DFID Department for International Development

British Embassy Phnom Penh

UK Government PRESS STATEMENT for the CG Meeting
Phnom Penh 7th December 2004

At the 7th CG Meeting held in Phnom Penh on 6th and 7th December, Government and donors, joined by representatives of civil society and the private sector met to review the government's Rectangular Strategy and highlighted the critical actions needed to implement it.

The UK Government welcomes the commitments made by the Royal Government of Cambodia including anti-corruption measures, improvements in managing public finances and reform of the civil service. Progress will be monitored quarterly jointly by government, donors and other groups. The meeting also highlighted progress made by donors in better co-ordinating development assistance and working in partnership with government, to improve the effectiveness of development assistance to reduce poverty.

Marshall Elliott, Head of DFID's South East Asia programmes and Head of the UK delegation said at the meeting that "The UK remains firmly committed to helping the poor people of Cambodia escape poverty. We welcome the commitments by the Royal Government of Cambodia to improve governance, strengthen growth and reduce poverty. We stand ready to work with our donor partners to help turn these commitments into action."

John Mitchell, Chargé d'Affaires at the British Embassy, added that "the UK government confirmed that its development assistance to benefit the poor of Cambodia will increase from US$20 million in 2004 to US$25 million in 2005."

The main focus of the UK's programme is improving health services for the poor, implementation of the government's HIV/AIDS strategy, support to community level development at the commune level, improving incomes for poor people in rural areas and support to improve the management of public finances. DFID works both through government and non-government organisations in Cambodia.

Background:

The CG meeting is the annual meeting of the government and donors, co-chaired by Government and donors with representatives of civil society and the private sector. The meeting reviews progress since the previous CG and confirms priority actions for government (supported where needed by donors) to implement its strategy.

The year's delay in the formation of the Government following the July 2003 elections, resulted in this being the first CG meeting in Cambodia since 2002.

The theme of this year's meeting was 'Promoting Good Governance for Poverty Reduction'. The actions agreed at the meeting were drawn from government's own plans and agreed through a series of sector level technical working groups consisting of government, development partners and other groups

Last week, government and 12 of its development partners signed the 'Cambodia Declaration', confirming their commitment to improved coordination between donors and with government in delivering development aid. The declaration is based on the 'Rome Declaration for Harmonisation' which was agreed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee in 2003.

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