

INDONESIA RESIDENT MISSION, ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

CAMBODIA JOINS ADB-OECD ANTICORRUPTION INITIATIVE

JAKARTA, INDONESIA (5 March 2003) - Cambodia has become the 19th country to join the Anticorruption Initiative organized jointly by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development.

Cambodia also endorsed the Initiative's Anti-Corruption Plan for Asia and the Pacific and joined its Steering Group.

Cambodia's Sum Manit, Minister of State, Secretary General of the Administrative Reform Council and Director of the Anticorruption Unit in the Office of the Council of Ministers, pledged "to work with all countries of the region to combat the corruption curse."

This is the major development announced at the 3rd Steering Group meeting of the Anticorruption Initiative being held in Jakarta from 4 to 6 March 2003.

The Initiative's goal is to help countries build effective anti-corruption mechanisms and lay the foundations for a sustained fight against corruption. The Initiative adopts an integrated approach to policy-making while respecting country differences and without interfering in internal corruption cases. It is an integral part of governments' reform efforts.

The meeting was opened by Agus Haryanto, Indonesia's Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance and David Green, Country Director of ADB's Resident Mission in Indonesia.

In his speech, Mr. Green said countries are finding it difficult to obtain foreign direct investment while corrupt practices are prevalent.

The objective of the Steering Group meeting is to review steps taken by the Initiative's 19 endorsing countries (including Cambodia) to implement the Anti-Corruption Action Plan as well as to share experiences.

Many countries are close to finishing their first cycle of implementation plans, the meeting was told.

"This is reassuring and shows that countries are taking this task to heart. Concrete discussions are also taking place to support countries that have yet to start implementing the Action Plan," said Jak Jabes, ADB's Adviser for Governance (Public Administration and Management).

The meeting noted that India held the first training master seminar organized by the Secretariat on the Prosecution of Corruption. As a result, the Secretariat has been asked to organize more such training at a regional level.

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The meeting also agreed upon guidelines to be used by countries in reporting on anticorruption projects as well as the approach to stocktaking of developments.

The meeting is being attended by 14 of the Initiative's participating countries as well as the Advisory Council, which consists of representatives of donor agencies, international NGOs and business organizations, including Transparency International, the World Bank, the Pacific Basin Economic Cooperation and AusAID. Also attending are two senior officials from the Ministry of Supervision, the People's Republic of China, as observers.

The next meeting of the Steering Group will be held with a regional conference in Malaysia in late autumn 2003.

The Initiative aims to foster regional and country-specific policy reforms, tailoring its activities to priority policies identified by countries and providing means by which governments, donors and other partners of the Initiative can discuss progress achieved.

The endorsing countries which make up its Steering Group met in 2002 in Manila to adopt a medium term strategy and reviewed projects and progress reports submitted by each country.

The policy work of the Initiative is based on four principles of action:

- Cementing country ownership
- Fostering regional cooperation
- Involving citizens and the business sector actively
- Enlarging the participating group of countries.

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