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**United Nations Development Programme  
Cambodia**

**Capacity Development for Socio-economic Surveys and Planning (**  
*CM96019V*

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*Report of the Evaluation Mission*

*June 1999*

## **Preface**

At the invitation of the Royal Government of Cambodia and UNDP, a three-member mission, Olympios Katsiaouni (Team Leader, UN-DESA), Professor Nikhilesh Bhattacharya (Indian Statistical Institute), and Srinivas Shivakumar (local consultant), carried out a mid-term evaluation on project "Capacity Development for Socio-Economic Surveys and Planning - CMB/96/019". The evaluation was undertaken between June 13 to 26, 1999, with the mandated Report and Project Evaluation Information Sheet submitted to the stakeholders, and with the relevant presentations made. The Team worked closely with the stakeholders, reviewed all available evidence at its disposal, and conducted extensive interviews as part of its remit. The entire process was highly collaborative, characterised by professionalism and collegiality, with considerable discussion and networking, as befitting a large and complex project of this nature.

The Team wishes to thank the Royal Government of Cambodia and UNDP, Phnom Penh, for their kind invitation, and especially the Ministry of Planning and project staff for hosting the mission. Details on meetings and persons met are given in the Annex and gratefully acknowledged. The Team, in particular, wishes to express its gratitude to H E Chhay Than, Minister of Planning (MoP), and H E Ou Orhat and H E Lay Prohas, Secretaries of State (MoP) for the discussions and support given to the mission. Messrs Paul Matthews and Jean-Claude Rogivue, former Resident Representative, and Resident Representative a.i., respectively, took a deep interest from the inception of the mission and ensured its fruitful passage. Further, Ms Kaarina Immonen, Assistant Resident Representative, and Mr Jonas Lovkrona, Programme Officer, UNDP, who were intimately involved with the project, worked consistently hard to ensure that the mission received all the necessary support for its deliberations. The staff of the project, especially Messrs Mathew Varghese and Raja B.M. Korale, were always available, but unobtrusive, and assisted the Team with infinite goodwill and candor. H E San Sy Than, Director General, National Institute of Statistics, showed patience and perspicacity in the face of many calls on himself, and staff, for information and interviews. Venkatesh Sundararaman, as the ex-officio, and informal, member of the support group helped generously in the discussions and with the production of the report in the last days of the big push. Finally, Mr B Mbida-Essama (acting Chief of the World Bank Resident Office in Cambodia), Ms Susana Womack (Operations Analyst, the World Bank) and Mr Daniel Asplund (SIDA Resident Representative in Phnom Penh), took time off from their busy schedules to discuss pertinent issues with the mission. Indeed all interviewees were magnanimous, to fault, in accepting the frequent intrusions on their work, and to share with the Team the many facets affecting the project. Credit must go to them, and to the poor people of Cambodia, for any value in the mission's work in support of the stakeholders and their noble cause.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

ADB

Asian Development Bank

## CSESCambodia Socio-Economic Survey

CARERE	Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
ILO	International Labour Organisation
mop	Ministry of Planning
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
PIP	Public Investment Programme
PPER	Project Performance Evaluation Report
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SESC	Socio-Economic Survey of Cambodia
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SLAP	Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (Tokyo)
TCDC	Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries
ToR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Tripartite Review
UN-DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

### **1. Executive Summary**

The accomplishments of the project and the difficulties confronted by it, reflect the ground realities in Cambodia. To begin with, any assessment of the project's accomplishments will have to be tempered with a backdrop of security concerns and financial constraints that have limited field operations. Furthermore, every facet of this project has an evolving aspect, thus: making project, administration and evaluation more challenging. Engagement with the national counterparts in the line ministries has been close and experimental in nature, with them assuming leadership roles over time.

The objectives for which this evaluation team were, in the main, to assess and give recommendations that will enable the project to strengthen its policy and strategy directions and to assist in the ongoing efforts at institutionalising methods, plans, procedures and techniques concerning socio-economic surveys, analysis, and planning. Particular focus is laid on developing the capacity of the Ministry of Planning (MoP) and on measures to improve its performance.

### Key observations

Despite numerous uncertainties, the project has fulfilled many of the initial objectives, while remaining flexible and sensitive to the ever changing requirements on the ground and pragmatic in outlook. The project has created a core cadre of trained and competent staff, who have gained the experience, skills and confidence to pursue socio-economic surveys, analysis and planning. The economic analysis and planning component has elaborated understanding on the causes and incidence of poverty in Cambodia. Perhaps most important of all the achievements of the project is that it has provided an institutional identity, required skills, and a mandate for the role of the Ministry of Planning in development planning.

