

2.4 Economic Situation

A climate conducive to economic growth doesn't exist. Money did flow in after the last election, however this primarily served to finance government officials thus increasing the position of the elites. Investors are confounded by the dualism in the midst of high inflation. The high level of corruption in government siphons off local revenue, as well as international aid. "Patronage, payoffs and protection" are rampant. The international community has also voiced concerns about the revenues being raised through the narcotics trade and the devastating logging practices.

2.5 Reform of the Justice System

The judicial system is weak and corrupt and still functions in the "communist-mode". There is a deep mistrust amongst groups. There is a need to assist reform of the judiciary and support the development of democratic institutions resulting in proper investigation, acceptable police methods and an independent judiciary. Currently there is no trust in the police. The reform of the judiciary is key to the future.

2.6 Civil Society

Civil society groups are crucial to the future of Cambodia. There is a need to create a culture of human rights and support for local NGOs. Although many NGOs are perceived as politically aligned, there are individuals interested in building independent non-partisan organizations. Basic resources are needed to support the development of civil society. For example, basic support could include supplying motorcycles for transport and per diems for rural extension workers so they don't have to return to their homes each night. People need free and fair access to information and the media. Although international efforts have helped to build a more visible civil society, basic resources are still needed to support this development.

2.7 Role of the Media

The print media is relatively active, but at best, propagandist. The existence of an informed, neutral free press doesn't exist in Cambodia. NGOs do not currently have third party access to the media. For example the Women's Media Centre has not been able to show their voter education videos. The question is how can Canada assist in educating people about the election through the media? A second issues is what role can Canada play in training Cambodian journalists who by and large are self-trained and politically aligned?