PRESS RELEASE

National Workshop
on
The Identification of Poor Households Programme
—"a Key Tool for Equitable Development"
at the
Cambodiana Hotel, Phnom Penh, 8 January 2009

On 8 January the Ministry of Planning held a national workshop on the Identification of Poor Households Programme. The workshop was presided over by HE Keat Chhon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance. The aim of the workshop was to present the Royal Government's national Procedures for Identification of Poor Households, and to promote the use of data on poor households for targeting of services and assistance to poor rural households.

Over the last three years, the Ministry of Planning's Identification of Poor Households Programme has been developing, piloting and then implementing on a large scale the Procedures for Identification of Poor Households, in rural areas. The Programme is implemented with financial and technical support from the Federal Republic of Germany through German Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

Identification of poor households is conducted in order to find poor households in each village and determine their level of poverty. The data collected is also used to compare the levels of poverty of different areas. Government institutions and non-governmental organizations use this data to target services and assistance to poor households and poor communities, in order to assist households to move out of poverty and to help protect them from the impact of crises (such as serious illness, crop failure, etc) which push them deeper into poverty.

Identification of poor households is implemented by Village Representative Groups and is coordinated by commune-level representatives, including commune councillors. The Department of Planning coordinates implementation in each province in cooperation with the Provincial Local Administration Unit.

Poor households in each village are included in a List of Poor Households which is approved by the Commune Council. Each poor household is photographed, and all data is entered into a Database of Poor Households. The Ministry of Planning distributes the data on poor households to all relevant government institutions and organizations. All poor households are issued with an Equity Card to help them to access services and assistance.

During 2007 and 2008, the Procedures for Identification of Poor Households were implemented by the Ministry of Planning in 2109 villages in five provinces, and in 2009 the Ministry will cover around 2876 more villages in five additional provinces. In addition, partner NGOs implemented the national procedures in 1322 villages in five provinces in 2008, and plan to cover four more provinces in 2009. In total, more than half the country will have been covered by the identification procedures by the end of 2009.

In the first quarter of 2009, the Ministry of Planning will prepare a Master Plan for expansion of coverage of the Identification of Poor Households Programme to cover all rural areas nationwide, during the period 2010-2011, and thereafter to conduct updates every two years on an ongoing basis. The Royal Government has expressed its commitment to allocating funds to the Programme annually from the national budget starting from 2010, and will also seek funding support from development partners.