweight in society, and by supporting common interests in all fields**

#### **Mission:**

To implement appropriate programs in cooperation with civil society groups, the private sector, people and governmental institutions for the sustainable development of society.

**Roles:**

Associations, Non-governmental organizations and People's Organizations are parts of civil society working to meet the needs of the people, and shall be accountable, transparent, independent, and respectful both of human rights and this code of ethics.

***CODE OF ETHICS***

*for*

*Associations, Non-Governmental Organizations and People's Organizations in Cambodia*

**Article 1. Associations, Non-Governmental Organizations and People's Organizations are organizations:**

- 1.1 Whose purpose is to work in partnership with stakeholders for the sustainable development of the Cambodian society, based on justice, equality, transparency, accountability and respect for human rights;
- 1.2 Whose policy and vision is appropriately and independently determined from that of any donor or government agency,
- 1.3 That are not aligned with or affiliated to any political party;
- 1.4 That are not-for-profit organizations in which no profits of the organizations are distributed for private gain;
- 1.5 Whose activities are carried out without discrimination on the basis of nationality, group **belonging**, political loyalties, ideologies, skin color, race, age, religion, handicap or gender;
- 1.6 That operates within the laws of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

**Article 2: Through their programs, Associations, NGOs and People's Organizations should:**

- 2.1 Respect the moral values, dignity, history, religion, custom, tradition and culture of the communities they serve when suggesting an improvement of the current situation;
- 2.2 Facilitate self-reliance, self-help and people participation for sustainable development so as to avoid dependency;
- 2.3 Seek to strengthen the human resources and the institutions of the Kingdom of Cambodia;
- 2.4 Have, as their fundamental concern, the well-being of those affected by the development programs;
- 2.5 Seek to promote women's status and implement international conventions regarding elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;

- 2.6 Seek to ensure that any material assistance provided by them is appropriate and meets internationally accepted standards; if possible, all materials should be purchased in Cambodia,
- 2.7 Seek to ensure that all development and relief assistance provided by them is guided and informed by internationally recognized and professional standards,
- 2.8 Are non-partisan in any public policy and lobbying activities with which they are involved.

**Article 3: Partnership and cooperation between Associations, NGOs and People's Organizations:**

- 3.1 Will be on the basis of equality, equity, dialogue and mutual respect;
- 3.2 Associations, NGOs and People's Organizations recognize that for a long term development, international experts are needed, but their support should be limited in time and the goal must be to strengthen the capacity of the Cambodian staff;
- 3.3 Associations, NGOs and People's Organizations will share relevant project information with each other, will refrain from competing with each other, and will cooperate at the field level to avoid duplication and disruption of each other's projects;
- 3.4 Associations, NGOs and People's Organizations strive to mutually support each other, so as to promote and maintain their values;
- 3.5 All Associations, NGOs and People's Organizations try to make sure that their relations with funding agencies are honest and above board. Under no circumstances will activities such as double funding for one plan, diverting resources to non-project related activities, overstatement of achievements or capabilities or distortion of facts be carried out or condoned by Associations, NGOs or People's Organizations.

**Article 4: In their relations with the Royal Government, Associations, NGOs and People's Organizations shall:**

- 4.1 Strive to cooperate with the Cambodian people and the Government to rebuild the country and to improve the quality of life of the people;
- 4.2 Strive to create a culture of mutual respect and openness based on the perspective that Associations, NGOs and People's Organizations are important components of any democratic society;

**Article 5: Within their own organizations, Associations, NGOs and People's Organizations shall:**

- 5.1 Be governed by an independent and well-qualified Board of Directors or Legislative Committee, and a duly constituted Executive Committee, so that they function with transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights;

- 5.2 Solve all problems and conflict on the basis of non-violence
- 5.3 Prohibit either direct or indirect conflicts of interest by members of the Board of Directors, employees, or volunteers;
- 5.4 Conduct their affairs with integrity and honesty. Their activities shall be open and accessible to scrutiny by their donors, except for personnel matters and proprietary information;
- 5.5 Strongly oppose and take no part in corruption, bribery, other financial impropriety or any illegal acts;
- 5.6 Recognize that all of their activities impact on the public perception of the community of Associations, NGO's and People's Organizations, and that they share a significant responsibility to enhance the public trust;
- 5.7 Provide avenues for individual growth and development of staff;
- 5.8 Provide just compensation and promote the rights and welfare of all employees;
- 5.9 Strive to promote participatory and democratic management practices.

*I hereby sign the Mission, Goal and Roles and the Code of Ethics for Associations, NGOs and the People's Organizations as a statement of the principle and intentions of the Associations, NGOs and the People's Organization, which I present.*

Phnom Penh, April 8 2003