



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

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 more than 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

Recovery efforts helping ease the plight of flood affected communities

Cambodia was hit by devastating floods in 2013. A combination of heavy rain and the swelling of the Mekong River water caused substantial damages to infrastructure and crop, disrupting livelihoods of many poor Cambodians in the countryside.

“It was very difficult for me to go to the district hospital and for all the villagers to go buy food because the road was out” due to the floods, said Mr. Chan Morn who lives in Thlong village, a flood prone area in Siem Reap province in northwestern Cambodia.

The 80-year-old man also recalled that it would take about an hour to go from his village to the district town hospital, which is just 20 kilometres away. Now, the journey takes about half an hour.

A sense of relief is now emerging in the affected communities after development partners injected funds for recovery and rehabilitation projects. This followed the release of the post-flood early needs assessment report by UNDP Cambodia in April 2014.

The floods caused the death of 168 people most of whom were children. They left behind an extensive trail of devastation across 20 provinces. Thousands of hectares of rice were destroyed and hundreds of kilometers of rural roads, which serve as crucial economic lifeline for the rural poor, were damaged.

continued on page 2

Scaling-up climate adaptation measures through sub-national planning



Photo: UNDP Cambodia

A vendor sells food on the side of a rural road in Battambang province, northwestern Cambodia. The road is part of the 4.5-km stretch across three communes that have been upgraded for the villagers to use as flood escape routes. The commune councils implemented the project with the support of climate change adaptation fund through UNDP.

Imagine a life in a village which faces extreme water shortage at least five months a year. To survive, the residents have to make daily six kilometer round trip to get water from an artificial reservoir created by a construction company that had carved out the earth to build road.

“Before we turned to that site for water, we had to spend at least five hours a day to find water from faraway places. There are only three hand pumps in the village but they usually dry up in the dry season. People would wake up at 4 o’clock in the morning to be at the pumps, and they often had arguments over who got to draw the water first,” said, 57-year-old Chan Sia, a village chief.

When five hours daily were spent on just finding water for cooking and washing, that didn’t leave much time for any family to earn a living. This is a harsh reality the 380 people of Dan village in Kulen district, Preah Vihear province, have endured as long as they could remember.

But a recently dug pond near the village could help lessen their plight – if not eradicate it entirely.

The pond – three metre in depth and 1,650 sq metres in size – was built as part of multifaceted interventions through the Cambodian local development planning process to reduce vulnerability of rural communities to climate change. In a scale-up measure, they build upon successful initiatives under other projects that work to improve climate resilient livelihoods through a number of ways such as infrastructure rehabilitation and introduction of integrated farming to help villagers increase family income and savings for a rainy day.

“Having the pond so close to the village gives a big relief to our people, especially women who have to take on responsibility of getting water when their husbands go to work far from home to support their families,” Chan Sia, the chief of Dan village, said.

So far, 32 communes across five districts in Takeo, Battambang and Preah Vihear

continued on page 2

Contents

Multimedia initiative to address Cambodian youth employment issues.....	3
Cambodia’s climate change response gets new support from the EU, Sweden and UNDP	4
Lao delegation learns organic farming tricks from Cambodian neighbors.....	5
More mine-free land released to Cambodian farmers.....	5
Cambodia: Investing in human capital critical for sustaining growth	6

Scaling-up climate adaptation measures through sub-national planning

continued from page 1

provinces have integrated climate change adaptation into district and commune investment programmes. Among them, 17 infrastructure and 15 non-infrastructure programmes have received funding from Canada and UNDP.

Some highlights of progress to date:

- In Battambang province, rural three roads totaling about 4,500 metres in length across three communes have been upgraded for the villagers to use as flood escape routes. The projects cost approximately US\$58,550.



Photo: UNDP Cambodia

Villagers gather by a new water reservoir which has been built with the support of climate change adaptation fund from UNDP.

