



ខ្ញុំទទួលយក

“ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept” Campaign

PRESS KIT

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For any further information related to the campaign, please contact:

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What is the “ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept” Campaign?

The “ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept” Campaign aims to advance **legal marriage equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT+) couples in Cambodia**. The campaign strives to raise more public awareness and acceptance of LGBT+ persons, and contributing to advance the legal protection of marriage equality for LGBT+ couples, in line with the Royal Government of Cambodia's commitment during the third Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

This campaign will raise the voices and stories of the Cambodian LGBT+ community members, their families, their parents, allies from all sectors, and the general public across the country through the media and social media, for more understanding, acceptance, and support for the importance of obtaining legal marriage equality for LGBT+ couples in Cambodia.

Just like everyone, LGBT+ couples want to marry the person they love and form their family following our Cambodian traditions, and want to receive a marriage certificate so that their families will be recognized and protected equally by the law under the same roof of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

1. Who are the founders and supporters of this campaign?

- The “ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept” campaign was founded by Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK),¹ a Cambodian LGBT-led organization that has been advocating for equal protections of the rights of LGBT+ communities since 2009. The campaign direction is constantly driven by the members of the Cambodian LGBT+ communities, who have continuously identified the obtention of legal marriage equality as the priority to secure their equal rights and well-being.
- The campaign is also supported by civil society partners, including Love is Diversity, Micro-Rainbow International Foundation-Cambodia, Cambodian Center for Human Rights, Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia, Gender and Development for Cambodia, Just Associates South East Asia, Prumsodun Ok & NATYARASA, and Vuth Lyno, Artistic Director at Sa Sa Art Projects.
- Going forward, the campaign will seek to mobilize more allies and supporters from all sectors of Cambodian society, including civil society organizations working on LGBT+ rights, women's rights,

¹ Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK) has a vision for Cambodia where Cambodian LGBTQ citizens live their life receiving full and equal respect, acceptance and human rights from all sectors of society - especially families, communities and authorities. We wish for Cambodian LGBTQ citizens to feel happy to be who they are and live happy lives. An active, committed voluntary group since 2009, RoCK has now been a registered NGO since February 2014 - the first LGBTQ advocacy organization in Cambodia. RoCK is beginning an exciting new stage of development as it transitions from a voluntary activist group to a professionally-run organisation. RoCK also has as a key goal to eventually transition into a membership-led organization. <https://rockcambodia.org/>



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gender equality, human rights, children's rights, artists, the private sector, and the Cambodian public.

2. How was this campaign founded?

- Cambodian LGBT+ persons have continuously identified the obtention of legal marriage equality as the priority to protect their equal marriage and family rights.
- In 2019 during the third Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Cambodia accepted three recommendations to amend Article 45 of the Constitution to enable legal marriage equality for same-sex couples. By accepting these recommendations, Cambodia committed to implement the recommendations. [\[See more details in the UPR recommendations infographic\]](#)
- The "**ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept**" campaign was initiated to support the progress towards the implementation of these accepted UPR recommendations, by raising more awareness and acceptance, and starting conversations across Cambodia about who same-sex couples are, why they want to marry, and why treating all families equally with respect is at the heart of who we are as Cambodians.

3. Context - What is the status of legal marriage for same-sex couples in Cambodia today?

- The current text of Article 45 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia determines that marriage is between "one husband and one wife", which effectively excludes same-sex couples.². While there is no longer any explicit legal prohibition of same-sex marriage, there are no explicit provisions facilitating legal same-sex marriage in Cambodian law.
- Currently, Cambodian LGBT+ couples can hold unofficial traditional wedding ceremonies and parties. However, they cannot register for a marriage certificate and cannot obtain legal recognition of their marriage relationship.
- As a result, same-sex couples in Cambodia are denied the essential protections and security that only legal marriage can provide.
- As long as same-sex couples in Cambodia continue to be excluded from the ability to marry under the law, thousands of couples who are already building their life together and working hard to care for their families will be treated as strangers under the legal framework and unable to protect and care for each other when it matters most.

