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## A radio by and for persons with disabilities

**PHNOM PENH** – “Welcome to our Global Knowledge programme on the Voice of Persons with Disabilities broadcasting from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap province (FM92.25 MHz) and Preah Sihanouk province (FM88.75 MHz).”

From inside a cramped studio on the ground of a Buddhist pagoda, the announcement by Ms. Phoum Leakhena, an anchor, made debut for the first time a radio programme by and for people with disabilities. Its mission is to provide an airwave channel for them to make their voices heard and to promote their rights and opportunities as equal members in the Cambodian society.

“We have in Cambodia many radio stations but all of them are broad in terms of audience.



Photo: UNDP Cambodia

Ms. Phoum Leakhena, a person with disability, hosts a call-in show during the launch of the Voice of Persons with Disabilities radio on 18 November 2014.

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## Diversified farming gives villagers hope for better livelihoods



Photo: UNDP Cambodia

Ms. Roun March inspects yard-long bean in the vegetable garden at her house in Preah Vihear province in northern Cambodia.

**PREAH VIHEAR** – Despite the scorching heat, Ms. Roun March kept toiling in the vegetable garden, her face protected from the sun by a large rim of the hat she was wearing.

“I used to earn a living by laboring in the rice field for other people. It is an unstable job where you become jobless as soon as the harvest is over,” said the 48-year-old woman.

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## Sweden extends financial support for climate change programme in Cambodia



Photo: UNDP Cambodia

Ms. Anna Maj Hultgård, Swedish Ambassador, left; and Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, UNDP Country Director, right; signed a grant agreement to extend the Cambodia Climate Change Alliance (CCCA) into a second phase, during a ceremony on 14 November 2014.

**PHNOM PENH** – Sweden has granted 28,000,000 Swedish Krona (approx. US\$3.8 million) to support an initiative implemented by the United Nations Development Programme to help Cambodia improve its capacity to respond to climate change impacts on its development.

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# A radio by and for...

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The mission of 'Voice of Persons with Disabilities [VPD]' is more specific. We are not discriminating against anyone but in this radio we focus on giving people with disabilities the opportunity to express their feelings and voices," Ms. Phoum Leakhena, 26, said.

People with disabilities in Cambodia number around 700,000 or 5 percent of the country's population. They face many obstacles in daily life that prevent them from fully enjoying equal rights and exercising their potentials as other citizens in the society. The VPD's broadcast—although still in its infancy – is aimed at correcting social behavior to treat people with disabilities not as a burden but an asset contributing to development of the country.

The radio is a component under Disability Rights Initiative Cambodia (DRIC), a programme funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia. The Abilis Foundation in Finland also gave financial support along with equipment to set up the radio.

It was inaugurated in August and housed in the office of Cambodian Disabled People's Organization (CDPO). Since then the station had been busy working to assemble its team. On 18 November, it, for the first time, began broadcasting various contents that had been

put together by its own staff. "My Voice, My Rights" is the name of a weekly roundtable discussion hosted by other anchors.

Ms. Phoum Leakhena, herself a person with disability, is one of them. She hosts the 'Global Knowledge' programme, a one-hour call-in show which hits the airwave four days a week. She is assisted by a male co-anchor, 27-year-old Sroun Channy.

"I am not a person with disability but I want to promote the rights of people with disabilities. Working for this radio will allow me to understand disability issues better and help people with disabilities develop positive thinking about themselves," he said.

Having received some basic training in radio broadcast, the pair's first day on the job was far from being smooth. Mr. Sroun Channy admitted that he was overtaken a bit by nervousness that forced him to pause amid live broadcast. This prompted the soundboard operator watching from the other side of the glass window to halt the broadcast and stepped in to give him some coaching.

"Loosen up and try not to sound like reading a speech," Ms. Chum Ratha suggested to Mr. Sroun Channy, who nodded with a smile in return.

The Royal Government of Cambodia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2012, affirming its commitment to improving the lives of people with disabilities. It has also enacted a number of disability laws and strategic plans in recent years.

Nonetheless, discrimination against people with disabilities still persists in terms of to social attitude toward them, lack of employment opportunity, and difficulties in getting access to and using places and buildings, Ms. Phoum Leakhena said.

"My hope is for this radio to operate well and effectively in improving the perception of the general public about people with disabilities," she said.

