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United States Launches New Program on Rights and Justice

Phnom Penh, Cambodia
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U.S. Ambassador Carol A. Rodley and H.E. Chan Tani, Secretary of State, Office of the Council of Ministers, kick off the Program on Rights and Justice.

The United States this week launched a five-year, \$20 million program designed to strengthen the rule of law and promote human rights in Cambodia.

The Program on Rights and Justice will work to improve the transparency and efficiency of the Cambodian justice system; offer legal-education opportunities to students, lawyers and judges; strengthen grassroots advocacy efforts; and provide grants to local human-rights organizations.

The program will work across all areas of Cambodian society, including the government, civil society and the private sector.

“I’m confident this new program will lay the foundation for reform of the legal system,” U.S. Ambassador Carol A. Rodley said during a reception at her residence on Thursday, February 19. The Ambassador said the United States looked forward to working with the Royal Government of Cambodia on judicial reform and human rights over the next five years.

The United States, through USAID, will use the new program to build on the successes of its previous Program on Rights and Justice, which ended in September 2008. The accomplishments of that program included support for a model court in Kandal Province and sending Cambodia’s first team of students to the International Client Counseling Competition in India, where they impressed the judges with their skills.

The previous program also provided ethics training to lawyers and judges, offered financial support to human-rights organizations, and conducted a nationwide survey to determine who in Cambodia was in need of legal aid.