

# Report

## “Workshop on Social Protection for Female Entertainment Workers”



**On Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 at  
Phnom Penh Hotel, Cambodia**

On Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2023 at Phnom Penh Hotel, Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPD), Phnom Penh, under the funding of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had conducted a “Workshop on Social Protection for Female Entertainment Workers” under the supreme presidency of Samdech Kittisangha Bandith Men Sam An, Supreme Council of the King Cambodia and the Director of Cambodian Women for Peace and Development.

### **I. Objectives:**

- To present results of the Baseline Survey on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Program, achievements of program’s implementation for past six months, challenges, pre-existing solutions and recommendations to improve the process to provide and utilize social protection systems among Female Entertainment Workers (FEWs)
- To strengthen cooperation with key sectoral ministries and relevant stakeholders in promoting and facilitating FEWs to obtain Health Equity Fund (HEF) cards and utilize it to access quality healthcare services effectively.

### **II. Expected Outcomes:**

- All participants will be better aware of current status and unmet needs related to sexual reproductive health and rights and facilitating FEWs to obtain the Health Equity Fund Cards
- Get support from collaborative partners and relevant stakeholders
- Mechanism and procedure to provide and utilize the Health Equity Fund Card will be convenient

### III. Participants:

There were **183** participants:

- **16** Presidents who were invited from the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Cult and Religion, National AIDS Authority, National Maternal and Child Health Center.
- **13** healthcare providers (health center)
- **06** Local authorities
- **08** Operational District Officers
- **14** key sectoral ministries
- **17** NGOs representatives
- **14** Hotspot owner/manager
- **42** female entertainment workers
- **41** CWPDP Staff (included **17** Outreach Workers and **24** CWPDP Head Officers)
- **12** Journalism team

### IV. Proceedings of the workshop:

Her excellency **Meach Sotheary, Executive Director – Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPDP)** had shared welcome remarks for the workshop and confirmed that CWPDP has been implementing projects such as Reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS among female entertainment workers women (FEWs) in Phnom Penh, Prey Veng, Kandal provinces and Sihanouk Ville under the funding of KHANA and Sexual Reproductive Health and Right (SRHR) program among FEWs in Phnom Penh under funding of UNFPA which CWPDP had closely collaborated with relevant stakeholders, local authority, hotspot's owner/manager and FEWs in order to prepare FEWs' name list and submit to Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and work closely with commune level regarding interview process among FEWs for requesting the Health Equity Fund Cards. Nowadays, in the four provinces, there were 1,063 FEWs who had registered and requested Poor ID Cards in which 557 had valid and completed documents. There were totally 126 FEWs who had received the Poor ID Cards, of which 27 FEWs lived in Phnom Penh. And there were 618 FEWs who had received the Health Equity Fund Cards which included 580 FEWs who lived in Phnom Penh.

During the workshop, **Ms Sandra Bernklau, UNFPA Representative** had expressed admiration and appreciation to the Royal Government of Cambodia for the leadership and commitment to ensuring inclusiveness of the most needed populations into the country's Social Protection policy and programs. This workshop marked a critical milestone in our shared efforts to provide vital support so that all people, especially women, can access quality sexual, reproductive and maternal health services including family planning. Ms. Sandra Bernklau continued that UNFPA was honored to be in partnership with the Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPDP) to support female entertainment workers to be able to register and receive the National Social Security Fund/ and Health Equity cards. She suggested the HEF and ID Poor cards' validity should be extended to three years, up from the current one year, which would offer greater stability to these at risk and highly vulnerable FEWs. She urged all stakeholders to consider a continuous registration process for these informal and very at-risk workers within the NSSF system, which may lead to a steady increase in registrations. Ms. Sandra also stressed that it's equally important to champion human rights-based and women centered health care services and our collective aim should be to curtail, if not eradicate, the stigmatization and discrimination that female entertainment workers and other key populations face, both in healthcare settings and society at large.

