
USAID HIGHLIGHTS

Electoral Reform Conference Gathers Members of Government, Civil Society

Phnom Penh, Cambodia
August 11-12, 2009



Members of government, political parties and civil society discussing results at the Electoral Reform Conference on August 11-12.

USAID sponsored the first major conference on electoral reform since Cambodia's national parliamentary elections in the summer of 2008. Members of the government, opposition political parties and civil society attended the two-day event, which was held on August 11-12 at the Sunway Hotel in Phnom Penh.

Key topics of discussion included voter registration and integrity of the voter list;

complaint resolution; the independence and composition of the election committee; and, to a lesser extent, election systems, political finance and the media.

U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Ted Allegra joined Cambodian Secretary of State of the Ministry of Interior Sak Setha in providing opening remarks.

"Recognizing the need for electoral reform is not, as some might say, a sign of weakness," Allegra said.

"Rather, the desire to self-examine and improve is a sign of strength, and it is a trait shared by all democracies, including those with long histories like the United States."

At the conclusion of the conference, the participants issued a public report detailing areas in need of reform and recommended steps for improvement.

USAID is committed to helping Cambodia promote democracy, political rights and the rule of law. Through implementing partner the National Democratic Institute, USAID supports women's leadership caucuses, promotes the development of women's wings in all major political parties; promotes a free and fair electoral process; and promotes constituency dialogues with members of parliament.