"It is very important for all aspects of development, which must have participation of people with disabilities. Their bodies may be handicapped but not their thinking, consciousness, and intelligence," she added.

DRIC programme is implemented jointly by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

To learn more about this programme, click: [http://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/operations/projects/democratic\\_governance/disability-rights-initiative-cambodia.html](http://www.kh.undp.org/content/cambodia/en/home/operations/projects/democratic_governance/disability-rights-initiative-cambodia.html)

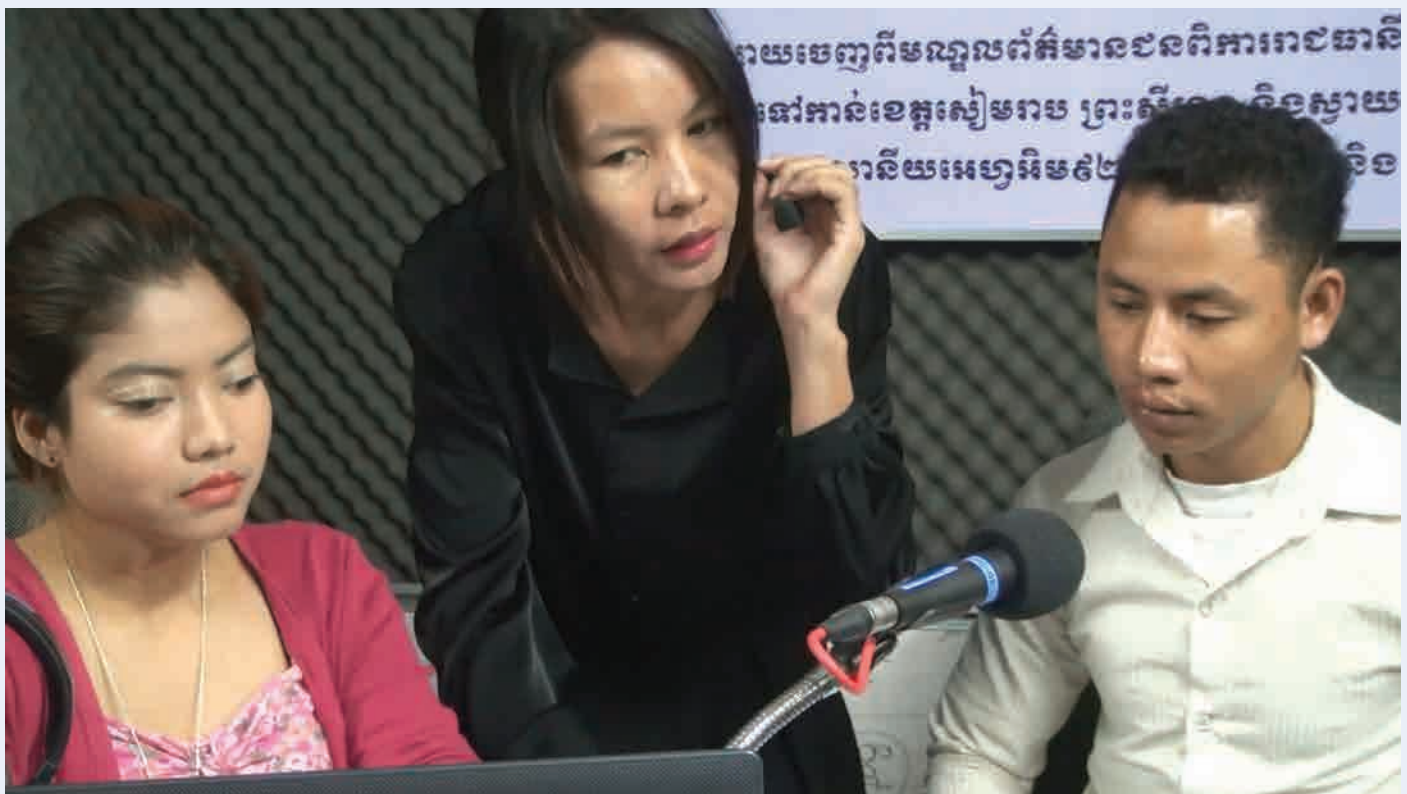


PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

Ms. Chum Ratha, centre, coaches anchors of Voice of Persons with Disabilities radio during a break of its broadcast on 18 November 2014.



