



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Newsletter

Vol. 09, No. 34
April - June 2012

UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in 177 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

Promoting women entrepreneurship in Cambodia

Phnom Penh – As a business woman, Keo Mom travels a lot and goes to many meetings, sometimes even one-on-one with a businessman. In the eyes of others, that seems inappropriate for a woman like her, who is young and beautiful, to be in a meeting alone with man. But she can't help pay it any attention.

Make no mistake, Ms. Mom is a successful business woman. She is the president of the Lily Food Industry, which employs 150 people and makes US\$4 million in revenue a year.

Her story was among several inspirational ones told by women entrepreneurs. They shared their stories at a recent forum that aimed to springboard a concerted action to boost women-headed businesses as a way to lift them out of poverty and to be on a more equal footing with men.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs organized the forum on "Women Entrepreneurship Promotion" on 6 June through the support from the United Nations Development Programme with the focus on how to help women's small and medium enterprises grow in Cambodia.

continued on page 3

Contents

Community forestry inches closer to trade carbon credits.....	4
Commune database revised to improve sub-national planning in Cambodia	5
Multimedia campaign encourages young people to vote in commune elections	5
Cambodia towards sustainable development conference Rio+20.....	6

Villagers' delight over restored water reservoir to boost farming



Photo: Wathnakpheap/Nguon Thol

Farmers harvest rice in Tuol Sdey commune, Svay Rieng province. Farmers in this commune can now grow rice crop two times per year following the construction of a dam to retain rain water in a natural reservoir.

Svay Rieng – For the first time in nearly a decade, Neang Tey and her fellow villagers are able to grow rice two times per season in Tuol Sdey commune, Svay Rieng province.

Water shortage used to force them to journey far from home to seek job. But a recently built water spillway – a concrete wall to regulate the flow of rain water beneath a bridge – is now answering their plight by stocking up enough water in a lake for the villagers to increase crop cycles – and yields too.

"I might have gone begging again had the spillway not been built yet," Neang Tey, 55, said.

The sprawling lowland area known locally as the Bathou lake holds the key to

economic survival of the 2,500 people in the commune, which is situated near the southeastern border of Cambodia. In the past, post-harvest season of each year was the time of desperation. Because of water scarcity, the villagers could grow only one crop – between May and October. Many of them then had to hunt for work elsewhere, including in neighboring Vietnam where they said they often ended up begging on the street to survive.

"We used to see people leaving in huge number every year that the villages became so quiet. Children had to abandon school because they had to go with their parents," said Sok Sek, the commune chief.

continued on page 2

Villagers' delight over restored water reservoir to boost farming

continued from page 1



Photo: UNDP/Chansok Lay

A Cambodian man walks on a concrete spillway that was built to retain rain water in Bathou lake, Tuol Sdey commune, Svay Rieng province. The spillways helps retain rain water in the lake for villagers to use to grow rice two times per year.

He said there used to be a metal water gate below the bridge at the lake's dam to manage water. But corrosion had completely destroyed it, leaving a wide gap through which rain water gushed freely downstream. By the time the rice harvest was over in December, the lake slowly dried up.

"Farmers were not the only one who faced the difficulty in dry season. Even their buffalos and cows did not have enough water to drink," he said.

The situation began to reverse in May 2011 when the construction of the spillway was completed. The 2.2-meter high and 32-meter wide concrete wall works to hold water from pouring out to waste so that it can be tapped for rice farming.

At the height of the rainy season, the spillway is able to retain water to feed up to some 830 ha of rice field compared to just 250 ha to in the past – more than three-fold increase, according to Ms. Heng Chanthon, director of Wathnakpheap, the

non-governmental group that carried out the construction.

The construction of the spillway is among the activities under 46 projects that the United Nations Development Programme and the Global Environment Facility-Small Grant Programme are implementing to help villagers in many parts of Cambodia improve livelihood to withstand impacts of climate change. The projects have received funding from the Swedish government and Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid). The spillway cost some US\$21,100 to build – a US\$19,600 grant from the Swedish government and an additional US\$2,000 that the Tuol Sdey commune's residents – most of whom live in mud houses – managed to raise for the project.

