

# **Democracy in Cambodia – 2003**

**A Survey of the Cambodian Electorate**

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The Asia Foundation

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**(draft 16 May 2003)**

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# 1 Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the second national opinion survey of the Cambodian population conducted on behalf of the Asia Foundation. The aim of this nationally representative survey, which is a follow-up to a similar poll conducted in 2000, is to provide detailed information on the knowledge and attitudes of Cambodian voters, so that NGOs and other providers of voter education can more accurately plan their efforts. The survey also repeated a variety of questions from the first survey, which provide measures of the progress of democratization in Cambodia and the impact of voter education projects.

The survey was conducted between February 20 and March 14, 2003 and consisted of a random, representative sample of 1,008 in-person interviews with Cambodian citizens over 18, conducted in 24 of the country's 25 provinces. The survey was commissioned by The Asia Foundation and conducted by Charney Research, New York and the Center for Advanced Studies, Phnom Penh, with technical assistance from AC Nielsen Indonesia, Jakarta. This study builds on the findings of an earlier phase of the research, involving in-depth interviews with voters in Phnom Penh and five rural villages, conducted in December of 2002, as well as extensive pre-testing of the questionnaire. This report also references the 2000 survey of the Cambodian public, which consisted of 1,006 interviews and was conducted between July 6 and August 10, 2000. Below are the key findings of the study, followed by a more in-depth explanation of them and their implications for voter education programs for the National Assembly election.

## 1.1 Key Findings

- The survey results indicate some progress in the consolidation of democracy in Cambodia over the past three years, although they also show that the country still needs assistance in voter education and other areas before it can be considered a fully functioning democracy. There have been improvements in perceptions of personal freedom and electoral administration, but the ability to function as citizens of a democracy remains limited and vote buying and electoral violence are still widespread concerns.
- Cambodians are more likely now than in 2000 to report they have freedom of political expression and are less likely to worry about direct coercion or other forms of political repression.
- Nevertheless, Cambodians continue to have very limited notions about what a democracy offers them and how it should function. Voters still view their vote primarily as currency for political patronage.
- The vast majority of Cambodians say the country is headed in the right direction and optimism has spread since 2000. The principal reasons for this optimism are development and economic recovery, although many still point to peace and social normalization.

- Cambodians continue to cite poverty as the main problem facing the country, though concern about economic issues has declined somewhat and worry about water issues has surged in the wake of widespread floods and droughts.
- Prosperity has continued to spread over the past two years, as more Cambodians say their situation has improved than declined. However, those from lower socioeconomic groups and the Southwestern region are still most likely to say they have been left behind.
- In line with their optimism about the direction of the country, most Cambodians are satisfied with the performance of the national government. A sizeable majority is also satisfied with the performance of their National Assembly representatives.
- Most Cambodians know the parties that have representatives in the National Assembly and say they actively campaigned in their areas in the commune elections.
- However, few are able to cite any differences between the parties. Cambodians are very interested in forums that would shed light on candidate and party positions, in person or on the airwaves, and in broadcasts of dialogue between Assembly Members and Ministers.
- Virtually all Cambodians have heard about the upcoming National Assembly election and the vast majority plans to participate.
- Almost half the Cambodian electorate is not sure if the upcoming election will be free or fair or thinks it will not be. While this represents an increase in voter confidence compared to the situation before the commune election in the 2000 survey, it shows no gain since the 1998 Assembly vote. A large proportion of those surveyed also is unsure or fearful regarding cheating in the coming vote.
- The share of the population who expect no election problems has increased significantly since 2000, although almost half still fear that one or more election problems may arise in their areas in the upcoming election.
- Although a fairly small proportion of Cambodians reports hearing of local voter coercion, the problem is still very real to many Cambodians because many are aware of accounts of voter coercion from other parts of the country.
- The survey results indicate that most people continue to rely on the local authorities for reporting election problems, rather than official election bodies, and less than one-third say they would report election problems through electoral administration channels.
- Despite the improvement in perceptions of electoral administration over the past three years, vote buying is still reported to be widespread. Fortunately, most

Cambodians do not think they must vote for a party that gives them money or gifts, although a significant minority would feel obligated to do so.

- Most of those who voted in the commune elections report seeing independent monitors when they voted and the presence of these monitors has a strong positive impact on voter confidence in the electoral process.
- Few Cambodians can identify any of their province's representatives in the National Assembly and few recall their National Assembly representatives visiting their area since the 1998 election.
- Participation in organized civic associations remains limited, although most Cambodians report interest in joining one or more associations.
- Political tolerance appears to have increased, as four in five Cambodians now believe that all political parties, even unpopular ones, should be allowed to hold meetings in their area. Personal political tolerance seems to have risen dramatically over the past three years, with four in five voters reporting they would accept a friend's decision to support an unpopular party.
- Most Cambodians accept the right of ethnic minorities to vote in elections, although support for voting rights for ethnic groups originally from neighboring countries – especially Thailand and Vietnam -- is substantially lower.
- Large minorities of Cambodians display intolerance towards Cambodians and Vietnamese. Large minorities also are also hostile to Christian missionaries and foreign funding of mosques and schools.
- There is widespread agreement that poverty is the biggest problem facing women, but sizable proportions of both men and women mention gender-specific issues, including domestic violence, family problems, jobs, health issues, birth control, and education.
- Most Cambodians believe that a woman should make her own choices in the voting booth, with a significant increase since 2000, but a significant minority could still benefit from further education on this issue.
- A huge majority of Cambodians would like to see more women as members of the National Assembly, and a majority report they would be more likely to support a candidate list that included a woman in one of the top three places.
- Almost all voters favor forums in their area that would give women an opportunity to discuss problems on their own.

## **1.2 National Issues and Governance: Positive Mood Reflects Economic Gains**

Cambodians remain optimistic about the future of their country and by most indicators appear even more optimistic than in 2000. Four out of five (81%) say their country is headed in the right direction, an increase from 72% in the 2000 survey. The principal reasons for this optimism are development and economic recovery. These appear to have had a positive impact on the quality of life for most Cambodians, a plurality of whom say their personal economic situation has improved over the past two years.

There are also signs of improvement in the area of political expression. Four out of five (79%) Cambodians report that people feel free to express their political opinions in the area where they live, a significant increase from the 66% found in the 2000 survey. It is noteworthy that voters in all demographic categories now say people in their areas can speak their minds, including even those over 50, who were the least certain about free expression in the last survey.

Despite these positive signs, life in Cambodia continues to be very difficult for most people. Cambodians continue to say poverty is by far their biggest problem; over half (52%) cite this as a top problem facing the country. One in ten said they went hungry at least one day in the week preceding the poll. Also, while concern about economic issues has fallen somewhat since our 2000 poll, worry about water issues has surged in the wake of widespread floods and droughts, which now are seen as the second biggest problem facing the country. Additional direct questioning shows that public concern about HIV-AIDS and human trafficking in Cambodia is extremely widespread.

## **1.3 The Local Mood: Also Positive Due to Development**

Opinions about local issues are also largely positive. A large majority of Cambodians (74%) think their communes are headed in the right direction, again even more than in 2000 (67%). As at the national level, those with positive impressions about the direction of their commune are most likely to point to development and economic recovery, followed by peace and social normalization.

While most Cambodians are optimistic about developments in their local area, they continue to face a variety of problems. As at the national level, poverty and water issues are, by far, the biggest local concerns.

## **1.4 Views of the Government and National Assembly: Positive Due to Improving Conditions**

Public perceptions of economic improvement and development clearly translate into positive impressions of the government's performance. In line with their optimism about the direction of the country, a large majority of Cambodians (76%) is satisfied with the performance of the national government. A sizeable majority of Cambodians

(66%) also report that they are satisfied with the performance of their National Assembly representatives.

However, it is important to stress that satisfaction with the government and National Assembly appears to be largely the general rising tide of economic and infrastructure development. The survey results consistently show that Cambodians have very little knowledge about or connection to their government. Only a small minority can name one or more of their Assembly representatives and only about one-quarter of Cambodians recall their National Assembly representatives visiting their area since the 1998 election.

### **1.5 Attitudes Towards Elections: Willingness to Participate, But Ignorance of Election Functions, Assembly Roles, and Party Stances**

Although virtually all Cambodians (96%) know the National Assembly election is approaching, fewer than half of those surveyed could correctly identify July as the month when it will take place. Almost all eligible Cambodians (98%) say they plan to participate. While the results of the commune elections indicate that voters tend to overstate their likelihood to vote in a poll, the intended turnout is so high that as in the previous vote, encouraging voter turnout does not need to be a central focus of voter education efforts.

While most Cambodians now agree that elections are an acceptable way to voice dissent, the data indicate that the electorate continues to have relatively limited notions of what elections can do. In direct questioning, over three-quarters (78%) agree that "*if you are unhappy with the government, you should vote for another party to let the government know you are unhappy.*" However, in unaided questioning about why they are voting and what elections can do, voters are most likely to cite choosing their Assembly Members and fulfilling their civic duty. Almost none think that elections offer an opportunity to provide input into government policy and composition or to change the direction of the country.

Similarly, few have any understanding of what National Assembly members do beyond delivering resources to their constituents. The roles of making laws, questioning Ministers, or choosing the Prime Minister are almost unknown. Viewed in this light, it is not especially surprising that only one-quarter of Cambodians think that voting in the national election will make a difference, while a plurality are uncertain and almost one-third think it will make little or no difference. Information on the purpose and functions of elections and on the role of the National Assembly could help citizens become more effective participants in the nation's life.

It is encouraging that most Cambodians recognize they have more than one choice at the voting booth and think this is important. The majority of Cambodians can name the parties that have representatives in the National Assembly, and say they actively campaigned in their areas in the commune elections. However, less than one-third of voters can cite any differences between the three main parties, another indication that vote decisions tend to be based on fairly rudimentary information.

Given their current lack of information about candidates and parties, the strong interest that Cambodians express in learning about candidates and party positions offers an important opportunity for voter education efforts. Nine-in-ten (91%) voters say they would be interested in listening to or watching radio or television broadcasts of ordinary people asking questions of candidates from all the parties. Similarly, 92% say they would be interested in listening to or watching radio or television broadcasts comparing what the different parties say about the problems facing Cambodia.

## **1.6 Voter Education Needs: Elections Appear Cleaner, but Vote Buying and Complaint Procedures Remain Problems to Address**

There are noteworthy signs of improvement in public perceptions of electoral administration over the past three years, with fewer voters than in 2000 saying that election problems are likely in their areas. The share of the population that expects any election problems has decreased significantly since 2000 (from 58% to 46%). In particular, voters are less likely to worry now that problems like violence, threats, forced support, and miscounts will happen in the upcoming election. Efforts by international and domestic organizations to encourage cleaner elections seem to have borne some fruit.

Nonetheless, concern about electoral practices remains widespread among the Cambodian citizenry. Almost half the electorate is not convinced the next election will be free and fair (42% are uncertain, 5% say it will not be). While the proportion that expects a free and fair election (52%) is larger than before the 2000 vote, it is a bit smaller than the share that says the 1998 National Assembly was free and fair. Concern about possible cheating remains more widespread: the majority of voters either says cheating can happen (10%) or is unsure about it (44%), while just 47% report that they are confident there will be no cheating in the national election.

One key aspect in which there appears to have been no improvement over the past few years is vote buying. One-quarter (26%) of the electorate thinks vote buying is possible in their areas in the upcoming election (up slightly from 23% in 2000), one-quarter (23%) report they heard about parties offering money for votes in the commune election, and almost half (46%) say they heard of parties giving gifts (rice, MSG, t-shirts, etc.) to local voters before the commune election. Fortunately however, most would not feel obligated to support a party giving them money or gifts – but as many as one in six either might feel obligated or is unsure on this score. This is an area where voter education can play a role in helping voters ignore bribes.

Although relatively few Cambodians report hearing of voter coercion locally in the commune elections, the problem is still very real to Cambodians, many of whom are aware of accounts of violence from other areas of the country. Some 8% say they heard of threats or violence against the supporters or activists of certain parties during the commune elections in their province, but 30% say they heard about such threats or violence in other provinces via media or word of mouth.

While most Cambodians say they know where to complain about election irregularities and are willing to do so, the survey results indicate that few are aware of official reporting channels. Two-thirds (68%) say they know to whom they could complain if there are election irregularities and three-quarters (75%) report they would be likely to report an election problem. However, the survey results indicate that most people continue to rely on the local authorities – especially village and commune chiefs -- for reporting election problems, and fewer than one-third say they would report election problems through the electoral system (monitors, local election committees, NEC, etc). There is clearly scope for vote education efforts intended to inform and encourage people regarding use of the appropriate channels for reporting complaints.

Most of those who voted in the commune elections report seeing independent monitors when they voted and the presence of these monitors has a strong positive effect on voter confidence in the electoral process. Three-quarters (72%) say they saw monitors or observers when they voted in the commune election. Among those who saw these monitors, 87% said it made them much (62%) or somewhat (25%) more confident that the election would be free and fair.

The survey findings suggest that a targeted part of the voter education campaign should focus on some specific groups of Cambodian voters who, in order to participate more meaningfully in the democratic process, require basic efforts to inform them of their rights and responsibilities as voters. These groups include the voters who are reluctant to voice dissent, hesitant to report election irregularities, and most susceptible to vote selling. These voters are most likely to be over 50 years old, have no formal education, live in the Eastern half of the country, and are kitchen/pot or death association members.

A more general phase of the voter education campaign should be targeted to the entire electorate and cover essential issues about which most voters are uninformed. In particular, most voters have little idea what elections can do, little sense of what their Assembly representatives do, and are ignorant about the proper channels to report election irregularities. A general voter program should educate Cambodians about what roles elections can serve and why their vote matters, the functions of the National Assembly, and how to complain about irregularities and to whom.

### **1.7 Civic Education Needs: Political Tolerance Grows, but Ethnic and Religious Tensions and Civic Organization Need Attention**

Most Cambodians still know little of democracy, but there are important signs of progress in the survey. In the current poll, more than half are able to articulate some definition of democracy, however limited, compared with just one-third three years ago. Although a substantial minority (41%) believes they have little or no influence over national government decisions, almost half of Cambodians (49%) feel they have at least some say. While the gains suggest that civic education efforts to date have scored noteworthy successes, there is clearly still need for more education in the meaning of democracy and its significance for the individual citizen.

Most Cambodians do not belong to any type of organized civic association, although most report an interest in being a member of one or more associations. Nor have many had the opportunity to develop the civic skills required for political participation other than voting in these groups: very few have participated in a meeting of an association or religious group or have helped make a decision at meetings of this type. Still, most express interest in joining one or more groups, the most popular including death associations, kitchen supplies/pot associations, farmer associations, women's associations, and water supply associations. There is immense scope for the development of civil society in Cambodia, which civic education efforts can promote by teaching people how to join or establish and run their own associations.

Political tolerance in Cambodia appears to have increased since 2000, another sign of success for voter education efforts. Four in five Cambodians believe that all political parties, even unpopular ones, should be allowed to hold meetings in their area. Four in five voters also say they would accept a friend's decision to support an unpopular party. The percentages expressing a tolerant view on both of these measures have increased significantly since the 2000 survey.

Most Cambodians accept the right of individuals who belong to ethnic minority groups to vote in elections, although their support of voting rights for ethnic groups originating in neighboring countries – especially Thailand and Vietnam -- is substantially lower. Large majorities support voting rights for the Chun Chiet (90%), the Khmer Kampuchea Krom (85%), Cham (78%), and ethnic Chinese (76%). However, support for voting rights of ethnic Lao (69%) and especially ethnic Vietnamese (57%) and ethnic Thai (54%), while still a majority, is less universal.

Many Cambodians are concerned and intolerant regarding outsider influence on the country. Xenophobic sentiments are widespread: two in five believe that Thais try to exploit Cambodians, while almost as many feel the Vietnamese are against Cambodia. Similar proportions think that Christian missionaries and foreign funding of mosques and schools will cause problems. It is important to note that these attitudes are most common among those of higher socioeconomic status, who tend to have the most exposure, personal and media, to disputes and stereotypes concerning the other nationalities.

The survey results suggest that the civic education drive should begin with an initial pre-electoral phase of targeted messages on the basics of democracy, to enhance participation in the electoral process. The primary target groups for these messages include voters under 25, those with no education, rural women, and those in the Northwest region. The messages for these efforts should focus on what democracy means and how elections are central to the democratic process, why democracy and politics matter to individuals, and the continued importance of political tolerance.

Additional civic education efforts for the entire population, which may continue after the election, should focus on democracy-related norms and practices. They include explaining how to join and participate in organizations, participation other than voting (e.g. contacting officials, working in groups to affect policy, etc), and emphasizing

tolerance towards ethnic minorities in Cambodia and members of different religious groups.

## **1.8 Women: Support for Increased Participation in Politics**

There is widespread agreement among Cambodians that poverty is the biggest problem facing women, as with the population in general. Still, sizeable percentages of both men and women mentioned gender-specific issues as the biggest problems facing women. In particular, Cambodians single out domestic violence, family problems, jobs, health issues, birth control, and education as problems specifically affecting women.

Most Cambodians believe that women should make their own choices when voting for elected officials and this opinion has become more common over the past three years. Overall, 81% think a woman should make her own choice when voting, while 19% feel men should advise her on her choice. This represents a significant increase in support for women's voting autonomy, which stood at 69% in the 2000 survey, and appears to be another achievement for voter education efforts. Nevertheless, voters over 50 and those with no formal education could benefit from further education on this issue.

The survey results indicate that the Cambodian public is largely receptive to increased participation by women in politics. The vast majority of Cambodians (92%) would like to see more women as members of the National Assembly. Although one-third of the public would prefer a male representative in the National Assembly, half says that the gender of Assembly representatives makes no difference to them.

The survey also shows that the net effect of placing women high on the ballot for National Assembly elections would be positive. Just over half (52%) of all voters would be more likely to support a candidate list that included a woman in one of the top three places, while only 12% say this would make them less likely to support the list. Similarly, 92% report they would be in favor – 78% strongly – of a law that would require at least one place in three on party lists had to go to a woman

Cambodians also overwhelmingly favor women-only forums. Almost nine-in-ten (88%) say they would favor – 74% strongly -- public meetings in their area for women only to talk about their problems, while just 10% oppose this idea. This concept is favored by vast majorities of voters from every demographic and regional subgroup. Men as well as women support giving Cambodian women a chance to speak out in their own public spaces.

## **1.9 Voter Education Media: TV Grows in Reach, but Radio and Oral Sources Remain Important**

Village chiefs have been and continue to be the most important source of information about elections and remain the most popular source for voter education. Broadcast

media still play a relatively limited role in spreading information about elections, with one-quarter of the electorate getting its information from television and one one-fifth from radio.

Cambodians continue to watch TV and listen to the radio much more than they read newspapers. Overall, 52% watch TV three or more times a week, while 38% listen to the radio three or more times a week and only 9% read a newspaper on a regular basis. TV has greater reach than radio overall and in most demographic and regional subgroups. In particular, it shows more reach in rural areas than in our 2000 survey.

As in the past, voter education in Cambodia will need to be accomplished through many varied mediums, since TV only reaches about half the electorate on a regular basis, and radio touches only half the remainder. In particular, older, less educated, and rural voters need to be reached through in-person education.

### **1.10 Conclusion: The Campaign Plan**

Two overlapping education campaigns should be run before the election – one addressing voter education, and the other focusing on civic education. For both of these campaigns, there are specific messages for targeted populations that need particular attention, as well as general messages for the entire population.

The first component of the voter education campaign should focus on the specific groups of Cambodian voters who require additional efforts to inform them of their basic rights and responsibilities as voters in order to participate more meaningfully in the democratic process. The issues involved concern the willingness to voice dissent or report irregularities and the buying of votes. The target groups include over-50s, the uneducated, Easterners, and members of death and kitchen associations. The second component of the voter education campaign should be targeted to the entire electorate, and cover essential issues about which most voters are uninformed. These include the purpose of elections, roles of the Assembly, and complaint procedures for the election.

The first component of the civic education drive should begin prior to the election to communicate targeted messages on the basics of democracy to enhance participation in the electoral process. Targets include under 25s, the uneducated, rural women, and Northwesterners and messages should focus on political tolerance and the meaning of democracy. The second component of the civic education campaign should be targeted to the entire electorate and continue after the election if resources permit. It should cover essential issues about which most citizens are uninformed, including building civil society organizations, non-electoral participation, and ethnic and religious tolerance.

## 2 Introduction

This report presents the findings of opinion research conducted to assist in planning voter and civic education campaigns for Cambodia's forthcoming National Assembly Elections. The national findings section of the report, with national data, has eight parts:

- *National Issues and Governance*
- *Local Issues and Governance*
- *Views of the Government/National Assembly*
- *Attitudes Toward Elections*
- *Voter Education Needs*
- *Civic Education Needs and Issues*
- *Women*
- *Voter Education Sources/Media*

It concludes with a summary of the proposed campaign plan, and has appendices with media and demographic data.

### 2.1 Methodology

The research was conducted in two phases:

- Phase 1: Qualitative -- 15 in-depth interviews conducted in late December 2002 among the general public in urban and peri-urban Phnom Penh and five villages in the provinces of Kandal, Kompong Speu, and Kompong Cham.
- Phase 2: Quantitative --A national survey, involving 1,008 in-person interviews of a representative random sample of Cambodians around the country, February 20 and March 14, 2003.

The fieldwork was conducted by the Center for Advanced Studies in Phnom Penh, with technical assistance from Dindin Kusumar of AC Nielsen Indonesia, Jakarta. Craig Charney and Steve Hopkins of Charney Research, New York did the sample design, questionnaires, and analysis, with project management by Adriana Best and research assistance by Crishana Lloyd.

### 2.2 The National Sample

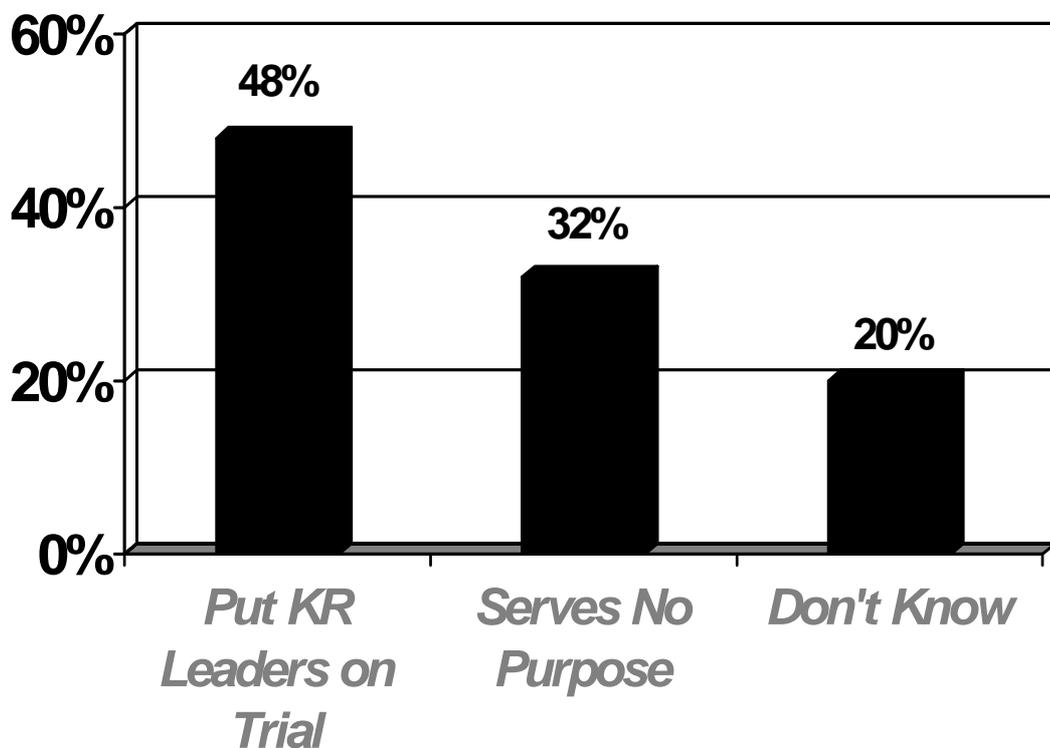
This baseline survey is one of the most representative and comprehensive polls ever conducted in Cambodia. The survey is based on a representative national sample of 1,008 in-person interviews, randomly drawn in proportion to the eligible voter population of each region and province, and has an error margin of +/- 3%.

The sample was drawn by a two-stage process in proportion to the eligible voter population of each region. In the first stage interviewing points were distributed randomly among the provinces in proportion to their population, and in the second households and individuals were randomly selected for interview. In this way, every voter in the country had an equal chance of being interviewed.

Interviews were conducted in 24 of Cambodia's 25 provinces, the only exception being Mondul Kiri, which has less than 1% of the country's population, and did not receive any interview points when these were randomly distributed. Elsewhere, every voter in the country had an equal chance of being interviewed. Thus, the survey represents the views of almost all potential Cambodian electors.

The largest share of interviews (32%) were conducted in the central region where one-third of the voters live. The southeast provided 27% of the sample, the Northwest 18%, and the Southwest 18%. The smallest proportion (5%) came from the least populous region of the country, the Northeast.

***1008 Interviews  
By region***



### 2.3 Representativeness of the Sample

The weighted sample drawn for the survey mirrored the adult population of Cambodia as a whole, when compared to the results of the National Census. In gender terms the breakdown of the sample is 45% male, and 55% female, which matches the census result. Some 17% of the respondents live in urban areas, 83% in rural areas, almost identical to the national figures. In terms of age, some 51% of the sample is between 18 and 35, while the other 49% is over 35, similar to the entire adult population. Thus, the survey sample provides an accurate reflection of Cambodia's electorate.

Since the sample is truly national and random, the survey results represent all parts of the population in their correct proportions. Demographically, the poll results are either identical to the real population, as indicated by the 1998 Census, or very close. As a result, the survey findings correctly reflect the public in terms of gender, urban-rural balance, and age. Therefore the findings regarding public opinion are thus likely to be representative as well, within the survey's margin of error.

	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Census</b>
<b>Gender</b> <b>Male/Female</b>	<b>45% / 55%</b>	<b>45% / 55%</b>
<b>Area</b> <b>Urban/Rural</b>	<b>18% / 81%</b>	<b>18% / 81%</b>
<b>Age</b> <b>18-35 / 35+</b>	<b>50% / 50%</b>	<b>50% / 50%</b>

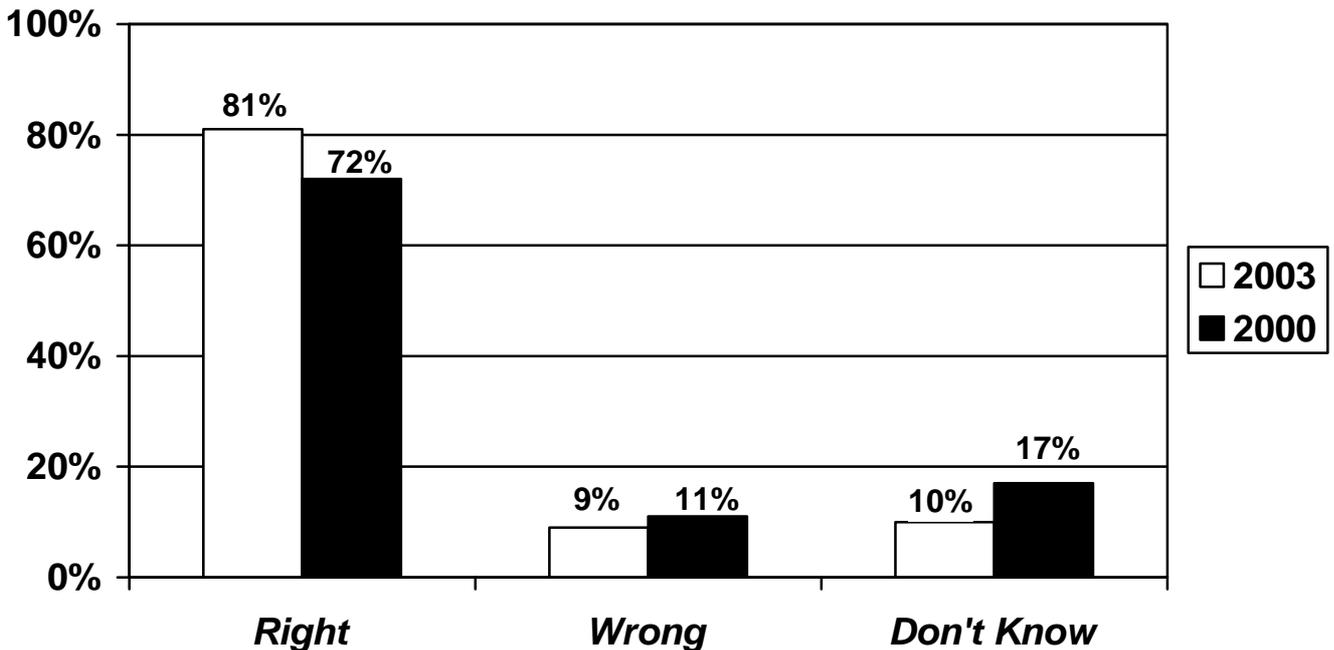
### 3 National Issues and Governance

#### 3.1 Direction of the Country

While Cambodians were positive about the future of their country in 2000, optimism has grown since then. A large majority (81%) says that things in general in the country are going in the right direction, while just 9% say they are headed in the wrong direction, and 10% are uncertain. This represents a significant increase in the percentage reporting things are going in the right direction since the 2000 survey (72% right direction).

As in the previous survey, optimism is widespread, with large majorities of both sexes and all age, regional, education, and income groups saying the country is headed in the right direction. While rural residents continue to have a more positive outlook than those in urban areas (82% and 71% right direction, respectively), urban residents are significantly more optimistic than in the past.

