



Press release

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Sweden and Switzerland to strengthen Cambodia's Sub-National Democratic Development

Sweden and Switzerland have confirmed additional contributions to the Royal Government of Cambodia's National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development (SNDD) amounting to US\$ 15.8 million for the period 2015-2017. The local governance reform program fosters democratic and social accountability and strengthens government capacity and systems at the sub-national level, particularly the district and municipal administrations.

H.E. Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Chairman of the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD), representing the Royal Government of Cambodia, H.E. Anna Maj Hultgard, Ambassador of Sweden, and Rahel Boesch, Development Counsellor, Embassy of Switzerland and Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Cambodia were on hand to finalize the agreements at a signing ceremony.

H.E. Sar Kheng expressed sincere appreciation for the continued engagement and support of the sub-national democratic development reforms from Sweden and Switzerland saying, "The 3-year grants from Switzerland and Sweden will enable the NCDD to further enhance the capacity and systems of the sub-national administrations (SNAs), particularly the district and municipal authorities. This strengthened capacity will in turn be used to deliver quality services, support inclusive development and contribute to poverty reduction."

Cambodia's sub-national democratic development reforms provide the basis for establishing governance structures that are accountable, predictable and transparent and which encourage citizen engagement and respect for human rights.

H.E. Anna Maj Hultgard said, "Sweden is proud to have continuously supported the sub-national democratic development reform from the very beginning. Bringing decision-making closer to the citizens has proven to be an effective way of strengthening democracy in Cambodia and we look forward to working together with all stakeholders to further deepen the decentralization efforts over the coming three years." Sweden has signed an agreement on the amount of US\$ 8 million from 2015 – 2017.

The first phase of the SNDD has shown promising results and the capacities of the Sub-National Administrations will be further strengthened in the second phase (2015 - 2017) including increased access to development resources which is essential to meet pro poor development goals.

Switzerland signed an agreement on the amount of US\$ 7.8 million from 2015 - 2017. Rahel Boesch highlighted the importance of the democratic decentralisation reform in Cambodia for increased participation, saying that: “Strengthened capacities at commune and district levels and enhanced local governance mechanisms will contribute to improved public service delivery. Switzerland understands the reform as key for promoting inclusive and equitable development in Cambodia and is proud to continue the support”.

Sweden and Switzerland jointly with the EU are contributing to the trust fund for the SNDD reform. The support is part of the 10 Year National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development, and is embedded into the wider framework of the European Development Cooperation Strategy for Cambodia 2014-18, of which Sweden, through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Switzerland, through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) are partners.

The primary goal of Sweden’s and Switzerland’s development cooperation with Cambodia is poverty alleviation and the support to SNDD contributes to improving the quality of life of Cambodian citizens through sustainable development of the country. The focus responds to the country’s key development challenges set out in the National Strategic Development Plan 2014 – 2018 and the Rectangular Strategy phase III of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

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