# Advancing HIV-sensitive social protection – a sound investment in human capital

**PHNOM PENH** – Optimizing the use of existing and emerging social protection mechanisms is critical to assist People Living with HIV (PLHIV) and key affected population to lead healthy and productive life. It is also a sound investment in human capital which is crucial for achieving sustainable and equitable development in Cambodia.



Photo: UNDP Cambodia

*An man reads a report of a survey on socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS in Cambodia.*

These were the key messages conveyed at the national consultation on Advancing HIV-Sensitive Social Protection that was jointly organized by UNDP and UNAIDS on 2 October, in partnership with the Cambodian People Living with HIV network. It was attended by over 70 representatives from the Royal Government of Cambodia, civil society, development partners, and community groups that also included entertainment workers, men who have sex with men, transgender people and injecting drug users.

“HIV-sensitive social protection is both an equity issue and a sound and high return investment in human capital,” said Mr. Napoleon Navarro, Deputy Country Director of UNDP in Cambodia. “It is still an emerging field in Asia and beyond, and this gathering demonstrates that Cambodia is once again a pioneer on a global development issue,” he added.

Despite significant progress in poverty reduction and improving provision of HIV treatment, PLHIV and key affected population still face disproportionate social and economic hardships and can easily fall below the poverty line.

Using evidence from recent studies, Mr. Sorn Sothearith, national coordinator of the PLHIV network, said that, while already living on the brink of poverty, PLHIV and key affected population tend to miss out on ID Poor and social protection schemes. One of the main reasons is that they tend to be more mobile and therefore may not be included in ID Poor assessments which are done at the household level. Mr. Sorn Sothearith also said many PLHIV and affected population do not access services because they face stigma and discrimination, or they worry that someone will reveal their HIV status. Others simply are not aware of the services available or do not

know how to access them either.

H.E. Ieng Mouly, Senior Minister and Chair of the National AIDS Authority, stressed that ‘understanding and taking into account the special needs and circumstances faced by PLHIV, key affected population and their families and respecting their rights are critical’. He also confirmed the government is looking into taking more responsibility and investing domestic resources in HIV/AIDS responses as external funding declines.

H.E. Ngy Chanphal, Secretary of State of Ministry of Interior and Vice-Chairman of Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD), said new opportunities should be maximized for improving PLHIV and key affected population’s access to social protection. He noted that efforts are underway to develop new urban ID Poor mechanism and make changes to the Health Equity Fund to respond more effectively to the needs of PLHIV. He said the efforts require a well-coordinated multi-sectoral approach involving all relevant ministries and authorities at the national and sub-national levels. Participation of community groups in all stages of the process is also critical, he added.

The workshop featured speakers from India – a world leader on HIV-sensitive social protection. With more than two million people living with HIV, integrating HIV into social protection services has been a critical part of the AIDS response in India. This south-south learning is critical as Cambodia forges ahead on this important issue.

Under the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, a new commitment has been made for HIV-sensitive social protection to move forward – and to leave No One Behind.

## Launching Cambodia Gender Assessment 2014

The Cambodia Gender Assessment (CGA) 2014 titled “Leading the Way Towards Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment” was to be launched by Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) on 17 December, along with the Fourth Five Year Strategic Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Neary Rattanak IV.

The MoWA has produced a series of CGAs over the past decade (2004, 2008, and 2014), which provide a comprehensive overview of gender in all sectors, through joint partnership and collaboration between the ministry, civil society organizations and development partners, with an inclusive consultation process across government through the Technical Working Group-Gender (TWG-G) mechanism.

The CGA 2014 and the Strategic Plan (Neary Rattanak IV) have been developed by the ministry with close support from the UNDP-Partnership for Gender Equality programme, funded by Sida, to serve as a joint evidence-based policy package to contribute to effectively meeting the needs of Cambodian women.

## End violence against women

In marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November, UNDP Administrator Helen Clark issued a statement calling for renewed commitment to eradicate all forms of violence against women and ensure justice and support for survivors.

“Our work to eliminate violence against women is central to our commitment to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, both of which are integral to sustainable development,” Ms. Clark said in a statement.

“Eliminating it requires changing those attitudes and social norms which do not value women’s rights and opportunities. It also requires ensuring women’s equal participation in decision-making at all levels, from the household to the corridors of government,” she added.

