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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 UN Resident Coordinator arrives in Cambodia



Ms. Claire Van der Vaeren

Phnom Penh - Ms. Claire Van der Vaeren of Belgium has taken up her position as the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations and Resident Representative of United Nations Development Programme in Cambodia.

Ms. Van der Vaeren officially assumed her office in early April 2013, succeeding her predecessor Mr. Douglas Broderick who has recently taken up a new assignment in Indonesia.

Prior to this assignment, Ms. Van der Vaeren served as the UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative for Bhutan. She was Division Chief for Southeast Asia and the Pacific in the

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Crop diversification builds stronger communities to tackle climate change



Photo: UNDP

Farmer Tum Heng takes fertilizer to prepare new vegetable beds at his house in Teuk Kraham village, Preah Vihear province.

Preah Vihear – The sun has just emerged in the horizon but Cambodian farmer Tum Heng was already working in full swing in his vegetable garden. After watering the vegetables, he made his rounds fetching cow manure to spread on newly paved rows where yard-long bean and cucumber were going to be on.

These will be the new additions to eggplant, cabbage, pumpkin and chili – just to name a few – that have already filled the sprawling garden within the compound of his house in Teuk Kraham commune, Preah Vihear province in northern Cambodia. These days the 61-year-old man and his wife, Kuy Sameun, keep busy daily routines toiling hard to ensure food sufficiency for their family of six.

"We go to the market only because we need to buy fish and meat, not vegetables," Mr. Tum Heng said.

He and his wife are among some 9,400 poor families in 16 communes across Kratie and Preah Vihear provinces where a UNDP-supported project is helping improve their ability to cope with the changing climate. The project Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture and Water covers a wide range of activities including techniques in crop diversification and better management of water resource. It is also the first of its kind designed to respond to priorities identified in the country's priorities to respond to climate change. The ultimate aim is to enable villagers to improve food security, thereby reducing their vulnerability to adverse impacts of climate change.

Like most Cambodians living in the countryside, Mr. Tum Heng and his wife used to depend on subsistence rice farming. But where they live drought is a frequent visitor. Because of that they decided three years

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New UN Resident Coordinator arrives in Cambodia

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Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific from 2004-2009 and Deputy Resident Representative in Turkey from 2000-2004. From 1997-2000, she was UNDP's Assistant Resident Representative in charge of programme in Cambodia. For a number of years, from 1991-1997, she worked with the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in New York as an Operational Guidelines Specialist to the Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit; as a Consultant; and as UNCDF's Field Implementation Officer in Ethiopia. Prior to joining UNDP, Claire worked as an International Staff Operations Liaison Assistant with CARE, Inc.

Ms. Van der Vaeren holds a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and a Licence in Political Science and International Relations, from the Université Libre de Bruxelles. She speaks French, English and Spanish.

Crop diversification builds stronger communities...

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ago to do home gardening as an alternative source of livelihood instead.

Using the knowledge they received from training provided by the project, the couple has turned the one-hectare space around their 5 by 6-meter wooden house into a little plantation of sort. Sugar cane is taking up the largest chunk of the land. Banana trees occupy a portion of the front yard and many of them are bearing fruits in the quantity that is surely more than the family of six can eat.

The husband and wife may not be the model farmers, however. In other parts of Cambodia there are farmers who have already embarked on multiple cropping to boost food stock and revenue. Yet, the couple's hard work is the latest example of

rural residents making necessary farming adaptation for their own survival, especially at the time when rainfall is becoming more erratic but intense and drought is prolonged.

"Now we only grow fruit trees and vegetables for a living. They are easier than rice to tend to and take shorter time to harvest. You can do two or three crops per year only if you have enough water. Vegetables do need water but not as much as rice does," Ms. Kuy Sameun said.

The couple owns 15 cows that they previously used to let loose in the field to graze. But these days they keep them fed on grass and hays most of the time inside the pen to ensure a steady supply of manure to produce methane gas for cooking and lighting the lantern at night.

For they are not even connected to the power grid like most rural homes, the gas stove in their kitchen represents a small surprise indeed.

The state-of-the-art, environmentally friendly stove is part of a bio-digester unit that the project has provided to Ms. Kuy Sameun and 11 other families in Teuk Kraham commune. To extract the gas, cow manure is mixed with water in a well in the ground from where methane is emitted and fed through a plastic hose to the stove and the lantern. Their cooking has become less of a chore ever since they began using the gas stove.

"In the past sometimes we were unable to cook because the fire wood got soaked up by the rain. But we do not have to worry about that anymore," Ms. Kuy Sameun said, adding that she can now save around US\$75 in annual spending she normally made on purchasing charcoal.