- In Preah Vihear province:
 - a 940-metre road in Toek Krahem commune has been raised above flood level, at the cost of approximately US\$23,590
 - a pond (30x55x3 m) in Dan village, Thmey commune, has been constructed to catch rain water for household use. The project cost US\$11,275.
 - a reservoir has been rehabilitated to regulate water supply to 590 ha in Pring Thom commune. The project cost US\$45,375.

Recovery efforts helping ease the plight of flood affected communities

continued from page 1



PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

Villagers drive a truck loaded with rice on a rural road in Siem Reap province. The road has been rehabilitated in recovery initiatives funded by donors following the flood in 2013.

At the Cambodian government's request, UNDP Cambodia conducted a post-flood early needs assessment (PFERNA), which estimated the cost of damages to be around US\$356 million. Of this, US\$153 million were in the destruction of physical assets in the affected areas, and US\$203 million in losses in production and economic flows. The report, which was shared widely among the government institutions and development partners, led to the mobilization of some US\$200 million from donors in grant and loan to finance reconstruction projects some of which have already been completed and some are still underway.

"We would like to express our profound appreciations to UNDP for its timely and effective support to the Cambodia 2013 Post-Floods Early Recovery Needs Assessment," H.E. Nhim Vanda, First Vice President of the National Committee for Disaster Management, said.

Cambodia is considered one of the most hazard-prone countries in South-East Asia. The major disasters faced by the country are floods, droughts, typhoons and storms. With approximately 70 percent of the population living in the rural areas and dependent on subsistence agriculture, natural disasters

can have devastating consequences on the livelihoods of the majority of Cambodians.

In Siem Reap province, the 2013 floods damaged nearly 300 kilometres of rural roads. Of these, 140 kilometres, or 46 percent of the entire damaged stretch, have now been rehabilitated thanks to the interventions funded by the World Bank, the government of Australia through the Asian Development Bank, and the government of South Korea.

In Kork Thnang village, Siem Reap province, life is a constant struggle like in other villages in the Tonle Sap flood plains. After the 2013 floods completely wiped out her rice crop, Ms. Gnugn Doeun, 36, was forced to migrate with her husband to work in construction far away from home, leaving her four children behind for her parents to look after. It was their temporary measure to earn the much needed income to support their family.

Since the road through her village has been restored, she now finds it easier to travel to work in her rice field, whereas her husband can safely commute to work in neighboring villages to earn income for his family.

"Now that the road is recovered, I can easily travel to town. Both my family and the other villagers are very happy," Ms. Gnugn Doeun said.

So is happy Mr. Chan Morn, the 80-year-old man, who said he and his family are now able to pay a more regular visit to the district hospital – thanks to the post-flood reconstruction projects.



PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

Swedish Ambassador Ms. Anna Maj Hultgård, left, BBC Media Action Country Director Ms. Meghan MacBain, centre, and UNDP Country Director Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, right, launch multimedia initiative for youth on 11 March 2015.

Multimedia initiative to address Cambodian youth employment issues

Sweden and UNDP have launched a joint programme to help address issues of youth employment in Cambodia. The new Multimedia Initiative for Youth, “Khlahan9”, came out at the right time as Cambodia is poised to embrace the ASEAN economic integration by the end of this year.

“I am especially happy with the focus on youth and employment. This is important for individuals as well as for the society as a whole to prosper and continue to grow,” Ms. Anna Maj Hultgård, Ambassador of Sweden, said during a signing ceremony to kick-start the programme on 11 March.

While the regional integration means new opportunities for growth, it will also bring an array of issues to challenge young people in their ability to compete with others when there is a greater flow of trade, investment and labour across regional borders.

Young people of Cambodia constitute a huge pool of labour force but they still face many barriers preventing them from meaningfully contributing to the economic development. A study by the National Employment Agency in 2013 found that young people often lack skills and confidence when preparing to look for a job. Another study by the International Labour Organization also found that there is high proportion of mismatch between education

and skills needed in the labour market due to lack of access to information to help young people decide what they should study. Family tradition also makes it difficult for young women to make a choice for their career, leaving them at greater disadvantage as compared to young men.

Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, UNDP Country Director, said during the signing ceremony that being blessed with demographic dividend is not enough for Cambodia.

“It is very important for Cambodia to have

a quality labour force which will produce revenue for the country that the government can redistribute into other population groups through the public service system,” Ms. Yamazaki said.

She said “Khlahan9” – which is implemented by the BBC Media Action – is a new milestone in the joint effort “to help equip young people in Cambodia, especially young women, with the knowledge and ability needed to chart their paths toward better employment opportunities and livelihoods.”

“Khlahan9” builds on the success of the previous cycle of youth civic education, Loy9, which also received financial support from Sweden. The new programme will undertake two major tasks which will include:

- Delivery of youth oriented employment education by establishing media platforms, programmes, and community outreach activities; and
- Capacity development for Cambodian youth through working with the National Employment Agency and Cambodian Broadcasting Service in a variety of media-based outputs.

Employment related topics will be featured in various formats such as television drama and magazine, radio phone-in shows, online content and live events.

The programme has a budget of US\$1.5 million from Sweden and US\$512,000 from UNDP, and will run through March 2016.



PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

UNDP Country Director Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, far left, and Swedish Ambassador Ms. Anna Maj Hultgård, in the foreground, give interview during the launch of multimedia initiative for youth on 11 March 2015.

Cambodia's climate change response gets new support from the EU, Sweden and UNDP

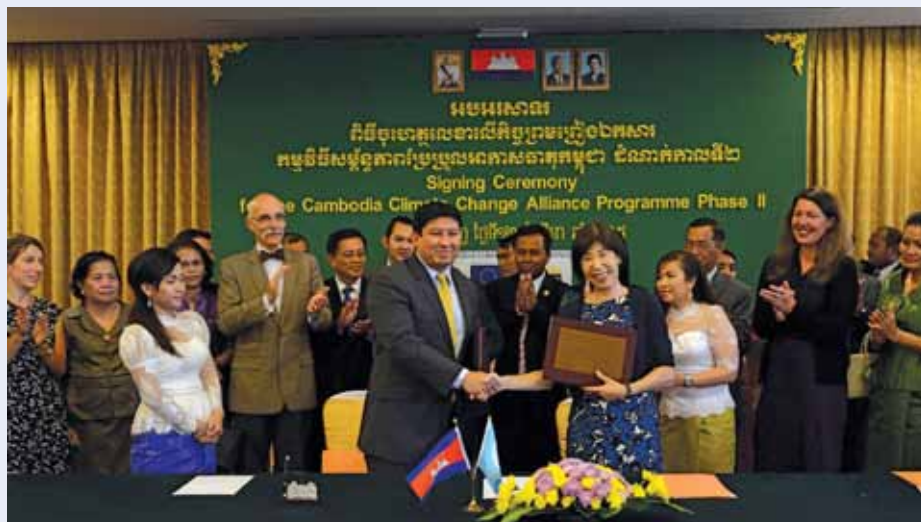


PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

H.E. Say Samal, Minister of Environment; left, and Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, UNDP Country Director; right, signed new agreement to support Cambodia's climate change programme on 12 March 2015.

Cambodia's efforts to tackle threats of climate change have received a new boost with additional financial support from the European Union, Sweden and United Nations Development Programme on.

The EU is committing over 50 percent of the combined financial contribution for the second phase of Cambodia Climate Change Alliance (CCCA) programme until 2019.

"The second phase is very much focused on implementation of the strategies and plans that were put together during the first phase," H. E. Say Samal, Minister of Environment, said at the signing ceremony on 12 March.

He added that "the programme will also put a strong focus on the development of the technological and human resources required for the climate change response, through grants for research, and partnerships with the education sector."

