

# CSHL NEWSLETTER

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## Cambodia's Women in the Law

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.<sup>1</sup> It is crucial for society to be diverse where everyone has equal opportunity regardless of any differences. Among other sectors that the public tries to emphasize on the equality between male and female, many have pioneered and advocated for women equality in the legal profession.

According to the 2018 report, among all registered lawyers, only 437 are female, making up 24 percent, and only 14 percent of all judges are females in Cambodia.<sup>2</sup> Although there is progress compared to past, women representation in legal professions are still limited. The aim of promoting fairness and justice in the legal profession can be provided when the opportunities are open to the inclusion of females. There are two important reasons as to why the inclusion of the women in roles within the legal profession is something that we should all work to achieve.

First, law is created for a diverse people in the society. The law itself is diverse in which it does not direct to any specific gender or race. Cambodia has been adopting liberal norms and practices of which the rules of law is one of the cornerstones.<sup>3</sup> This means that the law applies to everyone in the society without any discrimination. This can be evident by the different types of law ranging from criminal law, tort law, family law and the others. The law tries to be as inclusive as possible taking into account the existing differences from one person to the other. Hence, it would be reasonable that the lawyers who are representing the different categories of people and law involved to be also diverse. This means the inclusion of women in the legal profession as well.

Second, it can be set as the role model for other female who passionate in pursuing in legal profession. The great examples of those women in legal career are salient as there are a lot of young females who are hoping to be a part of the same profession. In this regard, they can use the platforms they have to achieve justice and equality to all. If these group of young people sees that there is equality, they will work even harder to achieve their goals. At least they will have people who they can look up to.

In conclusion, there can be more reason as to the essential roles of women in legal profession aside these mentioned points. Margaret Maed stated that "Never underestimate the ability of a small, dedicated group of people to change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that has ever changed the world."<sup>4</sup> This implies that a society where there is the inclusive involvement of women is, without a doubt, can make the world a better place. This can already be seen by the milestone achievements by some of the women who are already in the legal profession, many whom have learnt first-hand from their own mothers about the core value required to become a reputable legal practitioner.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, "Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls".

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

<sup>2</sup> Kelly Goles, "Cambodia's legal professions", November 24, 2021. <https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2021/11/cambodias-legal-professions/?loclr=ealln#:~:text=Women%20in%20Law&text=Among%20all%20registered%20lawyers%2C%20only%200a%202018%20report.>

<sup>3</sup> Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, "Rule of law", January 2009. [https://www.kas.de/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=b9b20b72-41808384d757&groupId=252038](https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=b9b20b72-41808384d757&groupId=252038)

<sup>4</sup> Sam Shoh, "The importance of females in the legal profession", October 02, 2017. <https://ms-jd.org/blog/article/the-importance-of-females-in-the-legal-profession>

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