Sok Sek, the commune chief, said the number of people migrating out for job has decreased dramatically since last year. He recalled that up to 400 people used to leave home each year to look for job or become

beggars since they had nothing to do after one harvest. Now increase of farming cycles – thanks to the new spillway – has created employment opportunities for the villagers. Even those who do not own any land can now rent their labors to other rice farmers for a living.

Neang Tey, who used to beg in Vietnam, lives all by herself in a hut on the edge of paddy field. For the first time, she managed plant two crops on a small plot, fetching a total of one ton of rice. It won't make her rich but she said is enough for her to live on through the next harvest time. "I don't need to go begging anymore," she said.

Yok Own, 46, used to bring along her 7-year-old son whenever she had to go begging in Vietnam. Last year she called it quit to earn a living from her land instead.

"I am so glad since we have the spillway to store water. From now on I can stay home to work on my land so that my son can go to school too," she said.

Promoting women entrepreneurship in Cambodia

continued from page 1

Presiding over the forum, H.E. Dr. Ing Kantha Phavi, Minister of Women's Affairs, said the economic empowerment of women is a key strategy to promote gender equality and poverty alleviation.

"From a development perspective, future income and employment opportunities in Cambodia will depend, to a large extent, on the prosperity of the private sector," the minister said.

"While there are many notable achievements, there are still a number of challenges to be addressed, especially when looking to gender gaps in the business sector and the particular needs for an enabling business environment for women," she added.

In Cambodia, women feature prominently in the workforce. More than 80 percent of them aged 15 and over are participating in formal and informal employments. Although more than 60 percent of micro, small and medium enterprises are owned by women, some 90 percent of these businesses are very small and in the informal sector. Compared to male entrepreneurs, women still face many difficulties, including, just to name a few, the lack of advanced education and access to market, business information and financial resources.

This needs to change, said Sophie Baranes, Deputy Country Director (Programme) of UNDP in Cambodia.

She said the government, development partners, private sector, and business associations all have important role to play to bring about the needed change that will spur more growth of women-led businesses. Financial institutions, for example, should explore how they can increase women's access to a range of financial facilities such as remittance transfer services, credit and insurance.

"This is particularly important for women-owned small- and medium-size enterprises, as they transition from microfinance to mainstream commercial banks," Ms. Baranes said in her remarks at the forum.

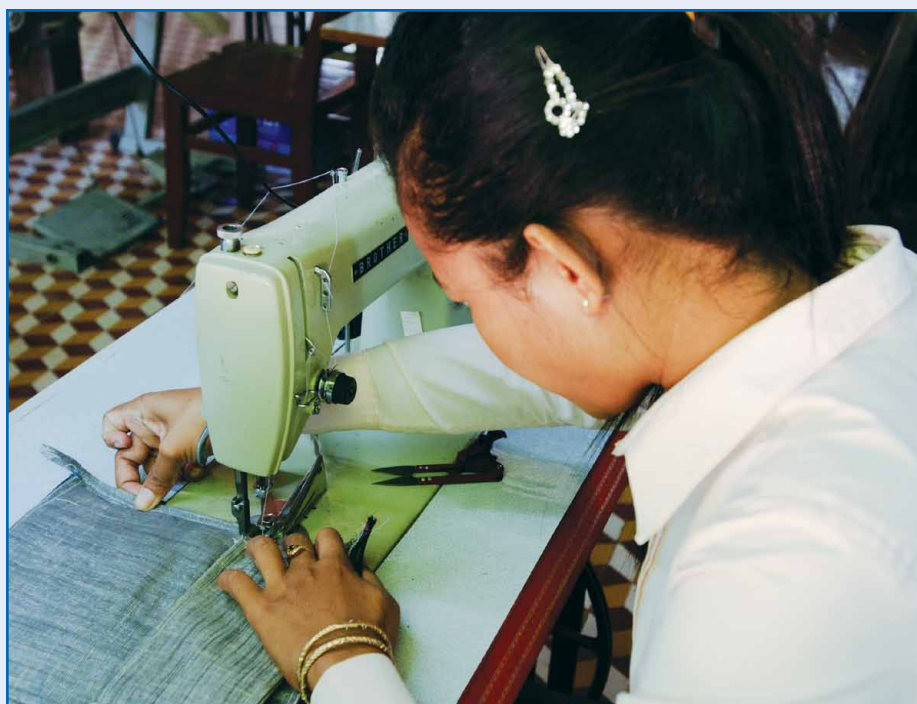


Photo: UNDP/Chansok Lay

A Cambodian woman sews a hand bag during skill training at Women Development Centre in Kampong Speu province. At a recent forum, officials from the government and development partners discussed ways to promote women-headed businesses as a way to lift them out of poverty and to be on a more equal footing with men.

