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United States Marks World Tuberculosis Day

Phnom Penh, Cambodia
March 24, 2009



USAID's innovative C-DOTS program has a cure rate of 90%

The United States joined the Royal Government of Cambodia and its partners in commemorating World Tuberculosis Day on March 24, 2009. Although deaths from tuberculosis (TB) worldwide have declined since 1990, the disease continues to claim more than 1.6 million lives each year, making it one of the three leading causes of death in the world.

Cambodia is one of 22 high-burden TB countries. An estimated 64% of Cambodians are infected with TB, and a substantial number of cases remain

undetected. Around 13,000 Cambodians die each year from the disease – or 35 people every day – while there are some 70,000 new cases each year.

“Although a cure has existed for more than half a century, TB remains one of the world’s biggest health problems,” U.S. Ambassador Carol A. Rodley said. “We must work together to ensure this deadly disease is effectively brought under control in Cambodia and around the world. The United States is fully committed to doing its part in this effort.”

The United States, through USAID, is the largest donor to TB programs in Cambodia, with \$3 million contributed in 2008. U.S. programs cover more than a third of Cambodia’s health centers, helping them to cure about 90% of patients.

USAID introduced in Cambodia the innovative C-DOTS program, which utilizes community volunteers to monitor TB patients and ensure they take the six months of daily medication necessary to be cured. Many of these unpaid volunteers got involved with the program to help a sick relative or community member, but continued long after the person was cured due to the prestige they acquired in their communities.

Between 2000 and 2008, the United States provided \$777 million for TB programs worldwide.