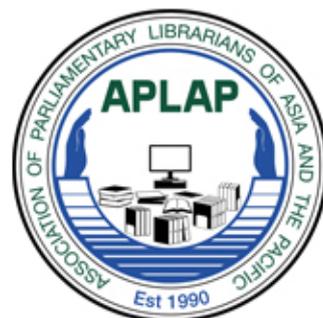


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***Strengthening Human Resources of Parliamentary library
and research service for the new normal***

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CAMBODIAN COUNTRY REPORT
ON
STRENGTHENING HUMAN RESOURCES
OF PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY AND RESEARCH SERVICE
FOR THE NEW NORMAL

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I- Abstract

This report is made amid the time Cambodia is fighting in every battle to master the “New Normal”. Parliaments has played a crucial role in to serve this purpose. For Parliament itself, normal services, especially information and research, are at the core for operations to institutionalize the New Normal. This report depicts Human Resource planning as mechanism for ensuring normal information and research services for the Cambodian Seante. The plan lays out about General Basic Requirements, Actual Requirements, and Output Specific Skills. It also highlights Cooperation efforts for HR capacity building. However, the General Secretariat envisage certain prominent challenges up the way forwards.

II- Introduction

Since 1999, the General Secretariat of the Senate has provided services for the Senate, leaders, Senators and for the mechanisms of the Senate as well as for the Cambodian Legislatures in the spirit of professionalism. Human resource development is the main priority which has regularly taken place under the principles of: “learning-by-doing” and “those who know teach those who do not”. The General Secretariat of the Senate has been making efforts to improve the value of the services it offers, and all types of work, and to promote the scope of its services and support with quality, effectiveness, and efficiency. As far as this matter concerns, the Secretariat General needs to act immediately with great flexibility to streamline its Human Resource management in respond to the “New Normal” of the services, including administration, procedures, technical and financial issues and ICT, research, initiatives, and creativity, along with diversified services. Throughout, it has paid attention to its customers, both inside and outside of the institution.

III- Structural Development

As of May 2020, the General Secretariat of Senate developed its research service structure to address increasing need for more and rigorous information and research from the Commissions and Senators. This was also done to assist the Senate in promoting full public participation. As a result, there are currently 9 departments responsible for information and research (for brief introductions of all these departments, please refer to; <https://senate.gov.kh/secretariat-general/secretariat-structure/>).

1. Department of Legislative Research
2. Department of General Research (Socio-Economic)
3. Department of Parliamentary Study
4. Department of Budgetary Research
5. Department of International Study
6. Library
7. Archive
8. Department of Information
9. Department of ICT

IV- Human Resource Management Strategy 2021-2030

To be able to implement the five functions (legislation, oversight, representation, international cooperation, and institutional development) with real quality and efficiency during this crisis, the Senate should benefit from satisfactory support services from the General Secretariat of the Senate. In terms of information and research, the General Secretariat of Senate is entrusted to provide other services, such as preparing briefing notes, reports, report summaries, research, documentation, the organization of Commissions, permanent committee meetings and plenary sessions of the Senate (plenary and extraordinary), other programs in the regions, missions inside of Cambodia and overseas, and so on. Indeed, the General Secretariat has been putting great effort in improving its research capacity through a clear development framework. Capacity development cooperation has been of great value that so far, the Secretariat General has been working hand in hand with all partners to train researchers and librarians, some interesting examples are recently budgetary and international study courses which were conducted at regional level. In general, our training program is still active via online basis. However, there is a long way to go for such a beginner to master the field of parliamentary information and research, not to mention the new challenges from Covid-19.