She also noted that removing barriers preventing participation of women entrepreneurs and their access to services will contribute to addressing the overall bottlenecks for the attainment of Millennium Development Goal 3 on gender equality and the Cambodia Millennium Development Goal 1 on poverty reduction.

To this end, the United Nations has developed the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) as a practical tool that can be used by countries to identify bottlenecks, solutions and investments needed to speed up progress on lagging MDGs.

In 2012, Cambodia has been selected to apply the framework with a focus on CMDG 3, particularly promotion of women's economic empowerment.

In a business playing field traditional dominated by men, Keo Mom, the president of Lily Food Industry, can be seen as a rare success story. She started her company 10 years ago. Since then she has worked very hard, taken risk, and even overcome

doubts about her ability to prevail in her venture. Moreover, she has defied the law of tradition where men usually enjoy greater socio-economic status than women.

"If you succeed as a woman, they tell you: It's not your doing, it's a miracle," Ms. Mom said, recalling the constant pressure she has endured to produce evidence.

In her village in Pursat province, Duy Sareth, 43, is a successful entrepreneur in her own right. She heads an association of 190 members that produces and sells rattan products. Through the group, the members share ideas and information about the market, and also ensure control of quality of the products to meet the needs of clients.

All of this, Ms. Sareth said, "is to eradicate poverty among us."

"For us to succeed, we need to have the courage, patience, and commitment to do so. Otherwise, we will remain trailing behind men as always," she said.

Community forestry inches closer to trade carbon credits

Oddar Meanchey – For many years, Buddhist monks and villagers here have been leading the fight to protect the forests in this northwestern part of Cambodia from illegal logging and concessions. Against all odds and pressures they have met in their mission, their efforts are now about to pay off.

Thirteen community forestry sites – including the well-known Monks' Community Forestry which is led by Buddhist monk Venerable Bun Saluth – are well on their way to begin offering carbon credits to sell to investors.

With the financial support from the United Nations Development Programme, villagers are now back in the protected forest sites to survey 100 biomass plots to measure how much carbon has been sequestered, said Amanda Bradley, Community Forestry Programme Director at Pact, an international non-governmental organization in Cambodia. Pact is working with community forestry groups in the province to help them preserve the forests and biodiversity on which they depend for sources of livelihood.

"The project is already seeking investors. Most buyers that have approached our broker – Terra Global Capital – would like to buy verified carbon credits. With the UNDP funds, we are starting this process of verifying credits," Ms. Bradley said.

She said the biomass plots, each measuring 2,500 square meters, were entered into a carbon inventory in 2008. "We need to re-measure 100 forest plots...to see how much carbon has been sequestered since the project started in February 2008," she said.

Together, the sites make up 64,318 hectares which represent the largest concentration of community forestry in the entire country. They are home to endangered wildlife and rich in non-timber products such as tree resin, medicinal herbs, and mushrooms that poor villagers rely on for food and income. Women are also among the conservation force.

Ms. Moul Nen, who leads the Samaki Community Forest, gave a simple explanation why she and many women in her village choose to volunteer in the environmental mission.

"Nearly half of the members of our forest patrol are women. Why? Because, we, as women, and our lives depend on the forest for daily survival," said Moul Nen, 55.

Through the United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation

and Forest Degradation known as UN-REDD, UNDP is collaborating with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) to assist Cambodia to be ready for REDD+ implementation at the national level. This includes development of necessary institutions, policies and capacity to manage forests to ensure the sustainable benefits for improving livelihoods, environmental services and overall economic development. All of this is part of the government's broader target of maintaining 60% forest cover, a key indicator in the Cambodia Millennium Development Goal 7.

The country's Forestry Administration has classified the 13 community forestry groups as a carbon offset project. The protected forest land is expected to sequester 8.3 million metric tons of carbon dioxide over 30 years.

Ms. Bradley, of Pact, said that, if all goes well in the process of verification of the project during the next six months, "we can be ready to sell (carbon credits) by August."

Ven. Bun Saluth, the leader of Monks' Community Forestry, said his group has been very encouraged by the support of the UN-REDD programme.

