



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY PHNOM PENH

MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIA PROVIDES SUPPORT TO CAMBODIA AS CHAIR OF ASEAN THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR CAMBODIAN OFFICIALS

On Monday 21 May 2012, the Australian Ambassador to Cambodia, Her Excellency Ms Penny Richards and His Excellency Mr Cheth Naren, Director-General of the General Department of ASEAN, Ministry Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, presented certificates of achievement to 33 officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC) to recognise their successful completion of an English language training course at the Australian Centre for Education (ACE). The training was undertaken with funding provided by the Australian Government through AusAID in order to upgrade the level of English language proficiency of officials who will be working on ASEAN-related meetings this year.

Cambodia, as the 2012 Chair of ASEAN, has hosted, and will continue to host, a range of ASEAN and related meetings including the ASEAN Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit. Australia, as a long standing partner of ASEAN, is proud to be able to support Cambodia in its role as ASEAN Chair. Australia became ASEAN's first dialogue partner in 1974. Australia has been involved in developing the full set of regional architecture which revolves around ASEAN as the central driving force.

“We understand that as Chair of ASEAN, Cambodia will be carrying a heavy burden this year, both in terms of logistics and protocol, as well as drafting documents and developing and negotiating policy outcomes. English is the working language of ASEAN. English language skills are indispensable in carrying out all these functions. We are therefore pleased to have been able to assist MFAIC officials in upgrading their English language skills, with a view to putting them to good use in ASEAN meetings this year and in the future” said Ms Richards.

In 2010-2011, Australia's two way trade with ASEAN as a bloc amounted to AUD 82.9 billion. Australia provided just over AUD 1 billion in development assistance to ASEAN in 2011-12.

The Australian Embassy congratulates the 33 graduates from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on the completion of their English language training course and looks forward to working with Cambodia to make Cambodia's year as Chair of ASEAN a resounding success.

Function details:

Venue: Australian Embassy

Date: Monday 21 May 2012, 1000 to 1100 hours

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