Meanwhile, the residue left from gas extraction goes to keep their vegetable garden flourishing.

"It is quite tiresome for us since we are not young any more, but we enjoy our work. After all it is pointless to leave the land empty, isn't it?" Ms. Kuy Sameun said with a grin.

Their hard work has paid off. Over the past two years they managed to accumulate US\$2,100 in saving from the sales of their produces. They spent half of the money on a brand new motorcycle for their son to drive to school. They are not rich but clearly better off now.



Photo: UNDP

Farmer Kuy Sameun waters vegetables she grows at her house in Teuk Kraham village, Preah Vihear province.

Scorecards to aid local planning needs

Phnom Penh – In cooperation with the Ministry of Planning, the United Nations Development Programme has recently held a session with representatives of development partners and non-governmental groups to discuss the use of new local development tools. These tools include scorecard on Cambodia Millennium Development Goals and sectoral scorecards on economic, social, environmental and admin security aspects of local development.

First introduced in 2010 by Ministry of Planning with support from UNDP, the MDG scorecard was designed for use in tracking progress of CMDG. It went local last year and

since then commune-sangkat councils across the country are using it to set development priorities in their respective communities. This scorecard derived from the Commune Database which contains comprehensive information about socio-economic conditions and infrastructure in the rural areas. Different from MDG scorecard, the sectoral scorecards, however, are designed respond specifically to needs for planning in economic, social, environmental and admin security dimensions. Gender is cross-cutting among all four areas.

The evolution and usefulness of the scorecards were discussed at the workshop with

other development actors on February 13. The discussions and exchange of views enabled the 60 participants – from UN agencies, development partners, international organizations, NGOs and Ministry of Planning – to better understand the new tools and strengthen collaboration in promoting it in support of sub-national planning.

The workshop was highlighted by the release of poverty and MDG scorecard updates – based on the CDB – for capital, provinces, districts, khans, communes and sangkats covering the period 2004-2012. The poverty and MDG scorecards can be found on www.un.org.kh/undp/mdgs/cambodian-mdgs.

Petroleum policy drafting forges ahead

Phnom Penh – The Cambodian government says it is forging ahead with the drafting of a crucial policy paper designed to regulate and manage the country's petroleum sector in the future.

The Cambodian National Petroleum Authority (CNPA), on January 11, held a one-day meeting with representatives of relevant ministries, non-governmental organizations and United Nations Development Programme to obtain comments on possible improvement to the draft National Petroleum Policy Framework.

The meeting was the culmination of a year-long analytical study that CNPA said it had conducted, looking into experiences in a number of countries – namely Australia, Brazil, Canada, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam – to use as the foundation for drafting Cambodia's own petroleum policy.

"This policy has the objective to obtain [the most] benefits from the petroleum sector, not just in terms of revenue and tax but also in securing a source of energy supply to contribute to promoting investment" in Cambodia, the CNPA said on its website, www.cnpa.gov.kh. It added that knowledge and

skill building and creation of employment opportunities in the petroleum sector are also among the goals to be covered by the policy.

Speaking at the meeting, UNDP Cambodia Country Director, Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, said she was encouraged by the latest step taken by the CNPA. Meanwhile, she urged the government "to take a sustainable, responsible and accountable approach" in trying to develop the sector.

"This means ensuring institutionalizing the rule of law ... to prioritize social, health, safety and environmental needs, all the while promoting economic development for all, especially education and training," she said in her remarks.

"It also means having in place transparent and open mechanisms to manage revenues and ensuring that they contribute to increased employment, better health and education and further other development needs of the present and future generations of Cambodians," she added.

Cambodian oil endowment is expected to have potential to help the country's socio-economic development move to the next

level. Its development is still at a nascent stage, however, with the first drop of oil reportedly expected to be pumped out of the seabed in the next few years.

The government, with support from UNDP in Cambodia, is nonetheless moving ahead to lay the necessary groundwork for handling the challenges that would come along the oil windfall.

The CNPA said on its website that the petroleum policy will pay close attention to environmental and cultural assets that could be affected by the petroleum development. In this sense, it said, the policy will embody a number of key strategic goals aimed at:

- Maximizing economic benefits arising from exploitation of petroleum resource;
- Encouraging investment by firms that have technological capacity to ensure safety as well as safeguard the environment;
- Setting clear regulatory framework for the sector;
- Helping mobilize revenue for the state budget, and
- Ensuring that petroleum revenue is used and re-invested [accountably and transparently] in the benefit of the Cambodian people.

Job fair puts focus on needs for skills improvement

Siem Reap – When Siem Reap provincial town hosted a job fair in January, the dominant messages were: the province has a lot of potentials to reap benefit from tourism growth and reduce poverty level by improving quality of skills, education and access to accurate labour market information.

