

NEWSLETTER FIRST QUARTER 2019

Policy Pulse, formerly known as the Reform Inventory Initiative, is an initiative of the Asia Foundation to bridge the information gap between the Cambodian government at the ministerial level and the general public, providing a platform whereby information on Ministerial policy reforms are collected, inventoried, validated, and shared. Policy Pulse is intended to be a window for current information and insight on the government's progress on reform, and to serve as the basis for a review process to identify and publicize the top reforms each year.

Policy Pulse Newsletter is a new medium to share with the public updates regarding recent policy developments in Cambodia.



POLICY PULSE

During the first quarter of 2019, there have been a number of notable policy developments in Cambodia. In this edition, we highlight some of those developments across the ministries, including the creation of new working group for cashew nuts, the new quota for recruitment of people with disabilities at various governmental instructions, and the measures to support local manufacturers and exporters, to name a few.



Students sitting inside a classroom. Photo: The Asia Foundation

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has established a working group for cashew nuts that aims to increase cashew nut production to one million tons per year. The committee will conduct studies on cashew nut production, and coordinate and facilitate the drafting of plans and programs to reach annual production goals by 2029.

The current challenges in cashew nut farming include the limited knowledge of farmers on correct planting and harvesting techniques and the lack of processing facilities.

There were approximately 170,000 hectares of cashew farms in Cambodia. Last year (2018), the production rose 30 percent to reach 136,094 tons, of which about 70 percent was exported in raw form, 20 percent processed and exported, and the remaining 10 percent consumed locally. Vietnam has historically been the biggest market for Cambodian cashews. ([Khmer Times, March 19, 2019](#))

Ministry of Civil Service

The Cambodian government has agreed in principle that at least two per cent of the recruitment of all civil servants, contracted officers and teachers should be persons living with disabilities, and that between 20 and 50 percent of all new recruits should be women. ([Phnom Penh Post, March 8, 2019](#))

Ministry of Commerce

The Ministry of Commerce has issued a statement cancelling the Export Management Fee (EMF). Local exporters are no longer required to pay for a certificate of origin (CO) and the Cambodia Import Export Inspection and Fraud Repression (CamControl) unit is being withdrawn from all border checkpoints to ease cross-border trade. These measures are designed to support local manufacturers and exporters to reduce production costs. ([Vietnam Plus, February 13, 2019](#))

Ministry of Economy and Finance

The Ministry of Economy and Finance will work with relevant ministries and institutions to develop a One-Stop Business Registration Platform that will centralize all services needed to ease the process of business registration. This effort will reduce the number of visits to different ministries and agencies for registration procedures and encourage more businesses to register. ([Khmer Times, March 20, 2019](#))



A man at a fish sauce and soy sauce manufacturing facility.
Photo: The Asia Foundation

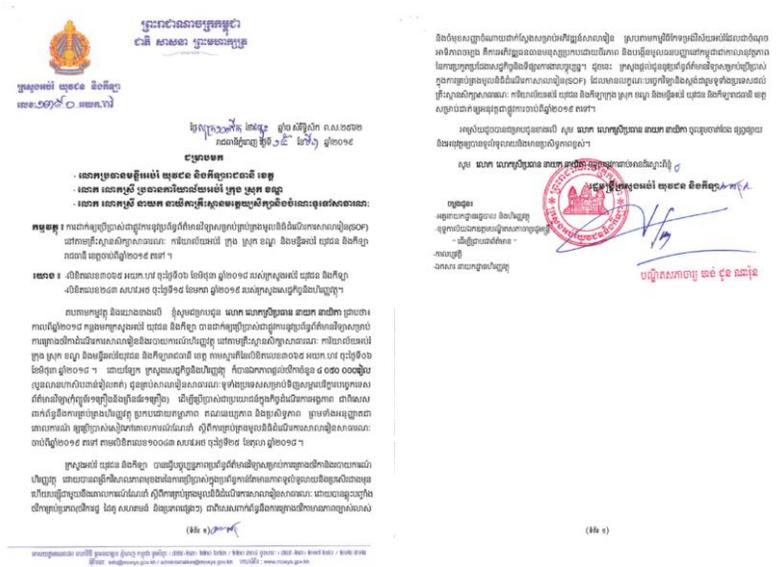
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MLVT) and UNESCO have launched an internet-based education program—The Basic Education Equivalency Programme (Beep)—for students from grades seven to nine who have left school early. The program will give them an opportunity to complete online courses, which are equal to a grade nine education, and will enable them to register for MLVT’s Technical and Vocational Education and Training Program (TVET) upon completion. The program offers 11 subjects, including entrepreneurship, English and Information Technology, among others.

The Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC) was the first institution to pilot Beep. MoEYS will expand the program to five institutions in Phnom Penh and five in Siem Reap province.

