

SPEECH

Ms. Sunniya Durrani-Jamal
ADB Country Director for Cambodia



Good afternoon! It is my great pleasure and honor to welcome you all today on behalf of the ADB to this phenomenal event on **Women’s Leadership journeys**.

Kampuchea is a beautiful land of soft spoken and gracious people, beautiful architecture, unique cuisine, and a very rich history. Like all great nations it is built on many cultures and civilizations. Women have played an important role in this country’s development and continue to be the backbone, that will drive this country into the future.

But Kampuchea’s future cannot be taken for granted. Like many countries, our well-meaning traditions sometimes place an extraordinary burden on women – we are expected to be the perfect daughters, wives, sisters, and mothers. In addition, when we enter the workforce we work equally to high standards, while carrying a full load of housework, and in these days of COVID-19, homework of our children. Some of us get exhausted and discouraged and drop out of work, while others feel more socially isolated as we build successful careers.

This does not need be that way. **Public policy** plays an extraordinarily important role in making sure that young girls and women are encouraged, nurtured and recognized for their contributions to society.

That is why I am so pleased for ADB to partner with Royal government of Cambodia and especially the Ministry of Women's affairs to promote women's leadership in the public and private sectors.

ADB recognizes that female leadership, as well as gender equality, is critical to accelerating economic empowerment, human development, poverty reduction, and resilience to external shocks. Therefore at least 75% of ADB projects are required to tackle gender issues in a meaningful way.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the theme of the 2021 International Women's Day is also "Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in the COVID-19 World". I am therefore so pleased to welcome our extraordinary guest panelists representing Kampuchea's civil servants, city administrators, business owners, and farmers. These include,

- H.E. Sorita Koun, Undersecretary of State at Ministry of Women's Affairs
- H.E. Chhunhak The, Director General of Gender Equality and Economic Development
- Ms. Vichekal Tema, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Phnom Penh Capital Administration
- Ms. Aphivath Keat, CEO and Founder, Thyrada Co., Ltd.
- Ms. Kounila Keo, Managing Partner, Mekhala Radiant Communication
- Ms. Lida Loem, Co-Founder, SHE Investment
- Ms. Pisey Khun, CEO and Founder, Workingna
- Ms. Kokneang Neng, CEO, Kokopon
- Ms. Sreylin Meng, CEO and Co-Founder, Smart Farm Assistance

I hope our guests today will inspire our girls to educate themselves and build their capabilities and also encourage our boys to view true masculinity as men who protect, and support women to reach their potential and rejoice in each other's achievements. Great societies are indeed built on creating higher level of trust, courage, motivation and confidence towards each other.

My own journey as a woman leader began at age 4, when my mother woke me up early one morning and took me outside to look at the sky and pointed to a rainbow. She educated us, protected us, and encouraged us to fulfill all our dreams. I hope all of us will show rainbows of love, support, and encouragement to each other as we build a better and more just society for women.

Thank you.