



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
PHNOM PENH**

MEDIA RELEASE

MORE CAMBODIANS “OPEN UP THEIR WORLD” THROUGH READING

Australian Ambassador HE Margaret Adamson was joined by HE Mr Thai Noraksatya, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, at the opening of a Public Forum on Reading and Writing, held at the National Library of Cambodia today. The Forum brought together four experts for a public discussion on encouraging Cambodians to “open up their world” through reading and appreciating good writing.

Continuing Australia’s long-standing support for Cambodia’s national cultural institutions, Ms Adamson also presented the National Library of Cambodia with a collection of books on contemporary aspects of Australia, including its biodiversity, climate change, media, literature, history, indigenous art and politics.

“Reading is an easy and inexpensive way to expand one’s knowledge of one’s own and others’ cultures. Today’s donation of books will provide Cambodian students and researchers with direct access to Australian society and culture “, said Ms Adamson. “I hope that, through the books and resources in the National Library, Cambodians will discover more about the riches of their own cultural heritage, as well as that of other countries”.

HE Thai Noraksatya said “Reading and writing are core pillars to achieve academic success, increasing confidence in self-expression, which leads to continuous self-development. Today’s event is a mechanism for students, readers and researchers from all spheres to understand the importance of reading and writing.”

Australia’s donation also included a complete record in hard copy and CD-ROM of all the Khmer language materials held in the National Library of Australia. The National Library of Australia houses one of the world’s largest and most actively developed research collections of Asian materials. One of its rarest and most valuable holdings is a complete Khmer language translation of the *Tripitaka*, or Buddhist scriptures.

The expert participants in the Public Forum on Reading and Writing included MS Khlot Vibolla, Director of the National Library of Cambodia; Mr Heng Sreang, representative of Cambodia PEN; Ms Pal Vannrirak, representative of the Khmer Writers Association; and Ms Allyson Hose, 2010Asialink Writing Resident, Nou Hach Literary Association.

The Public Forum also included displays of rare materials held by the National Library of Cambodia, as well as displays by Cambodian publishers, booksellers and other organisations involved in the promotion of reading and writing.

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