



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**

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**The Eighth High Level Consultations between  
the Royal Government of Cambodia  
and  
the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia**

Opening Remarks

**by Deputy Prime Minister KEAT CHHON**

Minister of Economy and Finance and First Vice-Chairman of CDC

Palais du Gouvernement (CDC)

Phnom Penh, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**H.E. Richard Moore**, Deputy Director General, Asia, and Head of the Australia Delegation

**H.E. Phillippe Allen**, Minister Counsellor, Mekong Region

**Mr. Lachlan Pontifex**, Counsellor, Australian Embassy

Members of the Delegation from AusAID

Excellencies and Colleagues from Royal Government's ministries and agencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to welcome the Australian delegation to the Eighth High Level Consultations between our two governments. I would like to extend my warm welcome to **H.E. Richard Moore**, Deputy Director General, Asia, Head of the Australian Delegation; to **H.E. Phillippe Allen**, Minister Counsellor, Mekong region; **Mr. Lachlan Pontifex**, Counsellor, Australian Embassy; and the other members of AusAID Delegation. I also welcome my colleagues from government ministries and agencies to these consultations.

On behalf of the Royal Government and the Cambodian delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to express my Government's sincere appreciation to the Government of Australia and AusAID for its continuing commitment to the Royal Government's development priorities as set out in the Rectangular Strategy-Phase II and the National Strategic Development Plan. Since our last consultation in August 2005, AusAID has continued to support the implementation of projects in priority sectors such as agriculture and irrigation, Mine Action, and Governance, and has recently engaged in the Health sector and PFM Reform Program

The Australian assistance program is regarded globally as very effective. The Australian Government's intention to increase its support to developing countries to 0.5% of Gross National Income (GNI) demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting the Millennium Development Goals. Australia has also demonstrated commitment to making its assistance more effective and has been an effective advocate and practitioner of principles set out in the Paris Declaration. We see evidence of this in Cambodia through Australia's delegated cooperation support in health, public financial management, mine action, as well as to CDC, and we also acknowledge the commitment to effective capacity development practices. We would also like to acknowledge Australian initiatives to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into every AusAID assistance program.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The High-Level Consultations today are being held at the time that the Country Strategy for 2009-2015 is being finalised. I would like to emphasize that the Royal Government considers these consultations an important process for further strengthening the development cooperation partnership between our two countries. It is an opportune moment for discussing the Country Strategy that Australia will support over the next seven years. More importantly, the consultations will contribute to ensuring real development results.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The core objectives of today's discussions are:

1. Firstly, to review the Annual Program Performance of the country strategy in 2003-2008 in the context of Royal Government aid effectiveness priorities
2. Secondly, to share and discuss Australia's Country Strategy for the period 2009-2015 and Australia's support for fiscal year 2009-2010
3. Lastly, we will discuss progress and the future direction in key sectors supported by AusAID including: agriculture, health, governance and community development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to take this opportunity to once again acknowledge the Australian government's partnership with Cambodia. The quality of Australia's assistance means that Australia is a very important partner for Cambodia, not simply as a provider of highly-valued financial resources but, more important, as an example of a partner that can bring new ideas and transfer knowledge.

Finally, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to conclude these opening remarks simply by saying that these discussions will give us a frank and fruitful discussion based on the spirit of goodwill and mutual understanding that exists in the relationship between our two countries. With these words I would like to officially open the Eighth Cambodia-Australia High-Level Consultations.

Thank you all for your kind attention.