



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

Press Release

European Union contributes €5 million to boost health behavioural change in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, 18 January 2005 – The European Commission (EC) has contributed €5 million (approximated US\$ 6.8 million) to a five-year project aimed at improving the capacity of public health care providers. The funds have been committed under a co-financing partnership agreement with UNICEF.

The Health Behavioural Change Communication Project, which gets under way later this month, will be implemented by the Ministry of Health (MoH) in partnership with UNICEF. HE Prof. Eng Huot, Secretary of State, said: "Behaviour change communication is one of the six priority areas of the Health Sector Strategic Plan (2003-2007). Changing people's behaviour is a complex, but potentially extremely beneficial activity. It is our health staff's responsibility to help children and parents to practice healthy behaviours."

The objective of the EC-funded project is to strengthen the capacity of MoH staff workers in the delivery of effective health promotion and health education services, by improving their skills, attitudes and behaviour with clients. In this way, it is expected to result in a substantial improvement in the overall quality of health services, as well as greater awareness among the public of key health care practices, especially those affecting mothers and children.

"The European Union has extensive experience in supporting the health sector in Cambodia," said Mr. Winston Mc Colgan, Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. of the Delegation of the European Commission in Cambodia. "Our co-funding partnership with UNICEF will increase the effectiveness of the project and achieve a more effective and efficient use of resources through pooled funding and better donor coordination."

Mr. Mc Colgan said the European Commission's Country Strategy for Cambodia "aims to support the long-term improvement of basic health as part of the over-arching objective of reducing poverty in the country. The Health Behavioural Change Communication Project is one more initiative to translate that strategy into reality."

The main activities of the project, which will be carried out at the central and provincial levels, include: building the capacity of the MoH's National Centre for Health Promotion to provide information services on BCC, train BCC specialists, and develop protocols to standardise the production of BCC materials and guidelines for quality assurance; strengthening the capacities of the provincial health promotion units in all 24 provinces; demonstrating good BCC practices in five provinces (Kampong Speu, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Stung Treng and Mondulakiri).

The total budget for the project, which will run from January 2005 to December 2009, is €5.7 million, with UNICEF contributing the additional €700,000.

For Further information:

Pol. Poun, Press and Information Officer

Tel 012 399 191 E-mail: pok.poun@cec.eu.int

About the European Commission: The European Commission is the executive arm of the European Union. Since the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in October 1991, the Commission has granted more than 300 million Euro in aid to Cambodia. This aid is additional to that granted bilaterally by the 25 individual EU Member States, and covers a broad range of sectors, such as humanitarian assistance, health, education, rural development, human resource development, the environment, mine clearance, democratisation and human rights.