According to the World Health Organization, gender-based violence kills as many women between the ages of 15 and 44 as does cancer. Its toll on women’s health surpasses that of traffic accidents and malaria combined. Victims of violence against women also include the more than 64 million girls worldwide who are child brides, as well as the estimated 100 to 140 million girls and women who have experienced female genital mutilation.

“Violence against women is never acceptable. It is a violation of women’s human rights for which perpetrators must be held accountable,” Ms. Clark said.

# Diversified farming gives villagers...

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PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

*"I will keep working hard - not in order to please anyone but for my own sake," said Ms. Roun March, a resident of Thoamachiet village, Preah Vihear province.*

Her life has taken a turn for the better after she began growing vegetables around her house in Thoamachiet village, Preah Vihear province, about a year ago. She makes on average 20,000 riel (US\$5) a day from their sales to a local market.

This would not be possible for her – and many villagers in this remote community in northern Cambodia – had it not been for the solar-powered pumps. The utility has solved the chronic problem of water shortage they had faced in the past. It was brought to them by a UNDP-supported project with funding from Canada. In addition to the utility, the project also trains the villagers on techniques to diversify farming to increase their food security, income, and resilience to impacts of climate change.

It is a common knowledge that Cambodia is among the countries most vulnerable to this threat. This is because the country has a large portion of the population that relies on subsistence, rain-fed farming and weak capacity to adapt to climate change.

Ms. Roun March, a single mother of two children, explained how she used to struggle to keep her vegetables green using water from a dug well she had. She said the well, however, normally dried out quickly during dry season, and so did her vegetables in the process.

"I now no longer have concern about the water problem like I had in the past. All I have to concentrate on now is growing many kinds of vegetable," she said, standing in between the rows of cabbage, mints, and

yard-long bean.

Each day starts very early for her. She said she usually gets up at 3 a.m. to begin picking the produce and take it to sell at the local market by sunrise. She brings home approximately US\$5 – a daily earning higher than that of garment workers. But she is not satisfied just yet and is determined to boost her income by increasing the variety of her produce.

"Last year, I grew only cabbage but I could not sell all of it and often had to throw away the leftover to rot or to the pig to feed on," she recalled. "This year I have planted many things – a little of this and a little of that to suit the demand of the small market," she said.

The project – Promoting Climate Resilient Water Management and Agricultural Practices in Rural Cambodia – is now in its second phase after receiving funding from Canada in late 2013. It supports some 5,500 poor and landless households across 32 communes in four districts of Preah Vihear and Kracheh provinces. It covers a wide range of activities including

techniques in crop diversification and better management of water resource. Aside from helping improve irrigation for rice farming, the project has also installed solar-powered pumps to supply the villagers with water for both household use and home gardening. Small fees are charged from them to put in a fund for maintaining the systems.

In Preah Vihear province, 16 solar pump units – with a price tag of US\$6,500 each – have been installed to serve 210 families living across 10 communes. Some 50 of them are households headed by women who now can save time from the trouble of fetching water to spend on farming to earn more money. Their children too have been spared from the chore to focus better on their studies.

Her daily routine is tough, but Ms. Roun March said that will not deter her from pursuing her dream to build "a better life."

"I am not going to sit around to be reminded about what I should do. I will keep working hard and through that I hope to make more money," she said. "Working hard – not to please anyone but for my own sake."



PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

*Solar pumps like this one are providing the villagers in Preah Vihear province with enough water for daily consumption and farming to increase family income.*



# Kuy Samoeun – a successful model in integrated farming

**PHEAR VIHEAR** – To a group of eight villagers Ms. Kuy Samoeun explained how to make organic pesticide cocktail to prevent bugs from destroying vegetables. On a wooden bed in front of them were a dozen types of natural ingredients that included wild roots, garlic, lemon grass, chili, ginger, and tobacco.

“The best time of day to spray the cocktail is in early morning and the evening. That is when the temperature is not so hot and the bugs like to gather on vegetables. But make sure to cover the nose with masks,” she told the villagers some of whom were jotting down notes to take home.

