

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Australia Supports Implementation of Royal Government of Cambodia Legal and Judicial Reform Strategy in Kampong Thom and Banteay Mean Chey

The Provincial Governors of Kampong Thom and Banteay Mean Chey and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) representative, Ms Arthi Patel, have signed a Memorandum of Agreement to support implementation of the Royal Government's Legal and Judicial Reform Program in Kampong Thom and Banteay Mean Chey Provinces.

The signing ceremonies held on 10 and 11 March 2009 were witnessed by the Australian Ambassador, HE Ms Margaret Adamson, HE Mr Prum Sokha, Secretary of State, Ministry of Interior, and attended by dignitaries and officials from the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice and other agencies at the provincial level. The Australian Government is funding the program through Cambodian Criminal Justice Assistance Project Phase III (CCJAP).

In December last year, these events were held in Battambang and Prey Veng Provinces, and this marks another important step in cooperation between Australia and Cambodia to support Cambodian efforts to improve the justice system at the sub-national level.

The current phase of assistance is designed to strengthen institutional capacity of Royal Government of Cambodia criminal justice agencies to implement the RGoC Legal and Judicial Reform Strategy, as well as other key governance reforms in public financial management, administration and decentralisation and deconcentration.

"There is a well-known expression in Australia which is 'that justice must not only be done, but that it must also be seen to be done'. Today, we are here as witnesses to what we believe will be the genesis of a new model and standard for how justice is done in Cambodia, through the collaborative efforts of key actors: legal, judicial and law enforcement, as well as civil society and with the support of the citizens of Cambodia.", said Ambassador Adamson.

His Excellency Prum Sokha Secretary of the Ministry of Interior said that, "CCJAP Phase 3 has been implemented in cooperation and coordination from the Project team, AusAID and the Royal Government of Cambodia in both national and provincial levels in order to improve and promote the justice system in Cambodia. The MOA signing is very important to the provincial levels who will take ownership and responsibility for key reforms within the justice system."

His Excellency Nam Tom, the Provincial Governor of Kampong Thom stated that "We strongly believe that this essential and crucial assistance will strengthen the criminal justice agencies in this province which is essential in order to gain the trust and support from the community for development."

His Excellency Ung Oeun, the Provincial Governor of Banteay Mean Chey said that "To ensure the entire community is safe and peaceful, with equal access to justice all private and state institutions need to be improved, especially the criminal justice sector, consisting of Police, Courts, Prisons, Gendarmerie and local authority. This support is a necessary and basic need for Cambodia and its people."

Australia has provided support to Cambodia's criminal justice system since 1997 through AusAID's Cambodia Criminal Justice Assistance Project. The project aims to improve the justice system, with a particular focus on vulnerable people including women, juvenile and children.

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