### **Mechanism and procedure from key sectoral ministries and relevant stakeholders regarding Social Protection System for Female Entertainment Workers:**

- **H.E Huot Hay, Vice Governor of Phnom Penh Capital City** had declared the attention of the Phnom Penh Capital City under the leadership of **H.E Khuong Sreng, Governor of Phnom Penh Capital City** about orientation towards Department of Tourism, Department of Planning and Department of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation which have to collaborate, verify, collect data and request the Health Equity Fund (HEF) cards for female entertainment workers. He suggested to all 14 District Administrators and relevant organizations to widely inform and disseminate information towards hotspot's owner/manager about benefit of the HEF card by free of charge and in accordance with voluntary policy. He continued to suggest the Municipal Health Department, Phnom Penh has to take care of providing healthcare services in good quality, technical and ethical standards. All organizations closely cooperate to address the challenges regarding FEW's essential needs and suggestions, to promote service utilization comprehensively and prepare to deliver HEF cards to FEWs.
- **Mr. Cheun Theany, Chairman of Department National Social Protection Cambodia – Ministry of Economic and Finance** who presented the Social Security System which focused on the Social Protection Council relating to National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and Health Equity Fund (HEF).
- **Mr. Hong Sokheab, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training representative** who present about scope provides social protection tasks toward FEWs to receive the health equity fund cards. With regard to the request to have a longer validity of the HEF and ID Poor cards, he agreed to bring this for more discussions with the NSSF.
- **Mr. Tit Chankreusna, Program Coordinator** who present results of the Baseline Survey on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Program
- **Mr. Chhorn Ann, Program Manager – CWPD** who presented progression, achievements, challenges and suggestions regarding facilitating FEWs to receive the health equity fund cards.

The challenges raised by FEWs and field observation:

1. Some FEWs did not have enough documents to interview to get HEF and ID Poor cards such as Identity Card - Family Book
2. Authorities did not certify on the letter of residence for non-residents living in their area such as the case of migrant FEWs who moved from another location to another or from one province to another province.
3. On the day of campaign: some FEWs did not participate because they are busy with their daily life or go back to hometown, some were busy with their customers/clients, other FEWs relocated.
4. There is no supportive budget for FEW's transportation to the registration sites.

## V. Recommendations/Actions:

**Samdech Kittisangha Bandith Men Sam An**, Supreme Council of the King Cambodia and the Director of Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPD) had mentioned that the workshop was absolutely important which was paralleled by the purpose and efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia which have been strongly paying attention for all people who especially the most at risk, ensuring "Leaving No One Behind" that struggle without leaving anyone unresolved, including female entertainment workers. **Samdech Kittisangha Bandith Men Sam An**, had expressed admiration and appreciation to all key sectoral ministries and relevant stakeholders which have been successfully implementing respectively to **Samdech Akak Moha Senaa Batei Techou Hun Sen** and Government's Declaration and the inter-ministries Declaration on Provision of Social Protection System for Female Entertainment Workers. **Samdech Kittisangha Bandith Men Sam An**, had endorsed some priorities recommendations as following:

1. Key sectoral ministries, all relevant stakeholders, all partners, all levels of authority have to collaboratively support female entertainment workers with access to healthcare services, including SRHR and family planning, through

health equity fund programme and access to quality healthcare services equally and equitably without discrimination and stigmatization and respectful manner in line with the Government's Commitments.

2. Continued to practically provide HEF and Poor ID cards towards female entertainment workers in more effectively and faster.
3. Increase closer cooperation between key sectoral ministries, institutions, partnered collaborations, local authorities, NGOs and all relevant stakeholders, especially hotspot's owners and female entertainment workers themselves.
4. Share and disseminate information and challenges regularly in order to work together for providing timely resolutions
5. Suggest to HEF funders and all partners to please continue to provide funding to local NGOs that are implementing health projects such as HIV/AIDS prevention, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, and informed choices to access healthcare services among female entertainment workers and other left behind populations to contribute to successful implementations of the national goals towards achieving AIDS 95, 95, 95 strategy by upcoming 2025.
6. In addition, actively participate to promote the provision of providing more HEF and Poor ID cards towards female entertainment workers with faster processes.

