



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Historic Ambulance handover for ten provinces through H-EQIP

A joint partnership between the Ministry of Health and trusted development partners has ensured the historic handover of 10 ambulances for 10 provinces in Cambodia today.

The new ambulances were procured as part of the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Cambodia, under the Health Equity and Quality Improvement Project (H-EQIP), co-financed by the Royal Government of Cambodia, Australia, Germany, the Republic of Korea and the World Bank.

At a ceremony at Cambodia's Central Medical Store, Ministry of Health representatives and Directors of Provincial Health Departments welcomed the ambulance handover as an important step in Cambodia's COVID-19 response.

The event was chaired by H.E. Prof. Eng Huot, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Health, with the Australian and German Embassies, KOICA and the World Bank.

Following the World Health Organization's declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, in March this year partners activated H-EQIP's contingency emergency fund with US\$14 million of International Development Association funds.

This decision enabled the purchase of the ambulances and medical equipment, as well as the rapid development of national laboratory capacity to respond to the pandemic.

Speaking at the event, **His Excellency Pablo Kang, Australian Ambassador to Cambodia** reaffirmed Australia's commitment to supporting the Royal Government of Cambodia to implement Cambodia's COVID-19 response Master Plan.

"This is a really important moment and is a perfect illustration of how we have ensured Cambodia's COVID-19 response is now front and centre of our bilateral relationship," Ambassador Kang said.

"Australia is contributing AU\$50 million over five years to H-EQIP. We have been able to deploy H-EQIP funding flexibly and quickly, following the request from the Ministry of Health, to help purchase essential supplies such as these first ten ambulances and build local COVID-19 response capability."

Echoing this support, **Ms Inguna Dobraja, World Bank Country Manager** for Cambodia, said the fast-tracked financing made available to H-EQIP helped Cambodia confront this unprecedented global health emergency.

"By working together, Cambodia succeeded to source much-needed medical supplies and facilities to diagnose and treat COVID-19, reduce the spread of infection, strengthen

emergency response capabilities, and contribute to recovery for both people and the economy," she said.

The new ambulances add to longer-term development work that Multi-Donor Trust Fund Partners, comprising of Australia, Germany, the Republic of Korea and the World Bank, are supporting in the health sector.

"Based on the partnership between the Ministry of Health and H-EQIP Multi-Donor Trust Fund Partners, I believe Cambodia will combat COVID-19 successfully," **Mr Rho Hyun-Jun, Country Director of KOICA**, said at the event.

"The Republic of Korea is proud to be a partner and friend with Cambodia to the benefit of all Cambodians and we will commit to the sustainable development in Cambodia."

"We look forward to seeing our efforts make both friendly and substantive cooperative relations between Cambodia and Korea take a leap forward."

**Benjamin Knoedler, Chargé d'Affaires at the German Embassy** in Cambodia said "Covid-19 has taught us: it is solidarity that matters in times of crises. Germany stands with the people of Cambodia in the fight against the pandemic."

"We are proud to be supporting strong health and social protection services in the Kingdom to protect the most vulnerable from the impact of the Corona crisis" he said.

## **About H-EQIP**

The Health Equity and Quality Improvement Project (H-EQIP) builds upon and scales up the innovations supported by the Royal Government of Cambodia and its Multi-Donor Trust Fund Partners comprising of Australia, Germany, the Republic of Korea and the World Bank over the past 15 years.

H-EQIP aims to improve access to quality health services for targeted population groups while protecting against impoverishment due to the cost of health services in Cambodia and to provide immediate and effective response in case of an eligible crisis or emergency. H-EQIP improves the resourcing and management of proven health sector innovations, including Health Equity Funds and Service Delivery Grants, to ensure institutional and financial sustainability, according to the National Third Health Strategic Plan (2016-2020).

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