

PHNOM PENH, FEBRUARY 27 - Within its mission to promote responsible business practices and in order to raise more awareness on how to prevent gender-based violence and harassments (GBVH) in the workplace, EuroCham's Responsible Business Hub (RBH), in collaboration with the Cambodia Women Entrepreneurs Association (CWEA), hosted a Breakfast Talk event on "*Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Awareness Raising, Guidelines and Best Practices*".

According to a recent Discussion Paper published by the International Labor Organization (ILO), sexual harassment in Cambodia is a widespread phenomenon present in many workplaces with an estimated 40-60 % of women and 10 % of men being harassed at work. Therefore, through expert inputs and discussions, the event aimed at raising awareness on the prevention of GBVH in the workplace, sharing existing initiatives and practices as well as identifying recommendations for future action to reduce these numbers and prevent the occurrence of this critical issue.

The event featured representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training of Cambodia (MLVT), the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), the Better Factories Cambodia (BFC/ILO), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ – FABRIC Cambodia) and private sector representatives.

The event was opened by Ms. Sara Monti, Coordinator of the RBH, who stated that "preventing and mitigating sexual harassment in the workplace is not only a moral imperative, but also a critical component of sustainable and responsible business".

H.E. Chea Ratha, on behalf of the CWEA, stressed the need for more women in business leading positions and the importance of strengthening peoples' knowledge about the rights to live and work free from any form of sexual harassment, whilst also encouraging victims to speakup and raise their voice more systematically.

H.E. Sovann Vannaroth, Secretary of State at the MLVT, and Ms. Sar Sineth, Deputy Director of the Department of Social Development at the MOWA, highlighted the government's commitment to addressing GBVH in the workplace and the measures being taken to prevent and address this issue, such as the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women (NAPVAW II) Program (2019-2023).

Mr. Arron Goldman, Program Manager at BFC, shared the newly-published guidelines which address GBVH in the apparel and textile industry, with the aim to provide a practical step-by-step guide to combat gender-based violence for all relevant stakeholders in the sector.

The event also welcomed many representatives from the private sector which bears a crucial responsibility to create safe and respectful workplaces for its employees, including the prevention of sexual harassment.

Private sector companies like Danone (represented by Ms. Nget Kunthida, Head of Public Affairs & Communication) and law firms as Bun & Associates (represented by Mr. Antoine Fountaine, founding Partner) shared their experiences and emerging best practices for addressing sexual harassment in the workplace: Danone, for example, shared some focal points of their global program on this matter.

During the panel session, the representatives from the CWEA, the Women Empowerment House (WE House), and the Women Union Network (WUN), emphasized the importance of promoting gender equality, even and especially at union level, and raising the level of awareness on the topic along all levels within workplaces, ranging from employees themselves to top management.

The event served as an opportunity in Cambodia for gathering experts from different industries and sharing best emerging practices adopted from both the Government and the private sector to address this delicate issue which continues to remain pervasive in the world of work. In addition to the above, this RBH initiative was aimed at identifying and elaborating new recommendations from all relevant stakeholders in order to continue to combat any form of gender-based violence and harassment in work environments. The most reoccurring recommendations included the persisting high need to enhance the level of education and information among all levels of stakeholders about the issue. Besides, the need for clear, standardized approaches in the event of GBVH cases was highlighted as transparent and well-functioning support and reporting structures are crucial to increase trust in the remediation process whilst also stressing zero tolerance of infringements.

As Mr. Marc Beckmann, GIZ FABRIC Project Director, said during his closing remarks, “The effort needs to be collaborative and the responsibility for success needs to be shared”, stressing the need of a collective approach towards a sustainable growth of Cambodia, especially against the background of upcoming Due Diligence legislations. Preventing sexual harassment, creating safer workplaces and improving the well-being of workers represents a key component of responsible business.

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

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### **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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**About the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH**

**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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