



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY PHNOM PENH

MEDIA RELEASE

IMPROVING REPRODUCTIVE, MATERNAL AND NEONATAL HEALTH IN CAMBODIA

Today the Australian Government, the Ministry of Health of the Royal Government of Cambodia, Save the Children, CARE and Marie Stopes International joined forces in a partnership to improve maternal, neonatal and reproductive health through the launch of a new three year initiative, Partnering to Save Lives.

The new initiative is a partnership designed to draw upon and leverage the skills and roles of all partners in order to achieve better outcomes. It will link funding from the Australian Government, implementation experience of the three NGOs, and policy leadership of the Ministry of Health to improve maternal, neonatal, and reproductive services in Cambodia.

HE Prof Eng Huot, Secretary of State, Ministry of Health said that “Partnering to Save Lives combines the complementary strengths of government and NGO partners to achieve the goals of the Fast Track Initiative Road Map for Reducing Maternal and Neonatal Mortality”.

Partnering to Save Lives has a special focus on comprehensive maternal, neonatal, and reproductive health service provision in the underserved north-eastern provinces. The program will also improve access to high quality reproductive health services, particularly for young women working in garment factories in Phnom Penh and Kandal provinces.

Speaking at the launch ceremony at the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh, the Australian Ambassador Ms Alison Burrows said that “the Australian Government is proud to be in a partnership that will help more women, especially those in remote provinces and those coming to work in the garment factories of Phnom Penh and Kandal, have access to better maternal and reproductive health services.” The Australian Government will provide AUD 14 million (approximately USD12.7 million) to the partnership over three years from 2013 to 2016.

During the launch, Stav Zotalis, Country Director, CARE Cambodia on maternal health explained that “Partnering to Save Lives is expected to enable nearly eighteen thousand women in the four north-eastern provinces to deliver their babies with the help of a skilled birth attendant. This will provide mothers and babies with essential care during the critical period around birth to help reduce maternal and neonatal deaths.”

Stefanie Wallach, Country Director, Marie Stopes International Cambodia (MSIC), commented that “many young women come from the provinces to work in the garment factories around Phnom Penh and can’t access the maternal

and reproductive health services they need. Partnering to Save Lives will help to provide them with information and services so that they can look after their own health.”

The program has a strong focus on learning from its successes and challenges. “Partnering to Save Lives will enable lessons learned by the NGOs to be shared with the Cambodian Government, to help improve their services over the longer term,” said Andrew Moore, Country Director, Save the Children Cambodia.

Partnering to Save Lives will also link with other key development partners to share lessons and reduce duplication across programs, so that all partners are able to support the Royal Government of Cambodia to achieve the goals of the Fast Track Initiative.

Australia has provided over AUD 80 million to the health sector in Cambodia since 2007. Australia works with key government institutions, multilateral and other bilateral donor partners, NGOs and local communities to improve health services for better health in the community.

CARE is an international humanitarian organization with a focus on empowering women and girls. In Cambodia, CARE focuses specifically on poor and vulnerable women and marginalized ethnic minorities to ensure they have equal access to quality health, education and livelihoods opportunities. Under PSL, CARE will focus on improving the quality of health services delivered, ensuring that communities are able to access and use maternal, neonatal, and reproductive health services, work with garment factories to improve workers access and use of maternal and reproductive health services, and contribute to partnership activities.

MSIC is a leader in reproductive and sexual health services. MSIC is committed to increase access to high quality, safe and affordable reproductive and sexual health services in order that men and women in Cambodia can build a brighter future for themselves and their families. Under PSL, MSIC partners with the MoH to train public health service providers, build MoH capacity and improve quality of and access to reproductive health services nationwide. MSIC’s activities increase knowledge and awareness about reproductive health and reduce financial barriers for women and men to access the contraception method of their choice. A special area of focus for MSIC is the reproductive health needs of garment factory workers in Phnom Penh and Kandal.

Save the Children is a global child rights organization established in 1919, fighting for children’s rights to reach their full potential. In Cambodia, Save the Children has over 20 years of health programming experience focusing on strengthening a facility-to-community continuum model of care that promotes equitable provision of maternal, neonatal, and reproductive health services to women, new-borns, and their families. Through PSL, Save the Children will target marginalised and vulnerable populations in Stung Treng and Kratie provinces, working with Provincial Health Departments and Operational Districts to improve health services at the facility level. The project will also help to strengthen community demand for quality health services and active participation in the health system.