"The programme is extremely important for our survival – not just in Cambodia but in the entire world," he said.

Spanning across 18,261 hectares, the Monks Community Forestry is the biggest community forest in Cambodia. For the past decade, Ven. Bun Saluth has been at the forefront of his environmental crusade. His dedication won him the prestigious Equator Prize from UNDP in 2010. He said that since then he has been putting the prize money to good use. This includes buying food supplies, uniforms and equipment to support the work of forest patrollers, employing labor to mark the boundary of the protected forest

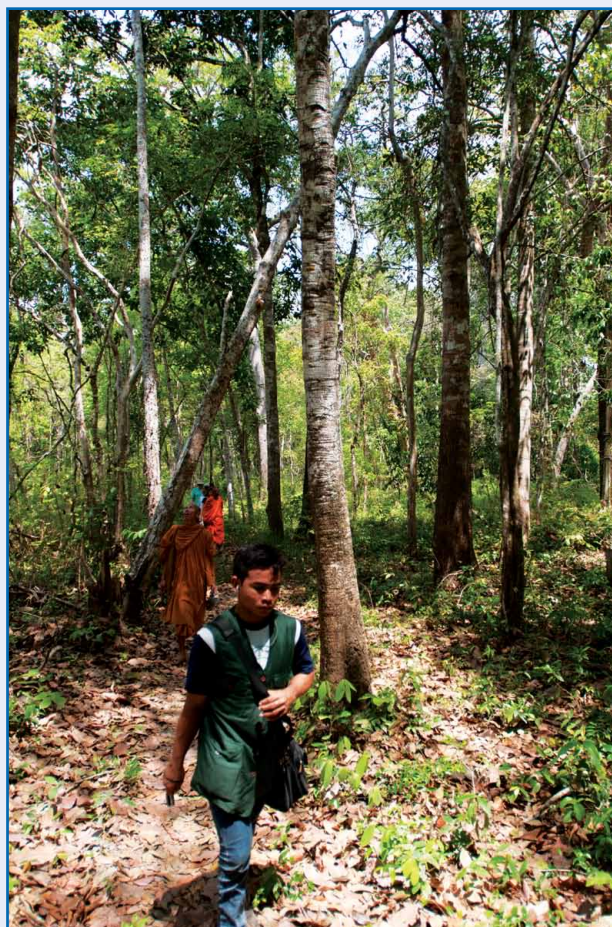


Photo: UNDP/Chansok Lay

Cambodian villagers and buddhist monks walk in a protected forest in Oddar Meanchey province.

site, and digging wells for the surrounding villagers.

"Our mission is far from over. This protected site is huge and so is the threat it constantly faces," he said.

During a recent visit to the site, UNDP's Resident Representative Douglas Broderick said he was very impressed by the monks' work using Buddhist teaching of compassion for life and nature to rally followers.

"The monks told us the trees and the forests do not hate people, but unfortunately sometimes on earth people hate the trees and forests," Mr. Broderick said.

"They gave us an example – an example of good faith, spiritual tenant and the kind of management and leadership that can help us to preserve forests in the world that is being very much deforested," he said. "It is our responsibility to work together to preserve the Earth. Otherwise, we have nowhere else to go."

Commune database revised to improve sub-national planning in Cambodia

The commune database (CDB), a wealth of local information, has gone through a revision that aims to improve its accuracy and also to respond to the need to monitor progress of the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDG).

The database is now expanding to cover statistics that were not previously attained. It includes data on literacy rate, level of education for both girls and boys, female share of business employment, domestic violence, abuse victims by sex and age, death caused by AIDs, malaria, dengue, tuberculosis, number and victim of mine explosions and other information with close link to the progress of CMDG.

The update has also triggered a revision of the CMDG scorecard – a planning, monitoring and advocacy tool to enable planners at the province, district, and commune levels to map out development priorities and mobilize funds to carry them out.

“Scorecard is like a cake. If it is delicious people will buy it. Planning needs information and the more the better as information is the staple food for the planners,” said H.E. Hou Taing Eng, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Planning.

