



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY  
PHNOM PENH**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**AUSTRALIA SUPPORTING CAMBODIA TO  
REDUCE POVERTY THROUGH AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH**

The Cambodia Rice Research Forum was opened today [30 April 2012] by His Excellency Dr Chan Sarun, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. The Forum is an outcome of a fruitful partnership between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Australian Government as part of the Cambodia Agricultural Value Chain Program (CAVAC).

The Forum brings together representatives from the Royal Government of Cambodia, research institutions, NGOs, the private sector and development partners to consider how to further strengthen Cambodia's rice production. During the forum, current research results will be discussed along with the challenges now facing Cambodia's rice production in order to identify future research priorities.

During her remarks at the opening of the Cambodia Rice Research Forum, H.E. Ms Penny Richards, Australian Ambassador to Cambodia, announced that "Australia will contribute AU\$ 1 million towards Cambodia's first agriculture census. The census will provide vital data on Cambodia's agriculture sector which will be used to improve policies and programs to address the needs of Cambodian farmers and reduce poverty. It will show where national and international resources can be best used to support Cambodia's agriculture and rural development sector, including the Royal Government of Cambodia's rice export policy."

Australia has been supporting Cambodia's farmers for 25 years. This assistance has contributed to rice yields more than doubling over this time. This has resulted in improved food security for Cambodian people and increased incomes for Cambodian farmers.

Recently, a more dynamic and complex agriculture sector has emerged in Cambodia, with growing markets for agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilizer and opportunities for processing and export. Australia is supporting Cambodia to make the most of these emerging opportunities.

Australia's \$43 million, flagship agriculture program, CAVAC program, is partnering with the public and private sectors to help boost the incomes of around 230,000 smallholder farmers by 2016. This program will support the Royal Government of Cambodia in moving towards its objective of exporting one million tonnes of milled rice per year by 2015.

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