*Generally speaking, do you think things in Cambodia today are going in the right direction or do you think they are going in the wrong direction? (Q.81)*



#### 3.2 Right Direction Reasons

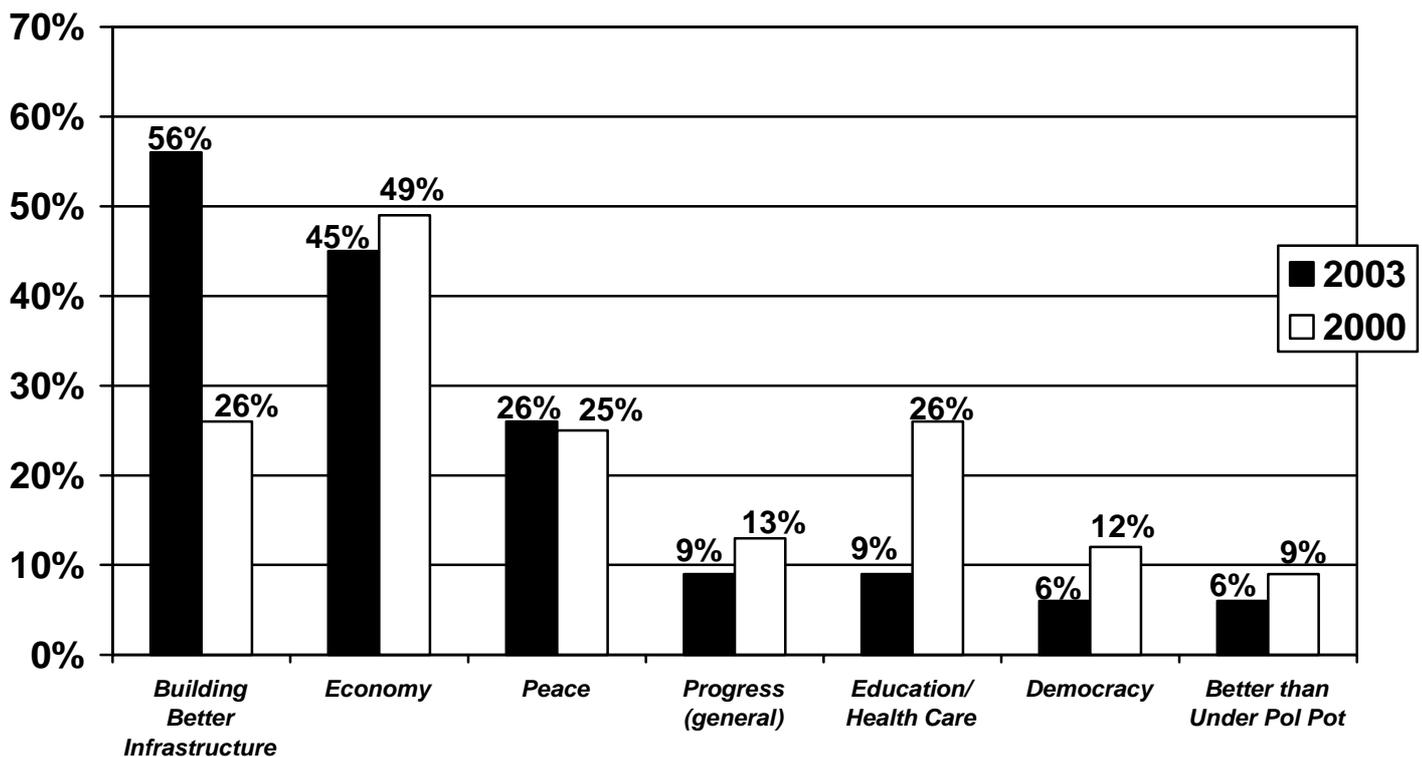
Those who are positive about the direction of the country are by far most likely to mention development and economic recovery as their main reasons for optimism.

Over half (56%) mention development (building, infrastructure improvements, etc.) as one of the two main reasons why they think the country is headed in the right direction – more than twice as many as in 2000. And, as in 2000, almost half (45%) cite economic improvements as a major reason why things are heading in the right direction. Development and the economy are cited most frequently as evidence for optimism in every regional and demographic subgroup.

Other reasons for optimism included peace (26%), general progress (9%), improved government services (education, health care, etc.) (9%), democracy (6%) and the fact that conditions are better now than under Pol Pot (6%). With the exception of the proportion mentioning peace, the shares mentioning each of these improvements has declined over the past three years. This is particularly true for the percentage pointing to improvements in education/health care, which has decreased from 26% in 2000 to 9% now. (However, many of those referring to infrastructure improvements mentioned school and clinic building.)

*Why do you say that? (Q.82)*

*(Two responses allowed, reasons given by 5% or more shown)*



*Base: 811*

**3.3 Wrong Direction Reasons**

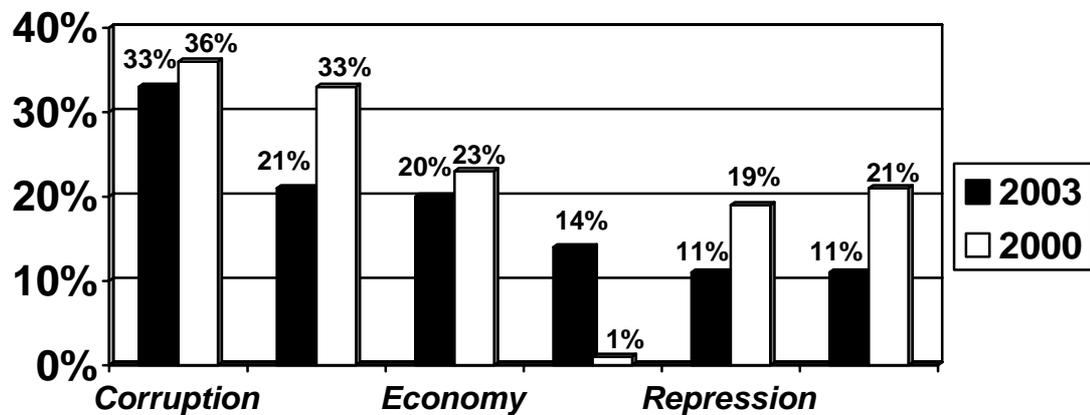
As in 2000, corruption, poverty, and the economy are the principal reasons cited by the minority who feel that Cambodia is headed in the wrong direction. The pessimists

cite corruption most often (33%), followed by poverty (21%), and the fear of a worsening economy (20%).

Although poverty and its associated problems (including unemployment, the lack of food and clothing, homelessness, begging, and child labor) was mentioned by one-fifth of those who think the country is heading in the wrong direction, this represents a decrease since 2000, when one-third (33%) of pessimists mentioned poverty. The share of these voters mentioning crime has also dropped, to just half of what it was in 2000 (21%, down from 11%).

It is also notable that the proportion of pessimists who cite political concerns -- repression, fear, or the lack of freedom – decreased to 11% in the current survey from 19% in 2000. On the other hand, concern about conflict has jumped to 14% from 1% just three years earlier, which may reflect conflicts during the commune elections or the emergence of local land and other disputes. At the same time, while still a second-tier mention, concerns about water problems have increased significantly over the past three years (from 3% to 9%).

*Why do you say that? (Q.82)*  
*(Two responses allowed, reasons given by 10% or more shown)*



*Base: 92*

### 3.4 Cambodia’s Biggest Problems

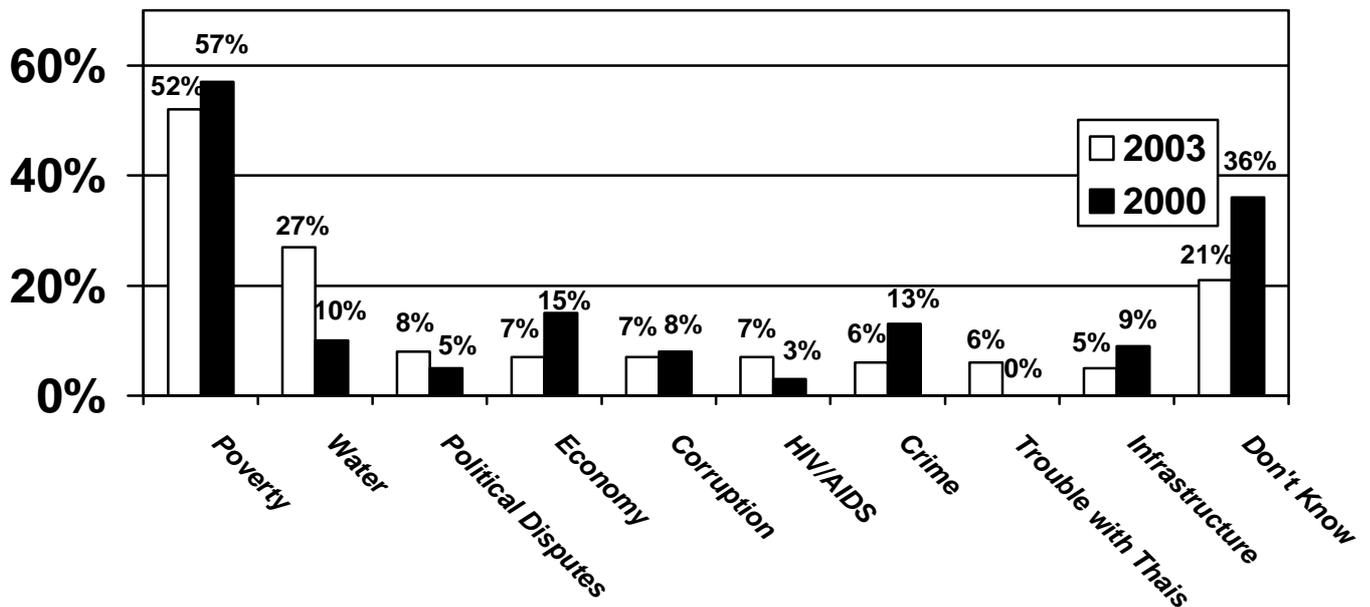
Cambodians see poverty as the biggest problem by far facing their country, much as in 2000. Just over half (52%) mention poverty, unemployment, lack of food and clothing, homelessness, beggars, and child labor as one of the two top problems facing Cambodia. This represents a small decrease since 2000, when 57% mentioned poverty as one of the top two problems facing the country. Together with the drop in

the proportion who see the economy as one of the biggest problems – from 15% in 2000 to 8% now – the poll results point to some improvement in Cambodians’ economic circumstances, despite the persistence of widespread poverty.

Water issues have jumped in importance: they now take second place among the problems facing Cambodia. One-quarter (27%) mention floods, droughts, and water issues as one of the top two problems facing the country, compared to just 10% in 2000. This probably reflects the severe flooding and droughts experienced in much of the country in recent years.

Beyond poverty and water issues, Cambodians cite a wide variety of problems facing their country, although no single issue is mentioned by more than one-in-ten surveyed. Concern over political disputes rose slightly to 8% and corruption remained steady at 7%, while mentions of crime fell to 6% from 13% and complaints about infrastructure dropped from 9% to 5%. However, two new issues pushed their way onto the agenda: concern about AIDS rose to 7% and trouble with Thais, which did not figure in the previous poll, was cited by 6%.

*In your view, what is the biggest problem facing Cambodia?  
And after that, what is the second biggest problem? (Q.83/84)*



*(Responses combined, all those cited by 5% or more)*

### 3.5 Freedom of Political Expression

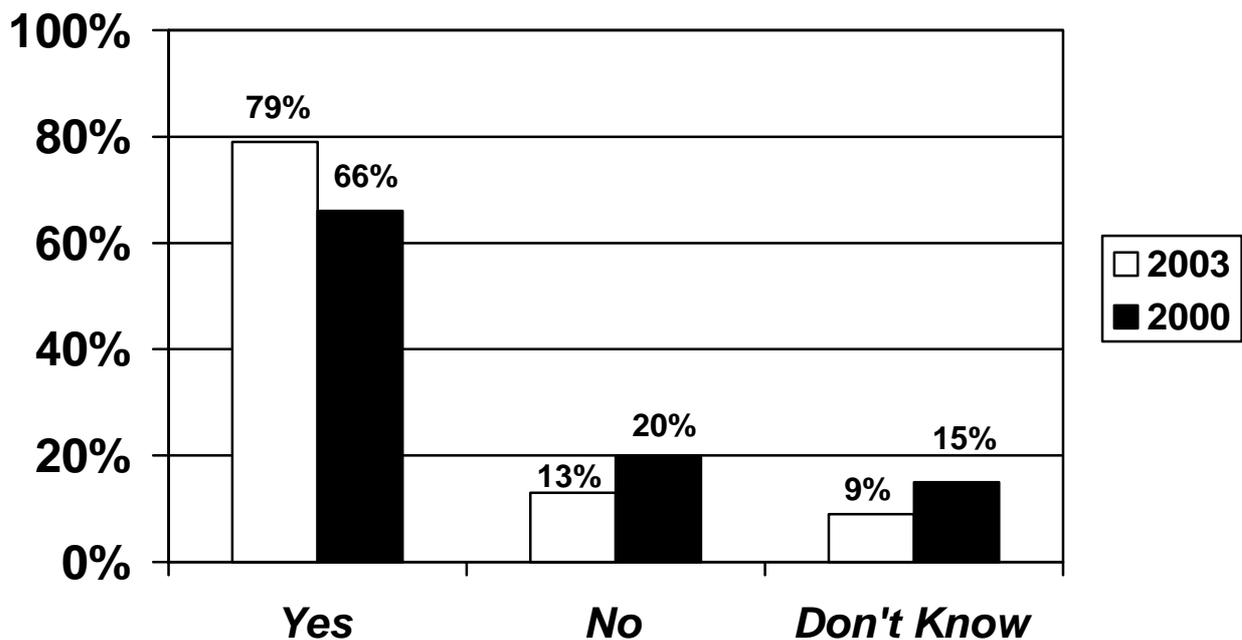
More Cambodians feel free to express their political opinions now than did in 2000. Four out of five (79%) report that people feel free to express their political opinions in the area where they live, 13% say they feel unable to express their opinions, and 9% are not sure. This represents a significant improvement since 2000, when 66% felt

people were free to express their political opinions, 20% said they were unable to express their opinions, and 15% were uncertain.

A majority in every demographic and regional group says that people feel free to express their political opinions, although there are some noteworthy variations. Those with less than a primary education feel less free to speak out than those who have completed primary or high school (75% and 81%, respectively). In addition, those in the Northeast (65%) and Southeast (74%) parts of the country are less likely to feel there is freedom of expression than those in the Central (78%), Northwest (82%) and Southwest (87%) regions.

It is important to note that the general perception of freedom of expression now extends to people over 50, who were adults during the years of the Pol Pot regime. In the previous survey, this group was considerably less likely to feel free to speak out. Now, however, those over 50 are almost as likely to say most people feel free to express their opinions (75%) than are those under 50 (79%).

*Do people feel free to express their political opinions in the area where you live? (Q.58)*



### 3.6 Economic Well-Being

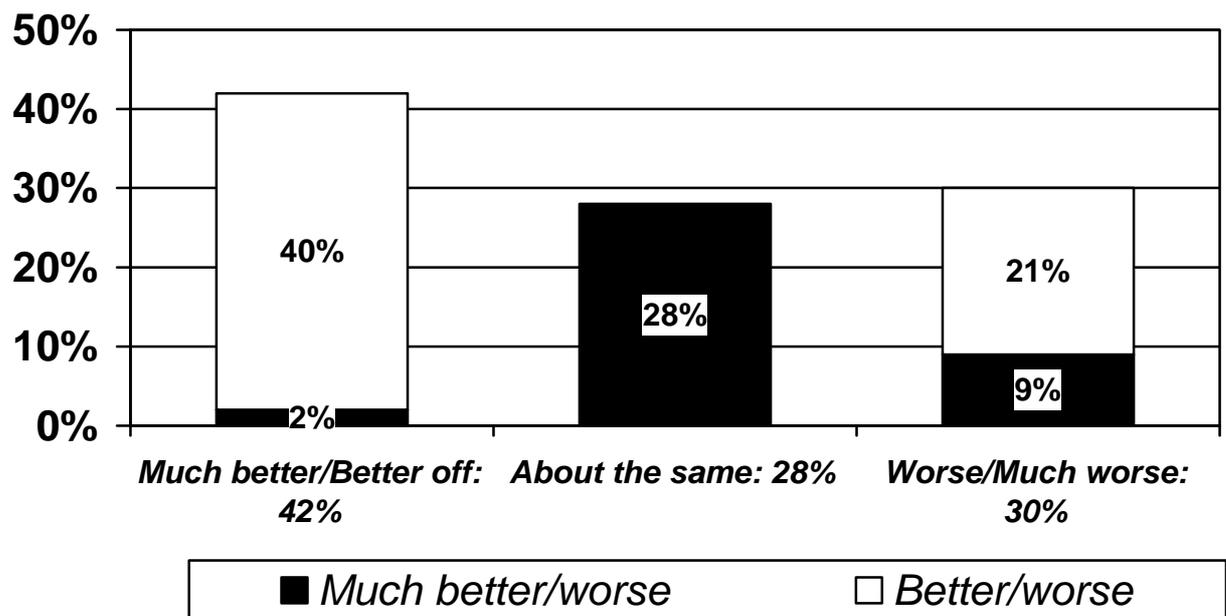
Cambodians report that their economic situation is improving. A plurality (41%) feel their personal economic situation has improved, compared to just 30% who say it has worsened (some 29% say it has stayed about the same.) In the past two years there has been a 6-point drop in the proportion saying things are getting worse. Perhaps most

importantly, the share reporting their situation is much worse has declined significantly from 26% in 2000 to 9% now. Cambodians are more likely now to say things are about the same (21% in 2000), while the proportion who report improvement is almost the same (40% now, compared to 44% in 2000). These changes seem to reflect the continuing economic recovery from the economic crisis experienced late in the last decade, much like the declining concern with poverty and the economy noted above.

Net improvement is reported even by the poorest, although better-off Cambodians seem to have gained even more. As in the previous survey, evaluations of improvement in personal economic well-being are highly correlated with socioeconomic status. Among those with household incomes below \$50 per month, 39% say they are better off, compared to 32% who are worse off. Among those with household incomes over \$50 per month, 49% say they are better off, while 23% report they are worse off. Similarly, those with no formal education (29% better off, 38% worse off) have on balance been losing ground, unlike those who have at least some education (45% better off, 27% worse off). Clearly, the better-off have reaped most of the recent gains of economic development.

There are also notable regional differences in perceptions of personal economic situation. Cambodians from the economically more dynamic Northeast (54% better, 23% worse) and Southeast (47% better, 25% worse) are significantly more optimistic about their economic situation than those from the rest of the country. As was the case in 2000, those from the Southwest offer the least positive assessment of their current economic situation (39% better, 37% worse).

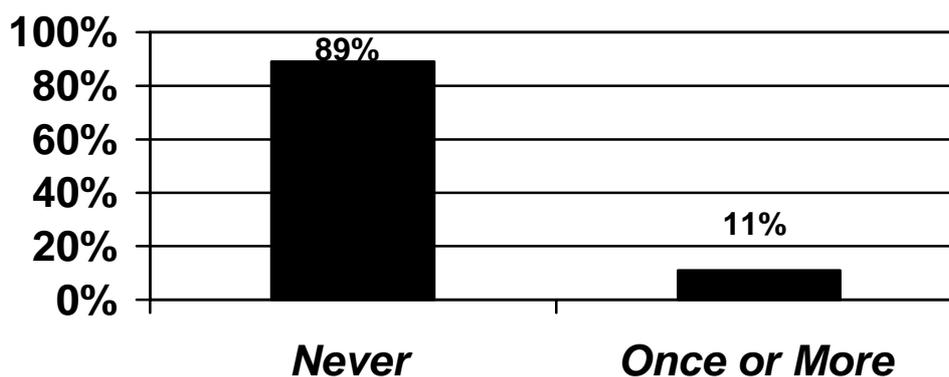
*Thinking about your own personal economic situation now compared to two years ago, would you say you are much better off, better off, worse off, much worse off or about the same? (Q.93)*



### 3.7 Hunger

While the economic situation is improving for Cambodians generally, there still is a significant minority reporting they often go hungry. One-in-nine Cambodians (11%) report that they did not have enough to eat on one or more days during the week prior to the survey. Not surprisingly, reports of hunger are much more common among those earning below \$50 per month (14%) than they are among those earning between \$50 and \$100 (6%) or over \$100 per month (0%). And rural residents are more likely to report not having enough food than those from urban areas (12% and 7%, respectively). However, access to food appears above all to be a function of location and region. Residents of the Northwest are much more likely to say they have gone hungry in the past week than those elsewhere: 38% report not having enough to eat, compared to 15% of those from the Northeast, and less than 5% in all other regions.

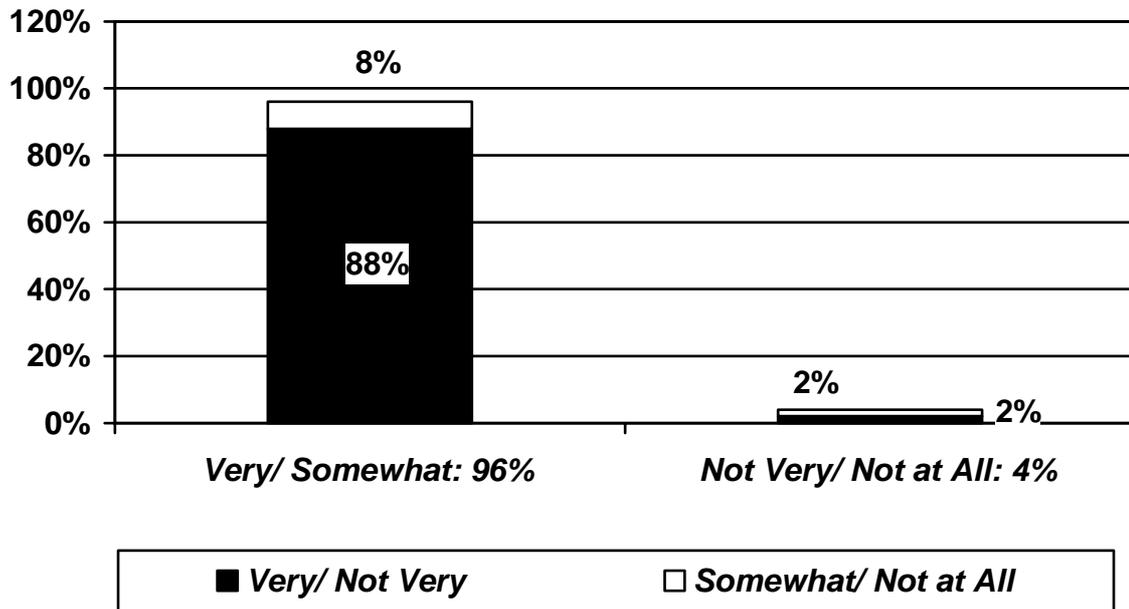
*How many days in the past week, if any, did you not have enough to eat? (Q.99)*



### 3.8 Concern About HIV-AIDS

Public concern about HIV-AIDS in Cambodia has become extremely widespread. Virtually all Cambodians (96%) report they are concerned with the problem of HIV-AIDS in Cambodia, with 88% saying they are very concerned. This high level of concern is present among Cambodians from all walks of life, with at least nine-in-ten people in every demographic and regional subgroup reporting they are concerned about HIV-AIDS. AIDS awareness is high in Cambodia today.

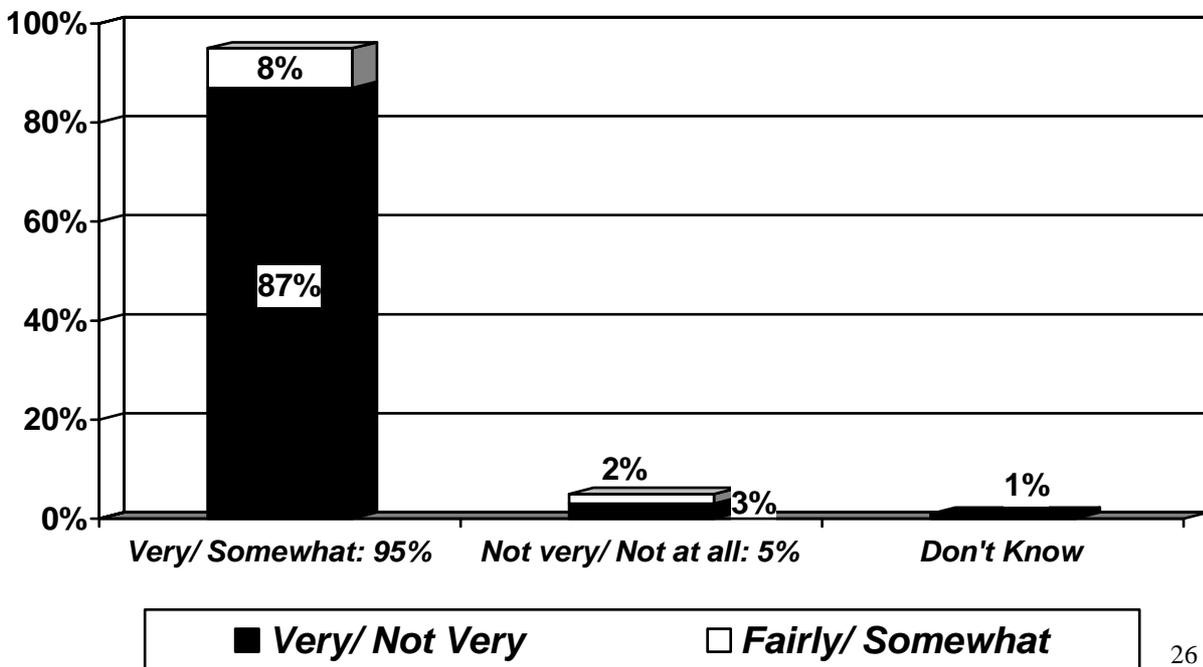
*How concerned are you with the problem of HIV-AIDS— very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, not at all concerned? (Q.91)*



### 3.9 Concern About Human Trafficking

Concern about human trafficking is also nearly universal. An overwhelming majority of Cambodians (94%) report they are concerned with the problem of human trafficking in Cambodia, with 87% saying they are very concerned. This high level of concern cuts across all demographic and regional subgroups, with at least nine-in-ten from every group reporting they are concerned about human trafficking. This problem, too, has received wide public recognition.

*How concerned are you with the problem of human trafficking in Cambodia-- very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, not at all concerned? (Q.92)*



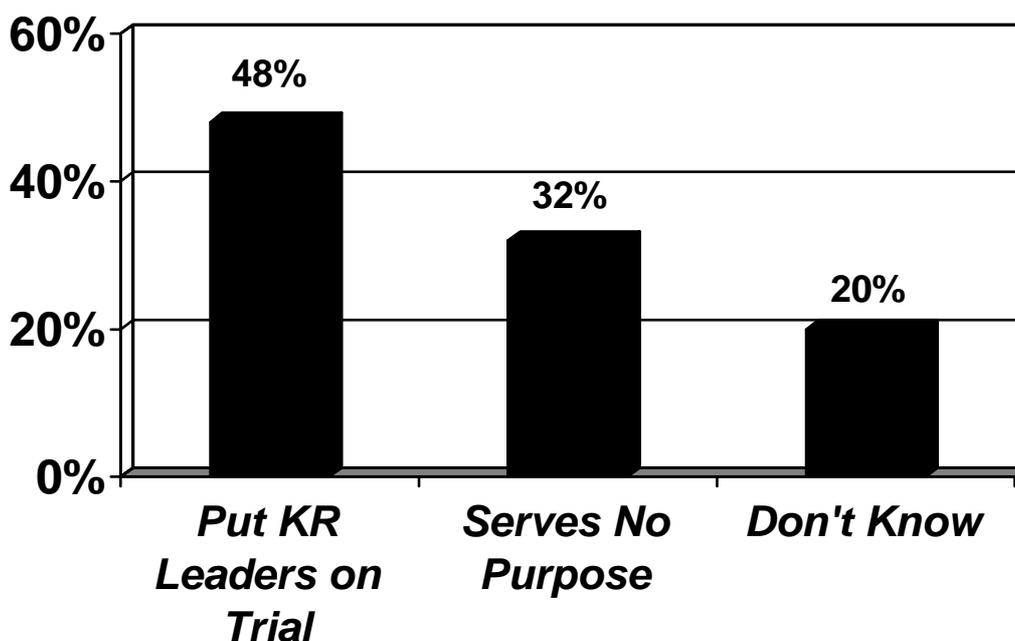
### 3.10 Khmer Rouge Trials

While a plurality of Cambodians support putting former Khmer Rouge leaders on trial for human rights violations, the population is clearly divided on this issue. The largest proportion, just under half (48%), feel the former Khmer Rouge leaders should be put on trial. However, 32% say this would only reopen old wounds and lead to nothing good and 20% are not sure.

Plurality or majority support for Khmer Rouge trials is present in most demographic and regional subgroups, although less-educated Cambodians and women tend to be more split in their opinions. A solid majority (59%) of those with a secondary education support trials, compared to 47% of those with some education, and 38% of those with no education. Men are more likely than women to support putting Khmer Rouge leaders on trial (52% and 44% respectively), while women are more likely to be uncertain about this issue (25% of women do not have an opinion, compared to 13% of men).

Pluralities or majorities support putting Khmer Rouge leaders on trial in every region except for the Northwest, where a majority (53%) feel this would serve no purpose, and only 29% support trials. Indeed, the Northwest – the long-time refuge and final bastion of the Khmer Rouge – is the only region where a majority or plurality opposes these trials.

*Some people have suggested putting the former top leaders of the Khmer Rouge on trial for human rights violations. Others have said this would only reopen old wounds and serve no purpose. Which of these is closer to your opinion? (Q.94)*



### 3.11 Summary

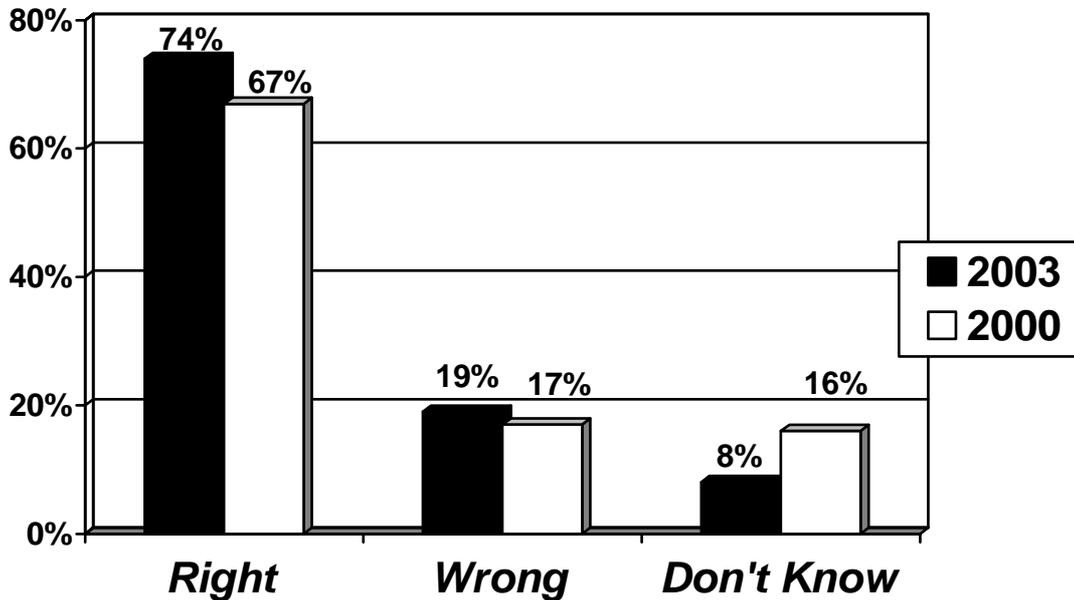
- The vast majority of Cambodians say the country is headed in the right direction and optimism has spread since 2000.
- The principal reasons for this optimism are development and economic recovery, although many still point to peace and social normalization.
- Concerns about corruption, poverty, and the economy are the principal reasons cited by the minority who feel that Cambodia is headed in the wrong direction.
- Although, Cambodians continue to cite poverty as the main problem facing the country, concern about economic issues has declined somewhat, while worry about water issues has surged in the wake of widespread floods and droughts.
- Freedom of political expression has become more widespread since the 2000 survey, with the majority of Cambodians reporting that people feel free to express their political opinions significantly larger. This now includes majorities of the groups least likely to feel free to express themselves three years ago, the least educated and those over 50.
- Prosperity has continued to grow over the past two years, as more Cambodians say their situation has improved than declined. However, the less educated and those from the Southwestern region are still most likely to say they have been left behind.
- While the economic situation is improving for Cambodians generally, one-in-nine report they did not have enough to eat one or more days during the week before the survey. The problem is particularly acute in the Northwest region.
- Public concern about HIV-AIDS and human trafficking in Cambodia is extremely widespread.
- A plurality of Cambodians support putting former Khmer Rouge leaders on trial for human rights violations, but the population is divided on this issue, with opposition strongest in the Northwest.

