

Cambodia Export Diversification and Expansion Programme (CEDEP)
Final Milled Rice Export Component Project Steering Committee Meeting
Opening Remarks by LCT Tekreth Kamrang, Secretary of State, EIF Focal
Point

February 15, 2016, Ministry of Commerce, Phnom Penh

HE SOK Puthyvuth, President, Cambodia Rice Federation

Excellencies,

Mr. Colin Taylor, IFC Regional Program Leader

Representatives from IFC

Members of the CEDEP Core Teams

MoC Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me first and foremost to welcome you all to the Ministry of Commerce and to appreciate your presence here today at this final CEDEP I – Milled Rice export project steering committee meeting.

The steering structure of the project was for long under the hands of the Ministry of Industry and Handicraft and the IFC, with MoC playing more an observer role, as a partner in the Agro-business Value Chain Project funded by the EU. We are glad that, as the EU-funded portion of the programme has ended, the MoC, as a co-founder of the CRF, is able to host the final project steering committee meeting.

The main objective of today's meeting is to ensure that the project, for which the bulk of technical activities ended in December 2015, has robust exit and sustainability plans adopted and, later on implemented. As we recalled several times, it is critical, not only for milled rice, but for other sectors as well, that the private sector takes over the responsibility of continuing the good work and sustain the results achieved by the different technical assistance projects supporting Cambodia rice development. The work currently done in branding Cambodian rice and gathering market intelligence in key export markets go in the right direction.

At this stage, I would like to highlight the very good contribution of the IFC, in its role of the Main Implementing Entity for the EIF CEDEP I component on milled rice exports. IFC has worked closely with the different private sector associations active in the rice sector, not only for the benefit of

exporters, but also for rice-growers, rice millers and for the benefit of the dialogue between the Government and the private sector.

We are pleased to hear that IFC is considering continuing its support in the rice sector in coming years, and certainly eager to learn more about the resources the IFC in particular and the World Bank Group in general is planning to invest in the sector. We encourage the IFC to work closely with our Department of International Cooperation and CRF to make sure that future support remains fully demand-driven.

CEDEP was launched as a response to the Royal Government of Cambodia's wish to foster economic diversification and as a follow-up to the Cambodia's Trade Policy Review under the WTO. The CEDEP structure is now applied to different sectors, all identified in the CTIS 2014-2018 as key export earners. Our Aid-for-Trade strategy for 2016-2020 tries to emulate the progress made in several sectors, including rice.

CEDEP I and CEDEP II are important examples of how targeted assistance can help Cambodia build capacity in key priority trade areas identified in our new Trade SWAp Roadmap and can help achieve some of the Government's targets for the benefit of the nation as a whole. I am pleased to inform you that DICO is currently preparing an MoC-DP pledging roundtable, currently scheduled for the end of March, during which we hope our development partners will pledge resources to support our Medium Term Plan for Aid-for-Trade.

Last but not least, we hope to receive the project 2015 report and final completion report as soon as possible, so as to fulfill our commitments with the EIF and promote our achievements more broadly.

Without further ado, I would like to thank you all once again for your participation and support.

Have a fruitful meeting.
