



Kingdom of Cambodia

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Ministry of Land Management,  
Urban Planning and Construction

### Press Release

On Thursday morning of 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021, His Excellency Chea Sophara, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, has presided over the opening ceremony of the Launching Workshop of Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development Project III (LASED III) virtually, attended by leadership and working groups of the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction; the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the Ministry of Economy and Finance; and the World Bank; representatives of the ministries and institutions under the National Social Land Concession Committee; provincial governors; and representatives of provincial departments and relevant units under provincial administrations, relevant district and commune administrations, indigenous communities, development partners, and national and international organizations.

LASED III is a project of the Royal Government of Cambodia that has a total budget of 107 million USD, of which 93 million USD in IDA credit is provided by the World Bank and 14 million USD is funded by the Royal Government, and that is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for a period of six years from October 2020 to December 2026 in target provinces with suitable land and at 71 sites (26 sites are for social land concession and 45 sites for indigenous communities). The project covers a total land area of 30,000 hectares, 10,000 hectares of which belongs to indigenous communities, and a total of 6,500 beneficiary households, including 1,500 indigenous households. The project's activities focus on 5 key areas, namely social land concession, indigenous communal land titling, commune land use planning, physical infrastructure development, and support for beneficiaries' agriculture and livelihood development.

Through the transparent and good governance-based implementation of the social land concession program, LASED III will provide agricultural and residential land for poor people as capital to embark on building their livelihoods and cultivating their land. The project will also contribute to building basic physical infrastructure, offering trainings on agricultural work, creating market linkages in order to boost incomes, improve living standards, reduce migration and reduce people's poverty, thereby contributing to the realization of the objectives of the Rectangular Strategy, Phase IV, which is the socio-economic agenda of the Royal Government in the 6<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the National Assembly.

Phnom Penh, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021



Cambodia Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development Project III (LASED III)

Virtual Project Launching Workshop

Opening Remarks by **Mariam Sherman**

Country Director, Cambodia, Lao and Myanmar

June 24, 2021

Excellency, Chea Sophara, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction

Excellency, Veng Sakhon, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Development Partners, NGO communities, Civil Society Organizations

Excellencies, colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning!

I would like to first congratulate his Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister for his leadership and notable commitment to the Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development Project (LASED) initiative, and also the entire government team, for the elaborate preparation of this launching workshop. This bodes well for the implementation of this project.

As the World Bank Country Director for Cambodia, Lao and Myanmar, I would have loved to travel to Cambodia for this event, had the context allowed a face-to-face workshop.

As I understand it, the LASED initiative has been a wonderful story of partnership between the RGC and the World Bank, since 2008. Its goal is to support government strategy to reduce poverty in a sustainable manner, by ensuring secured access to land and natural resources by small agricultural producers and their communities. The LASED program has been designed to help operationalize the legal frameworks established by the RGC to implement Social Land Concessions (SLC) policies for landless rural poor. Following the positive and encouraging results of the LASED pilot and the follow-on LASED II project, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved a US\$93 million Credit from the International Development Association (IDA) to fund this LASED III project. The LASED pilot tested implementation



approaches for SLC, LASED II consolidated achievements and focused on development support; and, LASED III aims at further scaling up achievements in SLCs.

A notable aspect of this new LASED III project is that, in addition to the SLC program, it will support several ongoing communal land titling (ICLT) processes as well as provide development assistance to several Indigenous Communities that have already completed their ICLT processes. This is a high risk, but high return endeavor because of numerous challenges including safeguards issues that need to be addressed. Illegal land appropriation in Cambodia remains a major issue. Therefore, I am pleased to see that LASED III has developed a Stakeholder Engagement Plan and outreach activities to inform and engage project beneficiaries and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), to ensure transparency and accountability in the land allocation process, to raise awareness about land rights, demarcation and ownership, and to build community and broader support for the project objectives. I therefore strongly encourage this close and constructive partnership between the Bank team and the government counterpart to stay the course, and to properly address all implementation challenges.

I am also pleased to inform you that through the JSDF, we have been able to mobilize \$2,993,938 to fund pilot rural development initiatives to help enhance livelihood activities in IC communities. On behalf of the Bank, I would like to thank the Japanese authorities for this important contribution.

Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen,

Let me conclude by wishing you full success in the implementation of this workshop which would be an important contributor to the implementation of this LASED III project. Again, thanks to the project team for organizing this event, and the World Bank team for its valuable support.

And, please, stay safe.