



**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
PHNOM PENH**

MEDIA RELEASE

**AUSTRALIANS RAISE MONEY FOR CAMBODIAN VICTIMS OF
HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

The Australian Chargé d' Affaires, Ms Fiona Cochaud, hosted a reception at the Australian Embassy to welcome the arrival to Phnom Penh of 22 bicycle riders from Australia and the United States who are riding across Cambodia to raise money to promote greater public awareness of human trafficking and sexual abuse of women and children.

The two week cycling journey covering 590km through Vietnam and Cambodia was organised by the Look 2 the Future organisation as part of its Futures 10 Project. Look 2 the Future's founder, Ms Stephanie Lorenzo, a young Australian from Sydney, is participating and leading in the ride.

In 2009, the first FUTURES cycle had 21 riders and raised over US\$79,000. This year, 22 riders have gone global and raised US\$150,000 to be donated to Somaly Mam Foundation for a project to raise awareness about human trafficking, one of the world's most prevalent transnational crimes. At the reception, the Australian Chargé d' Affaires, Ms Fiona Cochaud and Ms Lorenzo presented Ms Somaly Mam, President of AFESIP Cambodia and founder of the Somaly Mam Foundation, with a cheque for US\$150,000 from riders' sponsors.

"These young people have been motivated to make a personal contribution to a serious global issue, many of them after reading about the heroic efforts of Somaly Mam, who is herself a survivor of sexual slavery. I am very proud of their magnificent efforts so far in raising so much money for such a worthy cause," said Ms Cochaud.

The trafficking of women and children for sexual or labour exploitation is a serious problem confronting many developing countries, including Cambodia. Australia supports several projects in the Mekong sub-region that aim to reduce the incidence of women and children trafficked and improve the protection, recovery and reintegration of women and children who have been trafficked.

Through the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and AusAID, Australia has been assisting Cambodia to strengthen its legal frameworks to combat transnational crime, including human trafficking, people smuggling and child sex tourism. AFP and AusAID are actively cooperating with the ministries of the Interior, Justice and Women's Affairs to protect victims of human trafficking and promote greater public awareness of human trafficking and sexual abuse of women and children.

Media Enquiries: Fiona Cochaud, Tel: 023 213 470
Australian Embassy Phnom Penh
5 July 2010