To this end, the Secretariat General has developed “the Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Strengthening the Capacity of the Senate of Cambodia 2021-2030 and the Perspective of the General Secretariat of Cambodian Senate 2021-2030” in order to optimize development process, These papers identify major priorities as follow:

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- Equipping facilities and providing appropriate resources as well as more suitable office space to increase the efficiency and quality of all types of services provided by the Senate. This primarily relates to the security system, safety, comfort, and a better environment.
 - Civil servants working for the General Secretariat of the Senate should have a deep knowledge, professional competence, and technical skills as well as excellence in specific foreign languages. It is necessary to consider the establishment of a framework for advisors, senior legal experts, methodologies relating to parliamentary research and international affairs, in order to set up a basic foundation supporting effective and efficient multi-services that require high professional expertise (requirements of the institution, the country, and regional and international cooperation).

Investment should be made to update and enhance the capacity of the core components of the general directorate, which comprise key departments such as the Department of Procedure, Legal Research, General Research, Parliamentary Research, Budget Research, and International Relations Research, the Secretariat attached to Commissions, Regions and Collective Territories, and all Secretariats to Senate Groups.

❖ General Basic Requirements

When they start work at the Senate, first of all staff need to know at least the three parliamentary cultures in addition to their areas of competence and general knowledge.

1. Parliamentary Culture

The parliamentary culture refers to the understanding of history and the evolution of the national, regional and the global Parliaments, and the roles, duties and competences of the parliamentary institutions, the Permanent Committee, the specialized Commissions, and various Groups of the Parliament, as well as the General Secretariat of the Senate. Moreover, staff should understand the electoral system of the Parliament, which is reflected in the implementation of liberal-multi-political party democracy.

2. Political Culture

This involves an understanding of the evolution of the Constitution, the separation of powers in the Constitution (between the Legislative, Executive and Judiciary branches) as well as the role, duties and competence of each institution. In this regard, staff should understand the evolution of the Constitution and its amendments that have been made throughout the history of Cambodia. Furthermore, an understanding of political parties and the electoral system of liberal democracy, which are defined by the existing laws of the State, is also important.

3. Administrative Culture

The administrative culture relates to an understanding of national procedures and the administration of institutions and each ministry that makes decisions about affairs that are in the national interest and that deal with the proposals from, and the needs of citizens. In particular, staff should understand about the hierarchical administration management both at national and sub-national levels including province, municipality, district, khan, commune, sangkat and village.

In general, the three cultures open the way to understanding parliamentary life, which is at the core of the liberal-multi-party democracy and the will of the citizens.

Proficiency in foreign languages (either French or English) in writing or speaking is a valuable qualification. Skills in computer operation and modern ICT are indispensable in daily work performance.

❖ Actual Requirements

Coming to work at the Senate will enable the parliamentary staffs to contribute to the provision of parliamentary services in any particular unit within its General Secretariat.

Civil servants, therefore, should:

1. Know, understand, and contribute to the achievement of daily work which shows high quality and efficiency within the framework of roles-multi-sector, multi-level, and multi-skill - of each unit that the civil servant work for.
2. Accomplish work in quantity and quality, delivered in a timely fashion, which constitutes a way to measure the results and achievements of each unit.
3. Do their best to be constantly equipped with the necessary skills to provide better parliamentary services.
4. Comprehensively demonstrate the values of the parliamentary service in a timely way, with satisfactory and adequate support services.
5. Demonstrate integrity, impartiality, professionalism, a client focus, efficiency and mutual respect as systematic and in accordance with the work hierarchy.

These five points will help staff to see the future and to clearly define skills in general and have the understanding that is necessary to serve the institution and its development, as well as their own. From the day they start their work to the day of retirement, the capacity development of civil servants must be continued. This is necessary to equip them with the actual skills they need in line with findings and new knowledge that also aim to provide quality and effective parliamentary services in accordance with the requirements of their units and the institution as a whole.

The term, “skills” relates to a combination of knowledge, know-how and practical abilities. Skills are the means through which each civil servant conducts his/her work functions. It is necessary in preparation for achieving a career rank or advancement of rank and to develop a framework relating to the positions of civil servants, as well as for payroll use, and for other work benefits. The identification of skills not only makes a substantial contribution to the recruitment of new civil servants, but it also gives direction and develops the capability of both individual staff members and of the institution as a whole.