4. How will the campaign support progress towards obtaining legal marriage equality for LGBT+ couples?

- By accepting the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations to amend Article 45 of the Constitution to enable legal marriage equality for same-sex couples received during the third UPR in 2019, the government of Cambodia committed to implement these recommendations. The "**ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept**" campaign supports the progress of this commitment in the framework of the UPR, by working together with relevant stakeholders and the Royal Government of Cambodia to advance legal marriage equality.

² Encouragingly, the adoption of the 2007 Civil Code & 2011 Law on the Implementation of the Civil Code repealed a previous explicit prohibition on marriage of same-sex couples.



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- Civil society [called](#) on the Royal Government of Cambodia through the Cambodian Human Rights Committee and Ministry of Women's Affairs working together with other stakeholders to take concrete steps to advance marriage equality based on the UPR commitment. In particular, civil society recommended forming of a multi-stakeholder working group in charge of studying and reviewing the proposed legal amendment of Article 45 of the Cambodian Constitution to enable legal marriage equality for LGBTIQ couples.
- The " **ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept**" **campaign** raises the voices and stories of the Cambodian LGBT+ communities, their families, their parents, allies from all sectors, and the general public through the media and social media for more understanding, acceptance, and support of realizing legal marriage equality for LGBT+ couples in Cambodia.

5. Why is it important for LGBT+ couples in Cambodia to have the right to legal marriage equality and obtain a marriage certificate?

- In Cambodia, getting married is the key foundation of forming a family based on love, commitment, and following of traditions.
- Many same-sex couples in Cambodia already live together as a family in a committed loving relationship, and many of these couples also have children in their care.
- Just like everyone, Cambodian LGBT+ people and couples aspire to follow Cambodian culture as well as the footsteps of their parents and grandparents to marry the person they love, to form a family filled with great happiness.
- LGBT+ couples want to register a marriage certificate to see their love, marriage, and family being protected equally by the Cambodian Constitution and laws under the same roof of the Kingdom of Cambodia, in relation to adoption rights, legal protection for their children, joint-ownership of property, and social protection schemes. Only a marriage certificate can provide these essential legal protection and recognition of full legal equality.
- Enabling legal marriage equality provides a crucial opportunity to significantly reduce stigma and discrimination against the LGBT+ community. Enabling legal marriage equality improves well-being, and contributes to a more inclusive and harmonious Cambodian society which reflects Cambodian values as well as the vision of the Royal Government of Cambodia, and contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

6. What are the benefits of legal marriage equality for the Cambodian society?

- Enabling legal marriage equality helps to ensure that all Cambodian families have the tools they need to care for and protect each other – especially in hard times when it matters most.
- Extending legal marriage to same-sex couples contributes to reducing discriminations and ending exclusion of LGBT+ people, helping LGBT+ people to live more secured lives and be able to equally grow and contribute their capacities, skills, and talents as human capitals and resources for the development of the country.
- Enabling legal marriage equality also leads to positive contributions to social protections because LGBT+ individuals can access better jobs and therefore better support their parents and families.
- Enabling legal marriage equality helps LGBT+ couples to have access to the right to full adoption, which contributes to social protection between parents and children. This also contributes to



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ensuring the best interest of the child by providing all Cambodian children with a loving, protective family environment, which is also in line with the government's commitment to reduce the number of children in residential care institutions. When the children grow up in loving families with equal legal protections, they can also better develop their skills to strengthen the development of Cambodia in the future. The children adopted by same-sex couples can take care of their parents when they grow up in adulthood, also reducing the burden on the government.

- The Cambodian government has already expressed its commitment towards equality and non-discrimination towards LGBT+ persons, enabling legal marriage equality would be a strong step to put this commitment into action. By enacting marriage equality, Cambodia could demonstrate that it is a champion of LGBT+ non-discrimination regionally and internationally.
- By enacting legal marriage equality for same-sex couples, Cambodia would send a signal to the world that we are an open and inclusive place to live, work, visit and invest – boosting our global reputation and helping us to compete in the global marketplace.