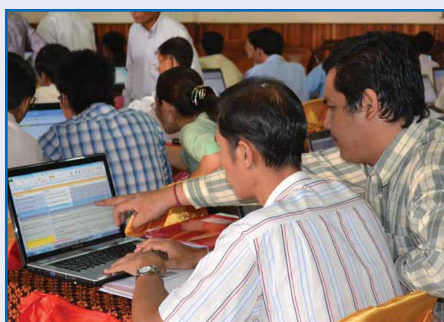


Photo: UNDP

Cambodian planning officers are in training on using revised commune database.

“I believe that a wise planner must use scorecards since it gives general information and then guide to the details of the problems. With scorecards, you can find root causes of a problem,” he added.

With support from UNDP, the Ministry of Planning unveiled the first scorecard in 2010. It was developed by drawing on data from the previous commune database on demography, natural resources, poverty, education, occupation, housing, transportation, gender and domestic violence, health, sanitation, access to clean water, governance, security, and on indigenous people. The revision that began in September 2011 will make the information

even more comprehensive and also improve its accuracy for measuring progress of CMDG.

Towards this end, more than 80 planning officers from all Cambodian provinces received training on the revised commune database in Ratanakiri province on May 8-11. The training equipped them with the skill to use the revised CDB to generate and apply CMDG scorecards in support of sub-national planning.

Battambang province's planning department advisor Tiev Choulong offered his view about the difference between the previous scorecards and the updated version.

“The new scorecard increases accuracy with more data to work with. The calculation gets simplified with simple formulas,” he said.

The widespread generation and use of scorecards will not happen without systematic attention paid to capacity development of key actors at the sub-national level. Once trained, the planning officers are expected to spread the knowledge, know-how, and the ability of interpret and use scorecards to their fellow planners and decision-makers in their respective provinces.

Multimedia campaign encourages young people to vote in commune elections

In the four weeks leading up to the June 3 commune/sangkat council elections, three voter education Public Service Announcements were broadcast regularly on TV and radio. Produced by Loy9, a UNDP-supported youth civic education campaign on TV, radio and online, the announcements encouraged young people to get out and vote, and communicated important information about required documentation and the secrecy of the ballot.

These important messages marked the culmination of Series 1 of the TV series, which combined education and entertainment to become widely popular across the country. The television shows, which were broadcast on CTN, are estimated to have reached over 3 million viewers per week.

Over 17 episodes, Loy9 TV covered a range of topics linked to youth participation, including volunteering and the participation of young women and girls, as well as providing advice about how to develop important

skills like public speaking, research and negotiation skills. Series 1 had a particular emphasis on the role of the commune council, and made it clear that voting on the elections day is just one of the ways that young people can interact with their local government. Episodes explored many of these opportunities for participation, like attending commune planning meetings and electing commune youth representatives. Popular highlights of the first series included three young teams from different provinces racing around Phnom Penh to collect important information about topics like voting, traditional culture, and road safety, before finishing inside the chamber of the National Assembly. The final episode mobilized over 1,200 young participants for world record attempt for the most people in one place dancing the popular ‘Madison’.

Early monitoring shows that young viewers are enjoying programme content and are picking up on key messages. In addition

to popularity of the TV show, the radio programme receives an average of 50 youth callers per week, ringing in from across Cambodia to discuss issues and share their opinions. The Loy9 website and Facebook page have also proven very popular, with views of online Loy9 videos topping 200,000 in early June, despite limited internet access across the country.

Loy9 is funded by UNDP Cambodia through its Strengthening Democracy Programme and produced by a youthful team at BBC Media Action. It aims to provide access to information about civic life and opportunities for participation for Cambodia's youth population. The weekly radio show continues on air on Saturdays at 12pm on FM103 in Phnom Penh and 12 provincial stations, and website is regularly updated. Meanwhile, the Loy9 television team is preparing for Series 2 which will commence at the beginning of 2013 and run up to the National Assembly election in July. Stay tuned!

Cambodia towards sustainable development conference Rio+20

Phnom Penh – To boost its competitiveness, Cambodia needs to invest more in human resources and skills. Its education sector also needs reforming to include vocational and technical training to prepare students for job market. Law enforcement has to be strengthened to address impact of economic land concessions. A social safety net can serve as an ideal tool to protect the poor from future economic shocks and climate change impacts.

These are some of the policy recommendations in a national report Cambodia will present to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development – the Rio+20 Summit – in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on June 20-22.