❖ Output Specific Skills

Apparently, all Units under the General Secretariat collectively provide three types of services:

1. Services for the Senate, Permanent Committee and the understanding of citizens, commune/sangkat councils, associations, NGOs and civil society representatives
2. Services for Senators, Commissions, Groups and parliamentary relations

In order to carry out the work attached to the above, we need to have current skills and further knowledge about skills we might need in the future.

1st Senate, Permanent Committee, Commissions, Mechanisms, and the Understanding of Citizens, Commune/Sangkat Councils, NGOs and Civil Society Representatives

The work of the support unit focuses on fostering the common achievements of the General Secretariat of the Senate in order for the Senate and Permanent Committee to operate effectively and for citizens, commune/sangkat councils, associations, NGOs and civil society representatives to understand and interact with the work of the Senate and the National Assembly.

The General Directorate of Legal Services and Collective Territories is the primary contributor in respect of the achievements of the Senate, Permanent Committee and the mechanisms of the Senate.

The General Directorate of Legal Services and Collective Territories contributes to the understanding of citizens, commune/sangkat councils and NGOs.

The functions of the General Directorate of Legal Services and Collective Territories provides key services by:

- Providing advice about procedures, the organization of various programs and support work
- Supporting the legislative processes
- Providing research and analysis
- Producing minutes and other documents for Senators
- Managing and conducting other work for the General Secretariat, the Senate, the Permanent Committee, Commissions and relevant Groups.

At the same time, the General Directorate of Information and Public Relations contributes key services including:

- Providing information about the Senate to the public (such as about Senators, mechanisms, procedures and the implementation of its work)
- Facilitating study visits to the Senate

- Strengthening the understanding of citizens, commune/sangkat councils, NGOs and civil society representatives and having the know-how to interact with the Senate, Commissions, Groups and mechanisms through community outreach programs.

To fulfill these functions, we need officials who have:

- Deep knowledge about parliamentary procedures and experiences and who have attended training
- Capability to understand, elaborate on, and implement the Constitution, internal regulations and parliamentary procedures and the organization of plenary sessions of the Senate, the Permanent Committee and other Groups of the Senate
- Capability to give advice on issues, complex parliamentary procedures (including those relating to the Senate and the Permanent Committee) in direct verbal and written language
- Clerical skills
- Deep knowledge of ICT skills
- Ability to make presentations
- Liaison skills
- Capability to elaborate on, and to analyze the statistics and procedures in complex record documents
- Ability to understand and explain law, amendments, and the publication of legislation
- Legislative drafting skills
- Drafting skills for publications from the General Secretariat
- Capability to speak, write and translate foreign languages.

The General Directorate of Information and Public Relations assists citizens to understand and interact with the Senate. In order to fulfill this task, staff of the General Directorate should have capability to:

- Attain a broader knowledge about the Cambodian parliamentary system and the process of the Senate
- Draft and publish the work of the Senate, Commissions and Groups
- Enhance the work of the Senate including specialized Commissions and Groups through publication and dissemination for the media and citizens, commune/sangkat councils, NGOs, and civil society representatives
- Liaise with the media in respect of the work and activities of the Permanent Committee, specialized Commissions, and other Groups.

2nd Services for Commissions, Groups and Parliamentary Relations

The General Directorate of Legal Services and Collective Territories provides advice and support for specialized Commissions and established Groups as well as *ad hoc* Commissions or special Commissions of the Senate. They deliver services to the ten Commissions and Groups and to the Senators who work in them.

The activities of the General Directorate are to:

- Provide procedural support and administration services to the specialized Commissions and Groups
- Research and analyze (analyze, synthesize, evaluate, and give advice)
- Take notes, provide legal documents and data within the framework of drafting services
- Prepare and implement the plans and action programs of the Commissions and Groups, research and gathering information
- Manage and administer resources which are provided for the specialized Commissions and these Groups effectively and efficiently
- Contribute to the achievement of the common targets of the General Secretariat.