7. How many countries around the world have already secured marriage equality for same-sex couples - and what has the impact been?

- As of December 2021, marriage equality for same-sex couples is already recognized in 29 United Nations Member States, as well as in Taiwan.³ Legal proposals to allow marriage equality are also currently under consideration in other countries throughout Asia and the world.
- Global evidence shows that recognizing marriage equality has had a positive impact in strengthening families, reducing discrimination against LGBT+ people, and contribute to more inclusive and harmonious societies.⁴ Every country that has secured marriage for same-sex couples offers substantial of evidence revealing that families are helped and no one is harmed when marriage discrimination ends.
- Global evidence from countries who have already recognized legal marriage equality also shows that marriage equality is good for business, and is key to attracting business investments, contributing to high productivity, fostering innovation, and contributing to sustainable economic development, all while boosting the tourism sector and the wedding industry.

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³ 'The Freedom to Marry Internationally', Webpage, <http://www.freedomtomarry.org/pages/the-freedom-to-marry-internationally>

⁴ See: Evan Wolfson, "After 20 Years of the Freedom to Marry for Same-Sex Couples, A Mountain of Evidence, Expertise, and Experience", European Human Rights Law Review. 2021 Issue 1. Available at: http://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/ftm-assets/ftm/EHRLR - Wolfson - Issue_1_March_2021.pdf

Press Release

Cambodian LGBT+ communities continue dialogue with the Cambodian Government and launch the “ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept” campaign to advance legal marriage equality for LGBT+ couples

Phnom Penh, 09 December 2021

On 09 December 2021, Cambodian Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT+) communities and civil society organizations held a **roundtable dialogue with Cambodian government representatives** and announced the launch of the “**ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept**” campaign to advance legal marriage equality for LGBT+ couples in Cambodia. The “**ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept**” campaign aims to raise more public awareness and acceptance of LGBT+ persons, and to contribute to advancing the legal protection of marriage equality for LGBT+ couples, in line with the Royal Government of Cambodia's commitment in the third Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

The roundtable dialogue and launching of the “**ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept**” campaign on the International Human Rights Day 2021 at Himawari Hotel were co-organized by Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK), together with civil society networks of individuals, groups, and organizations, including Vuth Lino, Artistic Director of Sa Sa Art Projects, Prumsodun Ok & NATYARASA, Love is Diversity, Micro-Rainbow International Foundation-Cambodia, Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia, Cambodian Center for Human Rights, Gender and Development for Cambodia, and Just Associates South East Asia.

Obtaining legal marriage equality has been continuously identified by the Cambodian LGBT+ community as a priority to protect their equal marriage and family rights.⁵ The **Roundtable Dialogue** continued discussions between Cambodian LGBT+ community members and their Cambodian government representatives on the ways forward for advancing the legal recognition and protection of marriage equality for LGBT+ couples in Cambodia, in line with the third cycle UPR recommendations to “Amend Article 45 of the Constitution to enable legal marriage equality for same-sex couples” accepted by Cambodia in 2019.

The total of approximately 85 participants in the **Roundtable Dialogue** included representatives from the Cambodian Human Rights Committee and key Ministries of the Royal Government of Cambodia, Cambodian local authorities, LGBT+ community members, the family members of LGBT+ persons and civil society organizations. This dialogue was a continuation of discussions held in 2018 and 2019, and recently in September 2021 on the UPR mid-term reporting period.

“It is so important to inform our government representatives and to the public that just like everyone, LGBT+ couples want to marry the person we love, to form our families, following our Cambodian traditions, and be able to receive a marriage certificate so that our families can be equally recognized and protected by the law under the same roof of the Kingdom of Cambodia,” said Ms. Pisey Ly, Coordinator of RoCK.

