

Cambodia-Canada Legislative Support Project

Newsletter

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MESSAGE FROM BUNLENG MEN, CCLSP PROJECT FIELD MANAGER



The Cambodia-Canada Legislative Support Project (CCLSP) is a major initiative of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and is managed by the Parliamentary Centre of Canada. Its goal is to contribute to good governance and democratic development in Cambodia.

On behalf of the Project, I am pleased to present this first CCLSP Newsletter focusing on selected component activities (Legislative, Representation and Secretariat) implemented in 2004.

The Project would like to ensure that this newsletter is a useful tool for communicating its planned activities and the results achieved. Its purpose is to provide practi-

cal information on activities undertaken by the National Assembly and Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia, in order to enhance the institu-



tional capacity of Parliament in three major areas: strengthening commissions capacity to effectively draft and review legislation, to increase responsiveness of lawmakers to their constituents and to improve

the capacity of the Secretariats to manage, administer and support their work.

On behalf of the Project Team, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the support and excellent cooperation that we have received from the Leaders of the Senate and the National Assembly, Members of Parliament, Senators, Secretary-Generals, and all levels of staff at the Secretariats, during the course of our work in supporting the legislative body.

Bunleng Men
Project Field Manager
CCLSP

THE CAMBODIA-CANADA LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT PROJECT (CCLSP) – BACKGROUND

The CCLSP is based on a Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Cambodia and Canada. The Parliamentary Centre manages the project and works with local counterparts in order to promote sustainability and local ownership.

Project Objective

The main objective of the CCLSP is to contribute to good governance and democratic development in Cambodia through capacity

development of the National Assembly and the Senate.

The project has three components:

1. Enhanced capacity of the National Assembly, the Senate and their Commissions to draft and review legislation;
2. Increased responsiveness of Members of Parliament to constituents;
3. Improved capacity of the Secretariats to support the National Assembly and Senate.

In the areas of legislation,

representation and services of the Secretariats, and taking into account the principles of gender equality, the project aims to achieve the following sub-outcomes:

Legislation

- ◆ Improved management of the legislative agenda;
- ◆ Improved legislative drafting;
- ◆ Professional analysis provided by Commissions of Parliament; and
- ◆ Incorporation of gender analysis in legislation.

Representation

- ◆ Improved public policy

consultation by Commissions;

- ◆ Improved record keeping by Commissions of Parliament.

Secretariats

- ◆ Politically neutral services to all parties, through secretariats;
- ◆ Improved communication with the public about Parliament business;
- ◆ Improved legislative research support to Commissions;
- ◆ Improved management and administration; and
- ◆ Improved recruitment and use of female staff.

The Cambodia-Canada Legislative Support Project (CCLSP) – 2004 Highlights

After two successful years, the CCLSP continued with its activities into the third year of the Project. The following is a summary of key activities and accompanying results that have taken place in each of the three components in 2004.

Secretariat Component

Study Visit of Legal & Research Staff of the Senate & National Assembly to Thailand (February 2004) & the Philippines (March 2004)

From February 22-28 and from March 14-20, 2004, study visits to Bangkok, Thailand and Manila, Philippines were organized for selected legal and research staff of the Senate and National Assembly of Cambodia. Both delegations consisted of ten legal researchers each, five from the Office of the National Assembly and five from the Office of the Senate. CCLSP representatives co-ordinated the meetings and accompanied the delegation to all meetings. Meetings took place between members of the delegation and officials from the Bangkok and Manila House of Representatives, Senate, relevant commissions and civil society organizations.

The main purpose of the Study Visits was to expose the participants to key legislative and democratic practices within the Thai and Filipino Parliaments, while paying particular attention to Thai and Filipino approaches toward domestic violence and anti-corruption legislation. By comparing Thailand and the Philippine's treatment of the development, parliamentary review and implementation of domestic violence legislation to the Cambodian experience, delegates were able to gain insight into the current issues of parliamentary governance, including legislative analysis, public consultation, staff support to legislators, and the use of gender analysis in legislative review.

The participants recorded their findings on the Thai and Filipino systems and made recommendations for improving the current Cambodian practice of parliamentary staff in providing legislative reports to Commissions of the National Assembly and Senate.

Study Visit of Senior Managers of the Senate & National Assembly to Canada (May 2004)

From May 11-24, 2004, a Study Visit to Canada was organized for Senior Managers of the Secretariats of the National Assembly and Senate of Cambodia. The delegation consisted of eleven

senior managers, six from the Secretariat of the National Assembly and five from the Secretariat of the Senate.



