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Resilient nations.

Newsletter

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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.

New UNDP Country Director arrives in Cambodia



Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki

Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, a native of Japan with extensive international development experience, has taken up her position as the Country Director of UNDP Cambodia. Ms. Yamazaki officially assumed her position on 1 December

2012, after her predecessor, Ms. Elena Tischenko, left Phnom Penh to take up a new assignment at UNDP Headquarters in New York.

Prior to this assignment, Ms. Yamazaki served as the Country Director of UNDP Country Office in Hanoi, Vietnam and contributed to the UN "Delivering as One" initiative as one of the eight pilot countries in the world. From 2001 to 2007, she was Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Country Office in Vientiane, Laos where she supported the country's Round Table Meetings (RTM) mechanism for aid co-ordination. She also worked in UNDP country offices in China and the Philippines, at UNDP HQ in New York as well as the United Nations Volunteers Programme Headquarters in Bonn, Germany.

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De-mining transforms former battleground into field of hope



Photo: UNDP/Alejandro Boza

Farmer Prak Chrin, third from left, plants green bean on a piece of land that was recently cleared of landmines and explosive remnants of war. The land is located in Battambang province's Samlot district, a heavily mine-affected regions in Cambodia.

Battambang – Farmer Prak Chrin paced slowly as she dropped green bean seeds into shallow holes on the ground. Nearby, her son, a hoe in his hands, was carving up the holes for the seeds in the family's new farmland in a far-flung northwestern part of Cambodia.

Tucked in a hillside forest, the freshly-plowed field was once a shrubland infested with landmines. Now it is a ticket to a more stable future for the 50-year-old woman and her three sons. Rice, corn and bean are growing side by side on the land after it was swept clean of landmines and other explosive devices in June this year.

"I am so glad to finally be able to use the land for crops," Prak Chrin said.

She obviously couldn't be happier, having lived for the past 20 years in O Tatiek village in Samlot district, Battambang province. By any standards, the village's landscape – about

400 kilometers northwest of the capital Phnom Penh – is one of the country's heavily-mined regions. But years of de-mining work, with support from international community including the United Nations Development Programme, are gradually transforming a former battle ground into a field of hope for the rural folks there.

Having started in 2006, a UNDP's mine action project has helped get rid of the deadly devices and free more than 54 square kilometers of land in Cambodia. In addition to reducing the fear factor, some two-thirds of the cleared areas have been converted into farmland.

In Rukha Kiri district, about 60 kilometers east of the provincial town, rows of pineapple are sprawling as far as the eyes can see. It is a new cash crop in the one hectare property that farmer Thong Yeuy, a mother of six children, owns in her backyard.

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De-mining transforms former battleground...

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"Just over a year ago this land was full of shrubs. We could use only a small portion of it because of landmines," the 42-year-old woman said while navigating through pineapple rows to pick the fruit. She said she made about US\$250 a year from selling the crop to supplement rice farming.

The amount may not seem that much but it can go a long way for rural families in a country where about a quarter of estimated 14.5 million people eke out a living on less than US\$1 a day. Their lives depend on access to cultivable land, a necessity by which Cambodia has made mine clearance a special Millennium Development Goal.

Through efforts to tackle its own landmine problems, Cambodia has grown in the know-how and capacity to even send de-miners to assist other mine-afflicted nations in the context of U.N.-peacekeeping missions. The number of casualties was drastically reduced to 211 in 2011 from 4,300 in 1996. Some 700 square kilometers of land have been cleared by various agencies and handed over for agricultural use and building critical infrastructure such as irrigation for farming, roads, schools and settlements.

Farmer Prak Chrin now owns a total of three hectares of land compared to just one she had four years ago. With bigger land, she

said she looked forward to collecting higher yields from harvest at the end of the year. In the long run, she hopes to increase her saving from selling crop surplus to build a larger house to replace the 15-square meter, rickety cottage she is currently sharing with her three boys.

That's her dream, but for now the most important thing for her is the absence of fear factor.

