

## **CAMBODIAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION (CEA)**

**In partnership with  
Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) and  
Economic Institute of Cambodia (EIC)**

### **Conference**

**“Youth and Employment”**

**June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**CJCC, Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

### **Report**

The Cambodian Economic Association (CEA), in partnership with Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) and Economic Institute of Cambodia (EIC), organized a conference on *“Youth and Employment”* at Cambodia-Japan Cooperation Centre, Phnom Penh. The workshop was held on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007. About 300 participants joined the conference. They are from various organizations including members of parliaments, representatives from government ministries, representatives from private sector, national and international organizations, etc. (See Annex 1).

The conference began with a welcome address by *Mr. Sok Hach, Founding President of CEA and Director of EIC*. In his remarks, he stressed the importance of the CEA in elaborating independent debates and raising awareness about socio-economic development in Cambodia as well as regional and global issues. He made a quick presentation on how CEA was established and funded.

Then, *Ms. Nisha Agrawal, Country Manager of the World Bank*, made a key note address on poverty rate and inequality in Cambodia and stressed the importance of the employment of young people, which is a main challenge for the government. She mentioned the importance of private sector diversification which can boost employment growth. She encouraged the government to reduce the cost of doing business in Cambodia and emphasizes the bureaucracy in creating complexity and reducing the competitiveness of Cambodia. She also mentioned the World Bank’s assistance to the government to tackle barriers to doing business in Cambodia. In conclusion, she stressed the importance of the youth’s role in increasing growth by not only working for other enterprises but also by running their own business.

Next, *Mr. John Nelmes, the IMF Representative*, made a presentation on *“Cambodia’s Macroeconomic Performance”*. He demonstrated the Cambodian economic growth resulting from the garment, tourism and agricultural sectors. Then, he went through the factors of the growth ranging from good monetary policy, rising foreign direct investment, reduced fiscal deficit and

narrowed trade deficit. Lastly, he made some projection on the Cambodian budget and debt based on the future oil and gas.

The conference continued with another presentation from *Mr. Chan Sophal, President of CEA and Senior Research Manager of CDRI*. His presentation focused on the “*Labor Markets and Employment Prospects*”. He started by giving the definition of labor market. After briefly presenting Cambodian demography and diversity of population, and numbers of employment by sector, he continued on the rate of unemployment and the method of calculating this rate. He stressed that the reasons behind unemployment are lack of qualified skill, mismatch of skill, lack of investment and the concentration of investment on the urban area. He concluded by briefing the challenges and opportunities of the employment creation in Cambodia.

Finally, *Mr. Dourng Kakada, EIC Researcher* presented on “*Export Diversification and Value Addition for Human Development: Implication on Trade and Policies development*”. Firstly, he started with study of the impact the Agreement on Textile and Clothing expiration on Cambodia. At this level he pointed out the importance of garment sector in the Cambodian economy as well as human development. Secondly, he focused on the opportunity for Cambodia to diversify its export profile in non-garment sectors. He pointed out five potential sectors for employment creation, value addition, rural income enhancement and poverty reduction: organic rice, silk, rubber, cashew nut and tourism. He drew out the implications on trade and policies developments by which he presented major constraints, at supply side, faced by those five sectors and proposed policy recommendations to overcome them. He presented trade negotiation strategies at the different negotiation fora (WTO, ASEAN etc) to overcome market barriers. In conclusion, he called for the participation of all stakeholders to make export diversification happen and stressed the important role of policies to establish effective links among trade, development and poverty reduction.

After the coffee break, *Mr. Ratnakar Adhikari, Program Specialist UNDP RCC*, stressed the necessity to support the study. Then, he continued on the prospect of the textile sector after the expiration of safeguards imposed by the EU and US on China. Finally, he stressed the importance of export diversification in promoting trade, employment and poverty reduction, thereby contributing to human development.

The discussion went on with a number of questions from the participants.

The conference was ended with the closing remarks of *Mr. Larry Strange, Director of CDRI*, stressing the importance of the Cambodian Economic Association and youth employment and giving some advice to students attending the conference.

Several reports were distributed during the conference including World Bank report on **Cambodia Sharing Growth: Equity and Development Report 2007**, and TDP Campaign Kit: **Understanding Trade, Development and Poverty Reduction** and many others.

### Annex 1: Number of Participants

No	Participants	Number
1	NA/ Senate	10
2	Ministry	13
3	Donors& IOs	27
4	Private Sector	48
5	NGOs	14
6	Student	157
7	Other (Researchers& Assistant)	28
<b>Total</b>		<b>297</b>





With Participation of CDRI and EIC

Annual Conference on  
“Youth and Employment”

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2007

Cambodian-Japan Cooperation Centre (CJCC), Room 3.13, Building E, IFL, RUPP

## Agenda

- 07:30 – 08:00: Registration
- 08:00 – 08:10: Opening Address  
**Mr Sok Hach**, Founding President of CEA and Director of EIC
- 08:10 – 08:30: Keynote Address  
**Ms Nisha Agrawal**, Country Manager, World Bank

### Presentations Session:

- 08:30 – 08:50: “Cambodia’s Macroeconomic Performance”  
**Mr John Nelmes**, Resident Representative, IMF
- 08:50 – 09:10: “Labour Markets and Employment Prospects”  
**Mr Chan Sophal**, President of CEA and Senior Research Manager of CDRI
- 09:10 – 09:30: “Export Diversification and Value Addition for Human Development: Implications on Trade and Development Policies”  
**Mr Dourng Kakada**, Researcher, EIC
- 09:30 – 10:00: Refreshments Break

### Discussion and Q& A Sessions

- 10:00 – 11:45: **Chair: Mr Sok Hach**, Founding President of CEA and Director of EIC  
Discussant: **Mr Ratnakar Adhikari**, Programme Specialist, UNDP RCC
- 11:45 – 12:00: Closing