The main objective of the Study Visit was to provide an opportunity to a core group of managers involved in developing human resource policies for the Cambodian Parliament to gain

first-hand knowledge and experience in Canada on the policies, practices and administrative systems in place in the Canadian Parliament.

The Study Visit was one activity in a series of training opportunities organized by the CCLSP to assist these Cambodian parliamentary managers in their efforts to improve and strengthen human resource management in their respective Secretariats. The visit was implemented as part of a series of previously held training sessions on 'Human Resource Management Principles and Policies' in Phnom Penh.

In general, the delegates were appreciative of the chance to learn about the Parliamentary system in Canada as well as the administrative structure of the Canadian Parliament. When they returned to Cambodia, each group prepared a report and submitted it to their respective Secretary General which allowed them to share their experiences during the Study Visit. This also allowed them the opportunity to transfer some of the lessons they learned during this Study Visit to their colleagues in Cambodia.

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Financial Management Training in Phnom Penh (October 2004)

From October 15-29, 2004, two consultants commissioned by the Parliamentary Centre, Mr. Jacques Sabourin and Mr. John McCrea, conducted a series of training sessions with staff from Cambodia's Senate and National Assembly on the subject of financial management.

Two roundtables, one with financial staff of the Senate and one with financial staff of the National Assembly, focused on challenges, problems and possible approaches to sound financial management in a legislative institution. The roundtables resulted in interesting and animated discussions among the participants. The participants were particularly interested in how financial managers interacted with Members of Parliament and Senators in Canada's Parliament as well as hearing about concrete

situations describing the role of the Finance Directorate in Canada.

Other activities also included two all-day training seminars for senior managers at the Deputy Director and Bureau Chief levels in both the Senate and National Assembly. One particular session included a group exercise involving the analysis of obstacles to decentralizing of budgets, which lead to enthusiastic discussions among the participants.



Study Visit of the Secretary-General of the Senate & Deputy Secretary-General of the National Assembly to Canada (November 2004)

As a result of the great commitment that the Secretary General of the Senate and Deputy Secretary General of the National Assembly had shown for Project activities and the desire to exchange information about the Canadian and Cambodian Parliaments, a Study Visit to Canada was organized from November 21-30, 2004.

The program for this delegation included an opportunity to meet with a variety of Members of Parliament, Senators and officials in the Canadian House of Commons and Senate, as well as meetings with officials and counterparts at the provincial level in the Quebec National Assembly.

The main objective of this Study Visit was to provide the delegates an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge and experience on the policies, practices and administrative systems in place in the Canadian and Quebec Legislatures.



Another objective included exposing the delegates to the Canadian and Quebec parliamentary institutions through meetings with Speakers and Clerks of the House of Commons and Senate, Senators, Library of Parliament officials, Committee Clerks, the Secretary-General of the Quebec National Assembly, and senior managers from various administrative departments at the federal and provincial levels. Other activities to help facilitate an understanding of the federal and provincial legislatures included observing Question Period in Ottawa and participating in a tour of the federal Parliament in Ottawa and the National Assembly in Quebec City.

The delegates expressed a great interest in meeting their counterparts and were enthusiastic about sharing their own experiences of the challenges that the Cambodian Parliament are facing, especially at the administrative and management level. Through participation in meetings, discussions, and a debriefing session, the delegates revealed much about the current situation in Cambodia with respect to Secretariat management and administration development, as well as lessons learned about the Canadian parliamentary system. One of the highlights of the Study Visit was the rapport developed between the Secretary General of the Senate, H.E. Mr. Oum Sarith and the Clerk of the Canadian Senate, Mr. Paul Bélisle. H.E. Mr. Oum Sarith had hosted a visit by the Speaker and Clerk of the Senate of Canada in Cambodia in November 2003, and this was an opportunity for Mr. Bélisle to return the hospitality.

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Representative Component

Asia-Africa Symposium - Governance and Accountability: Sharing experiences of parliamentary oversight and poverty monitoring in Asia & Africa (October 2004)

A three-day Symposium was organized that allowed African and Asian parliamentarians to share experiences on parliamentary oversight and poverty monitoring in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from October 4-7, 2004. Hosted by the Senate of Cambodia and the Parliamentary Centre of Canada, the symposium brought together six African Parliamentarians, half a dozen Cambodian



Parliamentarians and one Member of Parliament each from: India, Thailand and East Timor.

The first day featured plenary sessions, with a focus on sharing concepts and practices of parliamentary and civic engagement in monitoring public policies and poverty reduction. Five keynote presentations took place by parliamentary leaders from Asia and Africa, as well as experts with long-standing engagement in issues of accountability and parliamentary oversight.

