

**MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING
OF THE
PARTNERSHIP AND HARMONIZATION TWG
HELD ON
6 SEPTEMBER 2005, 9:00 AM AT CDC**

1. Mr. Chhieng Yanara, Chairman of the P&H TWG opened the meeting by welcoming all participants to the fourth meeting of P&H TWG. He said that the purpose of the meeting was to review progress that is being made in following areas:

- i. The formulation of RGC's Strategic Framework for Development Cooperation Management and the preparation of a multi-donor support program to implement this Strategic Framework.
- ii. Preparation of National Operational Guidelines for Development Cooperation Management dealing with grant assistance.
- iii. Preparation of an Updated RGC Action Plan on Harmonization, Alignment, and Results to reflect Paris Declaration's commitments.
- iv. CDC's efforts to empower senior officials in ministries and agencies to take real ownership of development cooperation activities and to provide leadership in planning, formulation, and management of development cooperation activities to ensure that these activities are focused on meeting the high priority needs of the Royal Government in order to maximize ODA effectiveness and its benefits for the people of Cambodia.
- v. Development of a web-based ODA system to collect and disseminate information on ODA flows.
- vi. Discussion on the role of TWGs in implementing RGC's Updated Action Plan on Harmonization, Alignment, and Results.
- vii. Lastly, presentation on the quarterly progress report of the P&H TWG.

2. Before addressing the first agenda item, Mr. Chhieng Yanara said that he would like to take a few minutes to share with all members of the P&H TWG the experience of CDC/CRDB in coping with the multitude of meetings ranging from individual donor missions to donor country assistance strategy sessions, as well as other high level meetings. He said that the way CDC, with limited resources, has managed is by ensuring that every meeting has a purpose and an identified output. He said that to make optimum use of resources and capacities, we need to discourage the culture of meetings for the sake of meetings. He added that there are now 18 sector/thematic TWGs in place, the challenge is to ensure that this mechanism works efficiently. He said that, "we need to agree on who needs to be informed in the context of each TWG, how often they need to be informed as well as identifying efficient mechanisms for information sharing."

3. Mr. Yanara then proceeded to provide an update on the first item of the agenda. He informed the meeting that over the last few months, CDC with UNDP assistance had been preparing RGC's Strategic Framework for Development Cooperation Management. He said that the initial draft was reviewed and revised based on comments received at an inter-ministerial meeting held on 1 August 2005 as well as from SNEC. He said that the draft had been distributed upon his request by Mr. Douglas Gardner in his capacity as Lead Donor Facilitator of the P&H TWG to all development partners and now CDC is waiting for

comments of the development partners. He informed the meeting that based on the comments received from development partners, CDC will proceed to make changes that fall within the parameters endorsed by SNEC, and submit the revised draft to the Council of Ministers for approval.

4. With respect to agenda item #2, he said that work on preparing the National Operational Guidelines for Development Cooperation management dealing with grant assistance is on-going under the Sub-Working Group of the P&H TWG with UNDP assistance. He said that the draft of the Guidelines had been circulated to development partners who had indicated interest in working on this task and that the next meeting of the Sub-Working Group to review and endorse the draft is scheduled on 12 September 2005. After the draft has been endorsed by the Sub-Working Group, it will be presented to the P&H TWG for review and approval. He also said that on the loan side, the MEF has been working to develop SOPs for ADB and World Bank projects.

5. On agenda item #3, Mr. Yanara reported that based on comments received at the 4-5 July workshop, the draft Action Plan on Harmonization, Alignment and Results (H-A-R Action Plan). The resource persons and logistics support for this workshop was provided by World Bank. Based on comments received at the workshop a revised draft was prepared by CDC. This revised draft was reviewed at a two-day workshop of government representatives on 1-2 September 2005 held in Sihanouk Ville. He said, the purpose of this workshop was to internalize the content of the Action Plan within the government in order to empower government officials to take ownership and to play a leadership role in discussions with development partners. This workshop was supported by UNDP. Based on feedback from this workshop a revised draft will be prepared and distributed to TWGs for their comments.