The government finalized the “Rio+20 National Report on Sustainable Development” on 8 June following several dialogues with development partners and concerned ministries. The report puts green growth at the core of the development agenda that aims to promote inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth to reduce poverty.

“The Royal Government of Cambodia remains convinced that a green economy is a practical and flexible solution for accelerating progress in the economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainable development as well as cultural diversity,” H.E. Dr. Mok Mareth, Senior Minister and Minister of Environment, said.

He was speaking to a meeting to finalize the Rio+20 national report on 8 June. It was preceded by two previous consultations to identify advances in socio-economic development and challenges that Cambodia needs to tackle in the years to come.



In the past 17 years, the report noted, Cambodia has been one of the fastest growing economies, growing at an average rate of 7.7 percent from 1994 to 2011. This has helped reduce poverty rate to 26.1 percent from 47 percent in 1992. As a result, several indicators of the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals have also been improved significantly, namely in the reduction of child and maternal health. Child mortality dropped from 124 for every 1,000 live births in 2000 to 54 in 2010. The maternal mortality rate has witnessed most changes in the past years, declining to 206 in 2010 from 472 in 2005. HIV/AIDS prevalence has also declined to 0.7 percent in 2011 from 2 percent in 1998, according to the report which cited the National Strategic Development Plan and Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2010.

While hailing the achievements, the Rio+20 national report also draws attention to the remaining bottlenecks and proposed recommendations to address them, including the need to:

- increase investment in strengthening human resources and skills – and thereby competitiveness – through additional investment in secondary education, a reform of tertiary education and targeted vocational and technical training.
- strengthen law enforcement, especially with regards to social and environmental impact of economic land concessions.

- promote public-private partnerships for green growth, including infrastructure development.
- implement targeted policies to address urban-rural disparities.
- for a national targeted anti-poverty program to provide a safety for the poor and near poor from economic and other shocks such as climate change and natural disasters.

This report builds on the government’s Green Growth Roadmap which focuses on inclusive green growth, poverty, equity and cultural diversity.

In his speech, Jean-Francois Cautain, Ambassador of the European Union Delegation to Cambodia, said promoting green growth is necessary to prevent erosion of Cambodia’s rich natural capital, including forest degradation and deforestation, increased scarcity of water, more pollution, and biodiversity loss. Nor is it costly in view of the long term benefit it can bring about, he added.

“If some of the Rio+20 National Report recommendations are implemented, these would make further contributions to an already high and continued growth in Cambodia by stimulating a green economy, creating jobs, protecting vulnerable groups, and improving environmental and social sustainability,” Mr. Cautain said.

At the Rio+20 conference, Dr. Mok Mareth will sign on Cambodian government’s behalf an agreement to join the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), an international body with a mission to promote green growth models for poverty reduction. The institute is based in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

UNDP programme areas

UNDP in Cambodia assists Cambodians to find their own solutions to the challenges of development. UNDP in Cambodia focuses on three thematic areas: Poverty Reduction, Energy and Environment, and Democratic Governance.

Poverty Reduction

UNDP is working with government, outside donors and the civil sector to reduce poverty country-wide by supporting poverty reduction efforts. These efforts strengthen government leadership capacity, give better access to information for effective pro-poor policy making, and focus on effective aid coordination so that each dollar spent has a greater impact.

Environment and Energy

There is a great sense of urgency for actions to address Cambodia’s environment and energy challenges. The poor are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and lack of access to clean affordable energy services. UNDP is helping to instill a long-term perspective in the management of Cambodia’s natural resources in some of the country’s most sensitive geographical regions.

Democratic Governance

Cambodia’s challenge in building democratic governance is to develop institutions and processes that are more responsive to the need of ordinary citizens, including the poor, and that promote development. UNDP helps to build a more robust democracy through providing long-term support to institutions, civil society organizations and civic education initiatives through strategic partnership with development partners and the government.



N° 53, Pasteur Street
Boeung Keng Kang I
P.O. Box 877
Phnom Penh
Cambodia

Tel: +855 (0) 23 216167

Fax: +855 (0) 23 216 257

E-mail: registry.kh@undp.org

Website: www.un.org.kh/undp/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/UNDPCambodia

Communications Unit

Munthit Ker
Public Information and Media Officer

Bopha Seng
Programme Communications Analyst

Sanghak Kan
Communications Assistant

Chansok Lay
Communications Officer