"Every morning I and my children just go out to work in the field, walk the cows without worry anymore," she said. "Things are a lot better now for us."

Local leaders embrace 'scorecard' as planning tool

Preah Sihanouk – At their recent meeting, Kampenh commune officials in this coastal province of Cambodia were presented with a spider graph showing status of various development indicators. In the areas of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, the commune scored 25 out of 100 points. The obtained point is way below average of 50 and that means, on this front, local officials still have a lot to do in their work plan.

The scores were laid out in the form of spider graph, bar chart and map. Better known as "scorecard," it has been recently rolled out by the government as a new analytical tool for local officials to use in better preparing development plan for their communities.

First introduced by the Ministry of Planning in 2010 with the support from United Nations Development Programme, the scorecard was designed for planning officers to use in tracking progress in Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDG). In September this year, it was made available for commune-sangkat councils to use in setting development priorities.

"Identifying problems is the first and most important step in drawing up commune development and investment plan. In the past, they did not have any scientific tool and only relied on their imagination in identifying problems," explained Mr. Mean

Thavorah, Deputy Director of General Planning Department, Ministry of Planning.

The scorecard works like an evaluation of student's performance on school subjects. Through it, commune-sangkat councils receive scoring on how well indicators under the CMDGs progress. A goal with 100 points means that it has done well and those with 50 points or below mean more efforts will be needed to improve them.

The scorecard can be generated automatically from commune database (CDB) at provincial department of planning across the country. The CDB holds a wealth of information on a wide range of issues including demography, natural resources, economy, infrastructure, education and health services in each commune and sangkat.

"When it is not yet made into spider graph, CDB is not really useful because it can create only commune profile and the commune councils do not have enough capacity to analyze the information to find the problems by themselves," H.E. Hou Taing Eng, Secretary of State, Ministry of Planning, explained.

"Now, when the CDB generates CMDG scorecard, they can see right away which goals have the lowest score. Even average people can see the problems clearly," he added.

Because the scorecard is a fairly new concept, it is expected that it will take time for many among the local councilors to find their way to use it to their advantage. At the same time, training sessions have been conducted to build their capacity to handle the tool.

New Country Director...

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"I am delighted to have an opportunity to serve in Cambodia. I understand that the country stands at a crossroads for the next phase of development. I am looking forward to working with you all to assist the country with a long-range perspective for the generations to come, tapping the great potential and young energy in the country and in the region, in partnership with many development partners," Ms. Yamazaki said.

"UNDP Cambodia will continue to strengthen our internal capacity to respond to emerging needs of the country and towards our mission," she added.

Solar-powered pumps bring water into rural homes

Kratie – Clean water is a commodity often hard to come by for Cambodians living in the countryside. For the most part, running water is simply unheard of.

That is beginning to change now for many villagers in Kratie province, about 315 kilometers northeast of the capital Phnom Penh. Pumping systems powered by solar energy channel clean water straight into people's homes that are not even connected to the main power grid.

"My house was the first to get the running water," Chhae Sokhaeng, a 37-year-old woman, said with a chuckle while washing vegetable to fix lunch. Turning off the faucet to halt the water, she added "it is just so convenient and saves a lot of time."

Her family is one of the 150 households – or around 1,000 people – in the province's Bos Leav commune that are now receiving, for the first time, clean water for cooking, drinking and washing. Such convenience can help spare women like Chhae Sokhaeng the trouble of fetching water to spend more time on farming activities instead.

The utility represents a small but significant breakthrough in tackling the larger water problem in the countryside that is home to some 80 percent of Cambodia's 14.5 million people. Across the country, around 56 percent of the rural populations are still without access to safe drinking water sources.

Bos Leav commune used to be one of them until recently. The area is also no stranger to drought and flood. The villagers and their animals rely on a nearby stream for water for consumption. In dry season, the stream ebbs, forcing people to trek 20 meters down the bank to fetch water. In rainy season, the stream overflows to consume the wider landscape where animal droppings are a common sight. Cases of water-borne diseases such as diarrhea were also common.