During the second day of the symposium, two leading Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Urban Sector Group and CIDSE, who work on poverty reduction efforts in Cambodia, organized and managed a field-based learning experience for the participants of the Symposium. One group visited a health clinic in



the Dangkor district and shared experiences on urban poverty issues. The second group engaged with the rural poor in Muk Kampoul district in Kandal province, exploring issues of sustainable livelihoods. The result was a shared understanding among the participants of the lessons they had learned, and their implications for joint and collaborative actions in strengthening parliamentary oversight for poverty reduction.

On the third day, these lessons were shared in the larger group and several central recommendations were generated for the way forward. These included the need for parliaments to collaborate with civil society and undertake joint-training and joint program implementation; the need to pursue exchanges of information and experiences between parliaments; and the need to include income-generating measures in poverty reduction projects.

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Consultation Workshop: Strengthening relations with citizens (November 2004)

On November 11, 2004, a one-day workshop took place in Phnom Penh between Members of the National Assembly and Senators of the Kingdom of Cambodia and two representatives of the Parliamentary Centre in Canada: Mr. Robert Miller, Executive Director and Mrs. Amelita Armit, Asia Programs Director.

The objectives of the workshop were:

1. To present a broad framework on the public participation process.
2. To clarify the meaning of “Public Consultation”.
3. To provide information on international trends and best practices in public consultation.
4. To share strategies and tips for organizing successful public consultations.

The participants initiated discussions on the subject of how to best handle issues concerning constituency relations. As a result, follow-up activities will include the development of consultation awareness strategies in the Cambodian provinces.

Legislative Component

Cambodian Women in Governance

Over the past year, discussions have been held, both formally and informally, with women Parliamentarians and women community leaders on the feasibility and desirability of developing a common “platform” for women Parliamentarians to come together across party lines to discuss various issues, develop new skills and build networks amongst themselves. Women parliamentarians expressed their interest in a program of practical skills development and informational initiatives, topics that allow women parliamentarians to fully enter into debates and participate successfully in policy development.



The CCLSP has taken a lead role and initiated a number of activities in this regard, including roundtables with former Canadian MP Ms. Dawn Black and African Members of Parliament, Ms. Anne Makinda (Tanzania), Ms. Jalia Bintu (Uganda) and Ms. Saudatu Sani (Nigeria). The high proportion of women (relative to their overall numbers in the National Assembly and Senate) who participate in other CCLSP activities confirms that they are serious about improving their skills and capacities that will enable them to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Over the next few months, a series of monthly seminars and roundtables will provide a forum in which practical skills development and information sharing can take place.

Information Session for new Members of Parliament (July 2004)

On July 29, 2004, a full-day information session took place at the Hotel Continental, Phnom Penh, for new Members of Parliament. The session brought together former Speakers from different countries around the world (including Canada, Germany and Senegal), who shared their experiences on the roles and responsibilities of Members of Parliament.

The guest Speakers provided technical assistance to the National Assembly in the field of Rule of Law and the principles of accountability and ethics in the respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental legal principles.

The Acting President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia stressed that each Member of Parliament should understand clearly three important roles: as lawmakers, as the representatives of the people, and in monitoring and oversight of government activities. At the end of the session, the Members of Parliament that participated in this information session better understood their roles and responsibilities and the importance of civil society as effective partners of Parliament.

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Forthcoming CCLSP Activities

Legislative Component

- ◆ Study visits to Canada for Parliamentarians on legislative management issues
- ◆ Workshops/roundtables for parliamentary commissions on various legislative review issues
- ◆ Roundtables/training to enhance capacity of women parliamentarians

Representative Component

- ◆ Networking/Exchanges with regional and/or international parliamentarians on priority parliamentary issues
- ◆ Development of consultation strategies with selected Commissioners, Civil Society, and national and provincial staff
- ◆ Public consultations with selected Commissions through field research and corresponding roundtables

Secretariats Component

- ◆ General staff training – administrative and management skills, report writing, research skills
- ◆ Performance and management reporting training with senior managers of Secretariat
- ◆ Training to National Assembly and Senate Commission staff on research in social and economic development
- ◆ Continued development of Human Resources policies and guidelines
- ◆ Ongoing legal staff training through legislative assignments with local mentoring
- ◆ Study Visits for staff on comparative research techniques

We hope you enjoyed the first Issue. We welcome your questions, comments and suggestions! Please email them to Louise McCoy at mccoysl@parl.gc.ca.

If you wish to subscribe to this newsletter, please email Louise McCoy at mccoysl@parl.gc.ca and include your full contact details.*

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