The gathering was the latest in a series of hands-on training that Ms. Kuy Samoeun has organized to teach other villagers how to use integrated methods in agriculture – by diversifying crops, growing fruit trees, and raising fish and animals grow multiple crops – to boost family income. During the past three years, the 58-year-old woman has gradually transformed herself to be a successful role model to inspire other residents in Toek Krohom village, Preah Vihear province.

“I have come here often to ask her because she has the skills better than me. I applied



PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

*Ms. Kuy Samoeun's husband and grandsons catch fish from a pond behind their house in Toek Krohom village, Preah Vihear province.*

the knowledge she has shared and it has made a lot of difference compared to growing vegetables the old way,” said Mr. Mao Samol, a 75-year-old man who also lives in the village.

Ms. Kuy Samoeun has acquired the skills through training under a UNDP-supported project. During the past three years she has

been on two study tours to Thailand to learn the tricks in integrated farming system. In a nation-wide farming competition in 2013, she beat other contenders from 24 provinces and won the first prize – a plowing machine and US\$300 in cash – from the government. Due to her success, a community training center has been built by the project for hosting knowledge-sharing for visitors from her village and faraway provinces.

The project – Promoting Climate Resilient Water Management and Agricultural Practices in Rural Cambodia – is now in its second phase after receiving funding from Canada in late 2013. It works in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and Preah Vihear provincial department of agriculture to implement activities including how to improve farming techniques and irrigation with the aim to build resilience of the villagers to climate change.



PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

*Ms. Kuy Samoeun, left, watches as other villagers write down the names of herbs used for making organic pesticide to protect vegetables from insects.*



# Sweden extends financial support...

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PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

*A Cambodian couple plant taro in Kraing Serey village, Kampong Speu province, where Sweden has funded a water reservoir restoration through a climate change adaptation project of UNDP.*

Ms. Anna Maj Hultgård, Swedish Ambassador, and Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, UNDP Country Director, inked the grant agreement on 14 November formally extending the Cambodia Climate Change Alliance (CCCA) into a second phase, which will run through 2019.

During the signing ceremony, Ms. Anna Maj Hultgård said "Increased resilience to climate change, environmental impact and natural disaster constitutes a key goal of Sweden's development cooperation with Cambodia for the period 2014-2018. We are therefore proud to formalize today our continued support to the CCCA, through which we will be able to assist – jointly with UNDP and the Delegation of the European Union – the Cambodian people and the Royal Government of Cambodia in their endeavors to strengthen national systems and capacities to better implement and coordinate the response to climate change both at central and local levels."

The new grant is the second by Sweden which also contributed more than US\$4.4 million to the CCCA programme during its first phase, 2010-2014.

Recent studies have consistently identified Cambodia as one of the countries that are most vulnerable to climate change due to its heavy reliance on agriculture, the large proportion of the population residing in the low lying areas and weak capacity to cope with unpredictable and extreme weather

events such as drought and flood.

The CCCA was established in February 2010 as a multi-donor programme to serve as a unified entry point for development partners to channel resources for climate change initiatives in Cambodia. Donors during the programme's first phase included Sweden, the European Union, Denmark, and UNDP. The programme has supported Government institutions and NGOs to implement 20 demonstration projects aimed at testing adaptation measures to improve resilience of rural communities most at risk to climate change.

At the national level, CCCA supports the National Climate Change Committee to develop policies and strategies for mainstreaming climate change in government systems and budget. The Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) was unveiled last year as the country's first-ever climate strategic framework. It outlines the government's vision for promoting low carbon and climate-resilient development for the next 10 years. The second phase of the CCCA will build upon previous achievements to strengthen further the institutional mechanisms and governance systems, foster partnerships among all stakeholders, and harness human and technological capacities to implement priority actions outlined in the Strategic Plan.

"To achieve these objectives, the CCCA will continue to provide policy support and demonstrations of innovative actions

through grants. On this note, we will work together with the Government of Sweden towards our common objectives of poverty reduction and enhanced economic, social and environmentally sustainable development based on people's own ability to drive development. We would like also to thank the Swedish people for their generous contributions – past and present," Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, UNDP Country Director, said.

"Our focus in this programme will remain on building resilience of the poorest and most vulnerable people so that they can escape entrenched poverty. As such, UNDP looks forward to working closely with Sweden in supporting the Royal Government of Cambodia in addressing climate change issues as part of its aspiration to achieve sustainable development in the long future to come," Ms. Yamazaki added.



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