## 4 Local Issues and Governance

### 4.1 Direction of the Communes

A year after the country's first direct commune elections, the proportion of Cambodians who express a positive opinion about the direction of their commune has grown, even compared to the large majority who expressed such views in our previous poll. Three-quarters (74%) report things in their commune are going in the right direction, compared to two-thirds (67%) in the 2000 survey. As in 2000, less than one in five (19%) report that things in their commune are headed in the wrong direction. Clear majorities in all demographic and regional subgroups are positive about the direction of their commune. However, rural residents (75% right direction, 18% wrong direction) are somewhat more optimistic than those from urban areas (66% right direction, 23% wrong direction). The increases are fairly consistent across most groups, but appear most substantial among the least educated. The uneducated were less optimistic than others in the past (63% and 70% right direction in 2000, respectively), but now are as likely as those with some education to think things are headed in the right direction (74% in both groups).

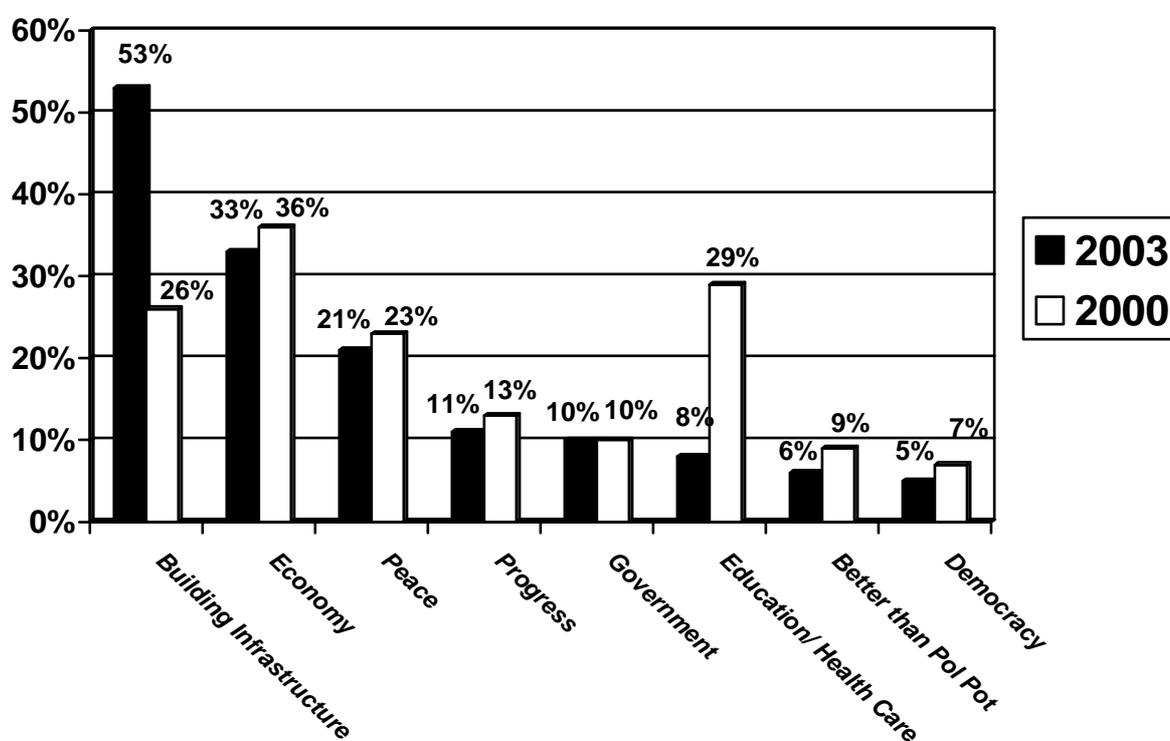
*Now let's talk about the commune where you live. Generally speaking, do you think things in your commune today are going in the right direction, or do you think they are going in the wrong direction? (Q.85)*



## 4.2 Commune Right Direction Reasons

The reasons cited for optimism about the direction of communes are similar to those given for the country as a whole: development, a recovering economy, and peace. The most often-cited factor is development (building, infrastructure improvements, etc.), mentioned by 56% of Cambodians, more than twice as many as in 2000 (26%). One-third (33%) mentions an improving economy, while one-fifth (21%) mention peace. As at the national level, the proportion citing improvements in education and health care services has decreased substantially, from 29% in 2000 to 8% now. (Again, however, it should be noted that many of those referring to infrastructure improvements mentioned school and clinic building.)

*Why do you say that? (Q.86)*  
*(Reasons given by 5% or more)*



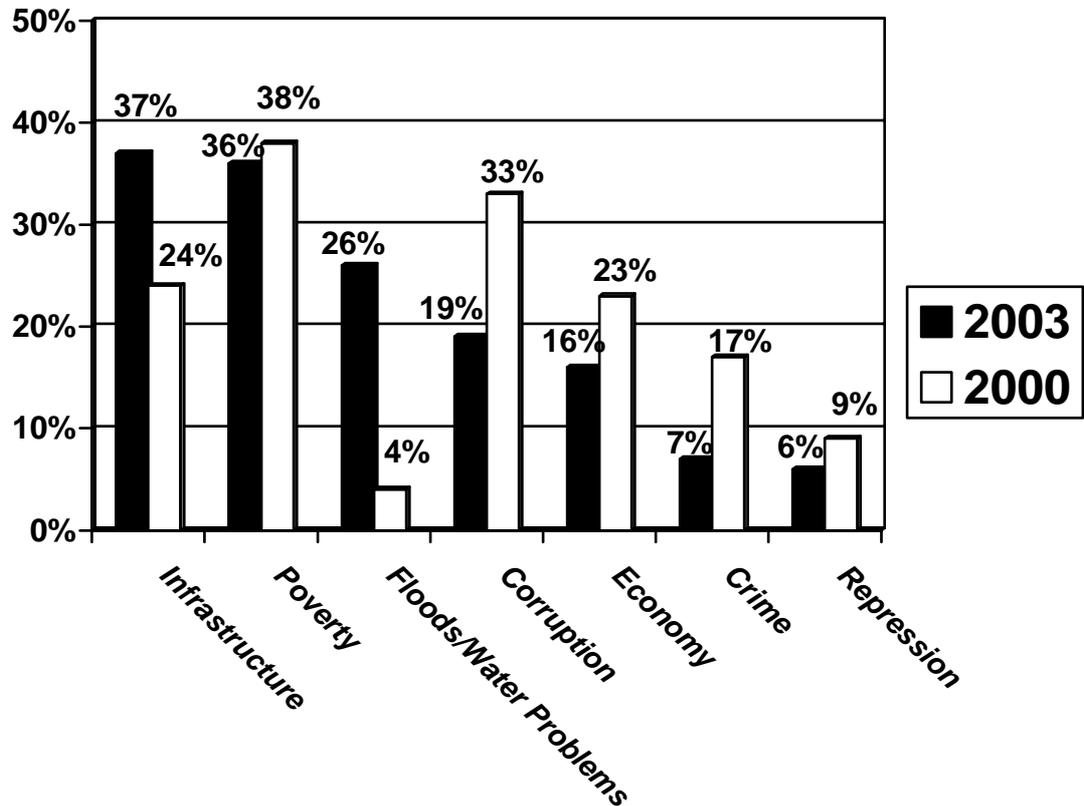
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## 4.3 Commune Wrong Direction Reasons

The principal reasons given by the 19% of the population who think their communes are headed in the wrong direction are poor infrastructure, poverty, water problems, corruption, and economic deterioration. Poor infrastructure is cited by 37% (of the 19%), followed by poverty (36%), floods/droughts (26%), corruption (19%) and a deteriorating economy (16%). As with the “wrong direction” reasons cited at the national level, those mentioning water issues has increased dramatically over the past

three years (from 4% in 2000), while concern about poverty has remained about the same. Consistent with the national level data, concern about corruption, crime, and the economy among pessimists have all declined.

*Why do you say that? (Q.86)  
(Reasons given by 5% or more)*



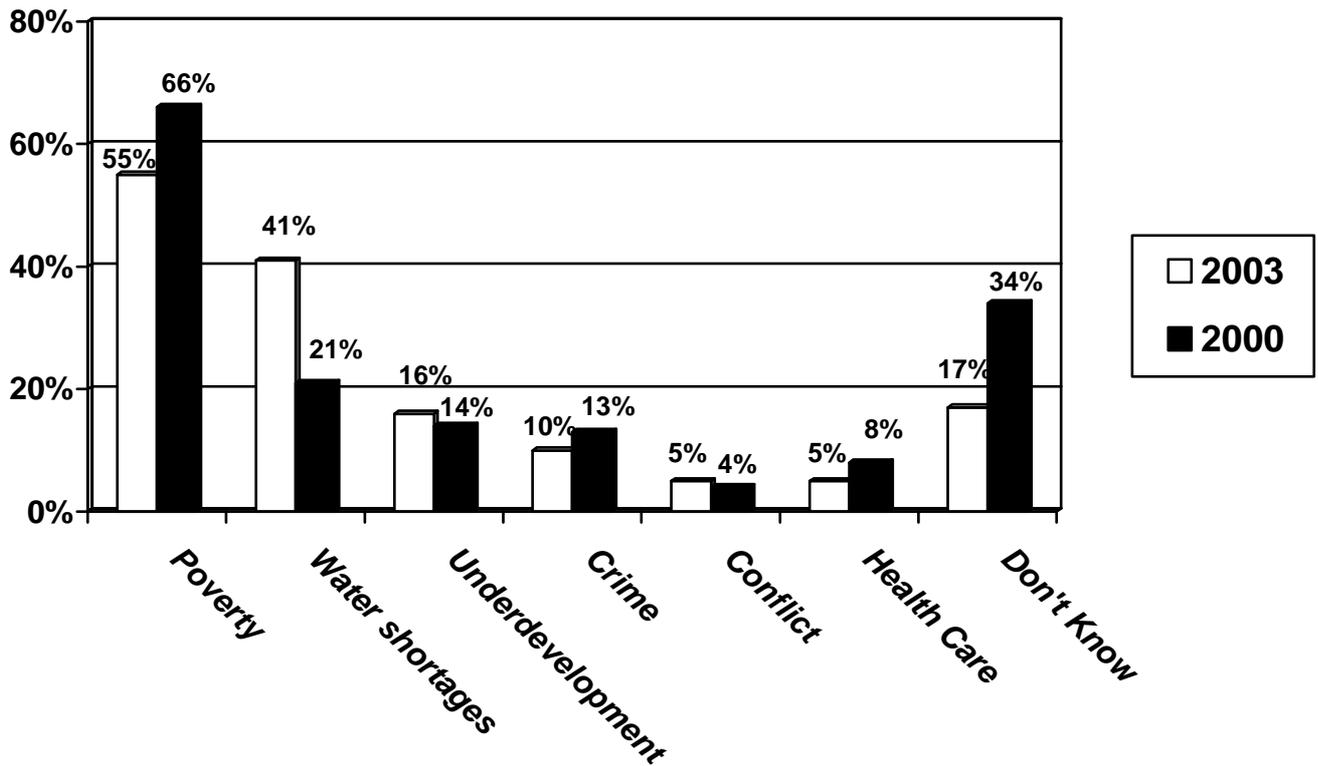
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#### 4.4 Biggest Local Problems

As at the national level, poverty and water issues are by far the biggest local concerns, with economic issues ranking a bit lower and floods and droughts much higher than in 2000. While the proportion of Cambodians citing poverty as one of the top two problems facing their area has decreased from 66% in 2000 to 55% now, poverty is still the number one local issue, and the most frequently cited by those from all demographic and regional groups. At the same time, the percentage mentioning floods, droughts and water problems has doubled since 2000 (from 21% to 41%), so that water now rivals poverty as an issue for Cambodian voters. This is almost exclusively driven by the attitudes of rural residents, 47% of whom mention water issues (compared with only 12% of urban residents).

As in 2000, other local issues mentioned by 5% or more of Cambodians include underdevelopment (16%), crime (10%), violence/conflicts (5%), and health care (5%). Concern about crime and other violence is much more common in urban areas (16% crime, 10% other violence) than in rural parts of the country (8% crime, 3% other violence), although, as at the national level, it is down a little at the local level compared to three years ago.

*In your view, what is the biggest problem facing your commune?  
And what is the next biggest problem? (Q.87/88)  
(Reasons given by 5% or more)*



#### 4.5 Summary

- A large majority of Cambodians think their communes are headed in the right direction, even more than in 2000.
- As at the national level, those with positive impressions about the direction of their commune are most likely to point to development, economic recovery, peace, and social normalization.
- Those who think their commune is headed in the wrong direction are most likely to cite poor infrastructure, poverty, water problems, corruption, and economic deterioration.
- As at the national level, poverty and water issues are by far the biggest local concerns.

## 5 Views of the Government/National Assembly

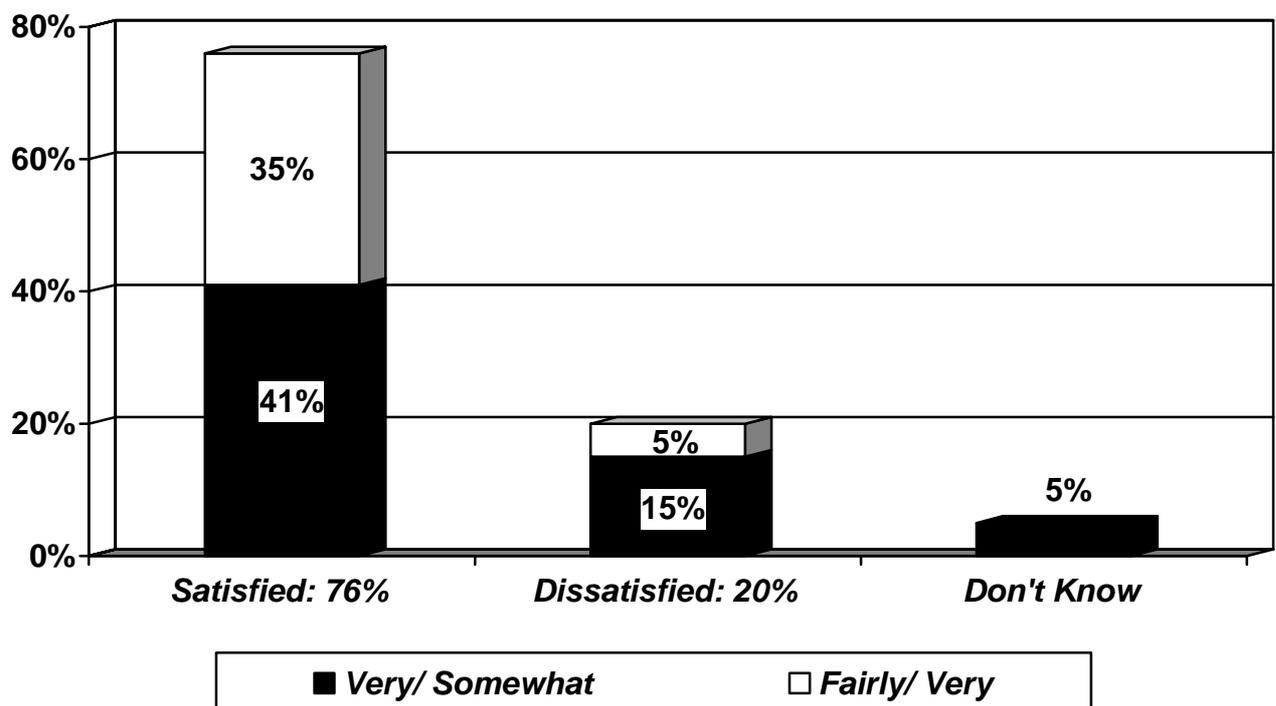
### 5.1 Satisfaction with National Government Performance

Consistent with their optimism about the direction of the country, most Cambodians are satisfied with the performance of the national government. Three-quarters (75%) report they are satisfied with the job the national government is doing, with 41% very satisfied and 35% somewhat satisfied. One-in-five Cambodians (20%) are dissatisfied with the national government's performance, most of whom (15%) are only somewhat dissatisfied.

While large majorities from all demographic and regional subgroups report they are satisfied with the performance of the national government, there are some differences in the intensity of this opinion across education, urban/rural, and regional lines. The least educated are the most satisfied: 85% of those with no education report they are satisfied with the national government, compared to 73% of those with primary education and 71% of those with secondary education.

Perhaps more importantly, only 33% of those with a secondary education and 38% of those with a primary education report they are very satisfied, compared to 55% of those with no education. Similarly, rural residents are somewhat more likely to report satisfaction with the national government (78% satisfied) than those from urban areas (64% satisfied), with those from Phnom Penh among the least satisfied (54% satisfied, 42% dissatisfied). Those from the northern parts of the country are more likely to be very satisfied (over half) than those in the rest of the country (about one-third very satisfied).

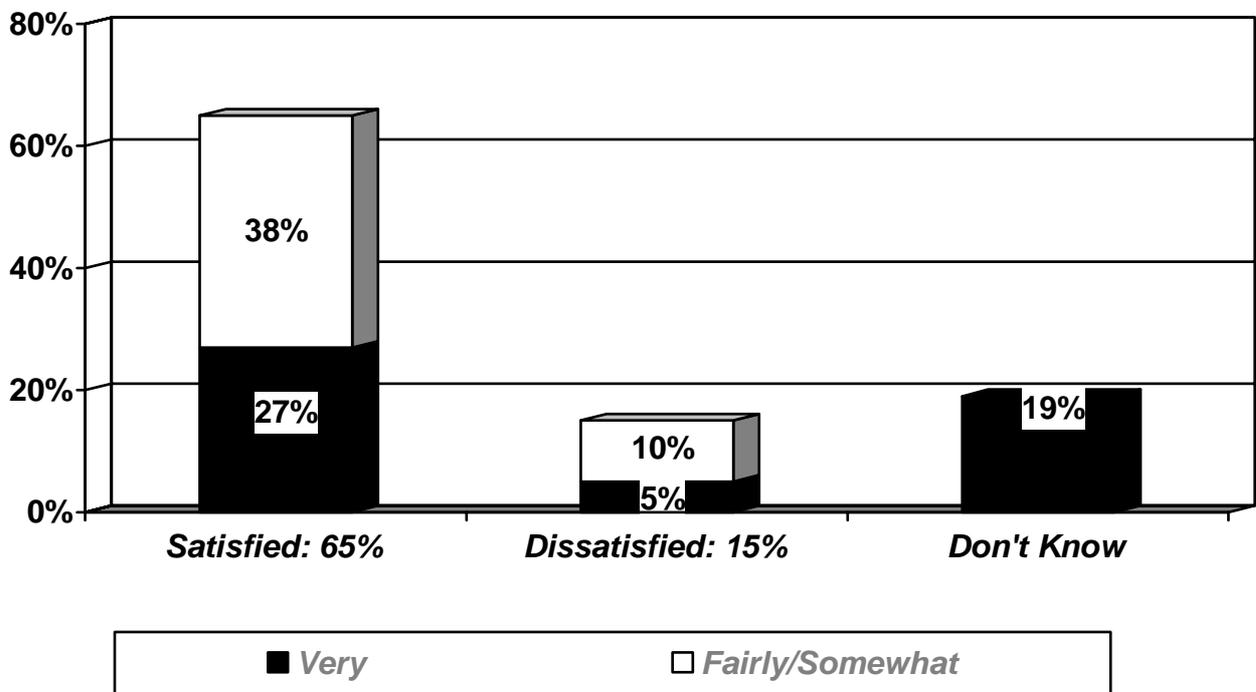
*Would you say you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the job the national government is doing? (Q.89)*



## 5.2 Satisfaction with Assembly Representatives

Consistent with the generally positive mood in the country, a sizeable majority of Cambodians report satisfaction with the performance of their Assembly representatives. Two-thirds (66%) say they are either very or somewhat satisfied with the job their province’s representatives in the National Assembly are doing. Some 15% are dissatisfied (10% somewhat, 5% very) and 19% are unsure. The residents of the capital, Phnom Penh, were the one geographic group where a majority are not satisfied with their members of parliament (48% satisfied, 25% dissatisfied, 27% don’t know). Clear majorities from all other demographic and regional subgroups report they are satisfied with the performance of their representatives, while fewer than one-in-five from most groups say they are dissatisfied.

*Would you say you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the job your province’s representatives in the National Assembly are doing? (Q.27)*

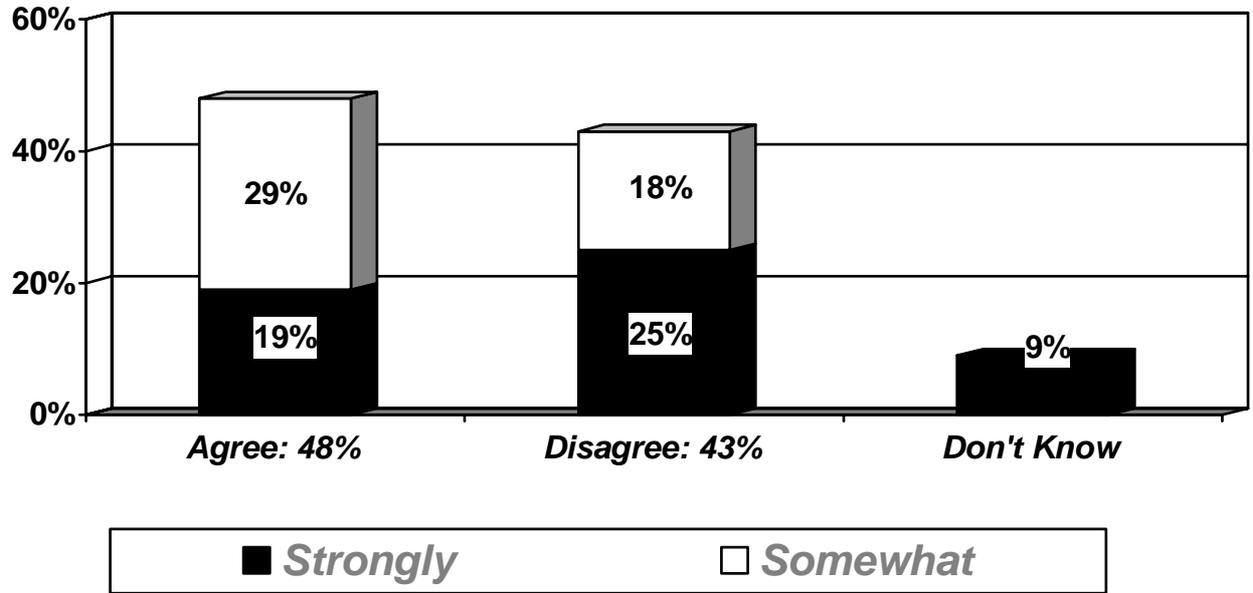


## 5.3 Does Government Care About What You Think?

Although most Cambodians are satisfied with the national government’s performance, they are much more divided on whether the government cares about what they think. A slight plurality (48%) agree that “I don’t think the national government cares very much about what people like me think,” but almost as many disagree (44%) with this statement. This division of opinion is present in every demographic and regional subgroup, although women generally are more likely to feel the government does not care about what they think (51% agree). Likewise, those who are dissatisfied with the

national government’s performance are more likely to say the government does not care about them than are those who assess government performance positively (55% and 47%, respectively).

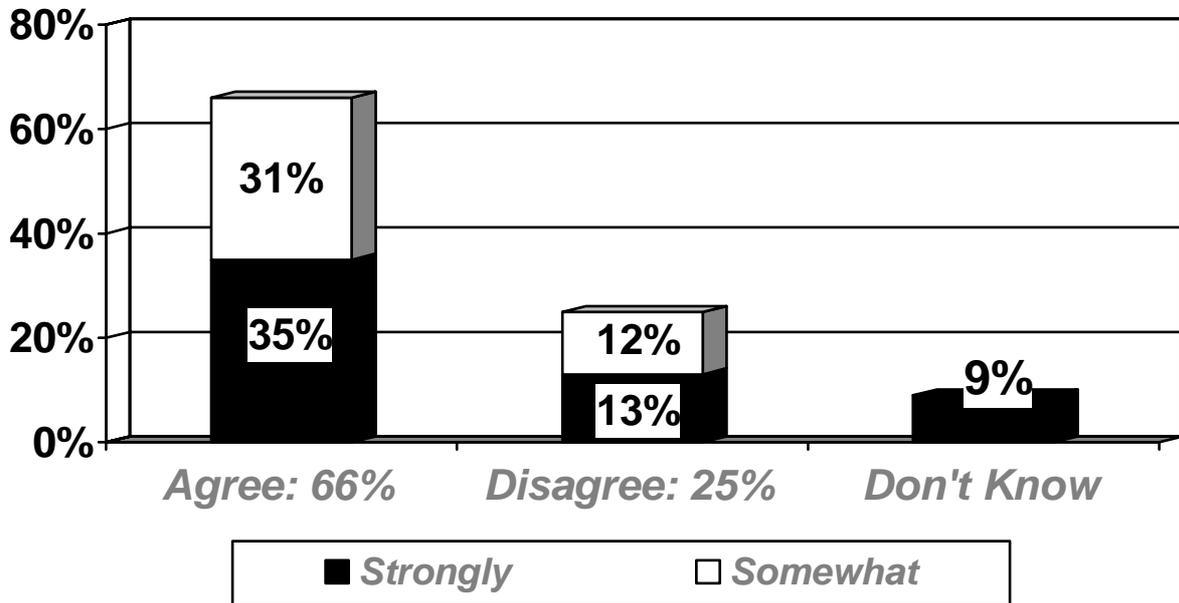
*Some people say, “I don’t think that the national government cares very much about what people like me think”. Do you agree or disagree? Strongly or somewhat? (Q.90)*



#### 5.4 Do Assembly Members Care About People Like You?

Cambodians seem to feel closer to their elected parliamentary representatives than to the national government as a whole. Although the public is divided on whether the national government takes their views into account, a majority of Cambodians also says that National Assembly members care about them. Two-thirds (66%) agree with the statement that the people elected to the National Assembly “care about people like you,” with 35% agreeing strongly with this statement. One-quarter (26%) disagree with this statement, 13% strongly. Majorities from all demographic and regional subgroups agree that National Assembly members care about people like them, although sizeable minorities of those from the Southwest region (34%), urban areas (36%), and particularly Phnom Penh (45%) disagree.

*If you think about the people elected to the National Assembly, suppose someone said: “they care about people like you.” Would you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly? (Q.23)*

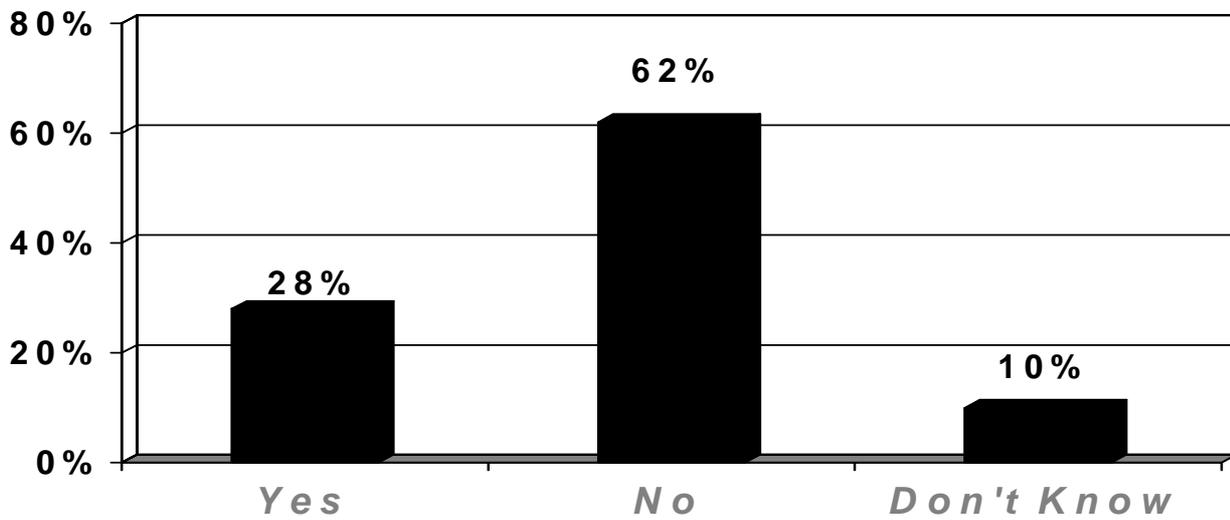


### 5.5 Assembly Representative Visited Area

Contact between Cambodians and their National Assembly representatives seems to be limited. Most Cambodians do not recall their National Assembly representatives visiting their area since the 1998 election. Nationally, only 28% say that any of their provincial representatives visited their area, while 62% say they do not remember such a visit, and 10% are unsure. Recollections of representative visits are most common in the western part of the country (36%), and least common in the Central region (21%) and especially so in the seat of government, Phnom Penh (11%).

The survey also shows that constituents reward attention from their Assembly members. Notably, those who recall a visit by their representative are overwhelmingly satisfied with their representative’s performance (91% satisfied -- 43% very satisfied), while positive evaluations among those who do not recall a visit tend to be much less common (56% satisfied – 21% very satisfied). Those who recall a visit are also more likely to express intense satisfaction with their representative (43% very satisfied) than those who do not recall a visit (21% very satisfied).

