



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
PHNOM PENH**

MEDIA RELEASE

**AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS CAMBODIA'S VEGETABLE INDUSTRY TO IMPROVE
INCOMES AND NUTRITION**

The inaugural Cambodian Vegetable Industry Forum was opened today [28 February 2012] by His Excellency Dr Chan Sarun, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. The two-day Forum is hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) with support from the Australian Government as part of the Cambodian Agricultural Value Chain Program (CAVAC). The Forum brings together representatives from the Royal Government of Cambodia, NGOs and the private sector to consider how to strengthen Cambodia's vegetable industry.

The Cambodian vegetable industry has doubled production since 2005, with current production estimates at close to 400,000 tonnes per annum. Despite this growth, domestic production remains insufficient to meet demand and needs to be heavily supplemented by imports. Furthermore, vegetable consumption rates for the average Cambodian are much lower than the recommended dietary intake, which contributes to malnutrition. To address this, the Royal Government of Cambodia, non-government organizations and the private sector are working to increase local vegetable production and consumption. Australia has been supporting these efforts since 2005 by helping to build vegetable research and extension capacity, through activities such as farmer training and support for government extension services.

The Vegetable Industry Forum will showcase the latest research in the Cambodian vegetable sector and provide an opportunity to learn about developments in the region. It will also forge networks between public, private and non-government sector experts on vegetables and facilitate the exchange of ideas on strengthening the industry. The Forum will feature sessions on seeds and other inputs, production technologies, postharvest management, food safety and marketing. It will also incorporate a field trip to facilitate discussion with farmers, collectors and wholesalers on key issues facing the industry.

Speaking at the opening of the Cambodian Vegetable Industry Forum, Her Excellency Ms Penny Richards, Australian Ambassador to Cambodia said: "Vegetable production plays an important role in not only improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, but also in providing an affordable source of nutrition ... Australia is proud to support the Royal Government of Cambodia, non-government organisations and the private sector to strengthen Cambodia's vegetable industry."

***Media Enquiries: Dave Gordge, Australian Embassy Spokesperson, 023 213 470, ext. 502
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