Press Release

UNODC launches public information campaign to sensitize about the harmful consequences of gender-based violence in Phnom Penh

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 24 May 2022 – Domestic violence or intimate partner violence, which includes physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, is the most common type of violence against women in Cambodia. One in five women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced physical violence. According to the 2020 Cambodia Centre for Human Rights report, this rate of incidence has risen during the Covid-19 pandemic.

While the Royal Government of Cambodia has made significant efforts to combat gender-based violence (GBV), remaining challenges need to be addressed, such as the lack of knowledge on victim-centered police responses to GBV against women and other available support services.

To help address these key barriers in Cambodia, the United Nations Office on Drug and Crimes (UNODC) Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, with support from the German Federal Foreign Office, is launching a 6-month public information campaign today, aiming both at strengthening community-police relations and informing the public of available services to tackle GBV-related crimes.

"UNODC is pleased to contribute to the National Action Plan for Prevention Violence Against Women (NAPVAW) 2019-2023 by means of this public information campaign. We aim to sensitize about the harmful consequences of GBV in Phnom Penh and make people aware of the available services to victims. GBV does not only affect the victims, but it also damages the social fabric of the communities," emphasized Mr. Esteban Felipe De La Torre, UNODC Regional Coordinator for Southeast Asia.

He further added that this campaign is part of a wider advocacy and awareness-raising initiative from a UNODC project that focuses on community policing approaches to reduce cases of GBV in high-risk areas in Phnom Penh. By working closely with the Cambodian National Police, the project also strives to build the capacity of frontline male and female police officers, to enhance existing mechanism to detect, report and refer incidences of GBV.

With the support from the Municipal Department of Women Affairs and District/Khan Office of Social Affairs and Welfare, six communities in three Districts confronted with significant challenges related to GBV were identified, including Khan Dang Ko, Khan Po Senchey, and Khan Sen Sok. Targeting diverse audiences, especially women between ages of 15 and 49, this public information campaign against GBV will reach out to the public through the dissemination of online and printed content. Prominent online influencers from various sectors will also take part in amplifying the campaign's message.

With the hashtag #SpeakUpAgainstViolence, the campaign entitled "Help is always available for you", encourages victims and witnesses to overcome the cultural and social stigma associated with GBV and speak up by building positive sentiment toward seeking supports when needed.

Lieutenant General Chiv Phally, Director of Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department, Cambodian National Police, and Ms. Sar Sineth, Deputy Secretary-General, Ministry of Women's Affairs of Cambodia, recognized champion against GBV, spoke at the event and emphasized the importance of reaching out to the most vulnerable communities.

During her closing remarks at the launch, Dr Angelika Stauder, First Secretary and Deputy Head of Cooperation, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Phnom Penh, commented that: "The police alone cannot solve violence against women and girls. It is a societal problem which requires a societal response. However, the police do have unique powers and responsibilities to protect victims from further harm, pursue perpetrators and prevent crimes. I hope that this public information campaign launch is an important step in directing victims towards the available police service and safety resources."

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