6. On agenda item #4, Mr. Yanara said that at the workshop on 1-2 September 2005 at Sihanouk Ville, CDC has started a process of dialogue between government officials on how to improve aid effectiveness and to identify specific support that CDC can provide to them to enable them to take ownership and play leadership role in managing development cooperation activities within their area of responsibility. He said that CDC has placed high priority on providing whatever support is needed through workshops and other modalities to meet these needs and the UNDP Support Program at CDC, of which he is the National Program Director, has allocated resources to support these workshops. He also said that over the next 6-12 months, CDC will organize workshops to deepen the understanding on issues such as harmonization and alignment; sector and program based approaches; sector MTEF; and managing for results.

7. On agenda item #5, he informed the meeting that work is underway to develop a dedicated ODA disbursements website designed to enable development partners to report their ODA disbursements data directly to the website and to provide access to ODA disbursements information to users. He said the work is being supported by the UNDP Support Program at CDC and is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

8. On agenda item #6, he said that this is the area where he would like this meeting to discuss and provide guidance on what role the TWGs can or should play in implementing the updated RGC's H-A-R Action Plan.

9. On agenda item #7, he said that the quarterly progress report of the P&H TWG was prepared in consultation with the UN Resident Coordinator in his capacity as Lead Donor Facilitator of the P&H TWG. He informed the meeting that quarterly report of TWGs for this quarter was streamlined to reduce the number of questions and a new section was added to capture information on harmonization and alignment efforts of the TWGs. He said that in terms of progress in the implementation of the H&A Action Plan, things are moving along.

10. Before opening the meeting for discussion on the agenda items, the Chair invited Mr. Douglas Gardner, Lead Donor Facilitator, to make his opening remarks. Mr. Gardner commended the Chair of the P&H TWG for providing strong leadership in the work of the P&H TWG and in the preparation of the H-A-R Action Plan. On the draft of the Strategic Framework for Development Cooperation management, Mr. Gardner informed the meeting that he had circulated the draft to all development partners for comments and that a meeting will take place to consolidate the comments by the end of September. With respect to the work on the National Operational Guidelines (NOG) he emphasized that an important aspect of the NOG is to bring about harmonization of different procedures of development partners. He said that during the last 12 months all development partners have been consulted extensively in an effort to find common elements which all development partners can endorse and support. He highlighted that the National Operational Guidelines will be an extremely important building block in our harmonization and alignment efforts.

11. In the discussion that followed, Ms. Fleur Davies commented that it is very importance of harmonization and alignment issues they should be on the agenda of each TWG. She noted that some TWGs are still at an early stage in dealing with H&A issues. Mr. Claes Leijon commented that harmonization effort is a long term process and capacity development of the TWGs is very important. He also said that the importance of aid effectiveness must be followed up by real progress and internalization of the concept. Mr. Nigel Coulson agreed that it is important that TWGs play an important role in advancing the H&A agenda. He said we have to look at the capabilities of TWGs as well. He noted that the TWG mechanism is a new one and both government and development partners have been moving forward and learning by doing. He said that to improve the overall capacity of TWGs, the workshop modality mentioned by the Chair is very critical to internalize the concepts by TWGs on issues such as H&A, managing for results and PBAs. He also informed the meeting that DFID is carrying out a study to look into issues of aid effectiveness in Cambodia from the perspective of development partners. He said that this study will provide information on both the progress and difficulties that development partners have been facing in moving forward the harmonization and alignment agenda.

12. In response, Mr. Yanara also expressed concern about the capacity of TWGs to perform their tasks because, he said, if we don't have capacity, we cannot own the process, much less lead it. Ms. Carol Strickler from the CCC indicated that this was the first time CCC joined this P&H TWG meeting and said that issues of harmonisation and alignment are not well understood within the NGO community. Mr. Yanara emphasized that information

sharing is very critical and should be strengthened. He also assured the NGO community that RGC considers civil society to be a partner in development, and NGOs are welcome to participate in both TWG and GDCC mechanism.

13. Concerning the issue of disseminating ODA information, Mr. Yanara requested Mr. Gardner to coordinate efforts to secure permission from development partners for CDC to post ODA disbursements information on CDC/CRDB website. Mr. Mogens Christensen also pointed out that data are sometimes not in the public domain; therefore it is difficult to make public because of some specific rules and regulations. He proposed for consideration that issue of information sharing as to how information for one ministry/agency can be used by other ministries/agencies so that duplication in producing the same data can be avoided. Mr. Yanara emphasized that in this meeting he only asked for permission to disseminate information on ODA so that it can be entered into the database information system which CDC has just developed for the purpose of information sharing.

14. The meeting adjourned at 10:30.