After the Roundtable Dialogue, LGBT+ communities also announced the launch of the “**ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept**” campaign. The “**ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept**” campaign will raise the voices, experiences, and stories of the Cambodian LGBT+ community members, their families, their parents, allies from all sectors, and the public across the country through the media and social media, for more understanding,

⁵ Context: Currently, **Article 45 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia** determines that “marriage shall be conducted according to conditions determined by law based on the principle of mutual consent between one husband and one wife”, which effectively excludes same-sex couples. While there is no longer any explicit legal prohibition of same-sex marriage, there are no explicit provisions facilitating legal same-sex marriage in Cambodia law. Currently, Cambodian LGBT+ couples can hold unofficial traditional wedding ceremonies and parties. However, they cannot register for a marriage certificate and cannot obtain legal recognition of their marriage relationship.

acceptance, and support for the importance of obtaining legal marriage equality for LGBT+ couples in Cambodia. More details on the campaign are available at: www.rockcambodia.org/iaccept.

“My partner and I have been together for ten years. We built our small family based on true love, commitment to take good care, forgive each other and look after our beloved son. Our parents, neighbors and local authorities knew about our family. However, the local authority could not issue the marriage certificate for us because we are a same-sex couple. I am so worried, especially for my son because our family does not receive the same legal recognition and protection as other families.”
– Poeu Dalin, LGBT+ community member of RoCK.

“I love and accept my child, all I wish for my child is that he can marry the one person that he truly loves. The happiness of my child is also mine as a parent. I hope the Cambodian government will allow my child to legally marry the same as other different-sex couples, living their simple lives with happiness and warmth.” – Mrs. Sous Narin, mother of an LGBT+ person.

“My partner and I, just like thousands of LGBT+ couples in Cambodia, have overcome all obstacles to finally be able to live together, forming our family together, and taking care of each other in both hard and happy times. Because of our commitment and endurance, our parents and our community accepted us. How long do we have to continue waiting until the law stops considering our relationship and family as strangers under the legal framework?” – Mr. Kuy Thida, co-founder of Love is Diversity.

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Press Kit “ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept” Campaign

“ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept” Campaign materials: Videos and Photos.

Please some key materials for the “ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept” campaign, including videos and photos, in the Google Drive link provided below:

- VIDEO: “What is the ខ្ញុំទទួលយក I Accept campaign ?”
- VIDEO: “Journey Home”
- VIDEO: “Letter from a Father”
- PHOTOS from LGBT+ couples and events

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11PTNc9ZTapsLz02f6H39qjRR0VRR0wXQ>

