



Australian Embassy
Cambodia



The Asia Foundation

Ponlok Chomnes National Policy Forum 2025
‘Inclusive Policymaking in the Age of Uncertainty: Connecting Knowledge, Policy and People’

5 September 2025

Joint Media Release

Australia and The Asia Foundation Support Cambodia’s Knowledge Sector

Today Australia and The Asia Foundation hosted the National Policy Forum 2025 in Phnom Penh. The Forum convened more than 200 participants from government, research organisations, civil society, the private sector, development partners and community representatives to discuss how Cambodia’s growing knowledge sector is strengthening evidence-based and inclusive policymaking.

Delivering the keynote address, H.E. Dr Vongsey Vissoth, Permanent Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in charge of the Office of Council of Ministers, emphasised the importance of integrating research and data into national policy processes and ensuring policies respond to the needs of all Cambodians, especially the most vulnerable.

Australian Ambassador H.E. Derek Yip said, ‘Australia is a long-term supporter of Cambodia’s valuable knowledge sector. The National Policy Forum is an important platform to deepen connections between policymakers, researchers and civil society and an opportunity to talk strategically about the demand for, and supply of robust evidence. It is another way Australia is contributing to sustainable development in Cambodia, supporting local leadership, human development, climate resilience and economic growth.’

The Asia Foundation’s Program Director for Ponlok Chomnes, Ms Dolgion Aldar said ‘Cambodia’s knowledge sector is growing, and this Forum is about turning that strength into inclusive and evidence-based decisions. This Forum, developed by our Cambodian research partners, shows how partnership and local expertise can enrich national policy dialogue.’

The National Policy Forum is an initiative of the Ponlok Chomnes II: Data and Dialogue for Development in Cambodia program, funded by the Australian Government and implemented by The Asia Foundation. The program strengthens Cambodia’s knowledge sector by building collaboration between policymakers, researchers and communities; enhancing the supply of timely and credible evidence; and integrating gender equality, disability, and social inclusion into research and dialogue.

The Forum also marked the launch of the Ponlok Chomnes Guidelines on Research Quality and Inclusive Dialogue, while plenary and parallel sessions explored pressing topics such as climate change, migration, rural development, youth-led engagement and research capacity. An Inclusive Awards Ceremony celebrated outstanding contributions in inclusive research, communication and dialogue.

As Cambodia advances towards Least Developed Country graduation, the country’s knowledge sector and decisionmakers’ efforts to shape responsive policies which reflect the voices of all Cambodians will be critical to its sustainable development.

Media enquiries:

Australian Embassy: Media.Cambodia@dfat.gov.au

Ponlok Chomnes: Ponlok.Chomnes@asiafoundation.org