



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
PHNOM PENH

MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Humanitarian Food Aid to Cambodia

The Australian Government, through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), is providing A\$5 million (approx. \$US3.1 million) in 1998/99 to the World Food Programme (WFP), to address the critical food shortages facing the poorest people of Cambodia. From the early 1980s, Australia has provided substantial humanitarian food aid to Cambodia, and in recent years has consistently been a major donor to WFP programs in Cambodia and throughout the world. AusAID's 1998/99 contribution continues this tradition.

The food aid will be distributed through WFP's new Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) for Cambodia, which was officially agreed with the Royal Government on 28 December 1998. As in recent years, Australia's humanitarian food aid will be especially valuable in that it is provided in cash, which is then used by WFP to purchase locally produced rice from Cambodia's small national rice surplus. These purchases stimulate the Cambodian rural economy in addition to meeting humanitarian objectives.

Australian food aid through WFP will help to alleviate the food security problems of many vulnerable Cambodians and assist in the rehabilitation of rural infrastructure and provision of essential services, through 'food-for-work' activities such as building rural roads, irrigation canals and developing other agricultural infrastructure. Approximately 1.7 million Cambodians are now benefiting from the program. WFP and the Government of Australia place particular emphasis in the programs on the welfare of women and children, many of whom are amongst the most vulnerable members of communities.

Humanitarian food aid demonstrates Australia's commitment to assisting the Royal Government of Cambodia and its people in their efforts to work towards achieving food security for all Cambodians. AusAID also provides significant support to agricultural development in Cambodia in an effort to improve food security. Australia is proud to contribute to the rehabilitation and development of Cambodia in conjunction with the programs of the Royal Government of Cambodia and other donors.

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