

JOINT STATEMENT

Civil Society Organizations Unite in Solidarity to Support Trade Unions' Proposal for Minimum Wage Increase to USD 250.66 for 2027

Phnom Penh, 18 September 2026

As minimum wage negotiation in Cambodia for garment, textile and travel goods sectors are happening, we the undersigned national and international civil society organizations, hereby express our unequivocal support for the trade unions' joint letter dated September 14, 2026. We endorse its proposal to establish a minimum wage of USD 250.66 per month in 2027 for workers engaged in Cambodia's garment, textile, footwear, travel goods, and bag sectors.

This proposal signifies an increase of USD 40.66 over the current minimum wage of USD 210. Based on comprehensive research into workers' living conditions, this adjustment is a reasonable and necessary measure to safeguard purchasing power, meet fundamental household needs, and progressively bridge the gap between the statutory minimum wage and a living wage.

The Urgency of Addressing Workers' Living Conditions

The trade unions' joint letter cites several studies showing that workers face significant challenges meeting their families' needs. Data from 2022 and 2024, along with preliminary findings from 2026, demonstrate that average individual earnings cover only approximately 60% of average household expenditure. An independent study conducted in 2025 reported monthly take-home earnings of USD 287 against median household spending of USD 391. Although the methodologies vary, these studies collectively highlight a persistent gap between individual earnings and family expenses.

Concerns about food consumption are equally alarming. Research cited in the letter shows that average daily calorie intake was 2,521 kcal per person in 2022, fell to 2,162 kcal in 2024, and was approximately 1,985 kcal in preliminary 2026 findings. The most recent data indicates a deficit of about 10% below the calorie threshold used for Cambodia's official food-poverty line. These findings underscore that adequate nutrition remains beyond reach for many workers' families. Workers must earn enough income to feed themselves and their families.

Further evidence from research cited in the letter shows that garment workers with loans often cut back on food to meet repayment obligations. More recent surveys indicate widespread debt and overtime work, while reports from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund warn of escalating prices that further constrict household budgets.

These findings substantiate the unions' assertion that wages must be sufficient to fulfill the basic needs of workers and their families during standard working hours. When families cannot afford adequate food or other essentials, current expenditure levels are inadequate.

Promoting Respectful and Evidence-Based Dialogue

We call on all stakeholders to engage respectfully and constructively with the unions' proposal and supporting evidence. Disparaging or mocking workers' demands risks fostering division and undermining meaningful dialogue. Workers and their representatives must be able to advocate for better wages without being discredited for raising legitimate concerns about their living conditions.

Any concerns about the potential impact of higher wages on investment or factory relocation should be thoroughly examined using sector-specific evidence. We support the joint letter's request to publish the data and assumptions used in assessments of productivity, competitiveness, employment, and profitability.

Workers have a vested interest in safeguarding jobs and industry stability. Governments, employers, and international buyers must collaborate with unions to address economic risks while striving to improve wages. Families should not be compelled to endure hardship by cutting back on food, accruing debt, or working extended hours.

A Shared Responsibility to Support the Union's Demands

We respectfully urge the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, along with the National Council on Minimum Wage, to respond proactively to the joint letter by setting the 2027 minimum wage at USD 250.66 per month. This decision should duly consider workers' evidence and involve full participation of independent trade unions in wage-setting processes.

Furthermore, we support the letter's call for suppliers to fully implement the wage increase, safeguard existing entitlements, and collaborate with unions to improve working conditions. Wage increases must not be offset by unlawful deductions, excessive production quotas, or pressure to work longer hours.

International brands and buyers must stand up and play a supportive role by adjusting purchase prices to reflect increased labor costs, ensuring order predictability, and making timely payments. The responsibility for raising wages lies across the entire supply chain.

We stand in solidarity with workers and trade union federations advocating for this proposal. Their contributions to Cambodia's economy must be recognized through wages that provide adequate food, basic household needs, and a life of dignity. We call on the government, suppliers, and international brands to meet the demands outlined in the joint letter and to support ongoing progress toward establishing a living wage in Cambodia

Civil Society Organizations endorsing this Joint Statement include:

1. Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)
2. Center for Business and Law Organizations (BHRE Center)

3. Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA)
4. Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
5. Cambodia Tourism Workers' Union Federation (CTWUF)
6. Labor Rights Supported Union of Khmer Employees of NagaWorld (LRSU)
7. Federation Union of Free and Independent Union (FUFU)
8. The Cambodia Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU)
9. Cambodia Food and Service Workers' Federation (CFSWF)
10. Cambodian Youth Network Association (CYN)
11. Equitable Cambodia (EC)
12. Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)
13. Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA)
14. Health Poverty Action Cambodia (HPA)
15. Communication and Media Promotion Organization (CMPO)
16. Community Legal Education Center (CLEC)
17. Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
18. Cambodia Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC)
19. Centre for Citizens Conserving Environment & Management (CECIC)
20. Sahmakum Teang Tnaut (STT)
21. Rural Women's Association for Agroecology (RWAA)
22. The People Center for Development and Peace (PDP-Center)
23. Building and Wood Workers Trade Union Federation of Cambodia (BWTUC)
24. Cambodia Living Arts (CLA)
25. Cambodian Youth Power Union Federation (CYPUF)
26. Partnership for Environment and Development Organization (PED)
27. Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC)
28. Cambodia Independent Trade Union Federation (CITUFED)
29. Worker's Heart Union Federation (WHUF)
30. Federation Union of Labor Influence (FULI)
31. The Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)
32. Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers' Democratic Union (C.CAWDU)

