

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Education is a priority target in human development and capacity building. Government has made great efforts to achieve the basic education for all, particularly for female education and to narrow the gender gap in basic education. The expansion of basic education has resulted in a substantial improvement in the status of literacy, educational attainment and school attendance during 1998-2008. However, Cambodia is still belonging to groups with low literacy, educational attainment and school attendance among ASEAN countries. The main findings of the 2008 Population Census are summarized below.

1. The majority of population speaks Khmer (96.3% of total population), followed by Minority languages (2.9%), Vietnamese (0.5%) and Lao (0.1%). About minority languages, Chaam language is spoken among 53% of minority groups. Languages other than Khmer and Minority languages spoken in Cambodia are Vietnamese, Lao, Chinese, Thai, English, Korean, French and Japanese. The persons speak these language are mostly foreigners who live in Phnom Penh or the province near across border.
2. Not only the general literacy rates but also the adult literacy rates rose for each sex during 1998-2008. Both the general and adult literacy rates improved remarkably, particularly those for females, however there still exists a gender gap in literacy rates. In 2008 Census, a question on literacy is added the literacy status of both Khmer and other language. Those who are literate not only in Khmer but also in English account for 4.9% of total literate population. Urban dwellers have substantially higher percentage in literacy than rural dwellers.
3. All the educational attainment other than secondary/diploma improved during 1998-2008. The proportions of persons with no education and primary not completed decreased, and those with primary and lower secondary educational attainment increased. The difference between males and females in the primary education attainment decreased, however there exists a gender gap in secondary and above educational attainment. The educational attainment between urban and rural has a great difference in the educational attainment of lower secondary and above. In rural area, they are less than half of those in urban area.
4. The free primary and secondary education system established by the law accelerated to up the school attendance rate. The school attendance rate at younger age groups and that for females rose remarkably during 1998-2008. The attendance rate aged 6-9 for females is higher than the counterpart in 2008. The attendance rate in rural area improved significantly in 2008. Although the official age for entry into elementary school grade 1 is 6 years old, the proportion of attending at 6 years old

remains at less than half.

The findings from the census data analysis pose keen challenges to policy makers:

- 1) Provincial variation in literacy and educational attainment status exist not less, Government should make every effort to the area where suffer from a lack of infrastructure for the basic education.
- 2) The need to promote secondary education with particular focus on females and peoples residing in rural area.