According to MoEYS, in the academic year 2017-18, the dropout rate for primary school (grade one to six) nationwide was 4.7 per cent, secondary school (grade seven to nine) was 16.6 per cent, and high school (grade 10 to 12) was 19.7 per cent. ([Phnom Penh Post, January 22, 2019](#))

MoEYS and Save the Children has developed a National Manual on Teaching Children with Disabilities that will provide up-to-date techniques on how to teach children with special needs. MoEYS aims to help almost 55,000 children living with disabilities to enroll in school. Save the Children has familiarized teachers and educational authorities from provincial and district offices of education on how to manage the behavior of children living with disabilities, how to teach them, and how to develop an individual child support plan, among other topics. ([Phnom Penh Post, February 18, 2019](#))



MoEYS has announced the implementation of the School Operation Fund System at public education institutions, and education departments at municipality, district, city, and provincial levels. The system enables the school to develop budget plans and financial reports on transparent, accountable, and efficient manners for school development. In order to support this effort, the Ministry of Economy and Finance has provided 4.05 million riels (about 1,000 USD) to each school to spend on IT equipment to operate the system. ([Facebook Post on March 18, 2019](#))

Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health has published a list of health centers that provide mental health and drug addiction treatment in public health facilities throughout the country. The number of facilities has increased from 177 in 2016 to 419 in 2017, and to 431 in 2019. Additionally, the ministry has trained 393 doctors and nurses to treat mental health and drug addiction and collaborated with international experts to train 21 Cambodians to provide professional counselling.

In 2017, about 90,672 people have received consultation and treatment for all types of mental illness in public health centers. The number was 16,825 less than in 2016. Among those patients, 21% of issues were caused by stress, 20% by insufficient sleep, 12.6% by depression, and 4.5% by drug abuse. ([Khmer Times, February 4, 2019](#))

Ministry of Interior

The Cambodian government has made the amendment to the 2008 Law on the Commune/Sangkat Administrative Management, including the increased number of Phnom Penh capital councils from 21 to 27 members, provincial councils from 15 to 27 members, city councils from 11 to 21 members, and district councils from 11 to 21 members has been passed by the government. The aim of the amendment is to improve service provisions to citizens as development and population increase across the country.

([Radio France International, January 3, 2019](#))

Commune development budgets will be increased to more than \$70,000 for each commune in 2020, and to \$110,000 for each commune in 2023 to address public needs, including infrastructure and the promotion of human resources, among others. However, this figure does not include administrative costs.

According to the Ministry of Interior, Cambodia has one capital, 24 provinces, 159 provincial districts, 12 municipal districts, 1,410 provincial communes, 236 municipal communes, 26 cities and 14,383 villages in 2018. ([Phnom Penh Post, February 14, 2019](#))

6,000 civil servants from the national level have been transferred to the sub-national level. This effort is to provide better service and promote good governance and economic development at the sub-national level. ([Khmer Times, February 15, 2019](#))

Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training

The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training has launched the first mini bus Mobile Job Center to bring employment services and information on job opportunities to youth in rural areas. The Mobile Job Center is equipped with computers and a library where job seekers can use its online facilities to look and apply for jobs. To date, Cambodia has a number of job centers in Phnom Penh and in eight provinces. ([Khmer Times, February 28, 2019](#))

Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction

The Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction aims to complete land registration nation-wide by 2021 that will reduce land disputes and increase real estate tax revenue for the government. To date, around 73 percent of the national registration process has been completed equating to 5.1 million plots among the nation's seven million registered plots. ([Phnom Penh Post, March 14, 2019](#))



Villagers are seen participating in a session on good governance.
Photo: The Asia Foundation

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Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology

The Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology and the Asian Development Bank will implement two projects totaling \$380 million aiming to effectively sustain water resource management and development. The Irrigated Agriculture Improvement Project and the Multiple Financing Facility on Irrigation and Water Resources Management Project will focus on water security, improving irrigation efficiency, flood mitigation, drought control, integrated water resource management for river basins and strengthening institutions. ([Khmer Times, February 5, 2019](#))

National Bank of Cambodia

The National Strategy for Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism 2019-2023 was launched to serve as a roadmap for ministries, institutions and other stakeholders to understand their roles and responsibilities and to streamline coordination between stakeholders in combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism in Cambodia. ([Phnom Penh Post, March 15, 2019](#))

The Policy Pulse advisory group includes representatives from the American Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia; the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace; Cambodians for Resource Revenue Transparency; the Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia; the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia; DFDL; the European Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia; GIZ, JICA Cambodia Office; Mekong Strategic Partners; the NGO Education Partnership; the NGO Forum on Cambodia; OXFAM; PACT; the Reproductive and Child Health Alliance; Transparency International Cambodia; the United Nations Children's Fund; University Research Company; LLC, and other experts from bilateral agencies, multilateral institutions, NGOs and the private sector.



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