"The water in the stream is simply dirty. You have to stir white alum in it to separate the residue first before you can even use it for cooking," said Im Li, a farmer. "The pipe water is clean and I don't have to worry so much



Photo: UNDP/Chansok Lay

Chhae Sokhaeng washes vegetables using running water from a solar-powered pump system in her village in Bosleav commune, Kratie province in northeastern Cambodia.

about my children getting sick with diarrhea like in the past anymore."

The 37-year-old man is also in charge of the water distribution in Preah Konlong village in the commune. Part of his job is to manage the power switch linking a well pump to the eight solar panels – each measuring 0.6-meter wide and 1.2-meter long – that rise above a six-meter high water tower overlooking the village's horizon.

Once the switch is on, the pump pushes the water up into four tanks that together hold 35 cubic meters of water. From that height the water drops through a main pipe system that snakes through the village.

This hi-tech utility is the latest intervention to help mitigate adverse effect of climate change on the villagers' lives. There are three solar water pumping stations across the commune. Each costs US\$21,350 paid for by a climate change adaptation project in water resources and agriculture, a partnership between the Cambodian government, United Nations Development Programme and Global Environment Facility.

Although it's still early to measure the extent of the impact, the villagers say the pump system is helping cut down significantly both the amount of time and money they used to spend on getting water and treating

water-related illnesses.

"Every day, we had to spend more than 5,000 riel to buy gasoline to run the generator and pump water from the stream for storage. It was really hard to keep up with the expense," In Aen, another 35-year-old farmer, said.

The villagers spoke of their plan to grow more vegetables around their houses during dry season, taking advantage of the new utility.

And so is afoot a plan for managing it.

Each of the three villages has formed a committee to draw up water use regulation. It will include limiting the amount of water a family can use per day to no more than 5 cubic meters at a fee of 1,000 riel (24 US cents) per cubic meter. The fee is less than half of the 2,300 riel (56 US cents) the provincial utility charges to the residents living in the nearby provincial town.

Im Li, the water distribution supervisor, said that imposing the limit will help ensure equitable share of the resource among the villagers. As for the fee, he said, it will go to building up a fund to help maintain the system.

"It is a big investment so we have to maintain it to last long," he said.

Towards sustainable energy in Cambodia

Phnom Penh – Cambodia has seen a dramatic increase in demand for electricity, fueled largely by a steady economic growth in the last decade. The country's Master Plan Study on Rural Electrification by Renewable Energy sets specific targets for all villages to be electrified from different sources by 2020. Furthermore, it seeks to raise access rate to reliable, grid quality and affordable price electricity services to 70 percent of the rural households by the year 2030.

In this context, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy have begun a process of consultation to create a project called "Sustainable Energy for All" in the future. This was the focus of the workshop that was presided over by H.E. Suy Sem, the Minister of Industry, Mines and Energy, on 13 December. The minister was joined by UN Resident Coordinator Douglas Broderick and several representatives of development partners and civil society organizations in Cambodia.

The gathering was an opportunity for the participants to gain understanding about the roadmap on the approach and process to develop national vision and readiness plan on "Sustainable Energy for All." Better known as SE4ALL, it is a global initiative launched



Photo: UNDP

Biogas extracted from cow manure is a new source of energy for the family of Mr. Tum Heng, 61, in Toeuk Krohom village, Toeuk Krohom commune, Choam Ksan district, Preah Vihear province.



Photo: UNDP/Chansok Lay

Solar panels generate electricity to pump clean water for distribution to 150 families in Preah Kunlong village, Bosleav commune, Kratie province.

by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2011. The initiative presents an opportunity for Cambodia to assess the national progress on national energy situation within the context of environmental sustainability, economic and social development.

In his opening remarks at the workshop, H.E. Suy Sem described "Sustainable Energy for All" as an "innovative initiative" that is in line with the government's policy to promote green growth and reduce poverty among the rural population.