In respect of their functions, civil servants of the General Directorate of Legal Services and Collective Territories should:

- Provide policy and general support in the areas of procedure, administration and technical issues for the specialized Commissions and Groups
- Provide services to facilitate research processes and gather information
- Provide necessary information to Commissions in order to define research, evaluation and missions
- Produce draft reports from the chairman of a Commission and reports from the Commission after the entire membership have considered the draft report of the chairman and the Commission
- Promote and publish the report through the electronic system and make copies.

❖ Cooperation for HR Development

In achieving this goal, the Secretariat General have been putting effort in building up cooperation with other research organizations. One main partner we have is the Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC) which is an independent institute that has contributed to the capacity development of the Cambodian and regional Parliaments in research and applied research in all aspects of the five functions. In accordance with requests made by the Senators and parliamentary Commissions, PIC provides training to enhance the capacity of parliamentary staff in research, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, presentation of results, in the coordination of expert hearings and public consultations, and to prepare and to disseminate the contents of papers, research papers and policy briefs.

Besides, we have managed to reach MOU agreement with some other parliamentary training bodies such as King Prajadhipok Institute of Thailand, Indian parliament research service (LARDIS), and Russian parliament Secretariat.

V- Challenges

1. The Unceasing Development of Science and ICT: most of the world's Parliaments have extensively integrated innovations in ICT systems within their daily work to carry out the key services for the Parliament. In its early stages, the Cambodian Legislature began to use ICT, and particularly iPads. But these were not intensely, broadly and effectively used.

Working operations conducted through the ICT system for the Permanent Committee, plenary sessions, regional forums, conferences and long-distance administrative work in times of emergency, have not yet become sufficiently habitual.

2. The Development of the Senate has presented new needs and required next level of services: procedures, standards, resources, work-systems, security systems, safety, ICT systems, and technical standards have needed to be more advanced to respond to the widening scope of its work and its responsibilities to the public. Where these remain limited, this is the result of a lack of resources and competency. All support services still need enhancement, including some procedures which have not yet become habitually operated as a system (research and consultation). Procedures need to be updated to ensure that each Article in the Constitution relating to the roles, duties and competency of the Senate is fully complied with, along with each Article of the Internal Regulations of the Senate. D&D has been executed by the government since 2002, which is ongoing, law-making must continue, and close attention must be paid to standards, the delegation of competence, resources, and the organization of the civil servant framework for sub-national levels, in particular the way to improve service provision for the people, and to build the trust and confidence that people have in public authorities at all levels, and in the Royal Government.
3. Senators, researchers, students, and the public are not able to visit parliamentary library and yet benefit from e-library since it is still not genuinely e-library.

VI- Conclusion

When it comes to the workings of Parliament, there are limits to any attempt to turn the clock back. Some features of the institution may be relatively new in parliamentary terms but are nevertheless firmly established by now and effectively uncontested. In any case, no matter how the 'old normal' is conceived, turning the clock back on the workings of Parliament could prove very difficult indeed. However, during this time of crisis, we should all keep up with the bright side by taking the opportunity of crisis to start from our respective ground and try out digital working platform in parliament that would not have happened this soon without emergency such as Covid-19.

To be able to adapt to the New Normal which requires almost all new way of working, Cambodian research service for parliament recognizes that capacity and ability to act with adequate flexibility is key to serve our purpose. We acknowledge that this is a double-challenged situation given that are still at the beginning of the profession and now needed to work out through the path of crisis. In this context, it is suggested that a statute for Cambodian parliamentary librarian and researcher be established as foundation, followed by a research and information cooperation diplomacy strategy for 2021-2030. It has been clear that capacity strengthening method could be effective and efficient through exchange and cooperation, particularly during such crisis

We devote ourselves and have faith in our friends!