

## PRESS RELEASE

**Phnom Penh, 06 February 2021** – Transparency International Cambodia (TI Cambodia) conducts the final round of Youth Debate Competition under the theme: *“Inclusive and Quality Public Service Delivery.”* This debate competition aims to raise awareness among youths on public service delivery and budget accountability at local levels and also to create an enabling environment and empower youth, particularly young women in Cambodia to effectively participate in dialogues and discussions on policy development and implementation to improve public service delivery.

The debate competition has gathered students of 26 teams from different universities across the capital. A team was made up of four members with 50% female at least, and all debate contestants made up of 104 university students. The debate competition was conducted in five rounds which includes audition round, elimination round, quarter-final round, semi-final round and final round, spanning from late October 2020 to early February 2021. The debate teams were judged by a panel of judges that included those from former debaters, think tanks, academic institutions, government departments and non-governmental organisations who have professional and practical experience on the issues. The debates were evaluated based on a set of judgment criteria which includes organization and clarity, use of argument, use of rebuttal and presentation style. Four teams are through to the final round and compete for first, second, third and fourth places. In addition to winning prizes, the champion team will also have opportunities to share the knowledge and experience with youth and university students in the capital and provinces and engage in internship with TI Cambodia.

At least 29 topics concerning inclusive and quality public service delivery at sub-national levels are debated throughout the course of the events. The topics include inclusive and accountable public service delivery and budget transparency and accountability at sub-national levels.

“While the government continues to put a lot of reform efforts including public administration, public finance and governance reforms with an aim to improve public service delivery, it is important that the public, especially youth, participates in dialogues and discussions on policy development and implementation to ensure the inclusiveness, responsiveness and accountability of public services,” said Mr. Pech Pisey, Transparency International Cambodia’s Executive Director, “This debate competition can serve as a platform for youth to interact, deliberate and propose policy and practical recommendations to enhance inclusive, responsive and accountable public service delivery in the country.”

The debate competition is also expected to benefit hundreds of other youth who have physically attended the events. Others are also expected to gain more knowledge and understanding of public service delivery, budget accountability and debating skills through watching the debates online as it is also lived on TI Cambodia’s social media platforms. This debate competition is part of Greater Young Women Empowerment in Decision Making and Accountable Public Service Delivery Project with the financial support of the European Union (EU) and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

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