UN Resident Coordinator Douglas Broderick

noted in his speech that that Cambodia is one of 63 countries that have so far joined SE4All initiative. He called it an "excellent response" to assist Cambodia to mobilize commitments and technical and financial resources to address its energy goals.

"Building on this momentum, now is the time for Cambodia to move further ahead," he said.

"Development is not possible without energy. Sustainable development is not possible without sustainable energy," he added.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Message on Human Rights Day

10 December 2012

Everyone has the right to be heard and to shape the decisions that affect their community. This right is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and fully integrated in international law, especially in article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Over the past century, we have made undeniable progress along the path of inclusion.

Yet far too many groups and individuals face far too many obstacles. Women have the right to vote almost everywhere, but remain hugely under-represented in parliaments and peace processes, in senior government posts and corporate boardrooms, and in other decision-making positions. Indigenous people frequently face discrimination that denies them the opportunity to make full use of their guaranteed rights or fails to take account of their circumstances. Religious and ethnic minorities – as well as people

with disabilities or those with a different sexual orientation or political opinion – are often hampered from taking part in key institutions and processes. Institutions and public discourse need to represent societies in all their diversity.

More generally, in several parts of the world, we have seen

alarming threats to hard-won gains in democratic governance. In some countries, civil society groups face growing pressures and restrictions. Legislation has been introduced specifically targeting civil society organizations and making it almost impossible for them to operate. Champions of democracy have encountered new confrontational measures. We should all be troubled by such backsliding.

Even in societies with a good track record,

there is room for improvement. No country has succeeded in ensuring that all its inhabitants are able to participate fully in public affairs, including the right to be elected to public office and to have equal access to public services. Enacting new rights or removing unjust laws is not always sufficient. Too often, discrimination persists in practice, creating barriers and mindsets that can be hard to overcome.

“No matter who you are, or where you live, your voice counts. Let us unite to defend your right to make it heard.”

Vibrant civil society groups are among the keys to the well-being and functioning of any nation, and the United Nations deplores measures

taken to suppress them. That is why, on this Human Rights Day, the United Nations is highlighting the right to participate and the associated rights that make it possible – freedom of expression and opinion, and peaceful assembly and association.

International law is clear: No matter who you are, or where you live, your voice counts. On this Day, let us unite to defend your right to make it heard.

UNDP Administrator Helen Clark

Message on International Anti-Corruption Day

9 December 2012

Corruption is a crime against development which thrives in the shadows. International Anti-Corruption Day is an opportunity to shed light on the damage it does, and to reaffirm our commitment to act against it.

The impact of corruption is greater than just the diversion of resources – significant as this is. Corruption is also corrosive of societies and contributes to a justified lack of trust and confidence in governance. The worst consequences of corruption are borne by poor and vulnerable groups. Bribes, for example, can make basic services available only to those able to pay.

As the poor are more reliant on public services, they are disproportionately harmed by what may be, in financial terms, small-time corruption. Research suggests that poor women are often the worst affected by corruption.

The poor also have the most to lose from rapid degradation of natural resources stemming from corruption which enables laws and regulations to be circumvented.

Illegal logging to which corrupt officials turn a blind eye, for example, can threaten the ecosystems on which poor people depend for their livelihoods, and lead to revenue losses for governments too. UNDP, through its work in support of the program Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, also known as REDD +, is helping to reduce the risk of corruption in forest management.

Preventing and combating corruption requires transparency and accountability at all levels. UNDP now has some two decades of experience in supporting countries to fight corruption.

Integrated approaches, encompassing capacity development, governance reforms, targeted anti-corruption measures, more transparency, and greater civic participation, have been proven to work well.

Anti-corruption measures need to be

integrated into development planning processes. UNDP's work on governance around the world aims to strengthen the national institutions and processes needed to build trust, improve responsiveness and accountability, and mobilise resources for development.