The minister was joined by Mr. Jean-François Cautain, EU Ambassador, Ms. Anna Maj Hultgard, Ambassador of Sweden to Cambodia, and Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, UNDP Country Director in signing a new CCCA programme document (2014-2019).

The EU will provide 6 million euros, the largest share of the financial package, followed by US\$3.8 million from Sweden

and US\$1.15 million from UNDP.

Mr. Jean-François Cautain said that, in addition to assisting Cambodia in addressing climate change issues, the EU also plans "to commit 149 million euros until 2020 in the natural resources management sector" of Cambodia.

Swedish Ambassador Ms. Anna Maj Hultgård said she hoped that the new financial support will result in "stronger efforts both at the national and sub-national levels in building more effective local climate change

responses and improved overall country resilience."

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 and funding to cope with unpredictable and extreme weather events such as droughts and floods.

The CCCA was established in February 2010 as a multi-donor programme to channel resources for climate change initiatives. Donors during the first five-year phase included the EU, Sweden, Denmark, and UNDP. Since its inception the programme has supported the government in developing climate change policy framework and implementing 20 grassroots projects aimed at testing measures to improve resilience of rural communities most at risk to climate change. In late 2013, the government unveiled the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan to serve as the guiding principle for promoting low carbon and climate-resilient development for the next 10 years.

"Working together we can surely achieve even more in our common vision and efforts to improve Cambodia's response to climate change to sustain growth and build resilience for the most vulnerable people as they work to escape poverty," Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, UNDP Country Director, said at the ceremony.

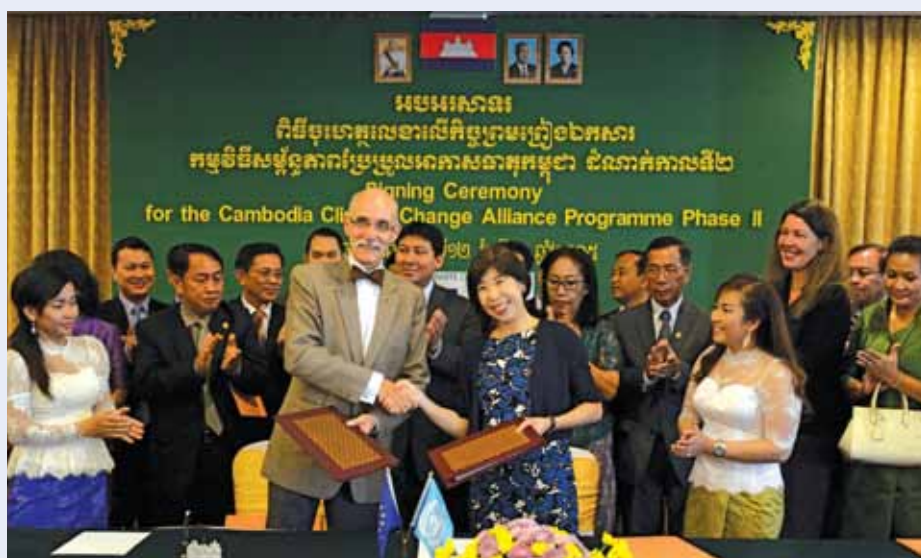


PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

Mr. Jean-François Cautain, EU Ambassador; left, and Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, UNDP Country Director; right, signed a joint agreement to support Cambodia's climate change programme on 12 March 2015.

Lao delegation learns organic farming tricks from Cambodian neighbours

It was time for lunch but the Laotian guests still kept asking questions and busy jotting down notes about formula for making organic pesticide and fertilizer. Their Cambodian host, Ms. Kuy Sameun showed no sign of tiredness either as she, a model integrated farmer, told them all the tricks of organic farming they wanted to know.



Photo: UNDP Cambodia/Naratevy Kek

Members of Lao delegation takes note as Ms. Kuy Sameun, third on the left in pink shirt, explains techniques for making organic pesticide and fertilizer during a recent knowledge sharing visit to Toeuk Kraham commune, Preah Vihear province.

