MOWRAM's Intervention
Concerning water resources/irrigation Management
In
Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum
2-3 June 2010, at CDC

Excellency Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic and Finance
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today I am very pleased to attend to the 3rd Cambodian Development Cooperation Forum and I have a great honour to provide some insights on the major constraints for agricultural productivity improvement pertaining to the lack of irrigation systems and the need for increased national budget for sustainability of irrigation operation and maintenance. On behalf of H.E Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology and H.E Co-chair of Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Water, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest thank to Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen from concerned ministries and Development Partners who have been supporting the Agriculture and Water sector. And on behalf of H.E Minister of MOWRAM, I wish to acknowledge the importance of issues addressed by Development Partners for our dialogue today.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Royal Government of Cambodia has been increasing the national budget for irrigation rehabilitation and construction works over the last 10 years in its efforts to fulfil the objectives of the National Government Policy on Water Resources Development, National Strategic Development Plan and Government Rectangular Strategy Phase I and II. As a results, the irrigated areas were increased up to 827,373 ha in 2008 (1.12 million ha of potential irrigated areas), represented 31.63% of total rice cultivation area 2.6 million ha, while in 2000, the irrigable area was 428,480 ha, represented only 18% of total rice cultivation 2.3 million ha.

Along with this substantial achievement, there are many challenges faced by Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology to response to the increase in water demand for agriculture due to population growth, scarcity of water resources and climate change, require MOWRAM needs to take more action to (i) improve and increase the efficiency of irrigation system by completing the whole irrigation system for each scheme so that irrigated water will be available for all farmlands and (ii) build more water storage following the former master plan formulated in 1960s and 1970s in some priorities areas.

His Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen,

In order to achieve the above targets successfully, MOWRAM will jointly cooperate with Development Partners to continue to work on the new procedures and guidelines to ensure effective and sustainable operation and maintenance of irrigation systems to be managed by Farmer Water User Communities.

Through the joint implementation of development projects together with Development Partners along with the Government Policy on Irrigation Management Sustainability, we have

received many lessons and learned how to improve irrigation management. It is really difficult and very complicated to continue to work effectively particularly on projects related to changing people's mentality and habits in irrigation management and agricultural practices while also focusing on improving farmers' capacity and competence in operation and maintenance of irrigation systems and working to increase financial support from the government.

In this context, it is required to carefully plan in advance, to prepare a roadmap including necessary new procedures, guidelines and regulations for irrigation system operation and maintenance in every project to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.

The program under the Strategy on Agriculture and Water is instrumental for achieving the overall development goal of the Royal Government of Cambodia which will be benefit farmers and the agriculture and water sector.

His Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, I would like to highlight the key priorities that need to be considered to achieve the objectives of sustainable irrigation operation and management as follow:

- To continue the policy aiming to complete the irrigation system at all levels including secondary, tertiary and quaternary canals to ensure sufficient delivery of water to all farmers' fields within the irrigation schemes, and to ensure fully operational scheme and its sustainable management.
- To innovate and disseminate appropriate technologies and knowledge of agricultural practices and market information to farmers in order to obtain high productivity and quality crops for domestic consumption and exports.
- To jointly review and prepare an adequate national budget with the Ministry of Economic and Finance and to establish responsively competent management of farmer water user communities to ensure sustainable irrigation operation and maintenance in Cambodia.
- To prepare the necessary regulations and suitable procedure to ensure effective and consistent implementation of the irrigation projects supported by the RGC especially from the Ministry of economic and finance.

I am really confident that Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen from the RGC and DPs will continue to closely cooperate with MOWRAM and MAFF and provide more supports to implement successfully SAW Programs in the next four years.

Thanks