Taking back what was lost to corrupt practices is everyone's responsibility – governments and civil society organizations, the private sector and the media, the general public, and youth who will play a pivotal role in seeing this agenda through so that their future is built on solid and honest foundations.

“Taking back what was lost to corrupt practices is everyone's responsibility – governments and civil society organizations, the private sector and the media, the general public, and youth...”

I encourage each of you to act against corruption today, to shine a light on those shadows, so that we can move together towards a better world.

UNDP and UNODC today launched a global competition to select the 2013 International Anti-Corruption Day campaign theme and logo. For more information see ACT – Against Corruption Today campaign www.actagainstcorruption.org. Join us in curbing corruption and building a sustainable world.

Ending violence against women – we must all do more!

Across the world, violence against women is increasingly recognized for what it is: a threat to democracy, a barrier to lasting peace, a burden on national economies, and a human rights violation.

Violence against women is not only painful and degrading. There are often serious long-term personal repercussions. The threat of rape and violence also contributes to human trafficking, unsafe sex, the spread of HIV and other health consequences.

But as more and more people believe that violence against women is neither acceptable nor inevitable, as more and more perpetrators are punished, the movement to end violence against women grows deeper and stronger.

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women was celebrated on 25 November. On that day, we came together and showed that this pervasive problem is never acceptable.

It also marked the start of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence, a global campaign with a local face. In Cambodia, hundreds of partners– from NGOs to Government ministries, UN agencies, civil society organizations and individuals – joined forces to raise public awareness. The 16-day period also covered moments such as World AIDS Day on 1 December and International Volunteer Day on 5 December, culminating on 10 December, Human Rights Day.

In Cambodia, the first step towards ending gender violence has already been taken: the silence has been broken. Policy-makers have taken decisive action by outlawing domestic and ‘acid attack’ violence. Building on Cambodia’s 1992 ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Government has incorporated many of the Convention’s standards into its laws, policies and practices.

The Ministry of Women’s Affairs, in partnership with other ministries and a range of development partners, is currently in the process of formulating the new National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women. Consultation is currently underway across the country, with the Action Plan to be finalized in 2013.

These are all important steps in strengthening policy and practice at the national and sub-national levels and



Photo: UN Women/CRDT

Cambodians take part in a ‘16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence’ event in Preah Rumkel, Stung Treng province, northeastern Cambodia.

ensuring they are responsive to the wide spectrum of needs and concerns, including those of marginalized groups.

Globally, knowledge on the root causes of violence has increased, and women, men and young people continue to mobilize in huge numbers to speak out. Countless organizations and their members work tirelessly to support survivors in many countries.

But there is still work to be done. We must all continue to do better to protect women and girls, and prevent this pervasive human rights violation.

We hope to see new and improved laws and national action plans that provide safe houses, free hotline services and free health and legal aid to survivors. We count on education programs that teach human rights, equality and mutual respect, and inspire young people to take leadership on ending violence against women and girls. We need increasing numbers of women in politics, law enforcement, and peacekeeping forces. We need equal economic opportunities and decent jobs for women. All of these actions require decisiveness and courage.

In some countries, up to 7 in 10 women will be beaten, raped, abused, or mutilated in their lifetimes. A crisis of such proportions deserves nothing less than the highest attention of world leaders. Next March, leaders from governments and civil society will come together at the UN Commission on the Status of Women to agree on action to prevent and respond effectively to violence

against women. Expectations are high, and they should be.

During the 16 Days of Activism, people in Cambodia and across the world took to the streets for a wide range of activities and events. It was an important opportunity to show your support, speak out and stand up against gender based violence.

Because this is not just a women’s issue. It is a responsibility for all of us. Such violence is an outrage and it must be stopped.

Time has run out for complacency or excuses. Let us show the will, the determination and let us continue to mobilize greater resources to end violence against women.

When asked whether ending violence against women is possible given the pervasiveness and persistence of these crimes, we must answer “yes”. It is possible. But only by working together can we achieve this end.

UN sponsors of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence



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