“This is something new we can share with our farmers back home,” said Ms. Phonesavanh Sisavad from Savannakhet province in Laos.

She is a provincial coordinator and one of the 25 representatives from Lao PDR who made a four-day study tour of UNDP-supported projects in mid-February. They visited the sites of the project ‘Promoting Climate Resilient Water Management and Agricultural Practices’ in Kracheh and Preah Vihear provinces, and a Small Grant Programme-supported initiative in Siem Reap province.

The visit by the delegation of ‘Improving Resilience of the Agriculture Sector to Climate Change Impacts in Lao PDR’ project (IRAS) was to gain experiences on adaptation practice in the agriculture sector to the impacts of climate change. They met with the Cambodian farmers like Ms. Kuy Sameun who have been benefiting from the UNDP Cambodia’s interventions such as the solar pump systems and integrated farming methods to improve resilience to climate change and their livelihoods.

Ms. Vilayphone Vorraphim, Deputy-Director General of the Permanent Secretary’s Office, Lao’s Ministry of Agriculture, highlighted three key takeaways from the Cambodian visit: the use of solar water pump, which the project in her country has not yet implemented, and the community voluntary participation in the projects. In her country, community members are paid so that they can implement their role in the group. The third is the knowledge about seed purification technique the Cambodian farmers possess to allow them to select resilient rice seeds by themselves. In Lao, rice seeds are purified at the station first before being transferred to the farmers.

“I’m happy to receive the knowledge and some best practices from the Cambodian farmers and the project team,” said Vilayphone.

The challenges facing the farmers in Lao PDR and Cambodia are similar. Flood and drought are particularly frequent occurrences. In efforts to address these challenges, the Lao government is encouraging the farmers, who make up 80 percent of the population, to change crop based on the changing of climate. For example, if the condition does not allow them to grow rice, then they should grow vegetable instead. Similar approaches are being used to help Cambodian farmers through various UNDP Cambodia’s projects such as ‘Promoting Climate Resilient Water Management and Agricultural Practices’ project, which has received funding from the government of Canada.

Mr. Pinreak Suos, the project advisor, said: “We try to establish a culture of sharing through visits and other channels to increase the awareness and replication of best practices in order to improve the livelihood of the poor in the changing climate.”



Photo: UNDP Cambodia/Naratevy Kek

Lao delegation arrives at Kork Sralao primary school in Preah Vihear province during a recent visit to Cambodia to exchange idea on climate change adaptation.

More mine-free land released to Cambodian farmers

Mine clearance operations supported by UNDP has just released 26.5 square kilometres of land for productive use by Cambodian farmers after it was swept clean of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in 2014. The land is expected to benefit some 35,000 villagers – 54 percent of whom are women – in three northwestern provinces of Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Pailin.

The region is heavily contaminated with landmines and ERWs left over from the Cambodian internal conflict that ended in late 1990s. Since 2006, UNDP-supported mine clearance work has cleaned nearly 110 square kilometres of the deadly menace, turning a former battleground into a major cassava growing region in the country.

“We used to grow corn and sell it locally but I did not earn as much as I do now with cassava,” said Mr. Siem Saret, a 48-year-old farmer in Pailin.

Mr. Mot Sammut, another farmer in the same province, added: “My annual income before growing cassava was roughly US\$1,230 and now my current annual income is US\$3,070.”

Both men said, however, that they were able to make more money only after landmines and ERWs were cleared to allow them to expand their plantations.

Mine clearance has directly contributed to local development, particularly through the expansion of the size of save land to be used by farmers, said Ms. Khit Sarin, the chief of Bor Taing Sour village, Pailin.

“Mine clearance also had an impact on improving infrastructure such as schools and construction of safe roads. The fear of using land has been decreased and the local community feel more confident in using and investing in land,” she said. “Starting from 2012, growing cassava is one of the main income opportunities for the farmers.”