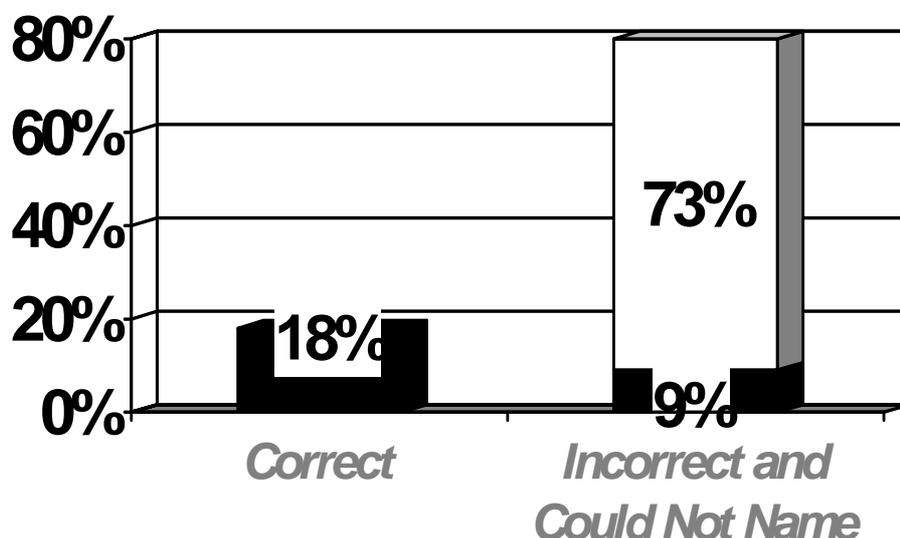
*As far as you know, have any members of the National Assembly visited your area since the last National Assembly election in 1998? (Q.25)*



## **5.6 Assembly Representative Identification**

The vast majority of Cambodians is unable to identify one or more of their province's representatives in the National Assembly, further evidence of fairly weak connections between representatives and represented. When asked to name one of their representatives, just 18% are able to correctly identify their province's Assembly member, while 9% give an incorrect name and 73% have no idea who their parliamentarians are. Low levels of knowledge about assembly members are common in all demographic and regional subgroups. This may be partly a product of the regional list system used in elections, which focus the election on the party rather than the representatives, as well as the low level of contact between voters and their representatives. Indeed, those who recall a visit from their representative are four times more likely to be able to name one of their representatives (43%) than those who do not remember such a visit (9%).

*Many people are not sure of the names of their province's representatives in the National Assembly. Can you name one of yours? (Q.24)*



## 5.7 Summary

- In line with their optimism about the direction of the country, most Cambodians are satisfied with the performance of the national government.
- A sizeable majority of Cambodians also reports satisfaction with the performance of their National Assembly representatives.
- Despite the divisions concerning the national government's sensitivity to popular views, a majority of Cambodians think that National Assembly members care about them, although this is less common in urban areas and the Southwest.
- However, the public is divided on whether the government cares about what they think, and this division is present in all voter groups.
- Only about one-quarter of Cambodians recall their National Assembly representatives visiting their area since the 1998 election.
- Only 1-in-5 Cambodians can name any of their representatives in the National Assembly.

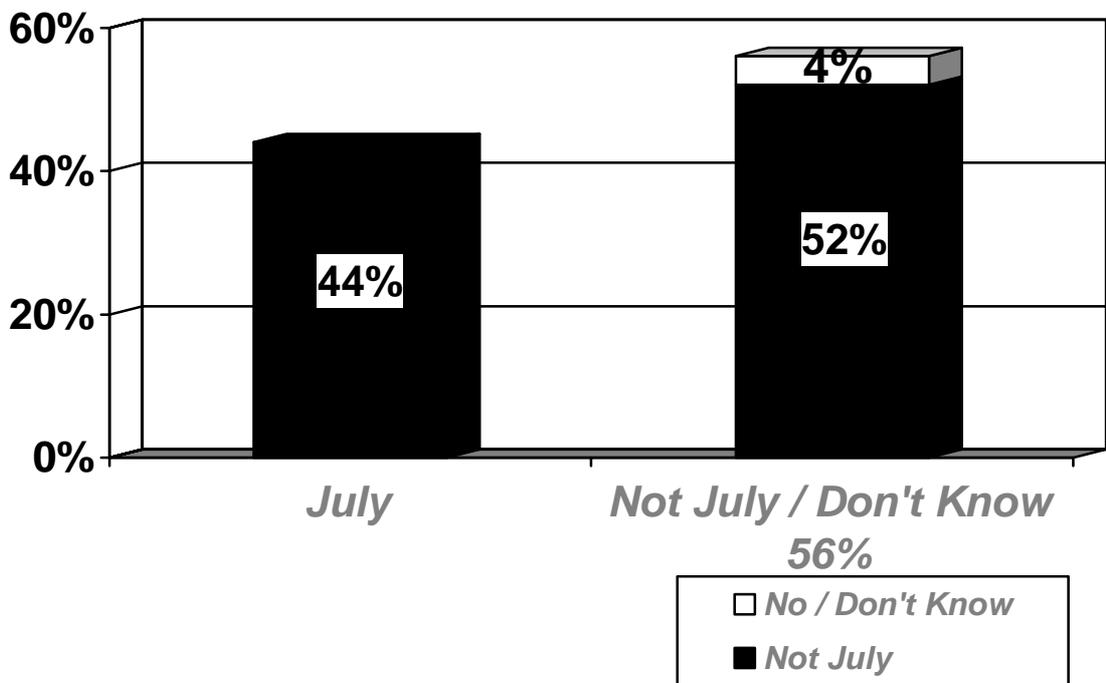
## 6 Attitudes Toward Elections

### 6.1 Awareness of National Elections

Virtually all Cambodians have heard that National Assembly elections are coming. An overwhelming 96% report they have heard something about the elections, while just 1% have heard nothing and 3% are not sure. High levels of awareness are present in every demographic and regional subgroup, with at least nine-in-ten from each group reporting they are aware of upcoming elections.

However, the survey results also suggest that many voters' knowledge about the election is limited. Fully 52% of the population is not able to correctly identify July as the month when the election will take place. The proportion able to correctly identify July varies most significantly by education level, with only 22% of those with no education able to identify the correct month, compared to 43% of those with some education and 73% of those with a secondary education. Awareness of the election month is also substantially higher among urban residents (62%) than those in rural areas (40%). Mass media has clearly played a role in informing voters about the specifics of the election, as those who read newspapers, listen to the radio or watch television are much more likely to correctly identify that the election will be held in July.

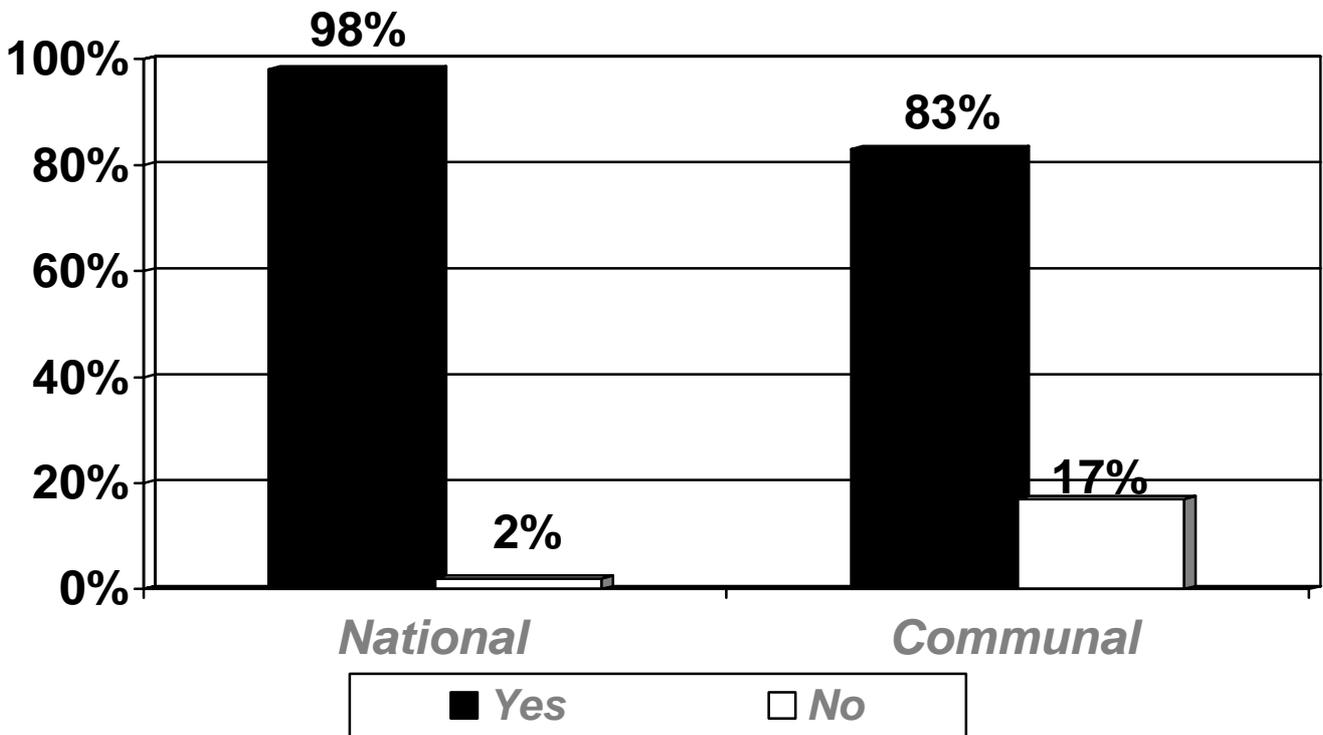
*Have you heard anything about elections coming for the National Assembly? IF YES: Many people are not sure when they will take place. Do you know which month they will be? (Q.11)*



## 6.2 Election Turnout: 2003 National and 2002 Commune

The vast majority of Cambodians say they are planning to participate in the upcoming national elections, although comparisons of reported and actual turnout for the commune elections indicate that voters tend to overstate their intention to vote. Ninety-eight percent (98%) think they will vote in the national elections, while only 2% say they will not. However, it is unlikely that all of these who intend to vote will actually do so. This type of over-claim is frequent in surveys in many countries, since respondents feel social pressure to say they are good citizens. However, while turnout is likely to be somewhat less than stated in the poll and while turnout levels for the upcoming election should be closely watched, convincing Cambodians that they should vote still does not appear to be a critical priority for voter education programming.

*Do you think you will vote in the National Assembly elections? (Q.13)*  
*Did you vote in the commune elections? (Q.45)*



## 6.3 Reasons for Voting

Cambodians cite a variety of reasons for wanting to vote in the national elections, with the right to choose leaders easily in first place. By far the most common reason mentioned is to exercise their right to choose their Assembly members, with 58% mentioning this as one of the top two reasons to vote. Smaller, although sizeable, percentages report they will vote because it is their civic or democratic duty (28%), to ensure peace (21%) and to end corruption (19%). Still other reasons include a desire

to see infrastructure improvements (9%) and freedom/democracy (8%). Encouragingly, the share of the electorate reporting they will vote because the authorities will tell them to do so has decreased from 11% to 6% over the past three years, which may be an indicator of lessening voter coercion.

*What is the most important reason why you want to vote? (Q.14)  
(Reasons cited by 5% or more of potential voters)*

<b>Choose leaders</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>Civic duty</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>For Peace</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>End corruption</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Better Roads</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Freedom/ Equal Rights</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Authorities say so</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Everyone Does</b>	<b>5%</b>

*Base: 992*

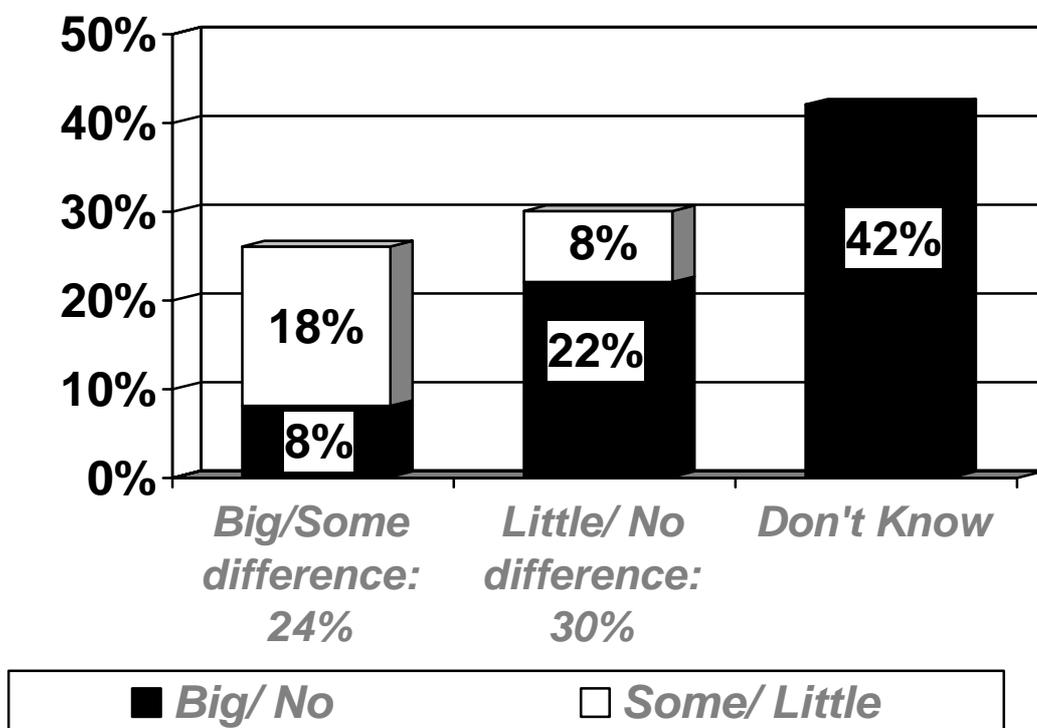
#### **6.4 Expectations for the 2003 Elections**

Although Cambodians plan to participate on a large scale, expectations of change in the 2003 elections are fairly low. A plurality (42%) is uncertain what, if any, impact voting in the National Assembly election will have. Another 30% expect it will make little or no difference (and most of those, 22%, think it will make no difference at all). Only 24% say it will make a difference, and only 8% think that voting will make a big difference.

The proportion that expects no change at all is almost double the 12% who said the same about the commune elections in our 2000 survey. This suggests that voters are more cynical about these elections than they were about the commune vote, which offered them their first chance to choose commune leaders. Taken together with our findings below regarding the low levels of awareness of the roles of elected institutions, this suggests that voters need to be better informed of how their vote

might have an impact on matters such as law, policy, and the composition of government if they are to expect voting to make a difference.

*Do you think voting in the national elections will make a big difference, some difference, little difference or no difference at all? (Q.30)*



## 6.5 Changes Expected

Even the most optimistic Cambodians see elections principally as means of claiming development resources. Those expecting changes from the election are most likely to cite improved infrastructure (35%), general improvement (21%), development (12%), and change in the members of the National Assembly (8%).

*What is the most important thing you expect to change? (Q.18)*  
*(Changes mentioned by 10% or more of those saying election will make a difference.)*

	<i>Change Expected</i>
<i>Better infrastructure (better roads, schools, ponds, wells, irrigation, hospitals)</i>	<i>35%</i>
<i>Better-generally</i>	<i>21%</i>
<i>Development</i>	<i>12%</i>
<i>Members of National Assembly/Leaders</i>	<i>10%</i>

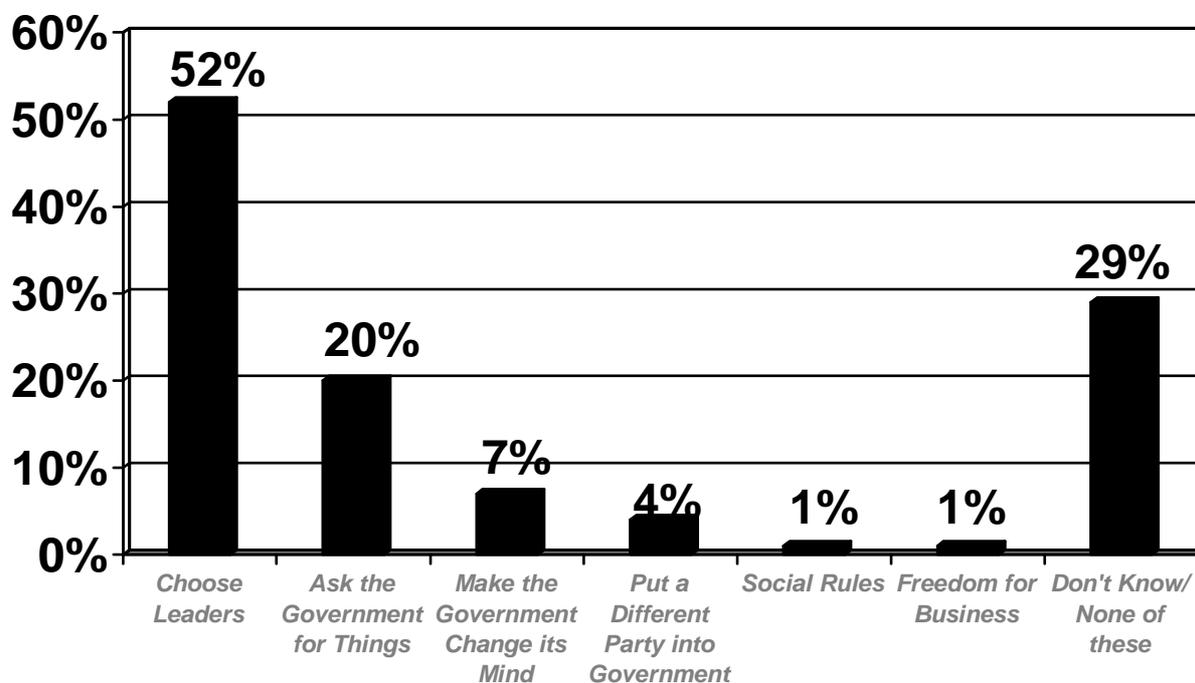
*Base: 282*

## 6.6 What Can Elections Do?

The Cambodian electorate's limited expectations for this year's elections are consistent with its relatively narrow notions of what elections can do. Just over half (52%) say elections can choose leaders, a perception expressed by a plurality or majority in every voter group. Beyond this, however, not many Cambodians are able to cite any other possible outcomes from elections, although 20% say elections are an opportunity to ask the government for things. Very few mention what are seen as the most important functions of elections in established democracies: just 7% say the ballot can make the government change its policies and a mere 4% say elections can put a different party into power.

These responses are consistent with the reasons people give for voting and their expectations of the coming elections. They suggest that most Cambodians do not yet feel very empowered by the democratic process. Cambodians' attitudes on the electoral process correspond to a client-list model of politics, in which the role of elections is to select among patrons and make demands upon them. If Cambodians are to understand that democratic elections can do more than fulfill these limited roles, voter education on the other purposes that their vote can serve may be appropriate.

*Different people have different views of what elections can do. What do you think elections can do? (Q.51)*



## 6.7 National Assembly Functions

The low expectations Cambodians have for the electoral process may also reflect the fact that most Cambodians know very little about what their Parliament does. The majority (55%) cannot name a single function of the National Assembly. Of the minority who can do so, most replies focus on the role of members in constituency service and service delivery. One-fifth (21%) say the member's role is to help people solve problems, while another fifth (18%) say they bring roads and development projects to their area.

Tellingly, only 3% say Assembly members make laws, and only 1% say they ask questions of Ministers or elect the Prime Minister. In short, there is almost no awareness of the political functions of the Assembly – as opposed to its patronage delivery role. It may well be, at least in part, that people cannot differentiate between the parties in the Assembly and vote on the basis of patronage considerations because they are not aware of anything else that the parties might do there. Clearly, voters need to be educated on their Assembly representatives' powers and functions.

*Different people have different ideas about what the people in the National Assembly do. What do you think they do? (Q.26)*

<b>Help People Solve problems</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Bring roads, schools, pumps, and development</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Make Laws</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Ask Questions of Ministers</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Elect the Prime Minister</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>55%</b>

## 6.8 Willingness to Vote Against the Government

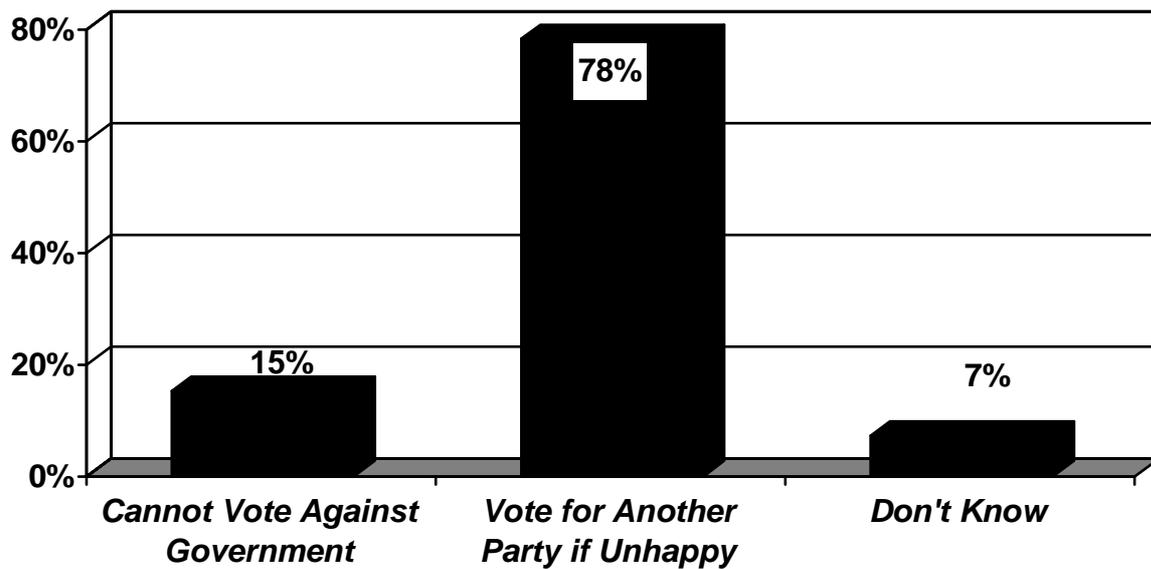
By now most Cambodians feel that elections are an acceptable method of voicing dissatisfaction with the government, but a significant minority remain afraid to vote against the government even if they are dissatisfied. A large majority (78%) agrees that *“if you are unhappy with the government, you should vote for another party to let the government know you are unhappy.”*

However, 15% say it is unacceptable to vote against the government because it is the high authority and 7% are uncertain, suggesting that more than one-fifth of the electorate is afraid to use the ballot to register its opinion. Opinions on this matter are highly correlated with education level. 35% of those without an education disagree that one can vote against the government, compared to 21% of those with some education and only 11% of those with a secondary education.

Other groups that are less likely to voice dissent include those from the Northeast (48% would not vote against the government or say they don't know) and members of kitchen or pot (30%) and death associations (29%), who tend to be slightly less

educated. And, those who regularly watch TV or read the newspaper are significantly more likely than those who do not to report they are comfortable voting against the government, an indication that methods other than mass communication will be necessary to reach these voters. These groups will represent important targets for voter education on the propriety of voicing discontent through the vote.

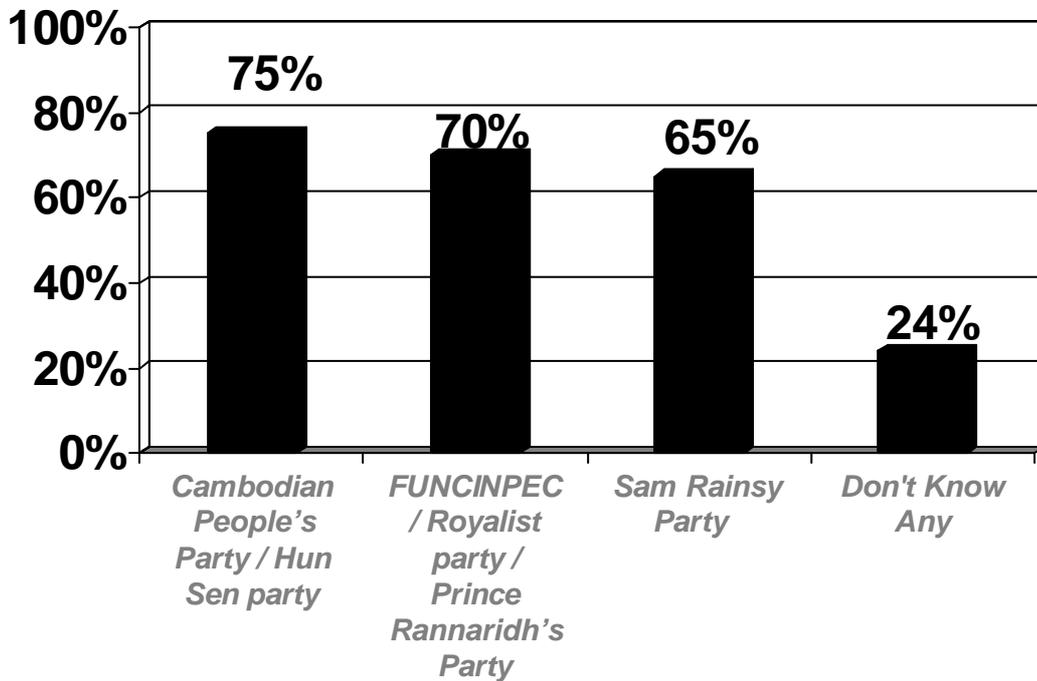
*Some people say, “Even if we are not happy with the government, we cannot vote against it. They are the high authority.” Other people say, “If you are unhappy with the government, you should vote for another party to let the government know you are unhappy.” Which of these is closer to your view? (Q.53)*



### 6.9 Awareness of Parties in the National Assembly

A majority of Cambodians is able to name the parties that have representatives in the National Assembly, but a substantial minority does not appear familiar with any. When asked to name the parties with members in the National Assembly, 75% identify the CPP, 70% identify FUNCINPEC, and 65% identify the Sam Rainsy Party. While majorities from most demographic and regional groups are able to name the three main parties, there is much less awareness among those with no education (54% CPP, 50% FUNCINPEC, 45% Sam Rainsy). This is also very much the case for the Northwest region (42% CPP, 39% FUNCINPEC, 37% Sam Rainsy), which has less experience with electoral politics than the rest of the country because of its more recent liberation from Khmer Rouge control. The Northwest is also the area where voters are least likely to report that any of the parties campaigned actively in their area.

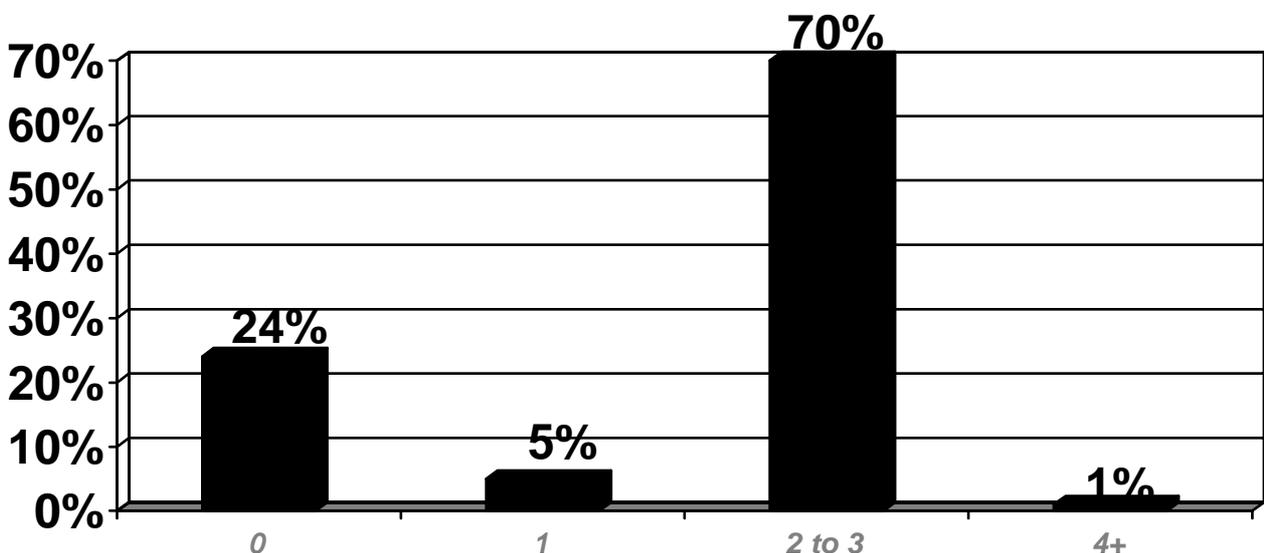
*Many people aren't sure who the parties in the National Assembly are. Which parties do you think have members in the National Assembly? (Q.19)*



### 6.10 Number of Parties Known

It is important to point out that most Cambodians who are aware of any parties are aware of at least two, and hence, most are aware of the existence of alternatives. Seven-in-ten Cambodians overall are able to name two or three of the parties with members in the National Assembly. Ultimately, while knowledge of multiple parties is far from universal, it is high enough to suggest that informing voters about their alternatives does not need to be a central part of voter education efforts.

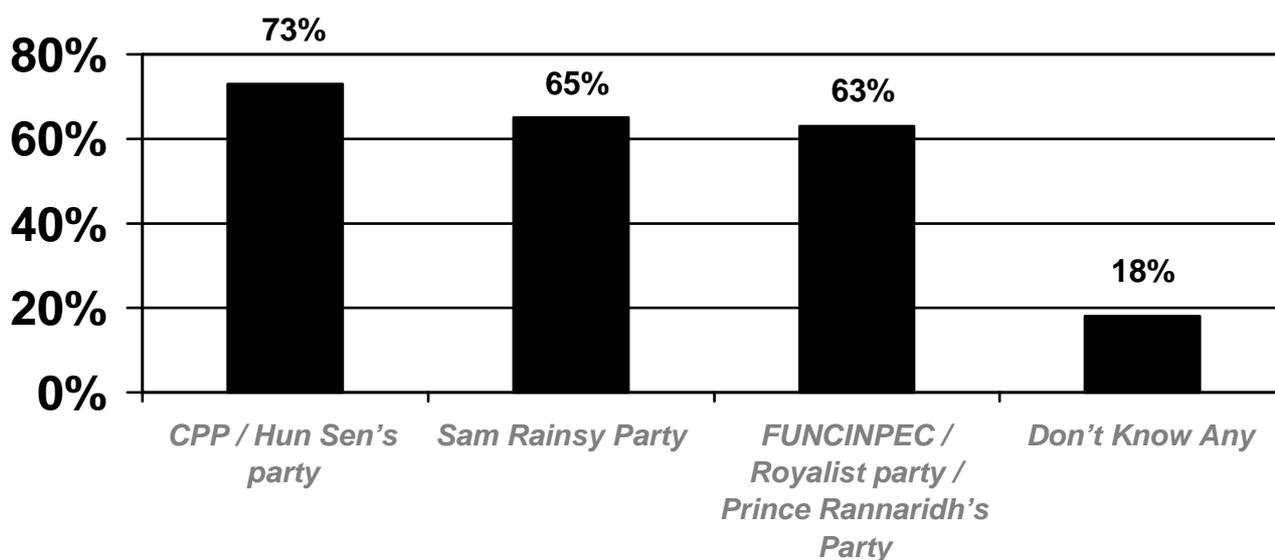
*Number of parties identified (Q.19)*



### 6.11 Commune Election Party Campaigning

In addition to being aware of the parties they can choose among, most Cambodians say the three main parties actively campaigned in their areas during the commune elections last year. When asked which parties campaigned in their area during the commune elections, 73% mention the CPP, 65% mention the Sam Rainsy Party, and 63% mention FUNCINPEC. As with party representative awareness, the percentage able to identify one or more of the parties is significantly lower among those with no education: 70% of those with no education can name one or more parties, compared to 82% overall. Reported party activity is also appreciably lower in the Northwest region (68%), where it began more recently due to the prolonged presence of the Khmer Rouges.