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សន្ទានុក្រម

ខ្លឹមសារ

- **អ្នកស្រឡាញ់ភេទដូចគ្នា៖** ជាពាក្យបច្ចេកទេស ដែលបាន និងកំពុងប្រើប្រាស់ ដើម្បីបង្ហាញនូវភាពទូលំទូលាយរបស់បុគ្គល ដែលមានមនោសញ្ចេតនាស្នេហា ជាមួយបុគ្គលផ្សេងទៀត ដែលមានភេទ ឬ អត្តសញ្ញាណយេនឌ័រចម្រុះដូចជាស្រ្តីស្រឡាញ់ស្រ្តី បុរសស្រឡាញ់បុរស អ្នកស្រឡាញ់ទាំងពីរភេទ និងអ្នកប្តូរយេនឌ័រ ជាដើម។
- **ស្រ្តីស្រឡាញ់ស្រ្តី៖** ពាក្យនេះប្រើ សម្រាប់ពិពណ៌នា ពីស្រ្តីដែលបានដែលបានកំណត់ មនោសញ្ចេតនា ឬ អារម្មណ៍ទាក់ទាញស្នេហាជាមួយស្រ្តី។
- **បុរសស្រឡាញ់បុរស៖** ពាក្យនេះប្រើ សម្រាប់ពិពណ៌នា ពី បុរសដែលបានកំណត់ មនោសញ្ចេតនា ឬ អារម្មណ៍ទាក់ទាញស្នេហាជាមួយបុរស។
- **អ្នកស្រឡាញ់ភេទទាំងពីរ៖** ពាក្យនេះប្រើ សំដៅទៅលើបុគ្គលដែលមានមនោសញ្ចេតនា ឬ អារម្មណ៍ទាក់ទាញ ស្នេហាជាមួយបុរសផង និងស្រ្តីផង។
- **អ្នកប្តូរយេនឌ័រ៖** បុគ្គលដែលកំណត់អត្តសញ្ញាណយេនឌ័ររបស់ខ្លួនឯងតាមរយៈការបង្ហាញខាងក្រៅ ដូចជាការស្លៀកពាក់ និងអាកប្បកិរិយា ដែលផ្ទុយពីភេទកំណើតរបស់ខ្លួន។
- **អន្តរភេទ៖** ប្រើសម្រាប់ពិពណ៌នា បុគ្គលដែលកើតមកមានលក្ខណៈកត្តាជីវសាស្ត្រ លាយឡំគ្នា នៃភេទប្រុស និងស្រី រួមបញ្ចូលទាំងអំប៉ុន ក្រមួស និងរូបរាងកាយ។
- **អ្នកមិនកំណត់អត្តសញ្ញាណភេទខ្លួនឯង៖** បុគ្គលដែលមានអត្តសញ្ញាណយេនឌ័រ និងការបង្ហាញយេនឌ័ររបស់ខ្លួន មិនស្របទៅតាមការកំណត់ និយមន័យនៃភេទ ប្រុស និងភេទស្រី។ បុគ្គលទាំងនេះអាចកំណត់អត្តសញ្ញាណយេនឌ័ររបស់ខ្លួននៅ ចន្លោះរវាង ឬ ក្រៅពី បុរស និងស្រ្តី។
- **និទ្ទាភាវភេទ៖** សំដៅលើទំនោរ ឬ មនោសញ្ចេតនា ឬ អារម្មណ៍ស្នេហារបស់បុគ្គល ម្នាក់ ទៅបុគ្គលម្នាក់ទៀតដែលមានអត្តសញ្ញាណយេនឌ័រ និងភេទផ្សេង។
- **អត្តសញ្ញាណយេនឌ័រ៖** ការកំណត់ខ្លួនឯង ដោយផ្អែកលើអារម្មណ៍ ខាងក្នុងយ៉ាងជ្រាលជ្រៅអំពីយេនឌ័រ ដែល អាចស្រប ឬ ផ្ទុយពីភេទកំណើតរបស់បុគ្គល។
- **ការបង្ហាញយេនឌ័រ៖** ការបង្ហាញឱ្យឃើញពីរូបរាងខាងក្រៅ នៃយេនឌ័ររបស់បុគ្គល ម្នាក់តាមរយៈការស្លៀកពាក់ អាកប្បកិរិយា ឥរិយាបថ សម្លេង ឈ្មោះដើម្បីកំណត់ អត្តសញ្ញាណខ្លួនឯង ដែលផ្ទុយពីភេទកំណើត។

ព័ត៌មានបន្ថែមអំពីសន្ទានុក្រម

- មគ្គុទេសក៍ស្តីពីសិទ្ធិមនុស្សសម្រាប់អ្នកស្រឡាញ់ភេទដូចគ្នា នៅក្នុងព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា <https://rockcambodia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Guide-to-H.R-2nd-Edition.pdf>
- វីដេអូអំពី “Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender expression (SOGIE)” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19r4uvLoSqQ>



សម្ព័ន្ធនាយក

Key definitions

SOGIESC: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression

Sexual orientation - Each person's capacity for profound romantic, emotional and/or sexual attraction to individuals of a different gender, the same gender, or more than one gender.

Gender - Refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

Gender Identity - Gender identity refers to each person's deeply felt internal experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender Expression - An individual's external manifestation of gender, for instance expressed through behavior, chosen name and pronouns, voice, clothing, make-up.

Sex Characteristics - Include primary sex characteristics (e.g., inner and outer genitalia and/or the chromosomal and hormonal structure) and secondary sex characteristics (e.g., muscle mass, hair distribution and stature).

LGBTIQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer

Lesbian - A term used to describe women who are romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally attracted to women.

Gay - A term used to describe men who are who are romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally attracted to men.

Bisexual - Individuals who are romantically, erotically, and/or emotionally attracted to individuals of more than one gender.

Trans/transgender - A term that refers to an individual whose gender identity/expression is different from what is typically associated with their sex assigned at birth.

Intersex - A term used to describe people that are born with atypical characteristics that do not fit within the stereotypical binary definitions of a man or a woman. It includes a diverse range of hormonal anatomic, genetic and chromosomal variations.

Queer – Queer can refer to people who are not heterosexual or cisgender or who do not see themselves as belonging to the socially accepted binary categories of sexual orientation and gender identity. Queer theory challenges heteronormative and cis-normative social norms concerning sexuality and gender, and claims that binary categories are social constructions. Traditionally a pejorative term, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBT+ people to describe themselves. Queer is also used by some as an umbrella term for LGBT+ people.

More information:

RoCK and Destination Justice, "Guide to human rights for LGBTIQ in Cambodia", 2015.
<https://rockcambodia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/HR-LGBT-Guide-FINAL-EN.pdf>

Video on "Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender expression (SOGIE)"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19r4uvLoSqQ>



UPR Recommendations on LGBTIQ rights accepted by Cambodia during its third UPR

During its third **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** in 2019, **Cambodia accepted nine recommendations specifically on the protection of the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) people**. The accepted recommendations on LGBTIQ+ rights focused on three main legal and policy reforms:

- **Amending Article 45 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia to enable legal marriage equality for LGBTIQ couples**
- **Enacting laws and policies guaranteeing non-discrimination based on SOGIESC**
- **Enacting legislation allowing legal gender recognition for transgender people.**

Recommendations on LGBTIQ rights accepted by Cambodia during its third UPR	
Recommendations	Recommending State
Amend the Constitution to enable legal marriage equality for same-sex couples	
Amend the Constitution to ensure marriage equality for same-sex couples. (110.47)	Iceland
Amend article 45 of the Constitution so as to enable legal marriage equality with a view to pursuing full and equal treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons in all areas. (110.51)	Netherlands
Amend article 45 of the Constitution to allow same-sex couples to marry. (110.55)	Canada
Enactment of laws and policies guaranteeing non-discrimination on the basis of SOGIESC	
Introduce an anti-discrimination law that guarantees and explicitly prohibits all kinds of discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics. (110.45)	Iceland
Adopt, in consultation with civil society organizations, comprehensive legislation and policies against discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and guarantee their implementation through all public entities, in particular in the education, health and labor sectors. (110.50)	Mexico
Introduce new legislation that guarantees equality and explicitly prohibits discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. (110.52)	Sweden
Adopt effective measures to combat and punish discrimination and violence motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity. (110.53)	Uruguay
Introduce, by the end of 2023, an anti-discrimination law that guarantees equality and explicitly prohibits discrimination of all kinds, including on the basis of religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or sex characteristics. (110.54)	Australia
Enact legislation to enable legal gender recognition for trans people	
Introduce a gender recognition law. (110.54)	Iceland

What is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)?

- The UPR is a United Nations Human Rights Council mechanism that operates by reviewing **every UN Member States'** adherence to its **human rights obligations**. During the UPR, UN Member States provide **recommendations** on how the State under review could **improve human rights**, in line with its human rights obligations. The process takes place for each country **every 5 years**.
- During its third UPR in 2019, Cambodia received a total of 198 recommendations from 73 UN Member States, and the Royal Government of Cambodia **accepted 173 recommendations**, and noted 25 recommendations.
- By **accepting UPR recommendations**, the government makes a political commitment to implement the recommendation before the next UPR cycle.

