NEWS RELEASE

"Where there is fish, there is hope."

The current global economic crisis is affecting the region in very significant ways and has the potential to erode many of the benefits which development in Cambodia has created in recent years. Declining tourism, a fall in construction work, a downturn in the property market and shrinkage of the garment sector are all predicted to affect the economy. Declining employment opportunities domestically and abroad, and falling demand for Cambodia's products will affect the incomes of everyone. This will be particularly felt amongst the rural poor who depend heavily upon remittances from family working away.

The role of fisheries in the economy is often overlooked, but it has always been very important, especially in times of national difficulty. The fisheries sector **contributes directly to economic growth** through production, processing and domestic and global trade generating around $200-250 million of landed value which contributes more than 8% of GDP overall. It **provides stability for the livelihoods** of around 2 million full-time, part-time and seasonal poor rural workers, and their families and is a mainstay of food security and nutrition. It also **creates a safety net** for many vulnerable and poor people in times of difficulty.

Although the recession in likely to hit other sectors, where there is fish there is still hope for the economy. The global and regional demand for Cambodia's fish is high and its relative contribution to GDP is likely to rise in the current crisis. Fish continues to support the livelihoods of the rural poor, to provide 81.5% of animal protein and to provide an important source of nutrients to maintain the nation's health. The role the fisheries sector plays as a safety net for the poor is likely to significantly increase in the near future.

This does not mean that the fisheries sector is without problems. Increasing demand for fish and migration into the sector is likely to threaten the environment and may lead to increased conflict over access to resources. This is why the Fisheries Administration (FiA) is working with development partners to ensure that the sector is developed and managed in fair and sustainable ways. FiA staff are currently working to produce a ten year **Strategic Planning Framework** which will help the country through the current crisis and provide a development path for the future. It is also developing a **Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries for Cambodia** to unite development partners in a common approach to the development of the sector.

FISHERIES ADMINISTRATION