*Which parties actively campaigned in this area during the commune elections?  
(Q.40)*



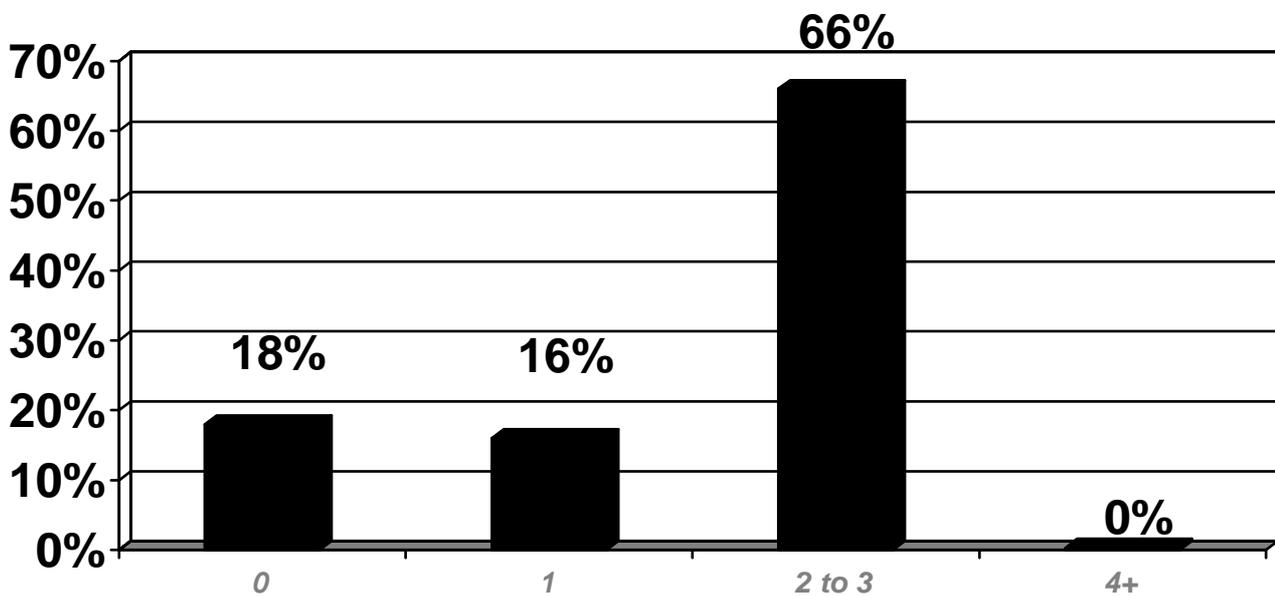
### 6.12 Number of Parties Campaigning in Commune Elections

In addition to being aware of multiple parties in the Assembly, most Cambodians say that at least two parties campaigned in their areas during the commune elections, another indication that they are aware that they have choices open to them among a variety of parties. Two-thirds of Cambodians overall (66%) are able to name two or three parties that campaigned in their area during the 2002 elections, while 16% can name only one, and 18% cannot name any.

However, substantial minorities of some groups are unfamiliar with the choices open to them. Women are significantly more likely than men to recall only one, or no,

parties at all that campaigned in their areas (40% of women did this, compared to 25% of men.) Other groups where large proportions say they were of campaigning by more than one party include those under 25 (41%), those over 50 (45%), the uneducated (46%), and voters from the Northwest (49%). Aside from the latter region, where parties were implanted late due to the persistence of the Khmer Rouge, the variations in awareness appear to reflect more levels of politicization than levels of party activity, since men and women, young and old, all live in the same communities.

*Number of parties identified as campaigning in area (Q.40)*



### **6.13 Party Differentiation**

While most Cambodians are aware of the three main parties, only a minority is able to cite differences between them. Most can't cite any: A plurality (44%) says they don't know if there are differences between the parties, while 11% say there are no differences and 16% say there are differences but are unable to specify them. Taken together, 71% are unable to specify any differences between the parties in the National Assembly.

The minority who note differences between the parties is most likely to mention issues (10%), numbers of representatives in the Assembly (7%), responsiveness to citizens (4%) and commitment to development (4%). In other words, although Cambodian voters are aware of the existence of different parties in the Assembly, the parties have not differentiated themselves in their eyes to any significant extent.

*What difference do you see, if any, between the different parties in the National Assembly today? (Q.20)*

<b>Are differences but can't specify</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>No differences</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Issues They Stress</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Numbers / power / members / members in Assembly</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Responsiveness to citizens</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Commitment to development</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Ideology</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Corruption</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>44%</b>

#### **6.14 Reasons for Supporting Party of Choice**

Cambodians say that obtaining material benefits is their principal reason for supporting their party of choice, followed by concerns about issues, keeping the peace, and the urgings of local leaders. Almost two-thirds cite the delivery of material resources by the party they support as one of their two main reasons for choosing a party. Some 34% say they support a particular party because it is committed to development, while 30% say their party of choice has gotten things done.

In contrast, just 28% base their decision on the party's policies, views and ideology. (This is hardly surprising, given the parties' lack of success in differentiating their messages on this dimension among the public at large.) Another 24% report they will vote for their party of choice to keep the peace and 13% say they will support the party that their chief supports. These last two voter groups seem concerned about the dangers of violence or the pressure of leaders. The main motive cited for voting thus is patronage-oriented (delivering the goods), while party differences and concerns related to coercion or leadership pressure follow in importance.

*What is the most important reason why you are voting for the party you choose?  
(Q.16) (1st and 2nd responses combined)*

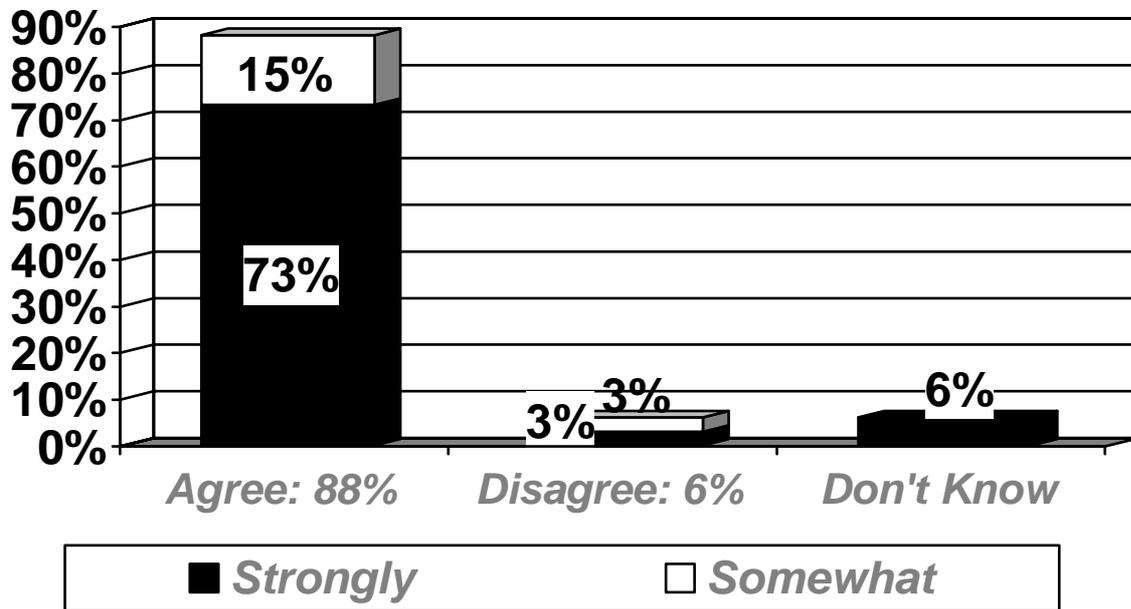
<b>They are committed to development</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>They have gotten good things done/ delivered</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Their policies / plans / political views / ideology</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Keep the peace / security</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Chief / local leaders urged it</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>My family votes for them</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Helping Population</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Tradition / custom / community</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>16%</b>

### **6.15 Importance of Multiple Parties**

While many Cambodians may not be able to differentiate between the main parties, the vast majority feels that multiple parties are critical to a democracy. Almost nine-in-ten (88%) agree that “*to have a democracy, there must be elections with more than one party competing,*” while 3% disagree and 6% are uncertain. Three-quarters (73%) agree strongly with this statement. This sentiment is widespread, with large majorities from all demographic and regional groups agreeing that multiple parties are essential for a democracy.

Thus, even if Cambodians have only a vague sense of the differences between the parties, the belief that a multi-party system is the foundation of democracy is very widespread and firmly held.

*Some people say, “To have democracy, there must be elections with more than one party competing.” Would you agree or disagree? Strongly or somewhat? (Q.50)*



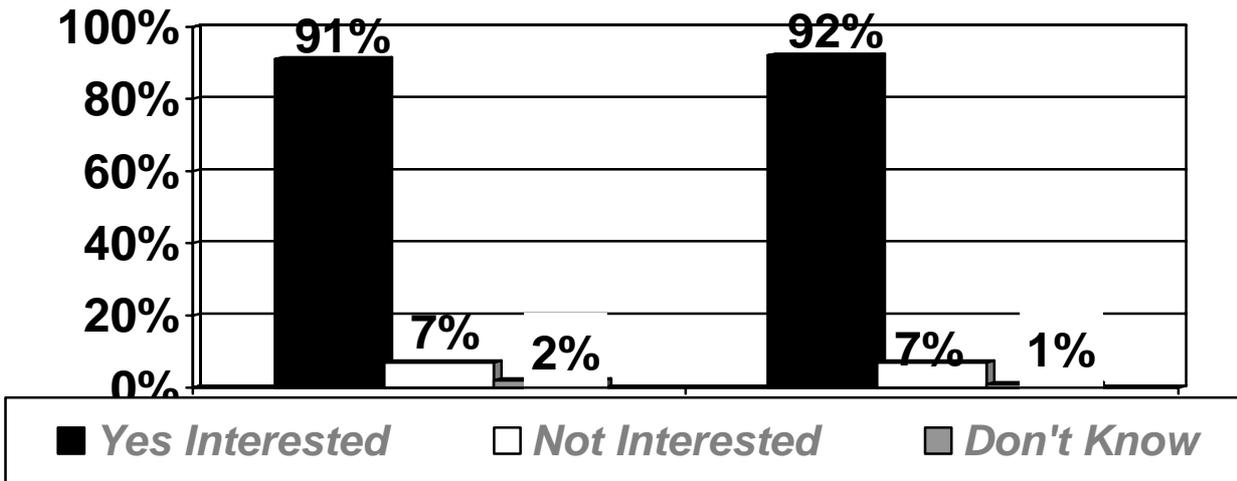
### 6.16 Interest in TV/Radio Candidate Forums and Party Comparisons.

Although Cambodians haven't heard much about the differences between the parties, this is not from lack of interest. Cambodian voters are overwhelmingly interested in forums that would shed light on candidate and party positions. Nine-in-ten (91%) say they would be interested in listening to or watching radio or television broadcasts of ordinary people asking questions of candidates from all the parties.

Similarly, 92% say they would be interested in listening to or watching radio or television broadcasts comparing what the different parties say about the problems facing Cambodia. Interest in these types of broadcasts is high across all regional and demographic groups. This suggests that voters generally do not need education on how to choose, but opportunities to compare what the parties are saying or open forums that let citizens pose questions of candidates of several parties, in order to obtain information that would help them distinguish between the parties.

*Suppose during the election campaign, radio or TV broadcast ordinary people asking questions of candidates from all the parties, would you be interested in listening or watching? (Q.21)*

*Suppose during the election campaign there were radio or TV broadcasts comparing what the different parties say about the problems facing Cambodia, would you be interested in listening or watching? (Q.22)*

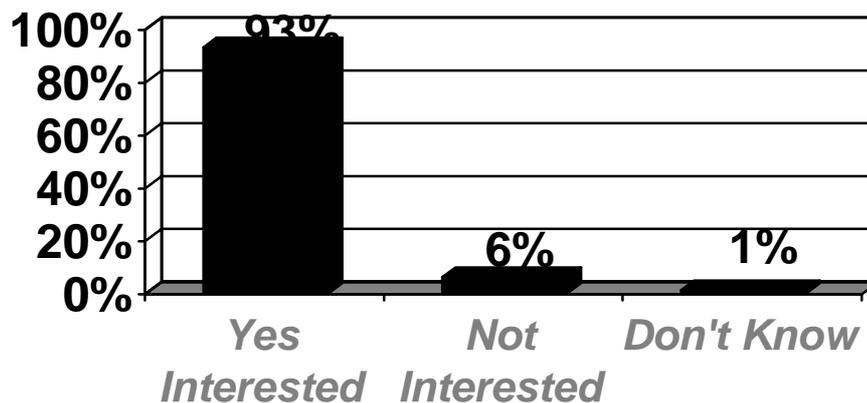


*Base: 504 for each question (random split samples)*

### 6.17 Interest in Assembly/Minister Dialogue

Similarly, the vast majority of Cambodians is also interested in broadcasts of dialogue between the Assembly and Ministers. More than nine-in-ten (93%) say they would be interested in listening to or watching radio or television broadcasts of Assembly members asking questions of the Prime Minister and Ministers. High levels of interest in this type of dialogue are present in every voter group.

*If the radio or TV broadcast members of the National Assembly were asking questions of the Prime Minister and Ministers, would you be interested in listening or watching? (Q.28)*



## 6.18 Summary

- Virtually all Cambodians have heard about the upcoming National Assembly election, although fewer than half of those know the election will be held in July.
- The vast majority of Cambodians plans to participate in the upcoming national elections.
- Cambodians are most likely to cite choosing their Assembly Members as a reason to vote, followed by fulfilling their civic duty, ensuring peace, and ending corruption.
- Only one-quarter of Cambodians think voting in the national election will make a difference, while a plurality are uncertain and almost one-third think it will make little or no difference.
- Those expecting changes from the election are most likely to cite improved infrastructure, general improvement, and development.
- The Cambodian electorate continues to have relatively limited notions of what elections can do.
- Most Cambodians feel elections are an acceptable method of voicing dissatisfaction with the government, but more than one in five is reluctant or unsure about voting against the government even if discontented.
- A majority of Cambodians is able to name the parties that have representatives in the National Assembly and identify the three main parties as actively having campaigned in the commune elections
- Yet, less than one-third of Cambodians are able to cite differences between the main parties.
- Most Cambodians cannot identify any of the functions of National Assembly Representatives.
- While many Cambodians may not be able to differentiate between the main parties, the vast majority feels that multiple parties are critical to a democracy.
- Cambodians are overwhelmingly interested in forums that would shed light on candidate and party positions, and in broadcasts of dialogue between the Assembly and Ministers.

## 7 Voter Education Needs

### 7.1 Free and Fair Elections?

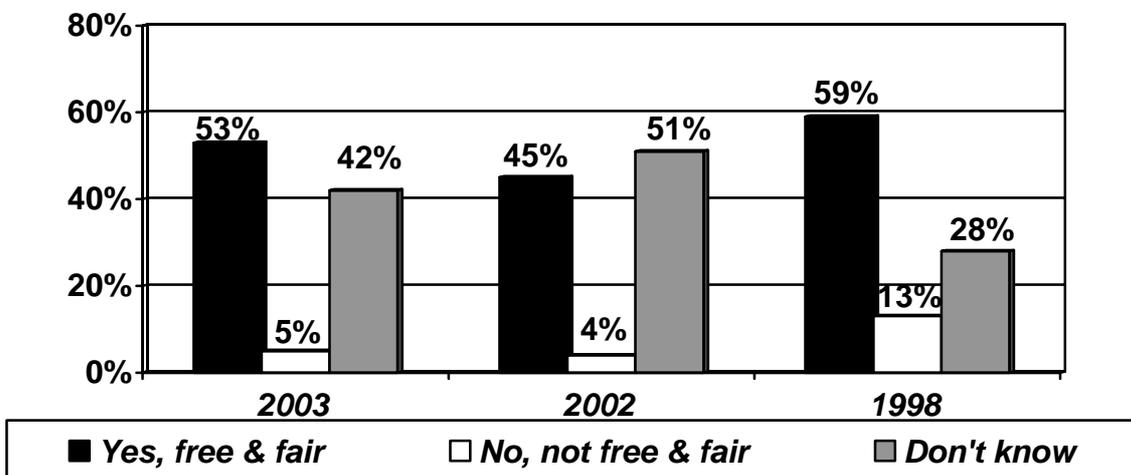
A majority of Cambodians (53%) expects that the upcoming national election will be free and fair, while 42% are uncertain and 5% think it will not be free and fair. This represents an increase in voter confidence from the 2000 survey, when 45% thought the commune elections would be free and fair, 51% were uncertain, and 4% thought the elections would not be free and fair. Current expectations also compare favorably to evaluations of the 1998 elections evident in the 2000 survey, when 59% said the elections were free and fair, but 13% reported they were not. However, it remains the case that almost half the electorate is not sure if the election will be fair or thinks it will not be, and that this proportion is larger than that with doubts about the 1998 election in our previous poll. Hence, while confidence in the electoral process seems to be growing, Cambodians are still divided on the subject.

It is important to note that in the current survey over three-quarters (77%) report that the commune elections were free and fair, 18% are uncertain, and only 5% think they were not free and fair. Among those who thought the last election was free and fair, 61% expect the upcoming election to be free and fair, compared to only 25% of those who did not think the last elections were free and fair. This suggests that positive experiences with the most recent elections, which included additional safeguards to ensure regularity in the voting and counting processes, are helping to shape positive expectations about future elections in Cambodia.

*Some people think the national election will be free and fair in your area, some think they will not be, and some are not sure. How about you? (Q.29)*

*Some people think the national election will be free and fair in your area, some think they will not be, and some are not sure. How about you? (Q.43 from 2000 survey)*

*Did you think that the 1998 election was free and fair in your area, did you think it was not free and fair, or are you not sure? (Q.77 from 2000 survey)*



## 7.2 Cheating in Elections?

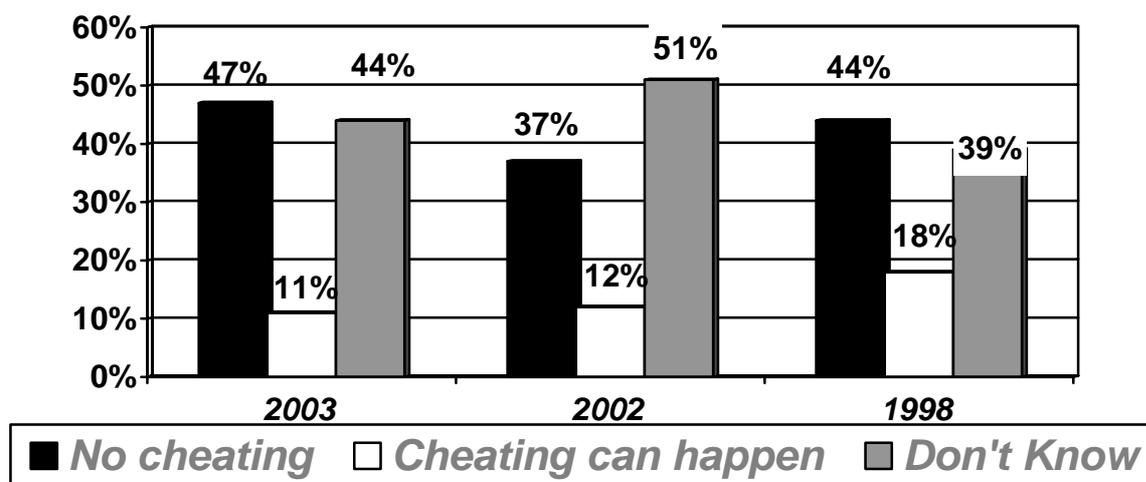
As with opinions on election fairness, Cambodians are more confident about the prospects of election cheating than before the commune vote last year, but a large share remain uncertain about this, too. Just under half (47%) report that they are confident there will be no cheating in the national election, while 10% think cheating can happen, and 44% are uncertain. This represents a significant improvement in voter confidence from the 2000 survey, when 37% thought there would be no cheating, 12% thought it could happen, and 51% were uncertain. It also represents an improvement from the evaluations of the last national election evident in the 2000 survey, when 18% said cheating occurred in the 1998 election, although the proportion who are not sure is up 5 points from that survey.

As with perceptions about election fairness, a solid majority (69%) report there was no cheating in the 2002 commune election, while 6% say there was cheating and 25% are uncertain. Some 59% of those who think there was no cheating in the commune election think there will be no cheating in this year's election, another indication that reforms in election administration build more confidence in future elections.

*Some people think there will be no cheating in the way the election is run, some think there can be cheating, and some are not sure. Which of these opinions do you agree with? (Q.31)*

*Some people think there will be no cheating in the way the election is run, some think there can be cheating, and some people are not sure. Which of these opinions do you agree with? (Q.51 from 2000 survey)*

*Some people think there was no cheating in the way the (1998) election was run, some think there was cheating, and some people are not sure. Which of these opinions do you agree with? (Q.78 from 2000 survey)*



### 7.3 Election Concerns

Cambodians see clear signs of improvement in most respects regarding the fairness of the electoral process over the past three years, although concern has increased a bit over vote buying and ballot secrecy. On the positive side, the percentages citing the possibility of news media bias (17%), violence (7%), cheating (6%), threats (5%), vote pledging (5%), and forced party membership (4%) are all significantly smaller than in 2000. In most respects, the election process is seen as cleaner than in the past in the wake of the 2002 commune elections, a sign of progress for efforts to improve election administration by international donors and domestic reformers.

However, vote buying is an increasing concern, with 26% reporting that it could happen in the upcoming election, a slight increase from 23% in 2000. This concern is widespread, with more than 20% from every demographic subgroup reporting it is a possibility. Concern about vote buying is especially high in the Southwest region (36%). There was also a rise, to 12% from 9%, in the proportion of voters who were concerned about ballot secrecy. Given the progress perceived in most other aspects of election administration by Cambodians, these two areas stand out as deserving attention from voter education and electoral reform efforts.

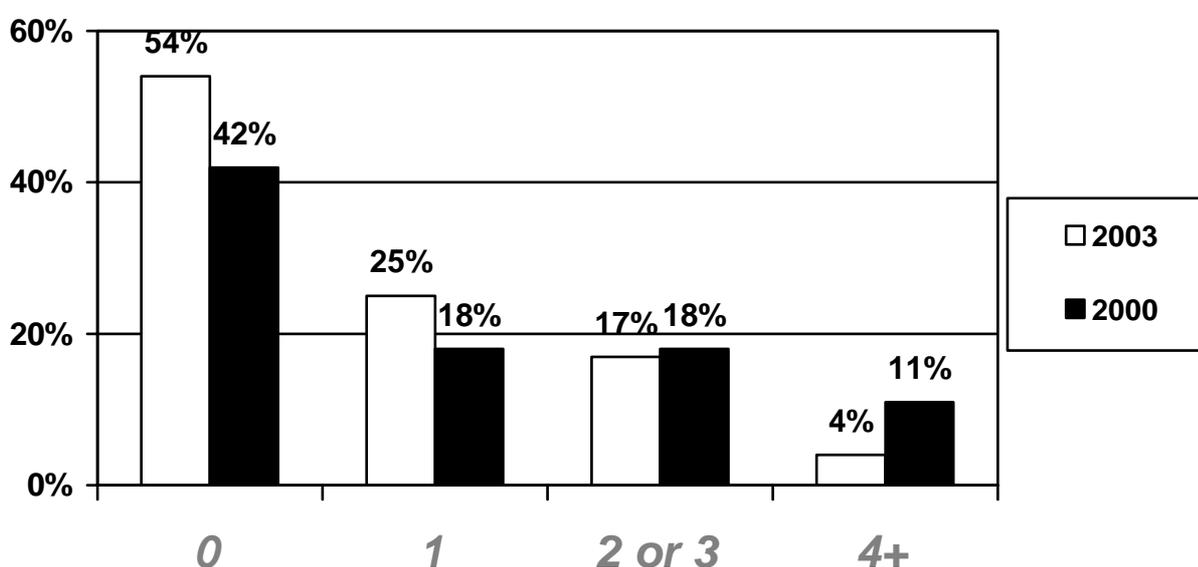
*I'm going to mention some problems that can happen in elections. For each one, tell me if you think it is possible here in the national (commune) election next year. (Q.32)*

	2003	2000
Gifts or payments for votes	26%	23%
News media bias favoring party	17%	30%
Finding out how people voted	12%	9%
Violence against party activists or voters	7%	14%
Cheating in counting	6%	13%
Threats from officials	5%	10%
Forcing people to pledge vote for a party	5%	11%
Not being allowed to register	4%	4%
Forcing people to join a party and vote for it	4%	9%
None of these possible	51%	42%
No response	3%	10%

## 7.4 Number of Election Concerns

The proportion of the population citing any potential election problems has decreased significantly since 2000, despite increased concern about vote buying and ballot secrecy. Just under half of Cambodians (46%) report that one or more of the election problems is possible in their area in the upcoming election, down from 58% who said the same regarding the commune elections in the 2000 survey. One-quarter (25%) say that one election problems could occur in their area, 17% believe two or three could occur, and 4% think four or more could occur. This represents a seven point decrease since 2000 in the share of the population who think more than two or more election problems are possible in the upcoming election.

*Number of concerns about election fairness (Q.32)*



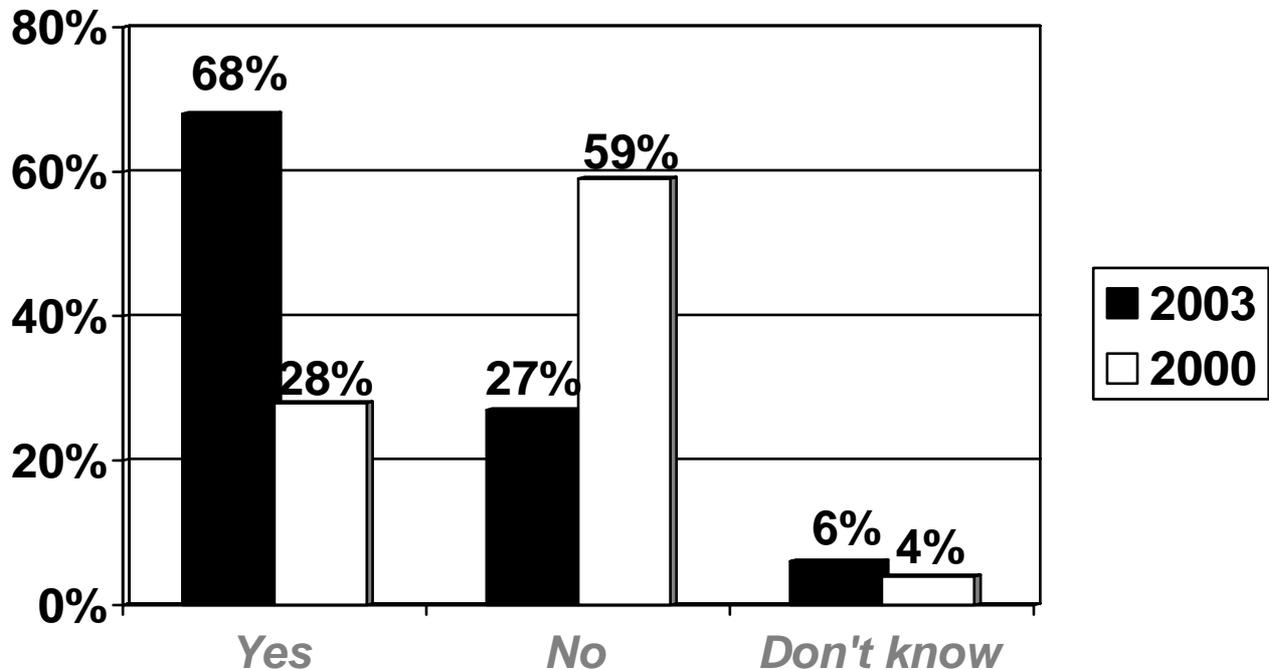
## 7.5 Know Where to Complain

Compared to the results of our 2000 poll, the findings of the new survey indicate a substantially higher proportion report that they know to whom to complain if they learn of election irregularities. Two-thirds (68%) now say they know to whom they could complain if there are election problems, while 27% say they do not know and 6% are uncertain. This represents a 30-percentage point increase since our last poll, when only 38% said they knew to whom they could complain.

The percentages reporting they know where to complain are fairly consistent across demographic and regional subgroups, although this awareness is clearly correlated with education. Only 57% of those with no education say they know to whom they

could complain compared to 68% of those with some education and 78% of those with a secondary education.

*If one of these problems happens in your area in the election, do you know to whom you could complain? (Q.33)*



### 7.6 To Whom Would You Complain?

While more voters say they know where to report election irregularities, the survey results indicate that they would continue to rely on the existing local power structure to do so. This suggests that the proportion actually familiar with the channels specially established to deal with election problems has remained fairly low since our 2000 poll. Of those saying they know where to complain, 64% say they would report problems to their village chief or government, while 40% would report problems to their commune chief of government. Hence, even though many more voters say they know where to complain, most are likely to rely on channels outside the election administration structures. The reliance on village leaders is especially high among rural women (75%), voters under 25 (72%), and those with no education (77%).

A relatively small number of Cambodians say they would report election problems through channels leading directly to electoral administration. While there have been slight improvements over the past three years, those who would report election problems to the local election committee (20%), independent monitors/observers (11%) or the National Election Committee (4%) remain fairly small minorities. Reliance on one or more of these appropriate channels is especially low among rural women, voters under 25, and those with no education. Targeted voter education should aim to build awareness of how to report irregularities.

