



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency  
and Switzerland through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation  
fund capacity development to the Parliament of Cambodia through the  
Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia***

**Phnom Penh, 20 November 2014**

The Government of Sweden, through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Government of Switzerland, through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), respectively announce the award of grants of SEK 13.2 million (approximately USD 1.78 million), and CHF 2.3 million (approximately USD 2.4 million) to support the Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (PIC).

This afternoon, H.E. Ms. Anna Maj Hultgard, Ambassador of Sweden, H.E. Mr. Christoph Burgener, Ambassador of Switzerland and His Excellency Oum Sarith, Secretary General of the Senate and Co-Chair of the Board of PIC, witnessed the signing of Cooperation Agreements between PIC and Sida and PIC and SDC, aiming to support the activities of the PIC, for the respective periods 2015-2017 and 2014-2016.

The primary goal of Sweden's and Switzerland's development cooperation with Cambodia is poverty alleviation and their support to the Parliament of Cambodia through PIC is an important initiative to strengthen the democratic system, which will help contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of Cambodian citizens and to the sustainable development of the country.

Sweden's Ambassador to Cambodia, H.E. Ms. Anna Maj Hultgard, expressed during the signing ceremony her appreciation of the work the Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia has done so far: "Sweden is proud to have supported PIC from almost the very first beginning. It has quickly grown to become a professional parliamentary research service of international standard able to cater to the needs of the National Assembly and Senate. Parliamentarians are representatives of the people, it is of crucial importance that they have sound basis for their decisions. This is the mission of a research service and a central contribution to any democratic state."

At the signing ceremony, H.E. Ambassador Christoph Burgener, the Ambassador of Switzerland, reiterated the commitment of Switzerland to supporting the Parliament in Cambodia through the Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia: "Strengthening the Parliament in this historic moment, will be a key driver for promoting equitable development and democratic governance in Cambodia. Switzerland is proud to start this important partnership with PIC. We trust that this will provide important opportunities for sharing Swiss practice and promoting capacity building upon request from Cambodian side."

Sweden's and Switzerland's Parliamentary Services will also provide ad hoc support to PIC's staff and that of the Secretariats. This should allow them to benefit from the long democratic experience and the Parliamentary Services' expertise of both partner countries in serving as competent, politically neutral bodies which operate at arm's length from the government.

Established in February 2011, PIC is as an independent and non-partisan NGO, specifically formed to support the improvement and performance of the Parliament of Cambodia through capacity development. It was established on the initiative of Members of Parliament from all parties and is governed by a Board of Directors that includes at least one Secretary General of Parliament, representatives of Cambodian civil society organizations and other members selected according to their commitment to the democratic development of Cambodia and to their parliamentary and management expertise.

The 3-year grants will enable PIC to continue to contribute to enhance the capacity and assist the Cambodian Parliament in its evolution towards fulfilling its roles in the democratic system of governance in Cambodia. PIC's capacity building activities focus on capacity development in providing expertise to produce international-quality parliamentary research; support in organizing workshops, seminars and training; providing tailored courses in English-language skills for parliamentary staff; assisting in the development of management and procedural tools; and supporting outreach activities of parliamentarians.

PIC actively seeks to develop partnerships with stakeholders interested in helping strengthen the Cambodian Parliament. The cooperation with Sida and SDC will also give the opportunity to the PIC to expand the scope of its work.

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