

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

FAO Representation in Cambodia

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**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries will sign a project agreement with
FAO for the Strengthening of professional agricultural organizations and
institutional decentralization in Cambodia at the celebration of World Food Day
1998**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) will sign a project agreement for FAO's assistance through its Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) for the Strengthening of professional agricultural organizations and institutional decentralization in Cambodia at the celebration of World Food Day 1998 on the 16th of October. The project which has a budget of US\$ 261,000 will provide technical assistance to the Ministry.

The objective of this project is to contribute to national capacity building with a view to guarantee food security and to assure sustainable development in rural areas through the establishment of:

- professional agricultural organizations which are autonomous and capable of supplying farmers with needed production goods and services and to assure better access to markets.
- local institutions capable of mobilizing the existing potentialities and creating sustainable rural development conditions with the participation of the populations concerned.

Eighty five percent of the Cambodian population is living in rural areas and about seventy five percent of the working force are farmers. The agricultural sector contributes to almost fifty percent of the GDP of the country.

The development policy of the Royal Cambodian Government comprises the following objectives:

The realization of the government's international commitment to guarantee food security for all citizens which requires a conscious effort to reduce poverty through employment generation, improving transportation and reducing market constraints. In particular efforts are needed to:

- improve systems of irrigation and water control, which will contribute directly to enhanced production;

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- * increase dry-season yields by improving seed quality, training and the application of fertilizer;
 - * invest in infrastructure, especially rural roads, which will increase marketing opportunities, promote agricultural diversification and improve access to extension and veterinary services. A smooth flow of agricultural inputs through the country is also an important prerequisite for promoting export of agricultural products;
 - * promote private sector investment and activities to increase productivity. The government's rural development policy stresses that intensification of agricultural production through sound and modern techniques will enhance food production; and
 - * develop a nutritional monitoring programme to determine nutritional trends and causes of malnutrition.
- * Rational and conservative exploitation of the natural resources to assure a sustainable development.
 - * Reformation of the public institutions to bring a higher efficiency, a stronger decentralization and a wider participation of the population in development, in particular in the rural zones.

FAO has been working over the years with MAFF and Cambodian technicians on fertilizer demonstration, the Integrated Pest Management in Rice (IPM) and the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) which are aiming at increased food production.

The country needs assistance and the general development assistance should be directed to meet people's needs.

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