Siem Reap provincial office held the two-day event on 19-20 January jointly with the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, and the National Employment Agency. The first of its kind to have taken place there, the fair provided a venue for job seekers, employers and training providers to meet and exchange ideas about employment opportunities and skills needed in the country's main tourism hub.

Siem Reap governor, H.E. Sou Phirin, said the fair was a “timely response” to the challenges facing the tourism industry. One of them, he noted, is the shortage of skilled labour to fill the needs of the fast-growing industry and its relevant sectors.

“All of this requires our utmost attention to address,” he said in his opening speech at the fair.

The United Nations Development Programme in Cambodia provided support to the job fair as part of a broader effort to assist Siem Reap provincial authorities to draw up a plan for human capital and skills development for the local population.

The tourism industry in Siem Reap is a major driver of local and national economic growth and creates employment for hundreds of thousands of people. However, poverty still persists in Siem Reap. According to the Commune Database 2012, which contains comprehensive information on a wide range of socio-economic issues, Siem Reap is ranked the 8th poorest province in Cambodia. Lack of employment at home has forced many women and young people to travel across the border to work, often in harsh conditions and without legal protection.



Photo: UNDP/Lara Moragrega-Martin

Young job seekers and students take part in a job fair in Siem Reap province.

Representing UNDP at the fair, Mr. Natharoun Ngo, head of the Poverty Reduction Unit, said the continued growth in the tourism industry in Siem Reap will undoubtedly offer more job opportunities to the local residents. But, he said, training centers and universities in the province, which operate with limited quality curriculums, “have not yet generated enough skilled workers to meet the demand of the industry.”

“All local tourism related actors in Siem Reap needs to pursue their efforts taking into consideration increasing regional competition if they want to meet good quality standards that have been achieved by our Thai or Indonesian neighbors within their tourism sector, to name a few,” he said.

The fair drew more than 3,500 visitors many of whom were university students who one day will enter the job market. Representative of public and private sectors made a series of presentation about job opportunities and vacancy in various industries to the audience. Dialogues ensued and brought to light issues of concerns to young job seekers such as preparation to enter labour market and skills development.

“As Cambodia moves towards economic integration together with its ASEAN neighbors, the need for increased national investment in strengthening Cambodia’s greatest asset – its young people – becomes more and more urgent,” Mr. Natharoun Ngo said.

Stop violence against women - let's make it a reality!

Joint UN Op-Ed on International Women's Day, 8 March 2013

Late last year, a woman in Delhi was gang raped on a bus. She died of her injuries.

The Delhi case caused national protest and international outrage, provoking a global conversation. The headlines blazed about violence against women, the lack of action to confront the issue, and the culture of impunity surrounding its perpetrators.

At about the same time, two stories hit the news in Cambodia. A teenage boy was shot and killed, attempting to protect his mother from violence at his father's hands. A woman who had been set on fire by her husband returned to the family home to find him still there; he was only moved after he attempted to rape both her and their daughter.

And just this week, Cambodian newspapers reported that five men drugged and gang-raped a woman to the point of unconsciousness at Koh Dach Port in Phnom Penh. Her ordeal lasted for hours.

The statistics on violence against women and girls in our region continue to shock. According to a multi-country study (involving, among others, roughly 2,000 Cambodian men and 500 women aged 18-49), one in five men said that they had committed rape in their lifetime.

It has to end.

International Women's Day on 8 March is more than just a day off work. It is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women. It's a chance to acknowledge progress towards economic, political and social equality for women. But it's also a time to reflect on the job still left to do.

In 2013 it is marked around the world on the theme 'Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls'. Also focussed on ending violence against women is this year's session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York. It is attended by a delegation from the Royal Government of Cambodia and will reaffirm international commitments to tackle violence against women in all its forms.

For violence against women to stop once and for all, however, the work undertaken at the policy level must be translated into actual changes in public perceptions and behaviour.

We all need to do more than just talk about it.

Words must meet concrete actions from everyone at every tier, from the international community to villages and households.

Living free from violence is every woman's right. This year, let's make it a reality.



Photo: UN/Martine Perret

Because violence against women and girls is violence. Period. It is a criminal act and a human rights violation. Moreover, it is a barrier to peace, security and economic empowerment, and is part of the vicious circles of human trafficking, substance abuse, and HIV transmission. And children who witness or experience domestic violence or sexual abuse are at higher risk of poor growth, ill-health and psychological disorders, compromising their potential as the keepers of Cambodia's future.