This means – the village chief and the two farmers said – demand for land for farming remains high, so does the need for clearance of the deadly devices for the villagers to make the best of the land to improve their living standards.

Cambodia: Investing in human capital critical for sustaining growth



PHOTO: UNDP Cambodia

Ms. Vin Rattana, centre, supervises her staff to service a car at a garage in Siem Reap province. Instead of enrolling in university straight after finishing high school, she enrolled in a skill training college as a foundation on which she has built a career success. Emphasis is growing on the need to improve skills of the workforce and human capital as Cambodia is poised to embrace full economic integration with ASEAN at the end of 2015.

When Ms. Vin Rattana completed high school a decade ago, her parents did not have enough money to send her straight to study for a university degree. But that was not the end of the road for her. She enrolled in a technical training school to learn how to fix cars.

“Whenever I came home during the school break, my friends would ask me “what are you studying?” I told them I learn about car mechanics and electrical systems. The laughed at me and said “as a woman you should not do that because when you finish you won’t be able to fix cars like men,” 31-year-old Vin Rattana recalled.

Today, she is a manager of a garage that sells Japanese car in Siem Reap province. In bypassing the direct route to university to obtain technical skills first, her journey to her present job makes an example that is at the heart of the discussion about how to develop human capital in Cambodia.

The country is poised to embrace full economic integration with ASEAN at the end of 2015. But there are growing concerns that too little investment in human capital will continue to limit employment opportunities for young people. Almost two-thirds of the population are under 30 years old, but with little education in possession, most of this potential labour force is usually stuck at the low end of the jobs market.

Like other developing countries, Cambodia is moving into a knowledge-based global economy. That means it needs to foster creativity, skills and innovation in its workforce. But the country’s public education system is under-funded, and even well-educated graduates also face problems as job competition is getting tougher and tougher.

“In the last two decades we have produced so many students in accounting and business. [But] we have only 2.5 percent of students studying agriculture, and Cambodia is an agriculture country. We have only 3 percent of students studying engineering, and Cambodia needs more engineers and technicians,” H. E. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, said in an interview.

“For Cambodia to move forward, we need to produce more engineers, more agronomists, more people in other sectors, not just in business and accounting,” he added to explain the Ministry’s strategy.

Minister of Labour and Vocational Training, H. E. It Sam Heng, agreed. He said the government is putting greater emphasis on giving young Cambodians the technical skills they need to compete within the ASEAN framework. He added that the private sector also has an important role to play.

“The Royal Government of Cambodia has already determined that the private sector

is the locomotive driving our growth. This partnership is crucial in two ways – in fostering private vocational training school and in fostering cooperation between private industry and the vocational training institutions of the government,” he said.

Human capital development is a key area where UNDP is providing policy support to the government’s strategies that will help generate skills and employment opportunities for Cambodians, particularly the youth.

“Human capital is critical. Unless the quality of the human resources and labour force is good to add values they will not be able to contribute to the Cambodian economy,” said Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, Country Director of UNDP in Cambodia.

The two-year technical training changed Ms. Vin Rattana’s life. She was never bothered by her friends’ laughter about her studying car mechanics. After graduating from the college, she worked in a smaller garage while managing to save money to upgrade her studies until obtaining a master’s degree in business management two years ago. Now she is a mid-level boss at a bigger, more modern garage where male mechanics are doing the greasy work of fixing cars under her supervision.

“At present, the ability of our Cambodian youth to compete is still limited. That is why we have to make a lot of effort to move them from attempting to hit just a single target in education. They must diversify to have additional skills. By doing so we hope to become more competitive with our partners in ASEAN,” Rattana said.

For her there’s no looking back. She is firmly on her way to tackle new challenges with confidence and the necessary skills to compete. This is one of Cambodia’s success stories – one that could help inspire other young Cambodians to follow in building career path towards a better life.



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.



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
www.kh.undp.org
www.facebook.com/UNDPCambodia
www.twitter.com/UNDPCambodia