



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
PHNOM PENH**

MEDIA RELEASE

**AUSTRALIA FIGHTS HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN**

Australia recognises that violence is a key factor preventing women from exercising their rights and achieving social and economic equality, Australian Ambassador HE Margaret Adamson said today, speaking at a function to mark International Women's Day, with special guests HE Ms Ing Kantha Phavi, Cambodian Minister for Women's Affairs, and Mr Ron Dunne, Director of Investigations for International Justice Mission (IJM).

HE Ing Kantha Phavi outlined steps taken by the Royal Cambodian Government to date to combat the trafficking of women and sexual violence against women and girls. Mr Dunne gave a presentation on IJM's work in preventing violence against women, child sexual exploitation and human trafficking in Cambodia through building police capacity and seeking structural change.

Ms Adamson said "The trafficking of women and children for sexual or labour exploitation is a serious problem confronting many developing countries, including Cambodia. Australia is working with partner countries such as Cambodia to reduce the incidence of women and children trafficked and to improve their protection, recovery and reintegration."

Australia contributes to preventing human trafficking in the region by promoting a more effective and coordinated approach to people trafficking by the criminal justice systems of governments in the region, she added.

Australia has contributed A\$21 million to the five-year Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons (ARTIP) Project, an initiative to prevent human trafficking in South East Asia: Cambodia, Thailand, Lao PDR, and Myanmar, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

Through the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and related Transnational Crime, Australia, with its co-chair Indonesia and other regional partners, fosters cooperation in combating people smuggling and trafficking through targeted and practical activities.

The Australian Attorney General's Department is currently working with the Ministry of Justice to develop a new Law on Protection for Victims of Human Trafficking. The Australian Federal Police (AFP) and AusAID are actively cooperating with the Ministries of the Interior, Justice and Women's Affairs to criminalise people smuggling and trafficking, and develop a national action plan to combat trafficking.

Media Enquiries: Fiona Cochaud, DHOM, 023 213 470
Australian Embassy Phnom Penh
12 March 2010