33. Building Community Voices (BCV)
34. SILAKA
35. The Cambodian NGO Committee on CEDAW (NGOCEDAW)
36. Alianza de Organizaciones por los Derechos Humanos del Ecuador
37. Klahaan
38. Cambodia Tourism Service Workers Federation (CTSWF)
39. Khmer Association of Informal Economy (KAI)
40. Farmers Association for Peace and Development (FAPD)
41. Cambodia Industrial Workers Federation (CIWF)
42. Cambodia Truck Drivers Association (CTDA)
43. Cambodian Human Rights Development Association (ADHOC)
44. The Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL)
45. Coalition of Apparel & Industrial Union (C-AI)
46. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)
47. Coalition for Partnership in Democratic Development (CPDD)
48. Advocacy and Policy Institute (API)
49. Bayon Education and Development (BED)
50. Our Objective Organization (OOO)
51. Save Vulnerable Cambodias (SVC)
52. Social Entrepreneurs Union of Agricultural Cooperation (SEUAC)
53. Village Support Group (VSG)
54. Cambodia Indigenous Peoples Organization (CIPO)
55. Community Legal Education Center (CLEC)
56. Cambodian Community Development Kratie (CCD-Kratie)
57. Action for Development (AFD)
58. Banteay Srei (BS)
59. Cambodian Organization for Children and Development (COCD)

60. Community Training Organization For Development (CTOD)
61. Help the Old Age and Most Vulnerable (HOM)
62. Rural Aid Organization (RAO)
63. Vulnerable Children Assistance Organization (VCAO)
64. Youth for Peace Organization (YFP)
65. Buddhism for Development (BFD)
66. Anakot Kumar (AK)
67. AMARA Organization (AMARA)
68. Building Bridges for Children (BBC)
69. Cambodia Agency Development of Disability and the Poor (CADDP)
70. Community Council for Development Organization (CCDO)
71. Cambodian Civil Society Partnership (CCSP)
72. Chumkriel Language School (CLS)
73. Co-Operation for Development of Cambodia (CoDec)
74. Cooperation For Alleviation of Poverty Organization (COFAP)
75. Cambodian Organization for Women Support (COWS)
76. Community Poverty Reduction (CPR)
77. Community Translation Organization (CTO)
78. Children and Women Development Center in Cambodia (CWDCC)
79. Disabled Veterans Development Association (DVDA)
80. Environmental Protection and Development Organization (EPDO)
81. Forest and Livelihood Organization (FLO)
82. Human Resource and Rural Economic Development Organization (HURREDO)

83. Khmer Association For Development of Countryside (KAFDOC)
84. Samakum Krom Akphiwat Phum (KAWP)
85. Kratie Disabled Peoples Organization (KDPO)
86. KHEMARA Organization (KHEMARA)
87. Kampuchea Women's Welfare Action (KWWA)
88. Khmer Youth Association (KYA)
89. Mlup Prom Vihea Thor Center Organization (MPC)
90. Nak Akphiwath Sahakum (NAS)
91. The Neakpoan Organisation for Development (NOD)
92. Peace and Development Aid Organization (PDAO)
93. Phnom Neang Kangrei Association (PNKA)
94. Phnom Srey Organization for Development (PSOD)
95. Promvihearthor Organization (PVT)
96. Rural Friend Community for Development (RFCD)
97. Rachna Satrei Organization (RS)
98. Samaky Organization (Samaky)
99. Street Children Assistance and Development Programme (SCADP)
100. Social Environment Agricultural Development Organization (SEADO)
101. STAR Kampuchea (SK)
102. Tekdey Sovanphum Organization (TDSP)
103. Vicheasthan Bomreu Neak samrabsamroul Karngea akphiwat (VBNK)
104. WOMEN COMMUNITY VOICES (WCV-FM 89-50)
105. Wathnakpheap Organization (WP)

106. Vulnerability & Illiteracy Reduction(VIR)
107. Cooperation Environment Tourism Organization(CETO)
108. Rural Community and Enviroment Development Organization(RCEDO)
109. Creation for Opinion Organization (COO)
110. Akphivath Neary Khmer Organization (ANKO)
111. Ponleur Kumar Organization (PK)
112. Education Rural Community Organization (ECD)
113. Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA)
114. Urban Poor Women Development (UPWD)
115. Cambodian Women’s Development Association (CWDA)
116. Cambodian Institute for Democracy (CID)
117. FIRST STEP CAMBODIA (FSC)
118. Non-Timer Forest Products Organization (NTFP)
119. Cambodia Children and Young People Movement for Child Rights (CCYMCR)
120. Environment Health and Education Organization (EHE)
121. Cambodian Center for the Protection of Children's Right (CCPCR)
122. Aphivat Strey (AS)
123. SILAKA Organization
124. Action for Health Development (AHEAD)
125. Facilitation Association of Economy for Cooperatives (FAEC Cambodia)