*To whom would you complain? (Q.34)*

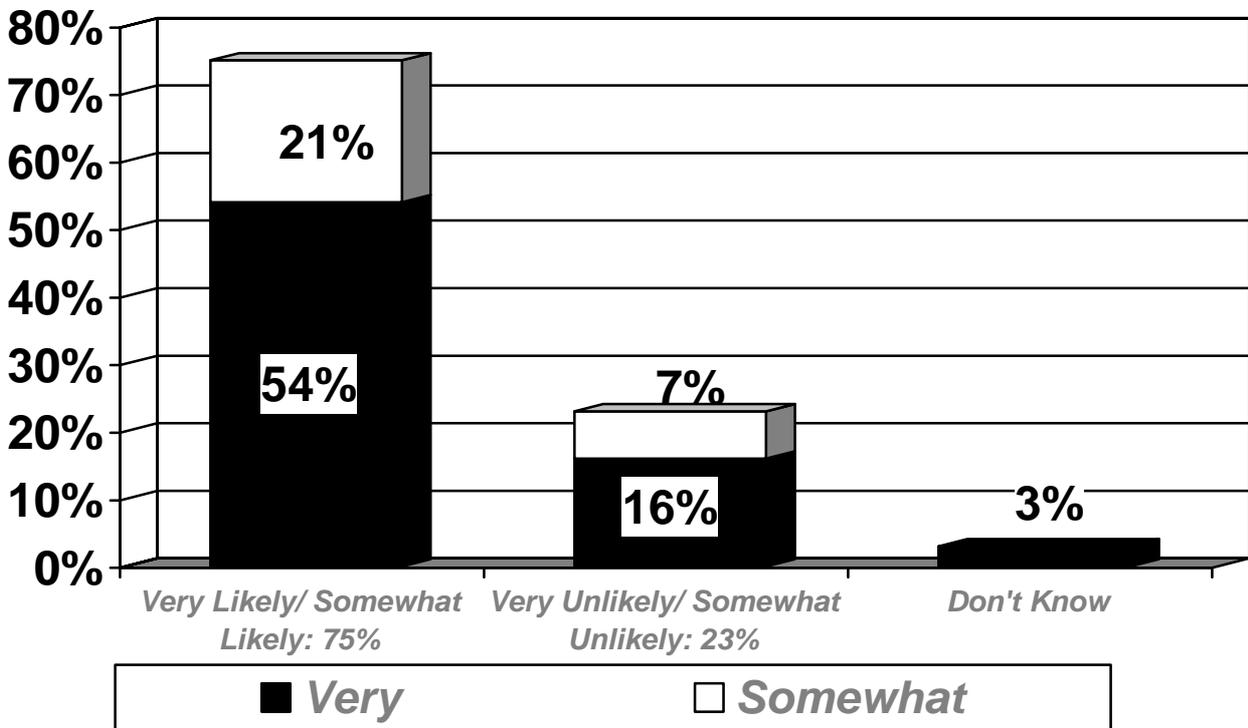
<b>Village Chief/ Government/ Commune Clerk</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>Commune Chief/ Government</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Local Election Committee</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Monitors/ Observers/ NGOs/ COMFREL</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Group Chief</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Police</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>National Government</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>NEC</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Human Rights Organizations</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>National Assembly</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Political Party</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>No Response</b>	<b>3%</b>

*Base: 683*

### **7.7 Likelihood to Report Election Problems**

Although most voters say they would be likely to report election irregularities, a substantial share says they would not. Three-quarters of Cambodians (75%) say they would be likely to report election problems, with 54% saying they would be very likely. On the other hand, 23% say they would be unlikely to report election problems, with 16% very unlikely, and 3% more don't know if they would. Reluctance to report election problems is especially high among those with no education, with 30% saying they would be unlikely to do so, and 5% uncertain. And, those from the eastern regions are less likely to report problems than those from the rest of the country (68% and 78% likely to report, respectively). Targeted communication should be done to encourage the least educated and those from the eastern regions to report election irregularities.

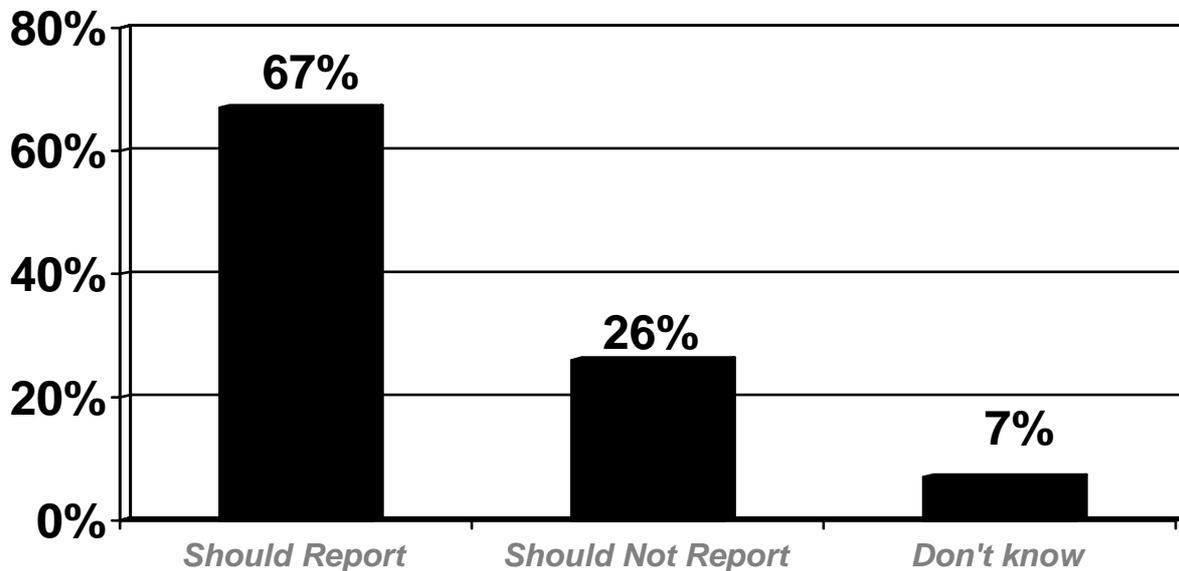
*If one of these problems were to happen in your area in the election, how likely would you be to report this problem? (Q.35)*



### 7.8 Election Problem Reporting

Arguments on the pros and cons of reporting did little to shake the willingness of the majority to report election problems, but pointed to a persistent minority fearful of doing so. On the positive side, 67% agree that that “*if a person sees or hears about election problems, that person should report this problem because Cambodia needs to have fair elections that represent the will of the people.*” On the negative side, 26% agree that “*the person should not report this problem because it will not make a difference, and could be dangerous,*” and 7% are uncertain. Again, reluctance and uncertainty are especially high among those with no education (29% not report, 14% uncertain), and is higher among women (37% say they should not report or are uncertain) than men (29%). Voters from the Southeast region are also less likely than others to feel an obligation to report irregularities (35% not report, 9% uncertain)

*Some people think that if a person sees or hears about election problems, that person should report this problem because Cambodia needs to have fair elections that represent the will of the people. Other people think that person should not report this problem because it will not make a difference, and could be dangerous. Which of these opinions do you agree with? (Q.36)*



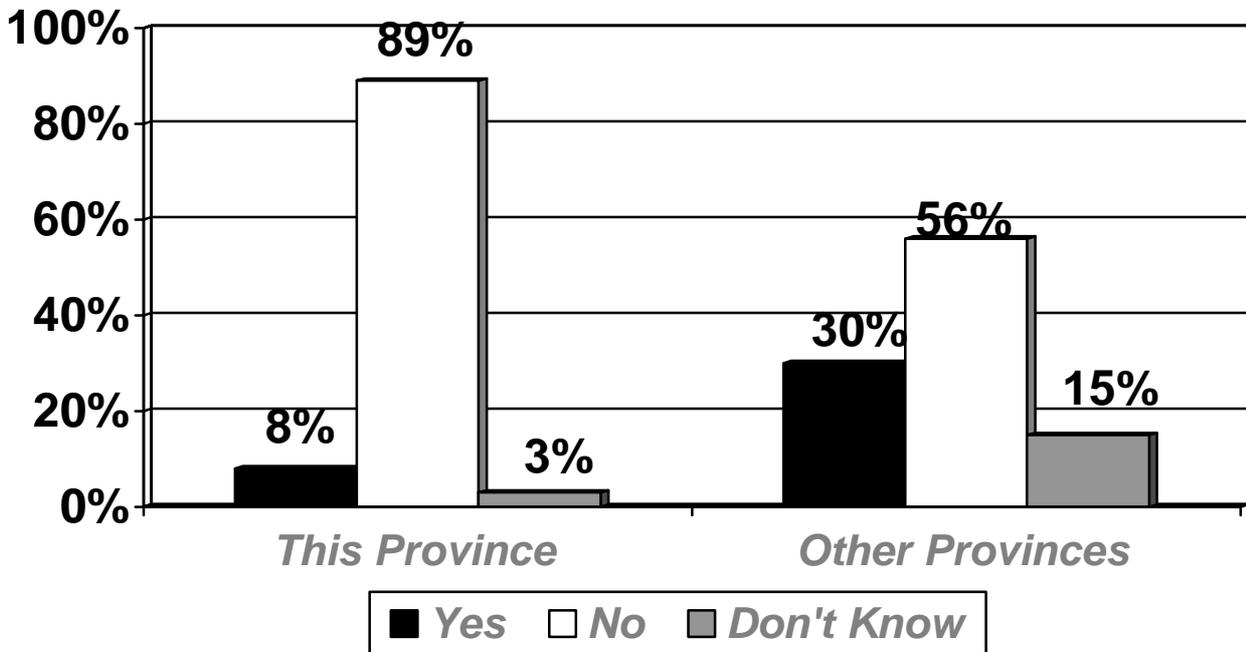
## 7.9 Voter Coercion

While relatively few Cambodians report hearing of voter coercion in their areas, the problem is still very real to many, since they hear accounts from other areas of the country. Overall, 8% say they heard about threats or violence in their province against the supporters or activists of certain parties during the commune elections. Reports of local voter coercion are especially high in the Northeast (16%) and Southeast (14%) regions of the country, and lower in the Northwest (5%), Central (5%) and Southwest (2%) regions.

While reports of local voter coercion center on the eastern side of the country, the impact of these incidents clearly extends to other areas, as 30% of Cambodians report hearing of threats or violence in other provinces. With the exception of the Northwest (where only 11% report hearing of incidents elsewhere), awareness of problems in other areas is as or more common in the Southwest (31%) and Central (30%) regions as it is in the eastern regions (26% Northeast, 42% Southeast). Awareness of coercion in other areas is higher among urban residents (39%), radio listeners (35%), and those who read newspapers (45%), but is also present among sizeable shares of rural residents (28%), and those who do not watch television (25%), listen to the radio (24%) or read the newspapers (27%). This suggests that awareness of voter coercion is not limited to those with access to media source, and that word of mouth plays a significant role in spreading the news about voter coercion.

*In some places, people say there were threats or violence against the supporters or activists of certain parties during the commune elections. Did you hear of threats or violence in this province? (Q.43)*

*Did you hear of threats or violence in other provinces during the commune elections? (Q.44)*



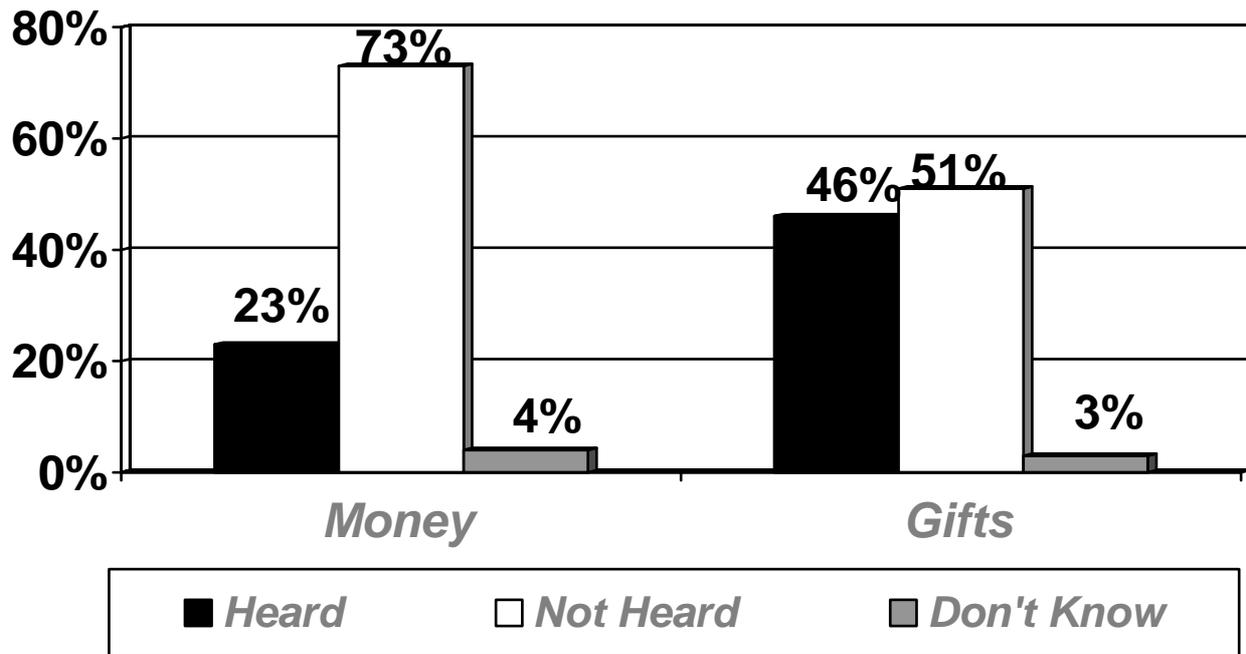
### 7.10 Vote Buying

In line with their fears expressed about the National Assembly elections, voters’ reports about the commune elections indicate that vote buying is still widespread in Cambodia. Almost one-quarter of those surveyed (23%) report that they heard of political parties giving money to voters in their areas before the commune elections, while 73% say they did not, and 4% are uncertain. The percentages reporting they have heard of parties giving money to voters is fairly consistent across all demographic and regional groups, although it is highest among those from the Southwest (30%) and Southeast (28%) regions.

Even more Cambodians report that they heard of non-monetary methods of vote buying during the commune elections. Almost half (46%) say they heard of political parties giving gifts, like rice, MSG, t-shirts, or hats, to voters in their area before the commune election. Awareness of gift giving is fairly widespread, with more than 40% in almost every demographic group saying they heard about this happening before the commune elections. Regionally, reports of gift giving are most common in the Northeast (64%) and Southeast (54%), and least common in the Northwest (40%) and Central (38%) regions.

*In some places, people say that political parties gave gifts, like rice, MSG, t-shirts, or hats, to voters before the commune election. Did you hear of that happening in your village or commune? (Q.41)*

*In some places, people say that political parties gave money to voters before the commune election. Did you hear of that happening in your village or commune? (Q.42)*



### 7.11 Perceptions Of Vote Selling

Most Cambodians say they do not feel obligated to vote for a party that gives them money or gifts. In a question administered to half of the sample, the vast majority (81%) agree with the statement that “it’s OK to take money from a political party. Poor people need money, and it might be dangerous to refuse to accept money or a gift. Because the vote is secret, you can still vote for the party you like.” Only 12% say the correct action is to vote for the party that gave them money while 7% are uncertain. Voters over 35 years old (17%) and those with no education (17%) are most likely to feel that the correct action is to vote for the party giving them a gift or money or be uncertain about the correct course of action (9% and 15%, respectively). The proportion saying it is OK to take money and vote for the party you like is also lower among those from the Southeast (72%) than from the rest of the country (84%).

A slightly different question, administered to the other random half of the sample, also indicates that relatively few Cambodians feel obligated to support a party giving them gifts or money. A majority (60%) believes that “if a party gives us money or a gift for our vote, it is wrong and we may take the money and still vote for any party we like.” Another 29% think that “it’s always wrong to take money from parties, it’s

bribery.” Only 7% said that “if a party gives us money or a gift for our vote, we should vote for that party” and 4% are uncertain. The proportions who feel the correct action is to vote for the party or are uncertain is highest among those with no education (17%), those over 50 (15%), women (14%), and those from the eastern areas of the country (21%). These results suggest that, although most do not feel obligated to vote for a party giving them money or gifts, some voters need to be informed that they have no responsibility to support those trying to buy their vote.

*Which of the following views is closest to your view? (Q.71/Q.72)*

*Base: 504 for each question (random split samples)*

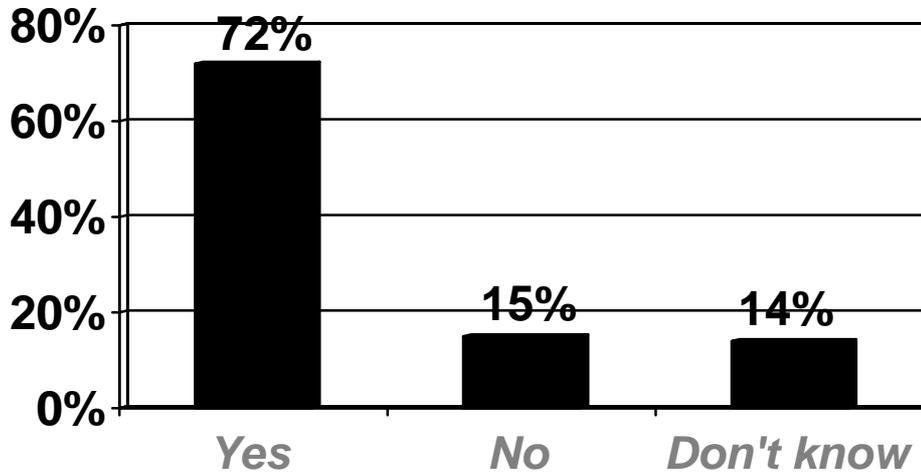
<b>It's OK to take money from a political party and vote for the party you like.</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>If someone gives you money or a gift to vote for a particular party, the correct action is to vote for that party</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>7%</b>

<b>If we receive money or a gift we should vote for that party</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Can take money and vote for any party</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Always wrong to take money</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>4%</b>

## 7.12 Observers In Commune Elections

Most of those who voted in the commune elections report seeing independent monitors or observers. Of the 83% who voted in the commune election, 72% say they saw independent observers, or monitors from NGOs checking that the voting was fair, while 15% do not recall seeing observers and 14% are uncertain. The percentages noticing monitors during the commune election is fairly consistent across demographic and regional groups, although slightly lower among women (66%), voters over 50 (65%), and those with no education (55%).

*When you went to vote, did you see any independent observers or monitors, like those from NGOs, checking that the voting was fair? (Q.46)*



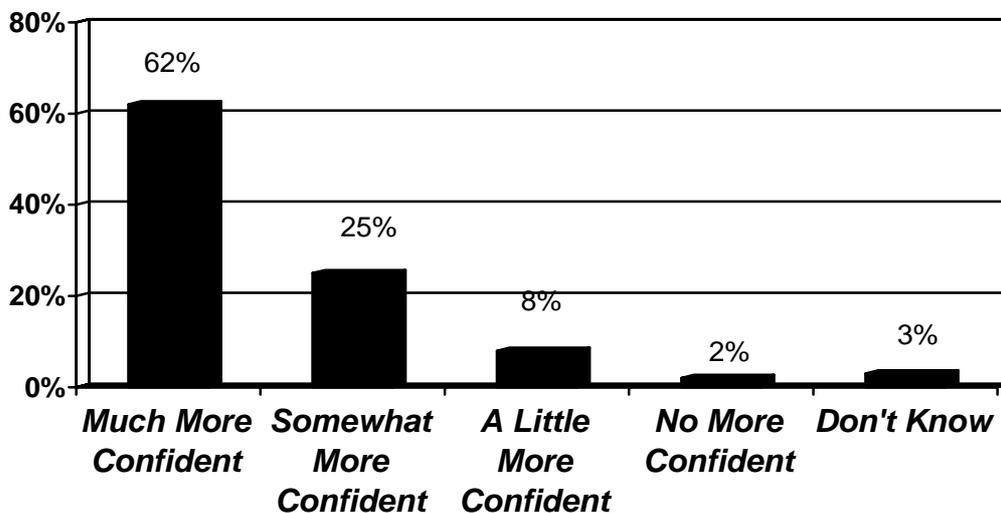
*Base: 837*

### 7.13 Effect of Observers In Commune Elections

The effect of election monitors and observers on voter confidence in the electoral process is strong and clear. Among those who saw monitors during the commune election, 62% say the presence of these monitors made them much more confident that the election would be free and fair. Some 25% more report that their presence made them somewhat more confident. The overwhelmingly positive impact of these observers suggests that these efforts should be continued.

*Did seeing the monitors or observers make you much more confident, somewhat more confident, a little more confident, or no more confident that the election would be free and fair? (Q.47)*

*Base: 598*



#### 7.14 Voter Education Recommendations for Specific Target Groups:

The survey findings suggest that part of the voter education campaign should target some specific groups of Cambodian voters who require efforts to inform them of their basic rights and responsibilities as voters in order to participate more meaningfully in the democratic process. These groups include those voters who are reluctant to voice dissent through the ballot box, hesitant to report election irregularities, and most susceptible to vote selling.

For these voters, additional efforts are needed to:

- *Explain that voicing discontent by voting for any party is an acceptable way to affect change;*
- *Encourage them to report election problems;*
- *Explain that they are not obligated to vote for parties that give them gifts or money.*

The voters in these groups tend to be older, poorly educated, from the east, and members of Pot or Death Associations. They should be the object of targeted voter education efforts.

<u><i>Target Groups</i></u>	<i>Not Vote Against Gov't</i>	<i>Not Report Election Problems</i>	<i>Obligated to Vote for Party Gifts/Money</i>
Voters over 50	29%	39%	23%
No education	35%	44%	25%
Northeast	48%	37%	28%
Southeast	28%	43%	22%
Kitchen Pot / Death Assoc Member	30%	37%	14%
<i>National Average for Comparison</i>	22%	29%	15%

### 7.15 Voter Education Recommendations for All Voters:

The survey findings indicate that most voters have little idea what elections can do, little sense of what their Assembly representatives do, and are ignorant about the proper channels to report election irregularities. A more general phase of the voter education campaign should be targeted to the entire electorate, and cover essential issues about which most voters are uninformed. Some important points are:

- *Elections are can have various uses: voicing demands, changing policies and laws, getting issues and problems addressed, changing the government;*
- *How and to whom to complain about electoral irregularities;*
- *What National Assembly members do (make laws, question Ministers, elect the Prime Minister, etc.);*
- *That monitors/observers will be present at voting sites;*
- *Promoting candidate forums on radio and TV and in person where citizens ask questions of candidates from several parties;*
- *Promoting party comparisons through radio and TV broadcasts and distributing voter guide brochures that compare the stands of the parties on issues facing the country.*

This phase of the campaign should begin once the first phase is underway.

**All voters need to be targeted for education about:**

- **What elections can do and why their vote matters.**
- **How to complain about irregularities and who to complain to.**
- **The functions of the National Assembly.**
- **The presence of monitors/observers at voting sites.**

### 7.16 Summary

- Just over half of all Cambodians expect the upcoming national election will be free and fair, while a substantial minority remains uncertain, and a small number think it will not be free and fair. This represents an increase in voter confidence for the commune election seen in the 2000 survey.

- As with opinions on election fairness, Cambodians are more confident than in the past that there will be no cheating in the upcoming election, although a large share remain uncertain.
- While there clearly are perceived improvements in electoral administration over the past three years, Cambodian voters remain concerned about vote buying and ballot secrecy.
- The share of the population who expect any election problems has decreased significantly since 2000, although almost half are still concerned that one or more of problems are possible in their areas during the upcoming election.
- Two-thirds of Cambodians say they know to whom they could complain if there are election irregularities.
- Most people would continue to rely on the local authorities for reporting election problems, and less than one-third would do so through electoral administration channels.
- While most voters say they would be likely to report election irregularities, one-quarter say they would be fearful to do so.
- Although relatively few Cambodians report hearing of local voter coercion, the problem is still very real to many Cambodians, many of whom are aware of accounts from other parts of the country.
- Voters' reports about the commune elections indicate that offering money or gifts for votes is still widespread in Cambodia.
- Most Cambodians do not think they must vote for a party that gives them money or gifts, although a significant minority says they would feel obligated to do so.
- Most of those who voted in the commune elections report seeing independent monitors when they voted and the presence of monitors has a strong positive impact on voter confidence in the electoral process.
- Only one in five Cambodians are able to identify one or more of their province's representatives in the National Assembly.

## 8 Civic Education Needs and Issues

### 8.1 Characteristics of a Democratic Country

While many Cambodians still have fairly limited knowledge of and experience with democracy, there have been significant improvements since our first survey in 2000. In this poll, the majority of Cambodians (55%) were able to name unprompted at least one characteristic of democracy. This represents a substantial 22-point increase on our results three years ago, when two-thirds of Cambodia’s electorate could not name a single aspect of a democratic system unaided.

As in the last poll, those who have some understanding of democracy are most likely to equate it with political freedoms. The principal associations, all of which are more common now, are freedom (36%), freedom of speech (22%), and equal rights (17%). In addition, the percentages identifying democracy in terms of economic benefits (16%) and peace/stability (12%) have increased substantially over the past three years (from 3% and 4%, respectively).

As in the past, the groups least likely to have an idea of what democracy means include women (54% have no idea), those with no education (67%), voters under 35 (51%), rural residents (49%), and the illiterate (63%). In addition, those who watch no television are much less likely than those who do to offer a definition of democracy (60% and 38%, respectively), suggesting that television-based civic education has been effective, but also an indication that targeting beyond mass media will need to be used to reach many voters.

*If a country is called a democracy, what does that mean to you? Anything else?  
(Q.48)*

	<b>2003</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Don’t Know / No Response:</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Political Rights:</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>32%</b>
- “Freedom,” “people have rights,” “can do what they want;”	25%	11%
- “Freedom of speech,” “Freedom to express opinions,” “People have their voice heard”	23%	11%
- “Equality,” “Equal rights”	15%	9%
- Other	3%	8%
<b>Economic Gains:</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>3%</b>
– “Better life”, “Easier to earn living”, “Employment opportunities”, “Jobs”	12%	
– “Country makes progress”, “Build infrastructure”	5%	
<b>Peace, Stability, Security:</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>4%</b>

Base: 504

## 8.2 Personal Consequences of Democracy

A majority of Cambodians (69%) believe that democracy offers them something personally, an increase from 54% three years ago. As with the definition of a democratic country, people are most likely to mention political rights (61%) as a personal benefit of democracy. However, 38% also mentions personal economic gain, and 19% cite peace/security.

As with definitions of a democratic country, the groups least likely to have an idea of what democracy offers them include women (39% have no idea), those under 25 (46%), and the uneducated (51%), as well as those from the Northwest (43%). These groups also are the least likely to mention political rights as a benefit of democracy, an indication they are still unclear about the fundamental concept of democratic rights and freedoms.

*What, if anything, is the most important thing that a democracy in Cambodia will bring you personally? Anything else? (Q.49)*

	<b><u>2003</u></b>	<b><u>2000</u></b>
<b>Don't Know / No Response:</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Political Rights:</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>44%</b>
– “Freedom,” “people have rights,” “can do what they want,” “travel,” “Freedom to choose loving,” “Not forcing people to join army”	29%	17%
– “Freedom of speech,” “Freedom to express opinions,” “People have their voice heard,” “Right to vote,” “People have power”	19%	6%
– “Equality,” “Equal in law,” “Impartiality,” “Justice”	13%	12%
<b>Economic Gains:</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>34%</b>
– “Better life,” “Easier to earn living,” “Employment opportunities,” “Jobs”	29%	20%
– “Country makes progress,” “Build infrastructure”	9%	11%
<b>Peace, Stability, Security:</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>5%</b>

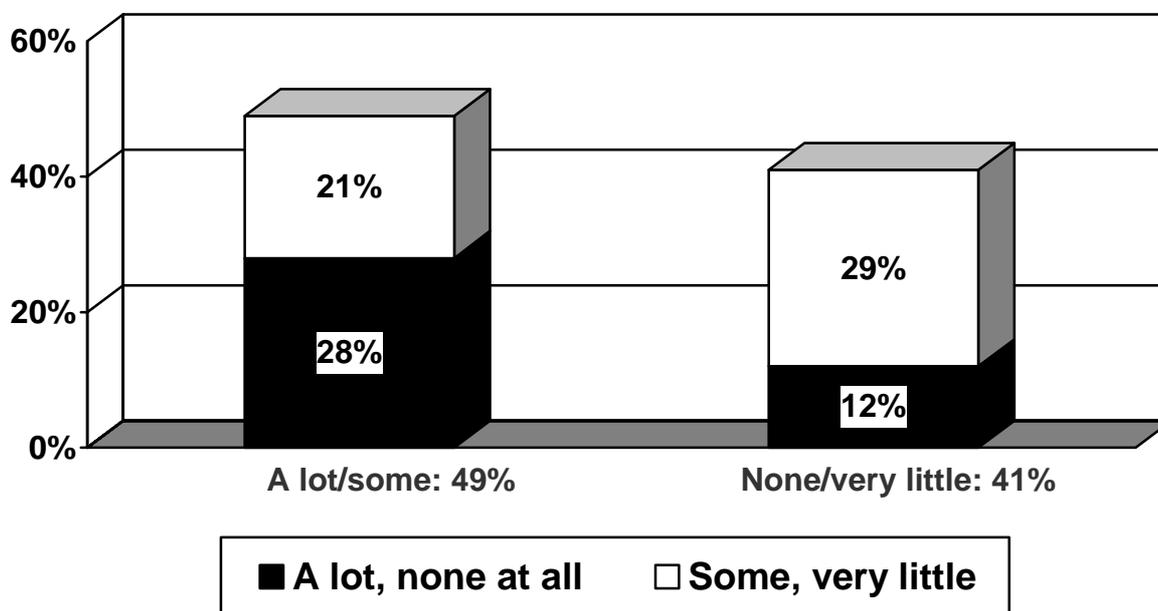
Base: 504

## 8.3 Political Efficacy

Cambodians are moderately positive about their ability to affect national government decisions. Almost half (49%) report they can have a lot (28%) or some (21%) influence over national government decisions, while 41% say they have very little (12%) or no influence (29%). (By comparison, only 28% reported in the 2000 survey they could have some or a lot of influence over local government decisions. While the two questions are not strictly comparable, the different results may indicate an increase in political efficacy.)

Feelings of political efficacy are most strongly associated with income and education. Fewer than half of those making under \$50 per month (46%) and those with no education (44%) feel they have at least some influence over national government decisions, compared to over half of those making over \$50 per month (57%) and those with some education (52%). Perceptions of personal political efficacy also vary significantly by region, from a high of 82% of those from the Northwest saying they have some influence, to a low of only 29% in the Southeast. (The percentages in other regions are similar to the overall percentage.) And, urban residents are more likely than those from rural areas are to feel they have influence over government decisions (56% and 47%, respectively).

