

***Breaking Barriers: People with Disabilities in the Garment Sector
Public and Private Sectors Driving Inclusion and bridging gaps***

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PHNOM PENH, Sept. 1st 2023 - EuroCham's Responsible Business Hub (RBH) in collaboration with CARE and with the support of GIZ FABRIC Cambodia, organized the Breakfast Talk event titled "Breaking Barriers: People with Disabilities in the Garment Sector," at TRIBE Phnom Penh. This gathering combined influential speakers, experts, and stakeholders to address the empowerment of persons with different abilities (PwDA) in the garment sector.

The event's objectives encompassed showcasing best practices in disability inclusion, fostering a vital dialogue involving government bodies, civil society organizations, and private sector actors, and generating actionable recommendations. These discussions aligned with the RBH's dedication to responsible business conduct and sustainability and mirrored the evolving global landscape of Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) legislation. Given the garment industry's substantial role in Cambodia's economic growth, it serves as a pertinent arena for addressing inclusion challenges and championing equality.

The event featured representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training of Cambodia (MLVT), the Disability Action Council (DAC), CARE Cambodia, Epic Arts, the Better Factories Cambodia (BFC/ILO), the Cambodia Labour Confederation (CLC), the Action on Disability and Development (ADD), GIZ FABRIC Cambodia, Civil Society Organization (CSOs) and private sector representatives.

The event opened with remarks from Ms. Sara Monti, RBH Coordinator, emphasizing the importance of fostering inclusion and equality in the business world. She stated, "Our goal today is not only to raise awareness but also to take concrete actions towards creating a more responsible working environment."

H.E. Ngy Simaneth, Advisor at the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT), and Mr. Eam Sarath, Director of the Welfare and Rehabilitation Unit at the Disability Action Council (DAC), highlighted the government's commitment to developing policies that promote greater engagement of persons with different abilities in the private sector. They stressed the need for increased awareness and investments in vocational training to drive positive change in the business sector.

Ms. Neou Sovattha, Country Director of CARE Cambodia, presented results from a 2022 rapid assessment study on inclusion environment in the garment sector. Among the key findings were that only one out of five factories met government criteria of employing 1% of PWD for private sector, none had a written inclusion policies, and workplace regulations were inconsistent. Additionally, only two out of five factories had accessible infrastructure, and none had safety precautions or emergency plans for assisting persons with different abilities.

The event also featured inspiring success stories, including insights from Ms. Channa Kao, General Manager of Battambang Textile, on empowering individuals with disabilities. The audience was

further inspired by Ms. Onn Sokny, Director of Epic Arts, an inclusive art organization that promotes expression and empowerment among people with and without disabilities.

During the panel discussion, representatives from Better Factory Cambodia (BFC), the Cambodia Labour Confederation (CLC), Action on Disability and Development (ADD), Battambang Textile, and CARE Cambodia emphasized key takeaways, including the importance of raising awareness, capacity building, creating accessible infrastructure, advocating for better recruitment conditions for persons with disabilities and implementing simple actions plans into companies.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Hasso Anwer highlighted the potential for tangible change when the joint efforts are made through the shared responsibilities between Government agencies, private sector (brands and local companies/factories), CSOs, and development partners at both the ground level and policy level. Together, these initiatives can drive meaningful change.

The event was a great success and EuroCham's RBH would like to thank all the speakers and panellists for their invaluable contributions.

About EuroCham Cambodia

The European Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia (EuroCham Cambodia) was created in 2011 by French, German and British business associations in Cambodia to act as the official chamber of the European business community in the Kingdom. Since then, it has grown to over 300 members and 5 national chapters, comprising 11 European countries. [EuroCham Cambodia](#)'s core activities are to promote, support and represent its members and European business interests in dialogue with the Royal Government of Cambodia, with the aim of developing a more efficient and fertile business and investment environment for all.

EuroCham's key objectives are to

- Consult & advocate on key issues related to doing business in Cambodia;
- Promote investment to Cambodia
- Work to improve access for European business to the Cambodian market, and vice-versa; and facilitate business between small and medium size companies of Cambodia and EU Member States;
- Provide services relating to economic, legal, technical, financial, market and other business issues in the EU and Cambodia and industry specific information to investors;
- Promote a strong European Union business identity vis-à-vis the Cambodian business community;
- Work closely with Cambodian stakeholders in supporting inclusive and sustainable growth of the Cambodian economy.

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The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is Germany's

leading provider of international cooperation services. As a federal enterprise, we support the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. We are also engaged in international education work around the globe. GIZ's project "Fostering and Advancing Sustainable Business and Responsible Industrial Practices in the Clothing Industry" (FABRIC) in Cambodia is addressing sustainability in the textile and garment industry in its social, economic, and environmental dimensions, encompassing a more comprehensive approach on engaging the private sector in project activities. The project is also working in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Vietnam and cooperates with actors in China, supporting the efforts of business representatives, government institutions, civil society, and trade unions to build an industry that offers quality jobs, protects the environment, and contributes to economic growth.

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About CARE is an international development organisation fighting global poverty with a special focus on **working with women and girls** to bring sustainable changes to their communities. In 2021 CARE reached over 100 million people across 100+ countries. CARE has been working with Cambodians since 1973, in Cambodia and on the Thai border, before establishing an office in Phnom Penh in 1991.

We focus on empowering particularly marginalized and vulnerable women in Cambodia, including urban women marginalized by occupation, rural women denied multiple rights, and women and girls from ethnic minorities. The Cambodian Office has worked for over two decades on inclusive programming in the garment sector with a focus on women.

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