

Annex 5 Opening Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marschall

Excellency Minister Chhieng Yannara
Dr. Pfeil
Excellencies
Dear colleagues
Ladies and gentlemen

Two years have gone by since our two governments last had come together to discuss the development cooperation, and it has been four years since these talks were held here in Cambodia. These negotiations are an important moment when we are taking stock of what has been accomplished and discussing what still needs to be done. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have been working hard during the past few weeks and months to prepare this conference, notably my two colleagues Ludgera Klemp and Birgit Strube as well as the colleagues from the BMZ, GIZ and KfW and our partners of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

Things have moved on since the last conference. Cambodia has moved forward, and remarkable accomplishments have been reached in numerous areas. German-Cambodian development cooperation has continued successfully. Only a few days ago I was able to see for myself the truly impressive work which both GIZ and KfW are doing in the so-called "Green Belt" and rural infrastructure project in the Siem Reap province.

There also have been elections in our countries since the last government negotiations. Elections always are an important event – this is when the voice of the electorate is being heard and this voice in a democratic state always serves as the guideline for the newly elected government. In the case of Germany, the new government has not been formed as yet, although much points in the direction of another grand coalition formed by the conservative Christian Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party of Germany. A draft coalition treaty provides for a continued commitment to development cooperation of the future German government, and although there may still be changes in detail, I believe we can safely assume that the general course of German development cooperation will not be altered, be it here in Cambodia or elsewhere.

Election results in this country have been telling. There has been an increased share of young people who have voted for the first time, and this may be at the root of an election result which many observers interpret as a call for reform and change coming from a considerable part of the Cambodian population.

The German government is following this with great attention and interest. Of course it rests with the Royal Cambodian Government to draw its own conclusions with regard to policy changes it may deem necessary to undertake. But Germany would like to encourage the Cambodian government to listen to this call for reform. German development cooperation will be implemented in such a way as to support and facilitate a reform process. Special attention will be given to an approach which includes civil society and, in particular, women. The question of securing land titles, a question which is at the core of a sound economic development but also of social peace and justice will continue to be part of German development cooperation. It is of paramount importance to us that this cooperation always works *for*, not against those whose livelihood depends on the land they are dwelling. - For cooperation in the administrative sector an important yard stick will be the successful reform of the Cambodian civil service. The aim must be to make civil servants independent of non-governmental sources of income.

No doubt, much still needs to be done. To our Cambodian friends I am saying: The German government stands at your side and we are looking forward to a continued good cooperation. I consider it my duty to help to promote and deepen the relations which exist between our two countries, and this of course – for the time being - includes development cooperation.

Thank you.