*How much influence do you think someone like you can have over national government decisions – a lot, some, very little or none at all? (Q.52)*



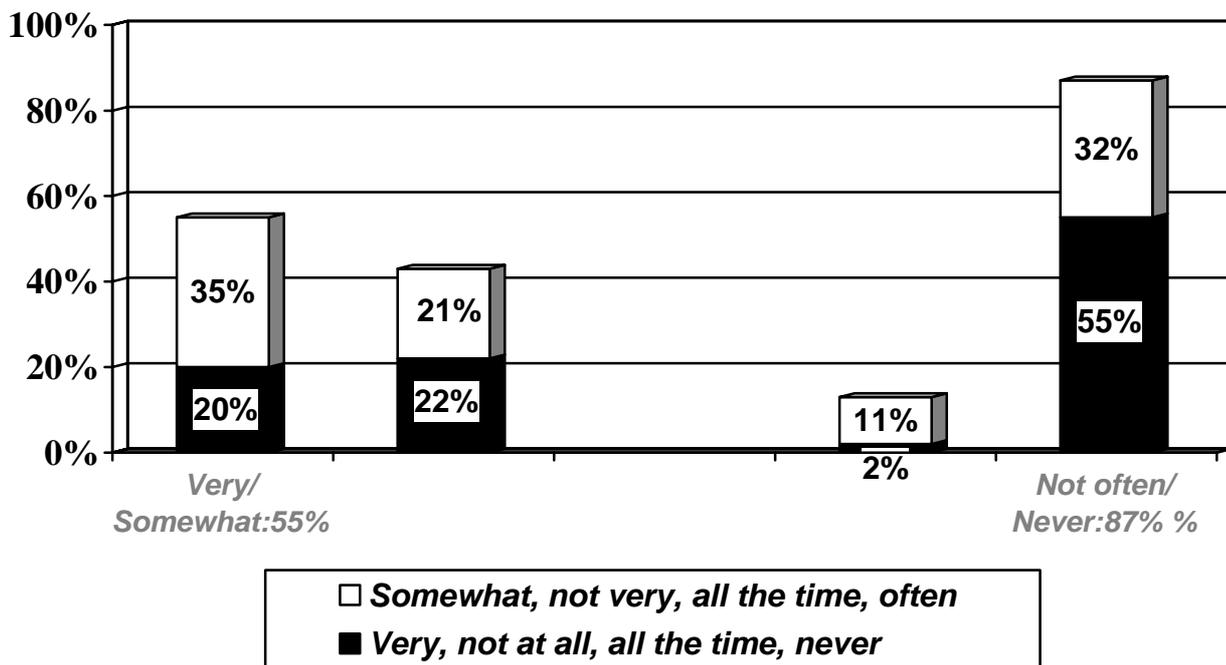
#### 8.4 Political Interest and Discussion

Despite clear gains in their perceptions of personal freedom and in electoral processes over the past few years, Cambodians continue to profess moderate interest in politics and say they discuss it rarely. Just over half (55%) report they are very or somewhat interested in politics, with only 20% very interested. Some 43% say they are not very or not at all interested in politics. The overall share interested in politics has changed little since 2000, when 50% were at least somewhat interested. Interest in politics varies significantly with education, with 43% of those with no formal education reporting an interest in politics, compared to 56% of those with a primary education and 67% of those with a secondary education. It is also considerably lower among women (50%) than men (62%).

The proportion of Cambodians who discuss politics on any regular basis has also not changed over the past three years. Just 13% report that they discuss politics often or all the time, while 32% do not discuss politics very often and 55% never or hardly ever discuss politics with friends. These percentages are virtually unchanged since 2000, when 14% discussed politics with some regularity, and 85% did not. Again, political discussion is least common among women and those with less education. The rarity of political discussion provides a further rationale for voter-candidate forums, suggested in the section on voter education.

*How interested are you in politics?*  
(Q.56)

*How often do you discuss politics with friends?* (Q.57)



### 8.5 Organizational Involvement

Organized civil society remains weak in Cambodia today – but there is a lot of potential to make it stronger. Although more than seven-in-ten Cambodians (71%) do not belong to any type of organized civic association, most (78%) of those who do not are interested in becoming a member of one or more associations. Of the 29% of the population that currently belongs to an association, the most common are death associations (10%), kitchen supplies/pot associations (6%), farmer associations (6%), women’s associations (5%, among women only), and water supply associations (4%). Associational membership is higher among those over 35, but this is primarily a function of death association membership (13% of those over 35, compared to 7% of those under 35).

Despite the low level of participation at present, there is widespread interest among the citizenry in joining non-governmental organizations, as noted above. While interest in joining a group is strongest among younger citizens (84% under the age of 35 are interested), it is also true of a majority of older voters (72% of those over 35). This represents an enormous potential target group for civic education efforts aimed at building civil society organizations. There are a huge number of Cambodians who would like to know how they can join existing groups or establish ones of their own.

*Here is a list of organizations. As I mention each, please tell me if you belong to it. (Q.102)*

*IF NOT: Are there any groups on the list you would like to join? (Q.103)*

	<b>Currently member</b>	<b>Interested in being member</b>
Death association	<b>10%</b>	<b>44%</b>
Kitchen supplies / Pot	<b>6%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Farmer association	<b>6%</b>	<b>34%</b>
Water supply association	<b>4%</b>	<b>34%</b>
Women association	<b>5%</b>	<b>40%</b>
Other	<b>3%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Construction association	<b>2%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Students' parents	<b>2%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Elderly association	<b>1%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Non-religious charity group	<b>1%</b>	<b>7%</b>
Youth Association	<b>1%</b>	<b>5%</b>
Don't know / None	<b>71%</b>	<b>22%</b>

## **8.6 Civic Skills in Civic or Religious Group Participation**

Opportunities to exercise civic skills in civic and religious groups are rather limited in Cambodia. Overall, only 19% of Cambodians report they have participated in a meeting of an association or group to which they belong and only 10% say they have helped make a decision at a meeting of this type. Religious meeting attendance is more common at 31%, although again only 10% report they have helped make a decision at such a meeting. This leaves substantial majorities who say they have never participated in a meeting of either type (59%), and report no experience in decision-making (84%).

These types of participation play an important role in building feelings of civic competence and efficacy. Notably, those who have helped make a decision at a meeting are significantly more likely to feel they have some influence over the government decision-making process (77% at least some influence, 45% a lot) than those who have not (45% at least some influence, 25% a lot). Given this, as well as the demonstrated relationship elsewhere between the development of civic skills in civil society groups and political participation, civic education programs could promote the democratization of internal proceedings and activities in civil society groups to expand opportunities to practice such skills.

*Have you ever participated in a meeting / helped make a decision at an association or at your Temple/Church/Mosque? (Q.104-Q.107)*

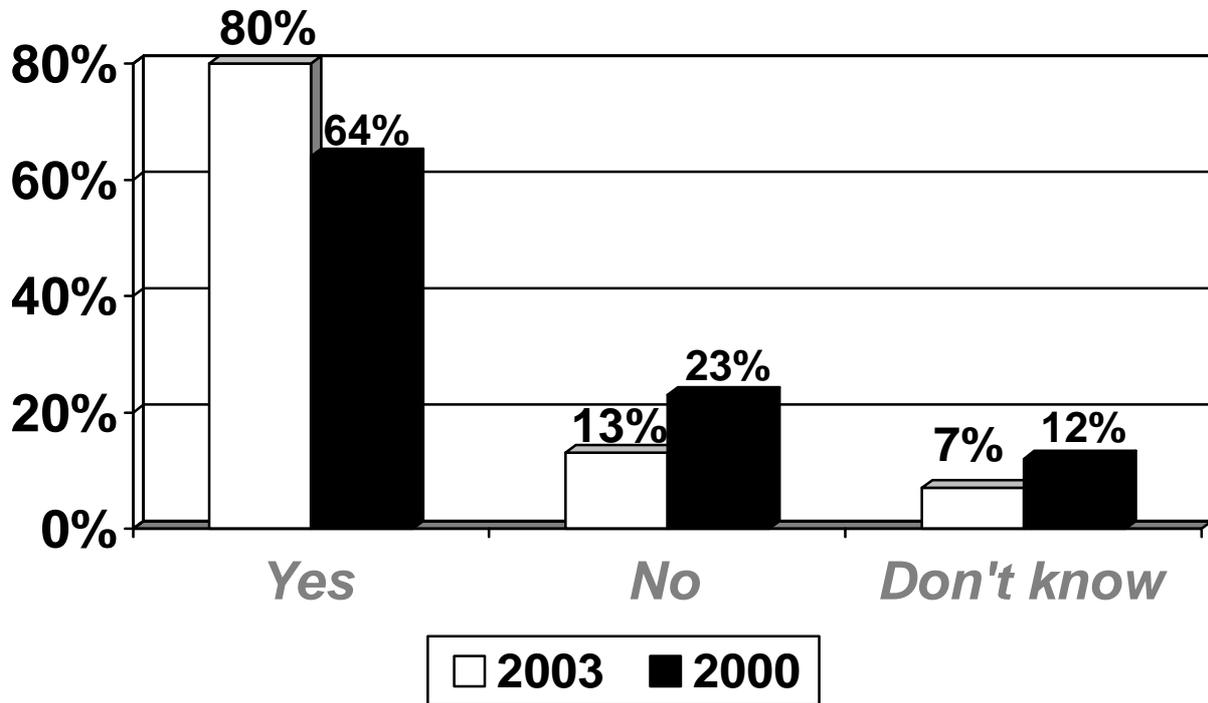
	Association or Group	Temple / Church / Mosque	Neither
<b>Participated in a meeting</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>Helped make a decision</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>84%</b>

### 8.7 Political Tolerance: Party Meetings

Political tolerance in Cambodia seems to have increased substantially since our 2000 survey, representing an important achievement for voter education efforts on this issue. Four-out-of-five voters (80%) believe that all political parties, even unpopular ones, should be allowed to hold meetings in their area, while 13% say they should not, and 7% are uncertain. This represents a significant increase in the percentage expressing a tolerant view, up from 64% just three years ago.

Men (84%) are more tolerant than women (76%) with regard to meetings, although this gap is narrower than in the past. As was the case in 2000, tolerance is lowest among those with no education (70%) and those without TV (75%) or radio (75%). While tolerance of opposing parties is clearly on the rise in Cambodia, a large enough minority still exists to make this a priority for civic education.

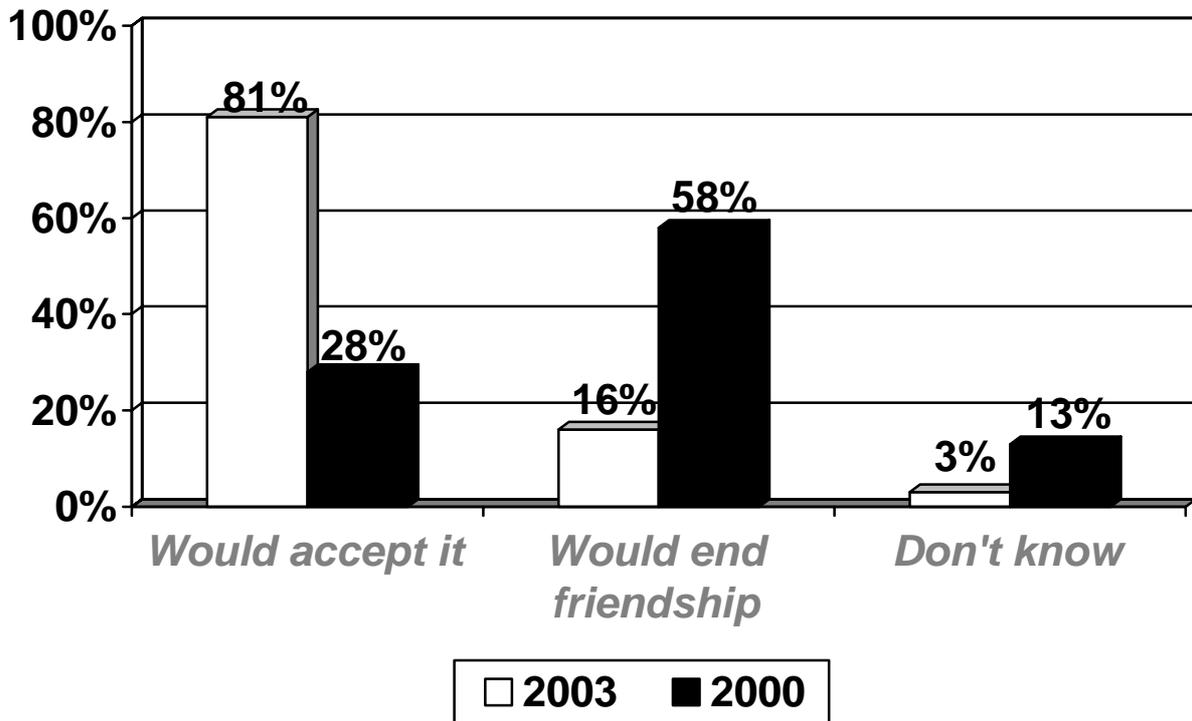
*Do you think that all political parties, even the ones most people do not like, should be allowed to hold meetings in your area? (Q.54)*



### 8.8 Political Tolerance: Personal

One of the most striking changes from the last survey to now is the dramatic increase in tolerance of differing personal political views. In the 2000 survey, only 28% of Cambodians said they would accept a friend's decision to support a party that most people do not like, while 58% said it would end their friendship, and 13% were uncertain. In a dramatic turnaround, 81% now say that they would accept their friend's decision, while only 16% claim it would end their friendship, and 3% are unsure. This also may in part be attributed to the extensive civic education campaigns conducted during the commune elections.

*Suppose a friend of yours supported a party that most people did not like. Would you accept that, or would it end your friendship? (Q.55)*



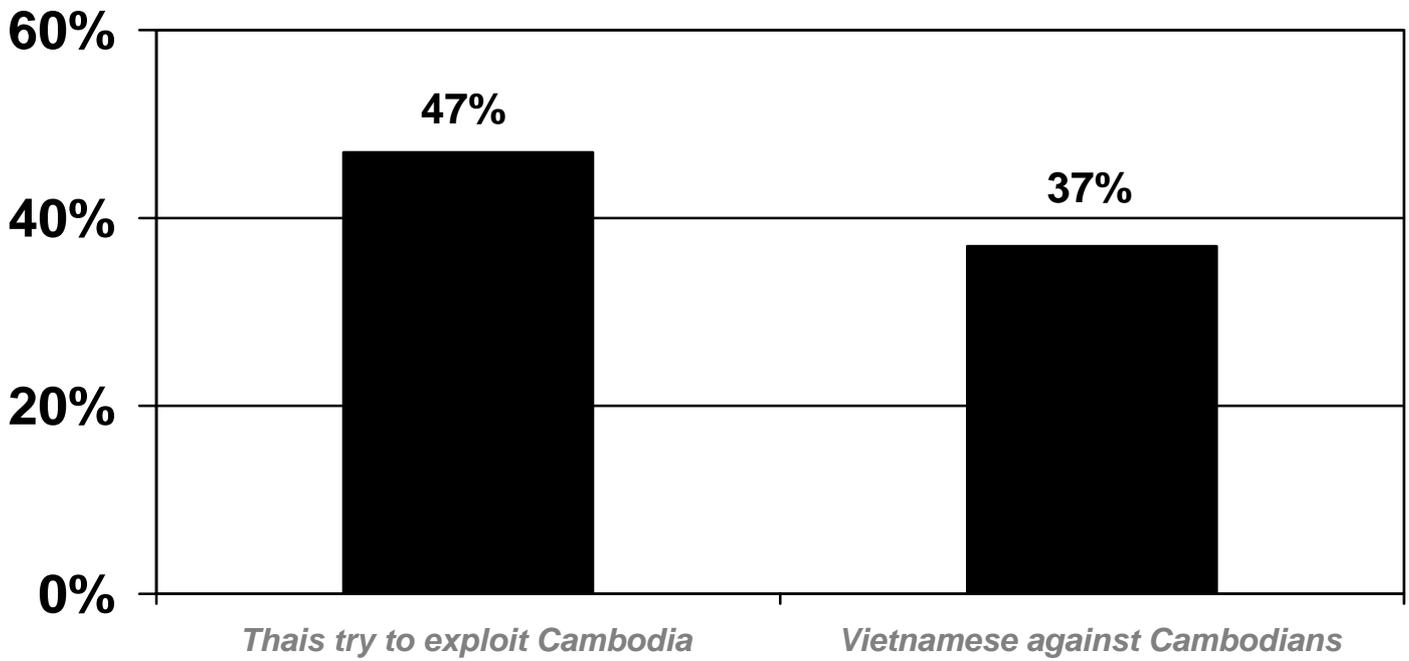
### 8.9 Views of Thais/Vietnamese/Christians

The survey results indicate that many Cambodians are leery of outsiders' influence on their country. When provided with arguments opposing hostile and tolerant views of Thais, Vietnamese, and Christians, substantial minorities exhibit xenophobic attitudes. Almost half (47%) believe that Thais try to exploit Cambodians, which appears to reflect hostility in the wake of the January anti-Thai riots. Additionally, some 37% believe that the Vietnamese are against Cambodia.

Perhaps most interesting is the fact that these negative views are most common among those of higher socioeconomic status: those with more education, higher incomes, newspaper readers, and urban residents are significantly more likely than others to report one of these negative views. These are the groups likely to have the most exposure, personal and media, to disputes and stereotypes concerning the other nationalities. (It is important to point out, however, that most of those from lower socioeconomic status groups are not necessarily more likely to agree with the positive views, but they are much more likely to be uncertain.)

*Some people say that some Thai people try to exploit Cambodians, while others say that most Thais are friends of Cambodia. Which is closer to your own view? (Q.66)*

*Some people say that the Vietnamese are against Cambodia, while others say that Vietnam helped save us from Pol Pot, and that most Vietnamese have good intentions. Which is closer to your own view? (Q.67)*

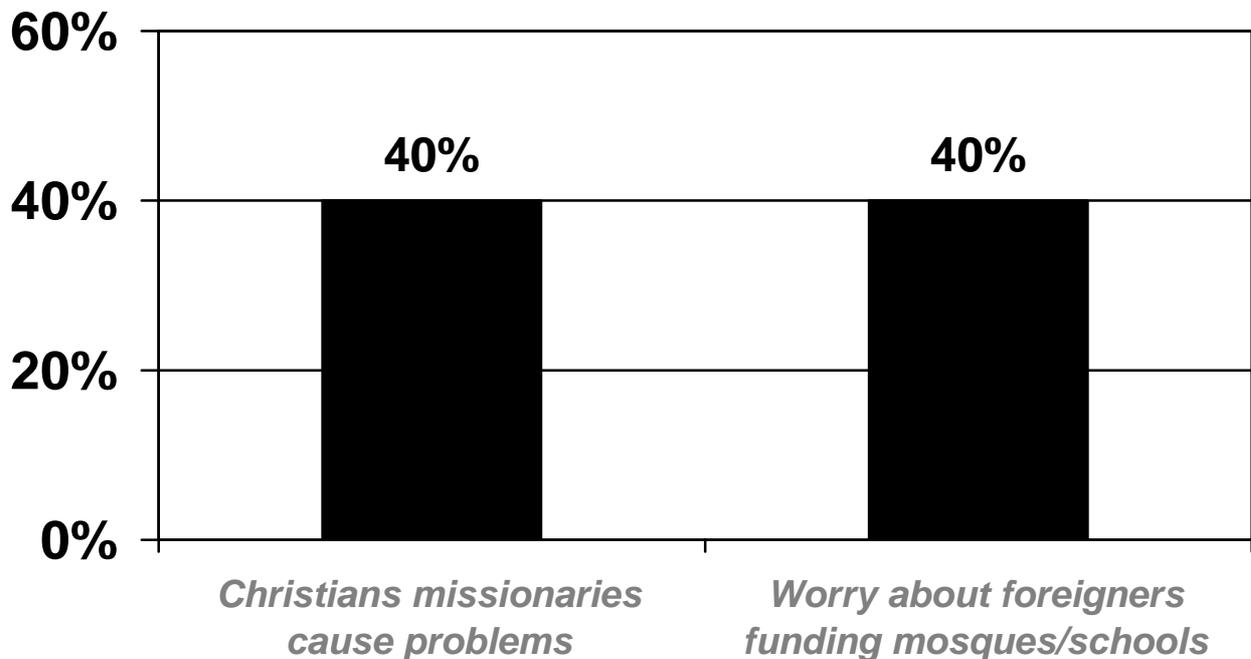


### **8.10 Views Toward Christian Missionaries and Foreign-Funded Mosques and Schools**

Cambodians are divided on the implications of Christian missionaries and foreign-funded mosques and schools for their country. When presented with two opposing viewpoints, 40% feel that Christian missionaries will cause problems in Cambodia, while an almost identical percentage (39%) say there is room in Cambodia for many religions and 21% are uncertain. Similarly, 40% say they are worried about foreigners funding mosques and schools in Cham (Islamic) areas, while 41% believe it is acceptable and 19% are uncertain. Divisions of opinion on these issues are present in all demographic and regional subgroups, although concerns about the effects of both are slightly more common among men and those with a secondary education. Regionally, voters from the Southwest and Central parts of the country are more concerned than others about the potential negative impact of both Christian missionaries and foreign-funding of Islamic institutions.

*Some people say that Cambodia is a Buddhist country, and that Christian missionaries will cause problems, while others say that there is room in Cambodia for many religions. Which is closer to your own view? (Q.68)*

*Some people worry about foreigners funding mosques and schools in Cham areas, while others believe it is okay. Which is closer to your own view? (Q.70)*



### 8.11 Citizenship/Voting Rights

Most Cambodians support the right of individuals from Non-Khmer ethnic groups to vote in elections, although their support of voting rights for ethnic minorities originating in neighboring countries is far from overwhelming. Large majorities support voting rights for longstanding indigenous groups like Chun Chiet (90%), Khmer Kampuchea Krom (85%), Cham (78%), and ethnic Chinese (76%). However, support for voting rights of ethnic Lao (69%) and especially ethnic Vietnamese (57%) and ethnic Thai (54%), while still a majority, is less universal. Interestingly, support levels for the specific groups do not vary considerably from one demographic subgroup to the next. On the contrary, the rank ordering of the support for the ethnic groups is fairly consistent across key demographic groups. That said, support for ethnic group voting rights overall is higher among Cambodians who are more educated, while those with the least education are less supportive and more likely to have no opinion.

*One requirement to vote in the upcoming election is that a person have Cambodian citizenship. I will read you a list of ethnic groups and I would like you to tell me if you believe they can have Cambodian citizenship and should be allowed to vote. (Q.60-Q.66)*

	Yes	No	Don't know
<b>Chun Chiet (highland tribal groups)</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Khmer Kampuchea Krom</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Cham (indigenous Muslims)</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Ethnic Chinese</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Ethnic Lao</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Ethnic Vietnamese</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Ethnic Thai</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>16%</b>

## 8.12 Civic Education Recommendations for Specific Target Groups

The survey results suggest that the civic education drive should begin with an initial phase of targeted messages on the basics of democracy to enhance participation in the electoral process. These messages would include:

- *What democracy means, including the centrality of elections;*
- *Why democracy and politics matter to individuals;*
- *The importance of tolerating meetings of all parties.*

The primary target groups for these issues include voters under 25, those with no education, rural women, and those in the Northwest region. The poll results show that these groups are the most likely to score well below average on these issues. The campaign to reach them should be conducted before and after the national elections.

<u><b>Target Groups</b></u>	<i><b>Don't Know Democracy Characteristics</b></i>	<i><b>Not Interested in Politics</b></i>	<i><b>Politically Intolerant / Unsure</b></i>
Voters under 25	50%	51%	22%
No education	61%	53%	30%
Rural women	50%	48%	30%
Northwest	51%	48%	21%
National Average for Comparison	39%	44%	20%

### 8.13 Civic Education Recommendations for All Voters

Although Cambodia's democratic culture is developing, there are still a number of democracy-related norms and practices that should be encouraged through broad-based civic education. They include:

- *Explaining how to join, form, and participate in organizations;*
- *Participation beyond voting (contacting government, interacting with government in organizations, etc.);*
- *Explaining that your vote can affect change.*
- *Promoting tolerance of different ethnic and religious groups.*
- *Broadcasting members' questions of Ministers in Parliament to build awareness of Parliamentary functions.*

This phase of the civic education campaign will promote tolerance, empower voters, and help inform the electorate prior to the elections.

#### **Priority Issues for General Civic Education**

- Encouraging political participation beyond voting
- Explaining how to join and participate in organizations
- Explaining that your vote matters
- Promote ethnic minorities' voting rights
- Promote tolerance of religious groups

### 8.14 Summary

- While many Cambodians still have limited knowledge of and experience with democracy, more than half are able to articulate a definition of democracy now, substantially more than three years ago.
- Almost half of Cambodians feel they have at least some influence over national government decisions, although a substantial minority believes they have little or none.
- Cambodians continue to have only a moderate level of interest in politics and few say they discuss politics on any regular basis.
- Most Cambodians do not belong to any type of organized civic association, although most report an interest in being a member of one or more associations.

The most popular types of groups include death associations, kitchen supplies or pot associations, farmer associations, women's associations, and water supply associations.

- Opportunities to build civic skills are rare: few Cambodians have participated in a meeting of an association or religious group to which they belong or helped make a decision at meetings of this type.
- Political tolerance has increased; four in five Cambodians now believe that all political parties, even unpopular ones, should be allowed to meet in their area.
- Personal political tolerance has increased dramatically over past three years, with four in five voters reporting they would accept a friend's decision to support an unpopular party.
- Large minorities of Cambodians are concerned about the influence of outsiders on their country, such as Thais, Vietnamese, Christian missionaries, and Islamic schools funded by foreigners. These attitudes are most common among those of higher socioeconomic status.
- Most Cambodians accept the right of individuals from ethnic minority groups to vote in elections, although their support of voting rights for minorities from neighboring countries – especially Thailand and Vietnam -- is substantially lower.

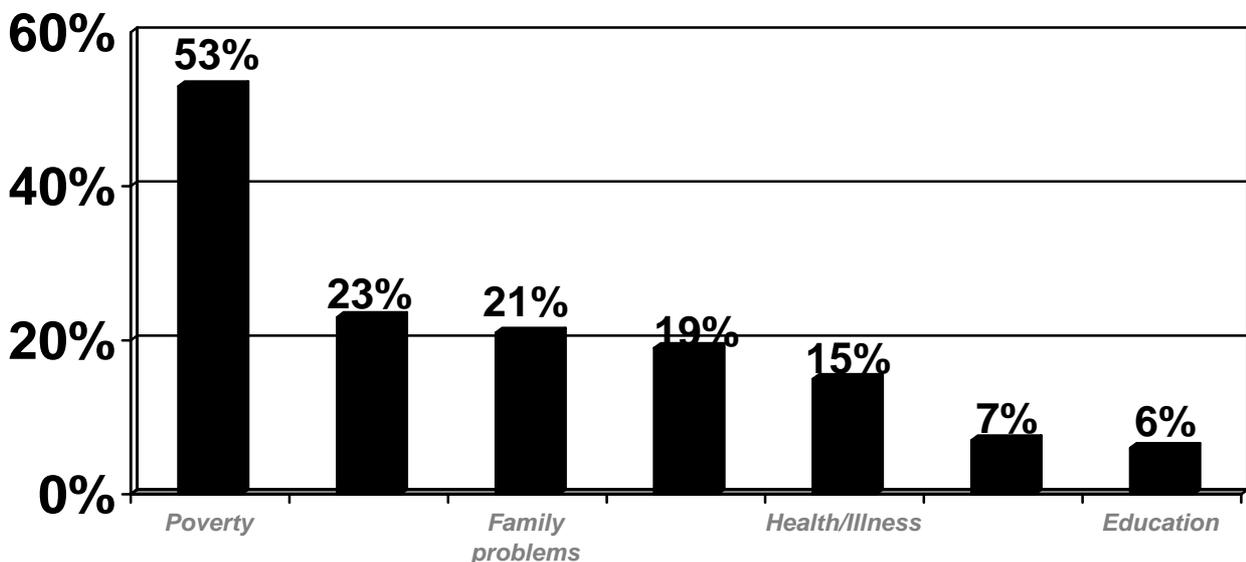
## 9 Women and Democracy

### 9.1 Problems Facing Women

While Cambodians are able to cite a variety of problems facing women that tend to be gender-specific, there is widespread agreement that the general problem of poverty is the biggest one for women as well. Overall, 53% say poverty is one of the top two problems facing women in their area. Women are especially likely to mention poverty as the biggest issue facing women (59%), although men also place this at the top of their list (46%). Indeed, poverty is by far the most frequently cited problem facing women in every demographic and regional subgroup.

In addition to poverty, sizeable percentages point to domestic violence (23%), family problems (21%), jobs (19%), health issues (15%), birth control (7%), and education (6%) as top problems facing women in their area. Men are as likely as women to mention most of these, including domestic violence, as problems specifically facing women in their area.

*What do you think is the biggest problem facing women in this area? Is there any other big problem facing women in this area? (Q.80)  
(Answers cited by 5% or more)*



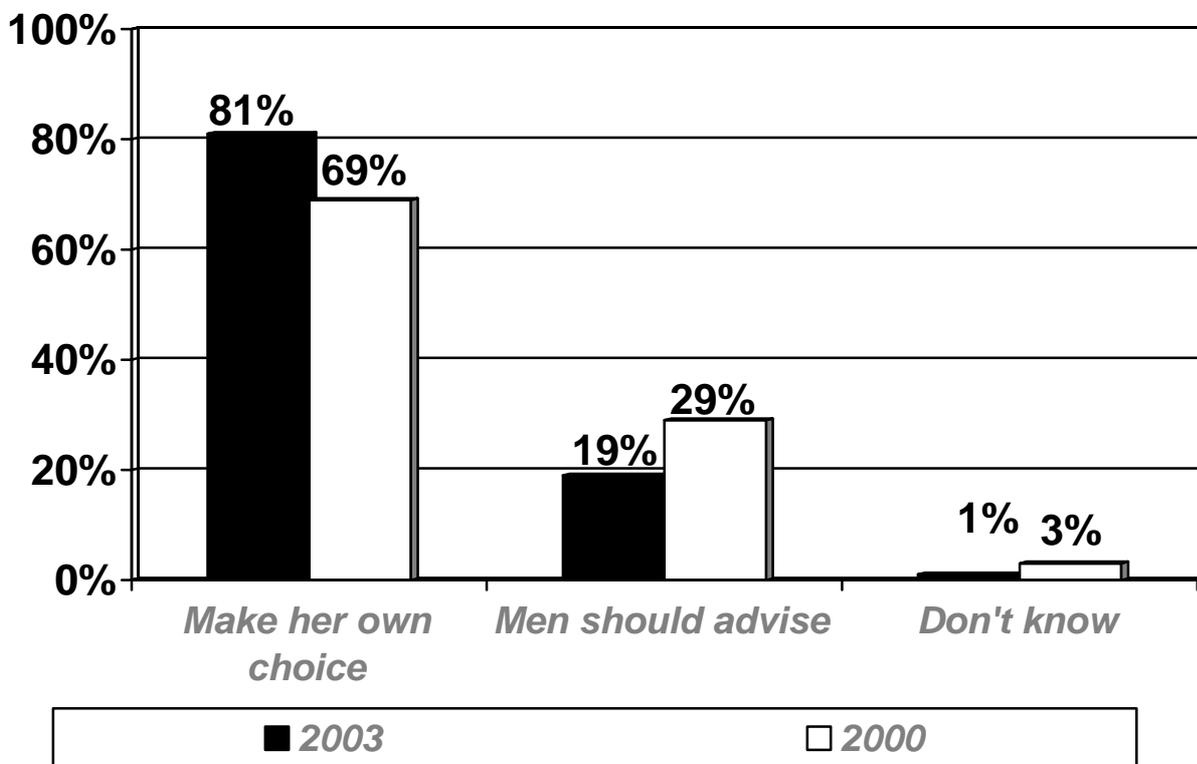
### 9.2 Women Making Their Own Choice

Most Cambodians believe that women should make their own choices when voting for elected officials and this opinion has become more common over the past three years. Overall, 81% think a woman should make her own choice when voting, while 19% feel men should advise her on her choice. This represents a significant increase

in support for women’s voting autonomy, which stood at 69% in the 2000 survey. These results testify to the success of voter education efforts intended to promote women’s independent choice in the commune elections.

