

SPEECH

Remarks by USAID/Cambodia Mission Director Erin Soto, GIPC Welcome Event

Phnom Penh
March 26, 2007

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good afternoon, and let me begin by offering congratulations to GMAC Chair Mr. Van Souieng and the members of the Executive Committee on your recent election, or re-election, to leadership in the industry. I also offer my Industry Productivity Center, who will be taking on a different industry leadership role.

You are all well-aware of the industry's accomplishments, and of the challenges, facing you in the next 2-3 years.

You know better than anyone that the end of the MFA ushered in a new era in the global garment industry.

The future of the industry here, with its hundreds of thousands of jobs and leading export revenues, depends on your ability to complete based on what Mr. Van Souieng recently called, "the three pillars of competitiveness – price, timely deliver and quality." It is also the key to achieving the financial returns that you hope for as you lead industrial investment in new countries.

USAID recognizes the contribution made by the garment industry to economic growth and opportunity in developing countries, and your importance to Cambodia. That is why we decided to fund the establishment of GIPC, to help strengthen apparel manufacturing and business fundamentals.

GIPC offers Cambodian producers world-class productivity consulting, and we are training local personnel in production technique. I am happy to say that the result for companies participating in our programs has been very good; we are especially pleased that so many of you have returned for additional services.

Now GIPC is taking the next step to becoming a sustainable training institution, able to serve the industry in Cambodia over the long term. With local leadership, working closely with GMAC and coordinating with the government and other stakeholders, responsive to

your needs, GIPC can help you show the world that Cambodia is competitive player in the tough world of apparel production.

I wish each every one of you the best of luck and good future in the upcoming year. I know GIPC is in good hands and Mona will be instrumental in developing world class.

During this season of new year celebrations we hear many predictions. I believe that success usually rewards those who work for it and I know the people in this room are a particularly hard working group. I wish you all the good fortune you deserve in the year ahead, and I am proud that USAID is supporting you in your efforts.