More information on Cambodia's UPR: <https://www.sithi.org/upr> & <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/KHindex.aspx>

Joint Statement by Civil Society Organizations:

Step up efforts to protect the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer (LGBTIQ) people in Cambodia, in line with the Universal Periodic Review recommendations accepted by Cambodia.

Phnom Penh, 27 September 2021 – At the mid-term reporting period of Cambodia’s third Universal Periodic Review (UPR), we, the undersigned civil society organizations working on the protection of LGBTIQ rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), women’s rights and children’s rights, call on the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and relevant stakeholders, including recommending states, to step up their efforts and take concrete actions towards effectively implementing the UPR recommendations on Sexual Orientation, Gender identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) rights and SRHR accepted by Cambodia.

During its third UPR in 2019, Cambodia accepted nine recommendations specifically related to the protection of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer (LGBTIQ) people. These accepted recommendations on SOGIESC rights focused on three main legal and policy reforms: amending Article 45 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia to enable legal marriage equality for LGBTIQ couples; enacting laws and policies guaranteeing non-discrimination based on SOGIESC; and enacting legislation allowing legal gender recognition for transgender people.

Since 2019, some progress has been noticed and appreciated with regards to the promotion and protection of equal rights of LGBTIQ Cambodians. Efforts by the Cambodian government, civil society organizations (CSOs) and LGBTIQ community members have contributed to improvements in public awareness and acceptance of LGBTIQ people in Cambodia. The continued work by the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports and civil society to roll out the new Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum in schools, which includes gender equality and SOGIESC concepts and rights for relevant grades and appropriate language for students, is particularly commendable. Statements by high level Cambodian government representatives encouraging government officials at all levels and the general public to not discriminate against LGBTIQ people are a welcomed step. The mention of lesbian, bisexual, transgender (LBT) women among women at increased risk of violence in the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (NAPVAW, 2019-2023) from the Ministry of Women’s Affairs is also a welcomed first step. Meanwhile, Cambodian CSOs and members of the LGBTIQ community have continued their work to raise awareness and encourage more acceptance by their families and the public.

Nonetheless, LGBTIQ people in Cambodia continue to face various forms of legal and social discrimination, in large part due to the exclusion of same-sex couples from being able to marry under the law and the lack of explicit legal protections against discrimination based on SOGIESC in employment, health and education sectors, as well as due to the lack of legal gender recognition for transgender people.

Based on our follow-up and monitoring work since 2019, we observe that the Cambodian Government has not yet taken significant concrete actions to advance the process of legal reforms necessary for the full implementation of the SOGIESC rights recommendations accepted by Cambodia at its third UPR.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of accepted UPR recommendations on SOGIESC rights before the next UPR cycle, and thereby advance on protecting LGBTIQ people from discrimination based on SOGIESC and protecting the human rights of LGBTIQ communities across Cambodia:

- We call on the RGC to take concrete steps working together with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of accepted recommendations on SOGIESC rights before the next UPR cycle, primarily towards enabling legal marriage equality for LGBTIQ couples. We also call on the recommending states to continue working with the RGC and all stakeholders in realizing these UPR recommendations.
- In particular, we call on the RGC to promptly consider forming a multi-stakeholder working group in charge of studying and reviewing the proposed legal amendments to enable legal marriage equality for LGBTIQ couples, including the proposed amendment to Article 45 of the Cambodian Constitution. This multi-stakeholder working group could be created under the coordination of the Cambodian Human Rights Committee (CHRC), given CHRC's technical expertise in coordinating the UPR mechanism. The multi-stakeholder technical working group should include all relevant stakeholders including relevant Cambodian government institutions, United Nations agencies, representatives from foreign embassies (in particular UPR recommending States), members of the LGBTIQ community and CSOs working on SOGIESC rights, SRHR, women's rights, gender equality and children's rights.

As long as same-sex couples in Cambodia continue to be excluded from the ability to marry under the law, it continues to perpetuate the exclusion of LGBTIQ people in the society and increase the vulnerability of LGBTIQ couples, their children and their family members. Enabling legal marriage equality provides a crucial opportunity to significantly contribute to reducing stigma and discrimination against the LGBTIQ community, thereby fostering improved well-being and a more inclusive and harmonious Cambodian society, which reflects Cambodian values, the vision of the RGC and contributes to achieving sustainable development.