While women (83%) are slightly more likely than men (77%) to support a woman’s right to make her own voting choice, there are more significant differences across age and education groups, with older and less educated voters less supportive. Still, even among those over 50 and those with no education, 75% feel a woman should make her own choice in the voting booth. Nonetheless, the dissenting minority remains large enough to justify continued educational efforts in this regard.

*Do you think a woman should make her own choice for voting, or do you think men should advise her on her choice? (Q.73)*

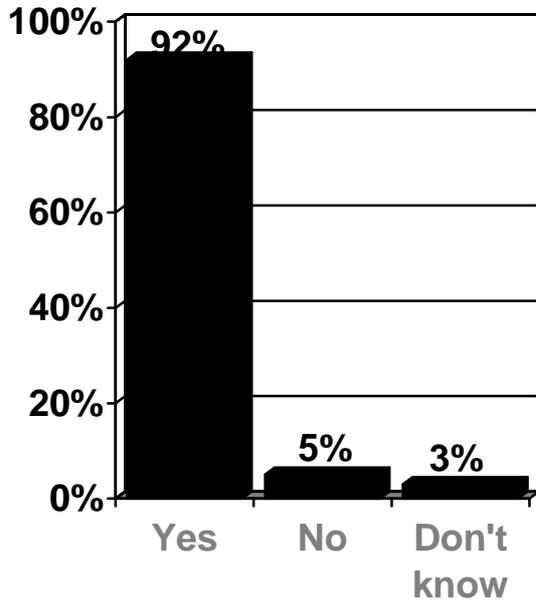


### 9.3 Women In the National Assembly

An overwhelming majority of Cambodians (92%) say they would like to see more women as members of the National Assembly. This opinion is held by about nine-in-ten voters from every regional and demographic subgroup.

Voters point primarily to gender equality (47%) and helping women (43%) as the main reasons they want to see more women in the National Assembly. Other commonly cited reasons include giving women power (16%), promoting development (13%), and the belief that women are less aggressive/angry than men (8%).

*Would you like to see more women as members of the national assembly? (Q.74) Why do you say that? (Q.75)*

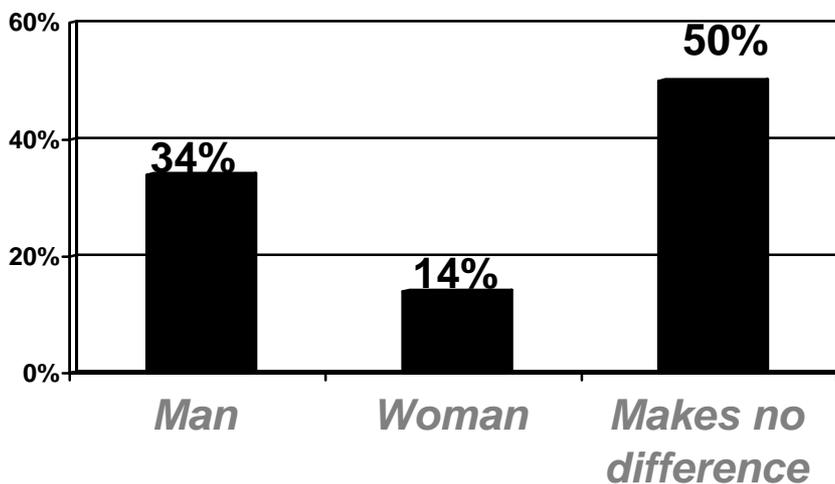


- Promote equality with men
- To help women / make women progress
- Give women confidence / power
- Promoting development
- Women are less aggressive / angry
- Other

#### 9.4 Assembly Representative Gender Preferences

While a majority of Cambodians say the gender of their representative does not matter, there still is a sizeable minority who would prefer a man. Overall, 34% say they would rather be represented by a man, while 14% would rather be represented by a woman, although the largest part -- 50% -- say it makes no difference. While men have a stronger preference for a male representative – 41% prefer a man, 14% a woman – women also lean toward male representatives (29% prefer a man, 14% a woman). The bias toward a male representative is present in most demographic and regional subgroups, although it is important to point out that pluralities or majorities in all groups say the gender of their representative does not matter.

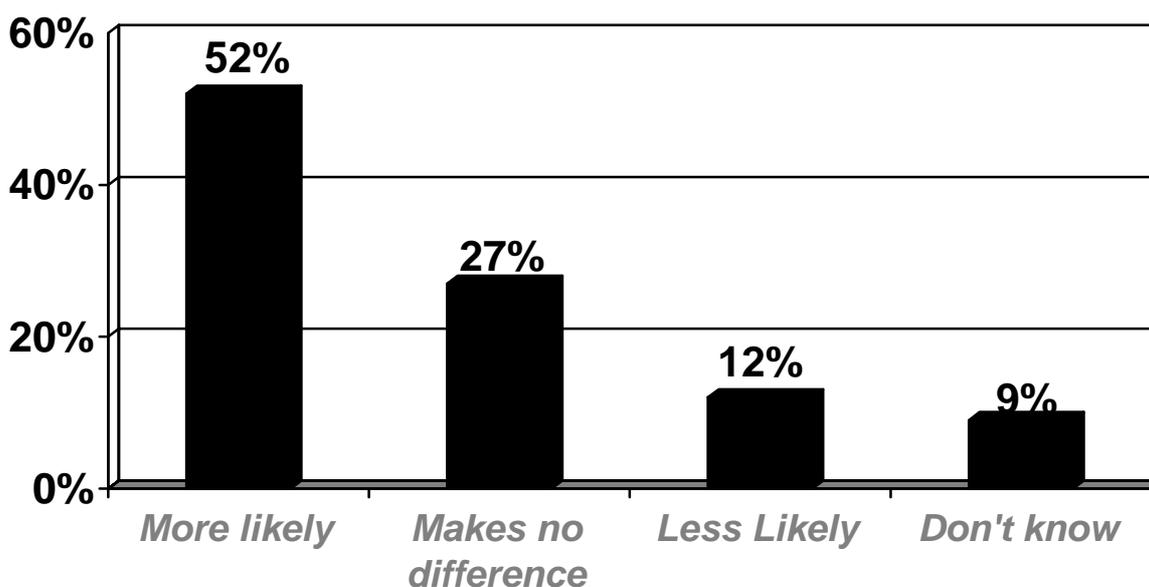
*Would you prefer to be represented by a man or woman in the National Assembly? (Q.78)*



### 9.5 Women’s Position on the List

The survey results show clearly that the net effect of placing women high on the ballot for National Assembly elections would be positive for political parties. A majority (52%) say they would be more likely to support a candidate list that included a women in one of the top three places, while 27% say it would make no difference, 12% say it would make them less likely to support the list, and 9% are uncertain. In other words, the desire to see more women in politics appears to trump the preference for male representatives, given the overwhelming domination by men of Cambodian political life at present.

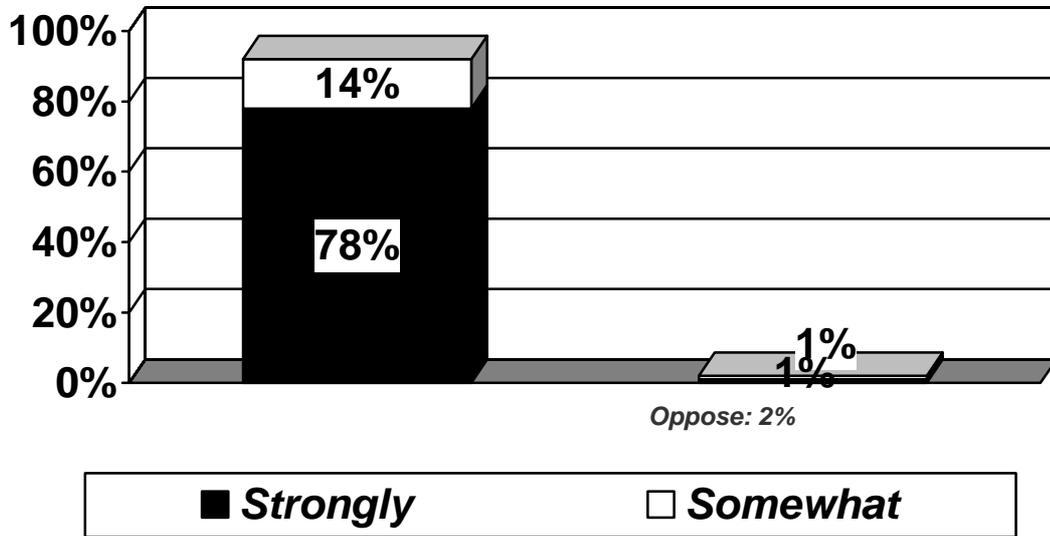
*In the National Assembly elections, every party has a list of candidates for the province, but usually only the top two or three people on the list have a chance of being elected. Knowing this, if a woman were included on a list in one of the top three places would you be more likely to vote for the list or less likely to vote for it? (Q.76)*



### 9.6 Requiring Women on Party Lists

Underlining their desire to see more women in the National Assembly, Cambodians overwhelmingly favor a law that at least one-third of National Assembly candidates must be women. Overall, 92% report they would be in favor – 78% strongly – of a law that would require at least one place in three on party lists had to go to a woman, while only 2% would oppose such a requirement, and 6% are uncertain. Strong support for such a law is present in every demographic and regional subgroup.

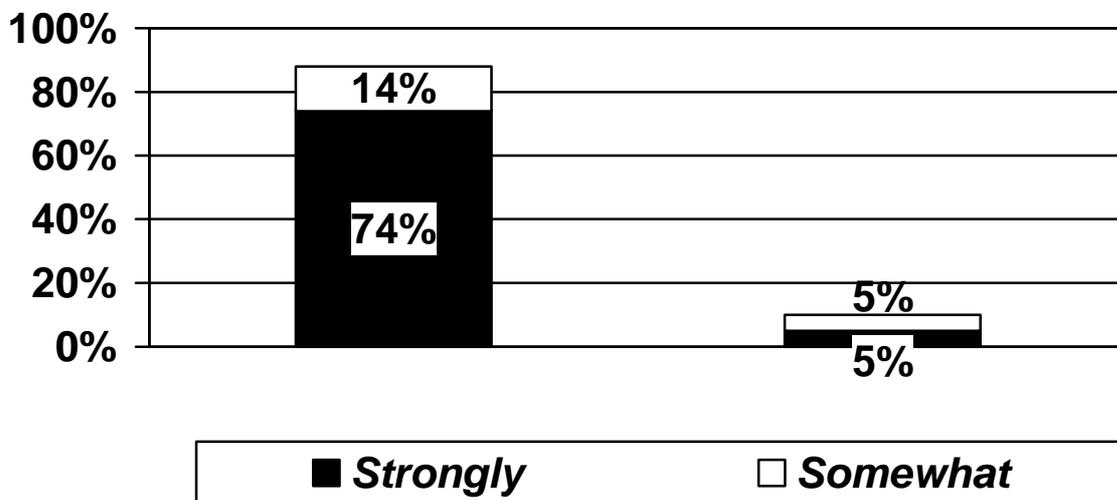
*Suppose there was a law that on every party list in the election, at least one place in three had to go to a woman. Would you favor this idea, or oppose it? (Q.77)*



### 9.7 Women-Only Forums

Cambodians also overwhelmingly favor women-only forums where women could speak out about their own problems among themselves, without the inhibiting presence of men. Almost nine-in-ten (88%) say they would favor – 74% strongly -- public meetings in their area for women only to talk about their problems, while 10% are opposed to this idea, and 4% are uncertain. This concept is favored by vast majorities of voters from every demographic and regional subgroup. Men as well as women support giving Cambodian women their own public space.

*Suppose there was a public meeting in this area for women only to talk about their problems. Would you be in favor or opposed? Strongly or somewhat? (Q.79)*



## 9.8 Recommendations for Education Programs Relating to Women

Voter Education Initiatives – Cambodians are increasingly likely to believe that women should make their own choices in the voting booth, but there still are some groups that specifically need education on this fundamental issue. As with targeted voter education efforts in general, the groups most important to reach with this message include:

- *Voters over 50;*
- *Those with no formal education.*

Civic Education Initiatives – The survey results indicate most are receptive to efforts to promote women’s equality and to increase the number of women in the National Assembly. Where appropriate and feasible, the following efforts should be explored.

- *Establishing and promoting women only forums at the level of individual neighborhoods and communities, where women can discuss and explore how to resolve their own problems.*
- *Finding ways to encourage the placement of more women higher on the ballot.*
- *Promoting legislation that would require one place in three on the ballot be filled by a woman.*

## 9.9 Summary

- There is widespread agreement that poverty is the biggest problem facing women, but gender-specific issues are mentioned by sizeable percentages of both men and women: domestic violence, family problems, jobs, health issues, birth control, and education.
- Most Cambodians believe that a woman should make her own choices in the voting booth, with a significant increase since 2000. Still, those over 50 and with no formal education could benefit from further education on this issue.
- A large majority of Cambodians says they would like to see more women as members of the National Assembly.
- Although half of Cambodians say that the gender of Assembly representatives makes no difference to them, among the rest, both men and women would prefer male representatives.

- The survey results indicate that the net effect of placing women high on the ballot for National Assembly elections is positive, with a majority reporting they would be more likely to support a candidate list that included a women in one of the top three places,
- There is overwhelming support for a law that would require at least one place in three on the National Assembly ballot to be filled by a woman.
- Almost all voters favor forums in their area that would give women an opportunity to discuss problems on their own.

## 10 Voter Education Sources/Media

### 10.1 Introduction -- Voter Education Sources/Media

This section of the report examines the sources and media that can be used to deliver voter and civic education to the groups that need them. It can be used in conjunction with the information in the Appendices to do detailed media planning for the civic and voter education campaigns.

In this section, and in the Appendices, the primary targets of the campaigns are defined as follows:

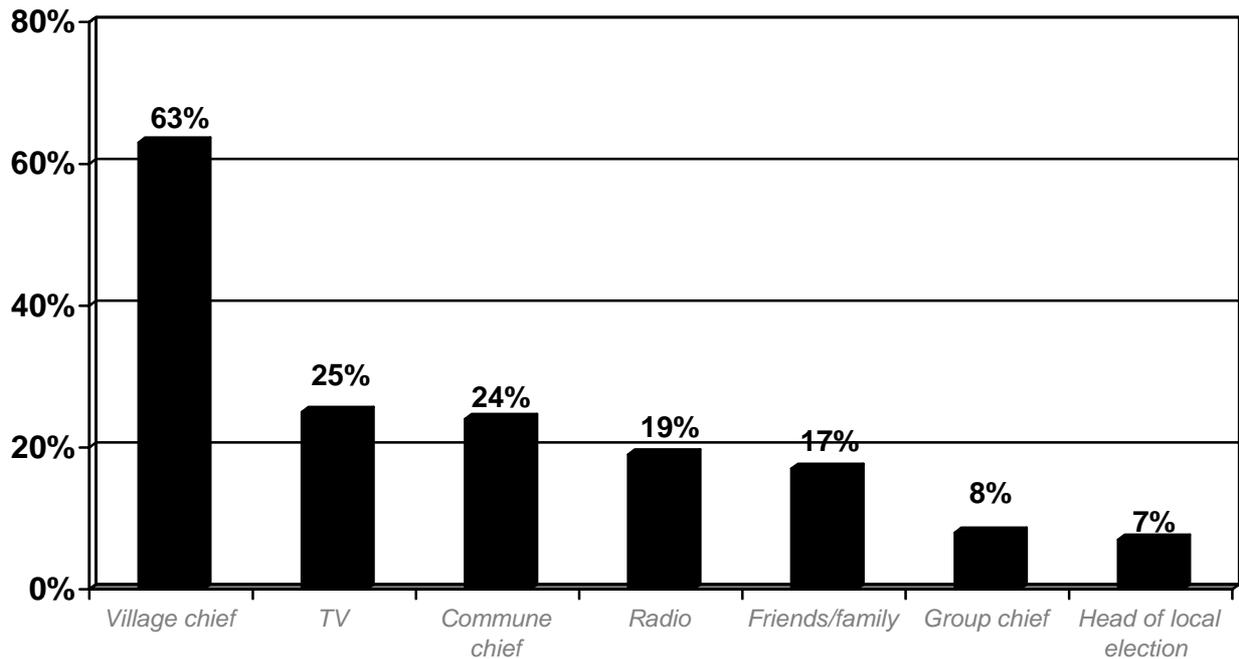
- ***All: The entire population, the target for the generalized voter education and civic education campaigns.***
- ***Voter Education targets: voters over 50, those with no formal education, members of kitchen/pot and death associations, and those from the Northeast/Southeast.***
- ***Civic Education targets: voters under 25, those with no formal education, rural women, and those from the Northwest.***

### 10.2 Principal News Sources-Elections

The principle source of information about registering and voting for elections continues to be the village chief, as 63% cite their village chief as the main source of this type of news. Rural residents (66%), those without formal education (72%), and those from the Northwest (76%) and Southwest (78%) are most likely to rely on the village chief. Another 24% overall also get information from their commune chief, and this is fairly consistent across all voter groups.

Broadcast media continue to play a limited role in spreading information about elections. Television is the source of election information for 25% of the electorate, while 19% get information about registering and voting from radio. Upper socioeconomic status individuals are the most likely to get information from electronic sources, but even they are as or more reliant on village and commune chiefs. And, it is important to note that television ranks as the second most common information source for both urban (34%) and rural (24%) residents, behind the village chiefs, and radio ranks fourth in both groups (24% and 18%, respectively, after commune chiefs).

*How have you gotten information about registering and voting for elections? (Q.10)  
(Responses cited by 5% or more)*



### 10.3 Regular Media Exposure

TV continues to be the most powerful medium for reaching Cambodian voters, followed by radio. More than half of all Cambodians (52%) watch TV at least three days a week, although the share is slightly lower among voter education (46%) and civic education targets (49%). As was evident in the 2000 survey, younger voters, the educated, and those in urban areas are the most likely to watch TV.

About four in ten voters (38%) listen to radio at least three times a week, and again the percentages are slightly lower in the target groups. Radio use is higher among men, the educated, and urban residents, though it is fairly uniform across age groups.

Only one in ten Cambodian voters (9%) read a newspaper regularly, and the proportion is even lower among the voter and civic education targets. As in the past, newspapers will not be a principal focus of voter education.

*Respondents who use particular medium 3 days a week or more (Q.8, Q.12, Q.19)*

	All Voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
Television	52%	46%	49%
Radio	38%	35%	32%
Newspaper	8%	6%	4%

#### 10.4 Preferred Election Information Sources

Consistent with their current and past experience, Cambodians are most likely to want election information from their local leaders, although they are clearly open to other sources. Large majorities say they would like to get information about the elections from their village chief (74%), from commune chiefs (61%), and from group leaders (58%). At the same time, sizeable majorities also say they would like to get information from other, more neutral sources, including a house visit from a non-partisan voter education group (70%), public meetings (59%), and TV (59%). Other sources that garner interest, albeit from less than half of the electorate, include radio (41%), religious organizations/individuals (35%), comic books (33%), TV dramas (29%), songs (28%), neighborhood civic groups (27%), and plays (24%). One-quarter of women (28%) also say they would like to get information from a woman neighbor.

It is important to note that the targets groups – especially voter education targets – are disproportionately interested in public or in-person information sources, and both are slightly less likely than overall to be TV/radio consumers. This underscores the importance of in-person visits and grassroots efforts for reaching these voters.

*I'm going to read you some information sources. For each, tell me if you'd like to get information about the new election from that source. (Q.12)*

	All Voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
Village chief	74%	76%	77%
House visit by non-partisan voter ed group	69%	74%	68%
Commune chiefs	61%	65%	64%
A public meeting	59%	66%	57%
TV	58%	55%	55%
Group leaders	58%	61%	60%
Friends or family members	46%	49%	47%
Radio	41%	41%	35%
Religious organizations/monks	35%	40%	35%
Comic books	33%	32%	28%
TV drama	29%	29%	28%
Songs/concert	28%	30%	30%
A woman neighbor (women respondents only)	28%	30%	37%
Neighborhood civic groups	27%	28%	28%
Plays performed in your area	25%	30%	27%
Newspaper	15%	13%	10%

## 10.5 Summary

- Village chiefs have been and continue to be the most important source of information about elections, and remain the most popular source for voter education. Many Cambodians also turn to commune chiefs and group leaders.
- Broadcast media continue to play a relatively limited role in spreading information about elections, with one-quarter getting election information from television and one-fifth getting election information from radio.
- When it comes to mass media consumption, TV and radio continue to be much more common than newspapers. TV has greater reach than radio overall and in most demographic and regional subgroups.
- As in the past, voter education in Cambodia will need to be accomplished through many varied mediums, since TV only reaches about half the electorate on a regular basis, and radio touches only half the remainder. In particular, older, less educated, and rural voters need to be reached through in-person education.
- While TV and radio will reach many of those in the voter and civic education target groups, supplemental in-person efforts will be an important element in communicating to these voters.

## 11 Campaign Recommendations

The survey results suggest that two concurrent education campaigns should be run before the election. One needs to address voter education, while the other should focus on civic education. For both of these campaigns, there are specific messages for targeted populations that need particular attention, as well as general messages for the entire population.

### 11.1 Voter Education Campaign: Targets

- The first component of the voter education campaign should focus on specific groups of Cambodian voters who require additional efforts to inform them of their basic rights and responsibilities as voters in order to participate more meaningfully in the democratic process.
- These groups include those voters who are reluctant to voice dissent through the ballot box, hesitant to report election irregularities, and most susceptible to vote selling.
- The voters in these groups tend to be older, poorly educated, from the east, and members of Pot or Death Associations.
- The most important medium will be television, supplemented by radio and in-person efforts.
- In-person voter education should be used to supplement these media, particularly among those with no schooling, a target group with little broadcast media exposure.

- **Emphasis: Targeted Voter Education – Rights & Responsibilities**
- **Target Groups: voters over 50, those with no formal education, those from the Northeast and Southeast, and kitchen/pot or death association members**
- **Media: TV, radio, and in-person efforts**

## 11.2 Voter Education Campaign: General Population

- The second component of the voter education campaign should be targeted to the entire electorate, and cover essential issues about which most voters are uninformed.
- The survey findings indicate that most voters have little idea what elections can do, little sense of what their Assembly representatives do, and are ignorant about the proper channels to report election irregularities.
- Voters in general need education about what elections can do and why their vote matters, how to complain about irregularities and who to complain to, the functions of the National Assembly, and the presence of monitors/observers at voting sites.
- TV and radio will be primary media, but large-scale efforts at in-person voter education will also be needed among groups not reached by broadcast media.

- **Emphasis: General Voter Education – Elections & the National Assembly**
- **Entire Population**
- **Media: TV, radio, and in-person efforts**

## 11.3 Civic Education Campaign: Targets

- The first component of the civic education drive should communicate targeted messages on the basics of democracy to enhance participation in the electoral process.
- The primary target groups for these issues include voters under 25, those with no education, rural women, and those in the Northwest region.

- As with the voter education targets, the most important medium will be television, supplemented by radio and in-person efforts.

- **Emphasis: Targeted Civic Education – Basic Democracy**
- **Target Groups: voters over 50, those with no formal education, those from the Northeast and Southeast, and kitchen/pot or death association members**
- **Media: TV, radio, and in-person efforts**

#### **11.4 Civic Education Campaign: General Population**

- The second component of the civic education campaign should be targeted to the entire electorate, and cover essential issues about which most citizens are uninformed.
- Voters in general need education about how to join, form, and participate in organizations, how to participate beyond voting (contacting government, interacting with government in organizations, etc.), understanding that their vote can affect change, and ethnic/religious tolerance.
- Broadcasting members' questions of Ministers in Parliament to build awareness of Parliamentary functions should also be considered.
- TV and radio will be primary media, but large-scale efforts at in-person voter education will also be needed among groups not reached by broadcast media.

- **Emphasis: General Civic Education – How to Participate, How the Government Works, and Tolerance**
- **Entire Population**
- **Media: TV, radio, and in-person efforts**

### 11.5 Summary

- Two concurrent education campaigns should be run before the election – one addressing voter education, and the other focusing on civic education.
- For both of these campaigns, there are specific messages for targeted populations that need particular attention, as well as general messages for the entire population.

The first component of the voter education campaign should focus on specific groups of Cambodian voters who require additional efforts to inform them of their basic rights and responsibilities as voters in order to participate more meaningfully in the democratic process.

- The issues involved concern the willingness to voice dissent or report irregularities and the buying of votes. The target groups include over-50s, the uneducated, Easterners, and members of death and kitchen associations.
- The second component of the voter education campaign should be targeted to the entire electorate, and cover essential issues about which most voters are uninformed.
- The first component of the civic education drive should communicate targeted messages on the basics of democracy to enhance participation in the electoral process. Targets include under 25s, the uneducated, rural women, and Northwesterners, and messages should focus on political tolerance and the meaning of democracy.
- The second component of the civic education campaign should be targeted to the entire electorate and continue after the election if resources permit. It should

cover essential issues about which most citizens are uninformed, including building civil society organizations, non-electoral participation, and ethnic and religious tolerance.

- TV and radio will be the most important media, followed by targeted in-person voter education efforts.

## 12 Appendix I: Media Planning Tables

### 12.1 Frequency of Watching TV

*How many days a week do you watch TV? (Q.8)*

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
Every day/almost every day	52%	46%	49%
At least once a week	14%	12%	14%
Less than once a week	8%	8%	8%
Never	27%	33%	30%

### 12.2 TV Station Most Often Watched

*Which TV station do you watch the most often) (Q.9)  
(Mentioned by 3% or more of respondents who watch TV)*

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
TV5 Royal Army	74%	75%	74%
TV3 Phnom Penh	31%	27%	31%
National TV	22%	24%	16%
TV9 Khmer	22%	25%	29%
TV11 Aspara	16%	15%	14%
Bayon	9%	10%	10%

Base: 738 (weighted)

### 12.3 TV Dayparts

*What time of day do you watch TV most often? (Q.11)  
(Respondents who watch TV)*

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
8 am – 12 Noon	8%	7%	8%
12 Noon – 5 pm	20%	22%	16%
5 pm – 9 pm	88%	88%	90%
9 pm – 11 pm	20%	17%	18%

### 12.4 Frequency of Radio Listening

*How many days a week do you listen to the radio? (Q.12)*

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
Every day/almost every day	38%	35%	32%
At least once a week	9%	9%	10%
Less than once a week	6%	6%	7%
Never	47%	51%	52%

### 12.5 Radio Station Most Often Heard

*Which radio station do you listen to most often? (Q.13)  
(Mentioned by 3% or more of respondents)*

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
FM 103	37%	30%	33%
FM 95 Mz/Bayon (FM 95)	26%	30%	25%
National Radio	15%	18%	13%
FM 105	6%	5%	4%
FM 98 Army radio station	4%	3%	3%

## 12.6 Radio Dayparts

*What time of day do you listen to the radio? (Q.15)*

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
5 - 8 am	20%	18%	19%
8 am - 12 Noon	33%	39%	35%
12 Noon - 5 pm	24%	25%	23%
5 pm - 9 pm	50%	46%	51%
9 pm - 11 pm	15%	13%	15%

Base: 570

## 12.7 Literacy

*Can you read? (Q.18)*

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
Yes	59%	47%	46%
No (Includes a little bit)	41%	53%	54%

## 12.8 Frequency of Reading Newspapers

*How many days a week do you read a newspaper? (Q.19)*

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
Every day/almost every day	8%	6%	4%
At least once a week	7%	5%	6%
Less than once a week	13%	12%	13%
Never	72%	77%	77%
Don't Know	0%	0%	0%

Base: 593 (weighted)

## 13 Appendix II Target Group Demographics

### 13.1 Target Group Demographics I

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	45 %	44 %	26 %
Female	55 %	56 %	74 %
<b>Age</b>			
Under 25	21 %	14 %	27 %
25 - 34	29 %	28 %	27 %
35 - 49	28 %	25 %	28 %
50 - 64	14 %	22 %	13 %
65 & over	6 %	11 %	6 %

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
<b>Marital status</b>			
Single	14 %	10 %	15 %
Married	86 %	90 %	85 %
<b>Education</b>			
None	22 %	34 %	32 %
Primary school	55 %	48 %	50 %
Secondary School	18 %	12 %	11 %
University	1 %	0 %	1 %

### 13.2 Target Group Demographics II

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
<b>Occupation</b>			
Farmer (own land)	70%	77%	75%
Informal sales	11%	7%	9%
Laborer domestic	4%	3%	4%
Skilled worker	3%	3%	3%
Small business owner	1%	1%	1%
Sales/office worker	1%	0%	0%
Other	10%	9%	7%

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
<b>Economic Activity</b>			
Working	90%	91%	92%
Housewife	4%	4%	4%
Retired	3%	4%	1%
Student	2%	0%	1%
Unemployed	2%	2%	1%
<b>Income Per month</b>			
Under \$50	74%	81%	79%
\$50 to \$100	17%	14%	16%
\$100 to \$150	4%	3%	3%
Over \$150	5%	2%	1%

### 13.3 Target Group Demographics III

	All voters	Voter Ed Targets	Civic Ed Targets
<b>Area Type</b>			
<b>City 1 Mill +</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>City 250K - 1 Mill</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>City 50K-250K</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Urban &lt;50K</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Rural</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>Region</b>			
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Northwest</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Southwest</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Central</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Southeast</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>25%</b>