The time for tolerance is over. Violence against women and girls is neither acceptable nor inevitable. So all stakeholders – from the police and the courts to the United Nations, NGOs and civil society – must put ideas in

practice to tackle every side of the problem. We need even more creative programmes and actions to terminate acceptance and impunity, and we have to enforce the law with the utmost rigour.

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Cambodia has indeed made great strides in recent years towards the elimination of violence against women and girls. From ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and introducing laws on trafficking and domestic violence, to a comprehensive study to determine the prevalence of the problem, to the second National Action Plan on Violence Against Women, the Royal Government and its partners have shown their clear commitment.

The UN stands firm in its commitment to support the Royal Government of Cambodia in eliminating violence against women. With several agencies working on violence against women and girls and sexual and gender-based violence, the United Nations is in a unique position to support Cambodia in strengthening its responses to these crimes.

And drawing on the national and international momentum to end violence against women, Cambodia is in a unique position to make 2013 count. We must take advantage of this focus and this energy to turn the tide.

So, on this International Women's Day, the United Nations calls for open dialogue and accelerated action to live up to the promises we have made.

Living free from violence is every woman's right. This year, let's make it a reality.

Pieter Van Maaren, United Nations Resident Coordinator ad interim. On behalf of the United Nations in Cambodia.

Youth multimedia campaign launches new TV series

Phnom Penh – The youth multimedia campaign Loy9 is shifting up gears by launching the second series of TV magazine featuring dramas last month.

The first episode of the TV magazine – officially known as TV Series Two – was broadcast on MyTV, a channel popular among young people, on March 7 and repeated on CTN and CNC stations that weekend. The launch of the new TV series also followed the announcement by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) on March 5 to grant 7 million Krona (US\$1.1 million) to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to promote civic engagement of young Cambodians.

Sharing the Swedish government's support for Loy9, Anne Höglund, the Swedish Ambassador to Cambodia, said: "Loy9 is an innovative way to engage young Cambodians to participate in public life and to strengthen understanding of the democratic process in this country. We are very happy to be associated with this initiative."

The Loy9 campaign is built on a UNDP-funded research in 2010 that showed a lack of knowledge and understanding among many young Cambodians about the country's democratic processes and difficulties expressing issues of concern to them. The project combines live events with entertaining and educational programming on TV, radio, online and mobile phones for an audience of 15 to 24 years old from all areas reached by mass media. In using multimedia platforms, it hopes to spur greater interests of young people to get more involved in community life as well as to improve their understanding about the country's democratic process and institutions.

In 2012, the project produced 16 episodes of weekly TV show, accompanied by regular live events, and radio and online discussions. An evaluation of the project found that Loy9 was "very well received by its audience" last year.

"We are so encouraged to see the enthusiasm and views that young people from all walks of life expressed through the first part of this multimedia campaign," UNDP's Country Director Setsuko Yamazaki said. "They have set a trend for many to follow and we hope



Photo: UNDP

UNDP Country Director Ms. Setsuko Yamazaki, left, and Swedish Ambassador H.E. Anne Höglund, right, sign a grant agreement to support youth multimedia project Loy9 on 6 March 2013.

the next series will be as successful as the previous series in inspiring young people to play active role in charting the future they want for Cambodia."

The debut of the new TV series followed the end of the first leg of the Loy9 activities that culminated in the programme being awarded the Guinness World Record for 'Largest Madison Dance.' The dance was an entertainment component of Loy9 which is implemented by BBC Media Action with support from UNDP.

The TV Series Two will cover a wide range of topics, including gender equality, women's participation in decision-making, young people's role in democratic process and citizens' participation in local development planning.

"The second series will introduce more inspiring young Cambodians, more examples of how young people can get involved and, of course, more fun," Loy9 project director Colin Spurway said. "And it will help a new generation to know what they are voting for, and how, when the nation goes to the polls in July," he added.

Among those who became fond of Loy9 was 18-year-old Pavchin, who lives in Kampong Cham province. The high school student said it helped him to learn how to express himself and think critically.

"In the past, I rarely discussed things, but now having watched Loy9, I do and I work in

groups more often. And I know more about women's rights," he said.

To 18-year-old Sony who lives in Kampot province, Loy9 was educational and helped promote good values in the society. Like many young people, she never took part in any community service before, but that has begun to change. One day after watching scenes in a Loy9 TV drama where young characters repaired a road, Sony volunteered to do the same in real life. "I participated in constructing a path to a paddy field after the Loy9 TV programme was finished because I think it's important for all people to be able to walk or use ox carts," she said.

She added that she enjoyed watching Loy9's debate segment too, especially the episodes where young people in two groups discussed voting age. "The debates are interesting. The two sides ask each other questions, both for and against...like about voting. For me, when we reach the age when we are eligible to vote, we have to vote," she said.



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