Summarized and Closing remarks **Lok Chum Teav Chou Bun Eng, Secretary of State, Ministry of Interior, Vice President of CWPD** had clarified that the Royal Government of Cambodia has always taken great care by being respectful to human's rights and lives as top priorities which will lead to achieving the realization of the SDG agenda by ensuring "Leaving No One Behind". However, past efforts still have gaps that have not yet been fully addressed. **Lok Chum Teav** also shared recommendations and prioritized tasks which to be continued implementing as following:

1. Key sectoral ministries, all partners and relevant stakeholders all partners which already had their mechanism and procedures regarding implementation of Government's commitments and policies and address the gaps. This requires more discussions to speed up the process for providing HEF and Poor ID Cards towards female entertainment workers.
2. Recommend all key sectoral ministries and relevant stakeholders respectfully and successfully implement the recommendations of **Samdech Kittisangha Bandith Men Sam An**
3. Suggest local authorities to support female entertainment workers to obtain all required criteria documents for the enrolment in the HEF and ID Poor process. Hotspot's owners have to attain the adequate and detailed name list of FEWs in their own hotspot to provide to the local authority for the registration process.
4. Strengthen and expand good cooperation, share information regularly and arrange meetings as often as possible.
5. Take into account the suggestion to extend the validity of the HEF and ID Poor card to 3 years for more discussions with the NSSF mechanism.

**Lok Chum Teav** profoundly expressed gratitude to all excellencies, ladies and gentlemen who are leaders of ministries, institutions, local authorities, all levels of national and international organizations that have cooperated well in implementing the Royal Government of Cambodia's press release on the Provision of Health Equity Fund for Female Entertainment Workers and she requested to continue to successfully implement the Royal Government of Cambodia's Pentagonal Strategic-Phase I.

**Lok Chum Teav** deeply expressed gratitude to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) which technically and financially supports this important workshop and for being a long term and trusted partner with the Royal Government of Cambodia, CSOs like CWPD, and other partners and stakeholders.

**Lok Chum Teav** suggested to all grant donors to please continue to fund important projects which Cambodian Women for Peace and Development can contribute to reducing/eliminating HIV/AIDS, improving sexual reproductive health and rights, access to right-based family planning, and other activities for the health and prosperity among female entertainment workers.

## VI. Attached Agenda:

Time	Topic/ Description	Responsible Person
08:00-08:50	Registration	CWPD Team
08:50-09:00	Arrival of delegation, honorable guesses	CWPD Team
08:50-09:00	Nation Anthem	Ms. Ieng Sopheak
09:00-09:15	Welcome remarks by CWPD	Executive Director of CWPD, Her Excellency. Meach Sotheary
09:15-09:30	Remarks by UNFPA	UNFPA Representative Ms. Sandra Bernklau
09:30-10:10	Presentation of “Progression and achievement regarding procedure and practices for Social Protection System, 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ministry of Economy and Finance</li> <li>- Ministry of Health</li> <li>- Ministry of Labour</li> <li>- Phnom Penh Municipality</li> </ul>
10:10-10:30	Official opening remarks	<b>Samdech Kittisangha Bandith Men Sam An</b> , Supreme Council of the King Cambodia Director - Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPD)
10:30-10:50	Group Photos and Break	CWPD team
10:50–10:55	Departure of <b>Samdech Kittisangha Bandith Men Sam An</b>	All
10:55-11:05	Presentation of Baseline Survey	CWPD
11:05-11:20	Presentation of progression, achievement, key challenges and solutions regarding accessing service uptakes and NSSF/Social Health Fund/Poor ID cards among FEWs by Health Facility-based	CWPD
11:20-12:00	Question and Answer	All
12:00-13:00	Lunch break	All
13:30-15:30	Round table discussion to identify key challenges, appropriate solutions and next steps	All
15:30-16:00	Official Closing Remarks	Lok Chum Teav Chou Bun Eng Secretary of State, Ministry of Interior Vice President of CWPD



**VII. Gallery of “Workshop on Social Protection for Female Entertainment Workers” On Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 at Phnom Penh Hotel, Cambodia**



Phnom Penh, Wednesday, 01<sup>st</sup> November, 2023

Prepared by

Program Coordinator

Approved by

Program Manager