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United States Launches New Economic Growth Program

Phnom Penh, Cambodia
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U.S. Ambassador Carol A. Rodley and H.E. Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in Charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers, kick off the Economic Growth Program.

The United States this week launched a four-year, \$21 million program designed to alleviate poverty in Cambodia by promoting economic growth in rural areas, home to 90% of the country's poor.

The Economic Growth program will work with farmers and small business owners to increase their revenue, thereby improving the living standards of their families. It will also help entrepreneurs advance their interests with the local and national government, and it will work with the government to improve the investment climate.

"This program is built on the idea that if you provide the Cambodian people with the tools they need to succeed, they will do great things," U.S. Ambassador Carol A Rodley said at a reception to launch the program on Wednesday, March 4.

H.E. Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in Charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers, thanked the American people for their support. "The concerted effort and strong determination from both the Cambodian and U.S. governments will obviously help improve the wellbeing of the Cambodian people," he said.

The United States, through USAID, will use the program to build on the success of its previous Economic Growth program, which helped over 1,600 small businesses improve their sales by 200%-500% and generated \$6.5 million in new revenue, a return on investment of \$1.5 million.

While these numbers are impressive, the true impact of the program is best seen in the lives of the thousands of Cambodians who work with the program. Through hard work, these rural families can now afford to send their children to school, build new and better homes, and pay for much-needed health care.