

Candidates to Discuss Views in USAID-funded Political Debates

TVK Studio, Phnom Penh
July 08, 2008



One hundred seventy people attended the debate featuring candidates from the Khmer Anti-Poverty Party (KAPP), Khmer Republic Party (KRP), Khmer Democratic Party (KDP) and Funcinpec Party (FCP).

Dozens of candidates from Cambodia's leading political parties will participate in 22 radio and television debates over the next several weeks, the first nationally televised debates ever held in the country. The USAID-funded events will allow candidates from Cambodia's 11 officially registered political parties to make their case to voters as the country prepares for national parliamentary elections on July 27.

Hundreds of people gathered for the first two debates, which featured women candidates, at TVK studios in Phnom Penh on July 8-9. The women-only debates are part of USAID's effort to promote female participation in politics. The remaining 20 events, which are open to men and women, will occur in each of the ten most populous provinces. Radio stations FM 105, FM 93.5, FM 90 and FM 90.25 will broadcast all 22 of the debates, while television station TVK will carry 10, including the two women-only debates.

Under a recent ruling by the National Election Committee (NEC), all 11 political parties officially registered by the NEC will have equal participation time, ensuring a level and democratic playing field for all candidates. In the past, time was allocated to parties based on the number of elected representatives in the National Assembly.

USAID has supported candidate debates in Cambodia since 2002. The events give candidates an opportunity to discuss important issues facing the country so that voters can make informed choices when they cast their ballots on Election Day. The National Democratic Institute implements the program.