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18/11

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## CAMBODIA: AGREEMENT TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT

I welcome the recent agreement reached by the leaders of the Cambodian People's Party and FUNCINPEC on the terms for establishing a new Cambodian Government. Agreement was also reached for the National Assembly to be convened on 25 November.

I commend the good offices of King Norodom Sihanouk in chairing the meeting between political parties that led to this outcome. I also welcome the spirit of flexibility and compromise shown by Cambodia's political leaders that has enabled conclusion of this agreement, and hope that the details and precise mechanism for the formation of the new Government are agreed as soon as possible.

The formation of a Cambodian Government after the 26 July general elections has been long delayed, but I trust that the 13 November agreement will prove to be a critical step in the development of political stability and constitutional government in Cambodia.

Australia, with others in the international community, has worked hard to encourage the Cambodian parties to resolve their political problems themselves, without depending on outside intervention.

I hope that the spirit of reconciliation demonstrated over the last few days will enable the smooth and peaceful operation of a new Cambodian Government, and one that is able to deal effectively with the urgent tasks of reconstruction now confronting that country.

Alexander Downer  
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