



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING

**MINISTRY OF LAND MANAGEMENT,
URBAN PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION**

Phnom Penh, 6 June 2019

Press Release

On the afternoon of 6 June 2019, His Excellency CHEA Sophara, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction together with His Excellency Say Samal, Minister of Environment; representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Commerce, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation met the EU Fact-Finding Mission on the Implementation of the Everything But Arms (EBA) Scheme led by Ms. Alina BOICIUS, Deputy Head of Trade and Sustainable Development Unit, Directorate-General for Trade, and joined by His Excellency George EDGAR, EU Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia at the Ministry.

Excellency Deputy Prime Minister welcomed the delegation and reaffirmed the Royal Government of Cambodia's position to ensure rule of law, democracy, and respect for human rights and informed the delegation about achievements the Royal Government has made in the land sector, including the registration of 5.22 million land parcels, equal to 74% of Cambodia's estimated total of 7 million parcels; the registration of 24 indigenous communities' land; the full resolution of 9,871 land disputes; and the forthcoming settlement of some 2,000 claims.

Ms. Alina BOICIUS congratulated and highly appreciated the achievements in the land sector and raised issues about 1) the EBA monitoring procedure, where economic land concessions (ELCs) are one aspect of assessment; 2) requested clarification on certain issues related to the resolution of disputes over economic land concessions (ELCs) for sugar cane for export, resolution methods, and expected outcomes by 12 August 2019 in four provinces of Udon Ratchasit, Preah Vihear, Kampong Speu, and Koh Kong; 3) indigenous communal land registration in Preah Vihear province in accordance with national and international standards; and 4) participation in an electronic platform, where information can be shared and clarifications can be posted.

Excellency Deputy Prime Minister gladly received the information about the launch of the platform and clarified the cases of disputes over ELCs for sugar cane for export in the four provinces as follows:

1. Udon Ratchasit province: Disputes were fully resolved for 412 relevant families/households who were granted a total of 1,028.37 hectares of social land concessions (SLCs) that had been withdrawn from ELCs. Each family received

2 hectares of farming land, which did not have stones or rocks and water sources that need to be preserved. This contradicts the concern raised by the delegation. 385 families happily accepted the granted land and were allocated the land by lottery. The remaining 27 families could not be identified. It is not true that there are disputes involving 280 other families that have not been resolved, as raised by the delegation, because if there are, there would have been protests at their localities and the Ministry. The delegation was encouraged to visit the sites in order to obtain factual information. The Ministry will gladly receive any request for SLC from other small landholders who actually need land according to the SLC procedure if there is any.

2. Preah Vihear province: The Ministry successfully mediated with the actual affected people over 57 claims and rejected 230 claims that had already been resolved and that covered public land of the State. The Ministry rejected the request by 3 Kuoy ethnic community in Tbeng Meanchey district, Preah Vihear province for the registration of 28,000 hectares of land drawn by an NGO that overlaps with wildlife sanctuaries, private land of the State already registered, residential zones, an administrative zone with the intention to destroy the environment, the economic structure, and state institutions and to prevent community harmony. Communal land registration for the 25th, 26th, and 27th indigenous communities are going to be carried out in Preah Vihear province. A request was made for participation with good will from the NGO Punlok Khmer in order to avoid any impediment to the land registration.
3. Kampong Speu province: Land disputes were completely resolved for 203 families, each of which received US\$500; other disputes are being resolved. The delegation is going to visit the site on 8 June 2019.
4. Koh Kong province: Land disputes were completely resolved for 960 families that were granted 1,929 hectares of land and each family received from US\$2,500 to US\$3,000 as well as 1.5 to 3 hectares of land. There is a solution to the issue concerning the quality of land that cannot be used for farming. The people chose the land themselves and they may choose other land at other locations. The 200 families who had submitted claims through the EU in 2012 each already received 1.5 hectares of land but did not receive any monetary compensation because one NGO had agreed to provide the families with monetary compensation in the first place.

The head of the delegation thanked for all the Deputy Prime Minister's responses and confirmed the mission's objective to cooperate with the Royal Government of Cambodia to protect the EBA from removal for the joint interests of Cambodia and the EU.

Excellency Deputy Prime Minister requested the delegation to make an assessment based on sensibility and to support Cambodia to continue to enjoy the EU's EBA scheme, which responds to the Royal Government of Cambodia's effort to develop the nation from zero after the destruction by the Pol Pot genocidal regime, thereby maintaining peace, political stability, creating jobs for youth, improving people's living conditions, and boosting economic growth as well as contributing to peace building and regional and world security with her status as a member of the United Nations.