

---

## USAID HIGHLIGHTS

---

### USAID Supports Workshop on Freedom of Information for Cambodian Lawmakers

Phnom Penh  
February 22, 2008



USAID Mission Director Erin Soto, Secretary General of National Assembly H.E. Leng Peng Long, Chairperson of the Commission on Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, Information & Media H.E. Son Chhay and the world-renowned FOI expert Mr. Andrew Ecclestone during the FOI workshop at National Assembly.

On February 22, 2008 – Over 90 Cambodian Lawmakers and Parliamentary-Senate staff attended a workshop on Freedom of Information (FOI). The half-day workshop, held at the National Assembly, covered topics such as international best practices on drafting and implementing FOI legislation and overview of Cambodia's first draft policy paper on FOI.

With technical assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the process of drafting an Access to Information Policy paper on FOI began in June 2007. The inter-ministerial drafting team, led by the Ministry of National Assembly-Senate Relations and Inspections (MoNASRI) to send the Policy Paper to the Council of Ministers for review, but it is currently unclear when this will occur. Participants in the workshop were introduced to the draft by official MoNASRI and Mr. Andrew Ecclestone, who is also the keynote speaker for the workshop.

In her opening remark, Erin Soto, USAID Mission Director, highlighted three important points of Access to Information: is a fundamental element of good governance and a characteristic of a strong, modern democracy; assists in attracting investments needed to create jobs for Cambodians; and remove systemic complexities that provide opportunities for corruption to occur."

The workshop aimed to improve parliamentarians' understanding of key Freedom of Information principles and the importance of an FOI law to development. Members of Parliament also learned from the workshop of possible impediments to introducing an FOI law and how these might be overcome.

The workshop was jointly funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, and the Embassy of the United Kingdom in Cambodia.