



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO THE KINGDOM
OF CAMBODIAPress Release**EU-funded community management project launched**

Phnom Penh 20 March 2007 – A programme co-funded by the European Commission and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) designed to address important community management and rural development issues was launched today.

The three year "*Community Management and Capacity Building for Self-Reliance and Sustainable Poverty Alleviation in Cambodia*" initiative was launched this morning at the Cambodiana Hotel, Phnom Penh. Taking part in the launch were Dr. Wilfried A. Herrmann, Project director, Thailand and Cambodia of Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Mr. Theo Kidess, Charge d' Affaires, German Embassy, Phnom Penh, and Mr. Erik Habers, Counselor for Economic Development of the European Commission Delegation in Bangkok.

Implemented by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) in cooperation with the Centre d' Etudes et de Developpement Agricole Cambodgien (CEDAC), the project is designed to address community management and rural development issues as well as build capacities of rural communities concerning a variety of governance topics.

The project will take place in Phnom Penh and nine provinces namely Prey Veng, Takeo, Kampong Cham, Svay Rieng, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom, Pursat, Kampot and Siem Reap.

The objectives of the project are to contribute to poverty reduction through better rural community management and better training of commune council members and other key multipliers in disadvantaged communities, through programmes of formal and informal participatory training and network-building based on "best-practice".

At the launch ceremony, Mr. Erik Habers stated that the project was a manifestation of the European Union's (EU) commitment to reduce poverty, to enhance the rule of law, and to sustain respect for fundamental freedoms. It will support operations addressing local social and economic development in rural and urban areas.

The total budget for the project, which runs until December 2009, is more than €400,000, (equivalent to over US\$520,000). The European Commission is contributing over €300,000 and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) the additional €100,000.

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The European Commission is the executive body of the European Union (EU). The European Commission has supported the rehabilitation and development of Cambodia since the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in 1991. European Commission assistance is additional to that granted bilaterally by the individual EU Member States, and covers a broad range of sectors, such as education, health, rural development, private sector development, administrative reform, and democratisation and human rights.

The EU now has 27 Member States following the accession of Bulgaria and Romania on 1 January 2007. In March, this year, the EU will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of its founding agreement, the Treaty of Rome.