– END –

This joint Statement is endorsed by:

1. *Rainbow Community Kampuchea Organisation (RoCK)*
2. *Love Is Diversity (LID)*
3. *Micro-Rainbow International Foundation Cambodia (MRIF Cambodia)*
4. *Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC)*
5. *Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)*
6. *Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)*
7. *KlaHaan*
8. *SILAKA*
9. *Just Associate South East Asia (JASS SEA)*
10. *Save the Children (SCI)*
11. *International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association Asia (ILGA Asia)*
12. *International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association World (ILGA World)*
13. *Asia-Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (APA)*
14. *Asia-Pacific Resource and Research Center for Women (ARROW)*
15. *Asia Pacific Coalition for Male Sexual Health Foundation (APCOM Foundation)*
16. *International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)*

For more information, please contact:

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4. *Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC): Dr. Saphon Somoliareasmey 069 777 855*
5. *Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) : Mr. Lim Borin: 012 904 266*

<https://rockcambodia.org/joint-statement-upr-mtr-2021/>



ខ្ញុំទទួលយក

Press Kit “ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept” Campaign

Previous statements by the Cambodian Government in relation to the protection of LGBT+ people’s rights in line with UPR recommendations

The Cambodian Human Rights Committee (CHRC), in its press release of 07 October 2021 stated that: ***"Cambodia promotes LGBT rights, preventing any acts that discriminate against LGBT people. Although the Cambodian Constitution and law do not yet recognise same-sex marriage, LGBT people can organise a ceremony and live together without penalty while certain countries in the region consider this act to be a criminal offence."***

Press Release “Update of Human Rights Situation and Law Enforcement in Cambodia (Part 2)” 07 October 2021.
Source: CHRC Facebook Page. <https://www.facebook.com/729919650418636/posts/4384773398266558/>
Page 4 of 11, Paragraph 10, “LGBT Rights”.

See also: Video interview of H.E. Keo Remy, Minister attached to the Prime Minister and President of the Cambodian Human Rights Committee (CHRC). VOA Khmer. 16 October 2021. (Addressing the situation of LGBT+ rights at minutes 5:55 of the video).

<https://www.facebook.com/729919650418636/posts/4414254445318453/>



ទំនួលយក

Press Kit “ខ្ញុំទទួលយក - I Accept” Campaign

Article 45 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia

Article 45 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia

“Article 45:

All forms of discrimination against women shall be abolished.

The exploitation of women in employment shall be prohibited.

Men and women are equal in all fields especially with respect to marriage and family matters.

Marriage shall be conducted according to conditions determined by law based on the principle of mutual consent between one husband and one wife.”

English translation available at: https://cambodia.ohchr.org/~cambodiaohchr/sites/default/files/Constitution_ENG.pdf

មាត្រា ៤៥.-

ការរើសអើងគ្រប់ប្រភេទប្រឆាំងនឹងស្ត្រីភេទត្រូវបំបាត់ចោល។

ការធ្វើអាជីវកម្ម លើការងាររបស់ស្ត្រី ត្រូវហាមឃាត់ ។

បុរស និង ស្ត្រី មានសិទ្ធិស្មើគ្នាក្នុងគ្រប់វិស័យទាំងអស់ ជាពិសេស ក្នុងអាពាហ៍ពិពាហ៍ និងគ្រួសារ ។

អាពាហ៍ពិពាហ៍ ត្រូវធ្វើតាមលក្ខខណ្ឌដែលមានចែងក្នុងច្បាប់ និង តាមគោលការណ៍ស្ម័គ្រចិត្ត ប្តីមួយប្រពន្ធមួយ ។

១៧

Original text in Khmer, available on the Constitutional Council of Cambodia website:
<https://www.ccc.gov.kh/library-detail.php? txtID=14>