



**Phnom Penh, Cambodia**  
**Thursday 15 July, 2010**

## **Media Advisory**

### **ILO Releases the Study of Indirect Sex Workers from the Garment Industry**

ILO has released a small qualitative study of women who left their jobs in the garment industry during the economic crisis to work in the entertainment sector. The study seeks to better understand the work situation of these women, including their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in order to identify avenues for practical assistance to reduce their HIV-related vulnerabilities.

The study is based on qualitative interviews with 16 ex-factory workers who were laid off during the economic crisis, and who were working in the entertainment sector and engaging in commercial sex in Phnom Penh to supplement their income.

The insights of the interviews were synthesized into case studies addressing common themes: the women's standard of living during childhood; their experiences in the garment sector, the entertainment sector, and as indirect sex workers; changes in their standard of living in the different occupations; notable impacts of the economic downturn; and condom use with clients and non-clients.

All workers interviewed indicated that the decision to supplement their income with commercial sex work was made out of financial necessity, i.e. the need for supplementary income to cover accommodation, food, and remittances.

The study forms the basis for a number of recommendations, including launching a campaign to prevent worker abuse at entertainment establishments; producing and disseminating educational materials to address entertainment workers' vulnerabilities to abuse and HIV/AIDS, and to inform them about their basic rights at work such as decent wages and union membership. A licensing process for entertainment establishments that includes a basic set of conditions for employers to implement also is recommended, along with a tripartite monitoring mechanism to look at the working conditions at entertainment establishments.

The study was conducted by the Australian development agency Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA. A Research Snapshot (attached) as well as the full version of the report are available on ILO *Better Factories Cambodia* website ([www.betterfactories.org](http://www.betterfactories.org)).

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