In developing and operationalising the project entitled: "Capacity Development for Socio-economic Surveys and Planning" (CMB/96/019), the MoP has laid a solid foundation towards achieving the ultimate goal of conducting future socio-economic surveys, analysis, and planning using national capacity.

The two sample surveys, Cambodia Socio-Economic Surveys, CSES 1997 and CSES 1999, have been well formulated, executed and managed. The deadlines were met on time and milestones reached according to plan. Personnel and resources were judiciously employed and managed. Training programmes were conceived in advance, properly sequenced and implemented. Feedback mechanisms are in place and followup contacts are maintained. Manuals were prepared, rigorously pre-tested and finalised for the field operations and statistical processing. Various sets of community level and sector-specific data generated by the project are already available with different agencies of the Royal Government (e.g., the Ministries of Health, Education, and Agriculture and the Social Fund of the Kingdom of Cambodia) and with international agencies like CARERE, UNICEF and the World Food Programme.

In spite of the achievements noted, the work is only partially completed. A lot remains to be accomplished.

Firstly, the CSE9\_ 1997 and CSES 1999 covered fewer number of villages than recommended for the community survey component due to security concerns, supervisory and financial constraints. The smaller than originally envisaged sample size has hindered the preparation of consumption-based regional and 'provincial' estimates of poverty. Available resources were not adequate to implement the proposed work plan and to realise the full potential of the project. To ensure sustainability of the project's accomplishments and to consolidate the gains made in the last two years, continued donor assistance is essential. The MoP has evinced its interest on pursuing this component.

Secondly, several important steps of CSES 1997 survey implementation had to be short circuited due to a delay in the project start up. This was compounded by the urgent need to make available statistical staff for population census programmes which curtailed the time available for staff development and training. This issue has been addressed and still warrants support.

The project has published several reports, two of them being sectoral in content. These reports have helped the Royal Government to internalise the causes and consequences of poverty and the effect of changes in government policy.

All the reports published by the project are now being used as standard reference materials for the targeting of anti-poverty programmes in the country and serve as benchmarks for developing projects by the government and non-government agencies.

On the side of policy analysis and dissemination of findings, the project had the unique distinction of preparing a detailed poverty profile for the country, based on internationally acceptable standards and methodology, and made available for their use. It provided poverty estimates, explained the characteristics of the poor and produced a set of welfare indicators.

The project has made considerable progress in upgrading the technical capabilities of the national staff working in conducting field operations of surveys and in different stages of data entry, computerised data processing and analysis. National staff have enthusiastically participated in the training programmes organised by the economic analysis component and increased their command of the issues as evidenced from their contributions to the preparation of the reports and documents. However, the vacuum left by the departure of the Senior Economist has adversely affected this vital component. Recently, the project has recruited a short-term Junior Economist to complement the training aspect of this component.

The Inter-ministerial Committee and the Technical Task Force have assumed responsibility to liaise with various line ministries, donors and development community by pursuing discussions on the formulation of the questionnaires. It has helped to

streamline the statistical component of various line ministries as they begin to more rely on the MoP data for socio-economic and welfare indicators.

## Recommendations

### *Organisational commitment*

- A key recommendation that this evaluation team makes is that all participating agencies need to reaffirm their commitment to the objectives of this project and support for its goals.
- The participating agencies should continue to emphasise the primary objective of the project in its role of capacity development and for the institutionalisation of procedures and practices that will ensure the capability of local expertise to carry out and perform assigned tasks. This is necessary to ensure that high quality personnel will be available for conducting future socio-economic surveys, and policy analysis.
- A detailed Exit Strategy is proposed (refer Annexure 1) by the evaluation team.

### *Survey tools and mechanisms*

- In order to institutionalise the household survey programme, the project should review the survey methods and techniques; survey instruments and manuals and computer processing programmes, modify and standardise them from the experience gained in implementing the surveys.
- It is necessary to review the design and sampling plan of the survey, including sample size and allocation, in a manner aligned with the project document so that regional and provincial level estimates of poverty and estimates of other socioeconomic indicators can be prepared.
- The return of political stability creates opportunities for the conduct of highly disaggregated surveys by increasing geographical coverage and hence the sample size. It is timely to conduct the household consumption surveys using a detailed questionnaire that will provide a better handle on the incidence of poverty in Cambodia. The sample size should be sufficiently large to provide reliable provincial/regional level estimates of poverty. This is essential for strengthening the credibility and wider use of the results of socio-economic surveys. It is to be pointed out that the consumption data collected through abridged modules in the core questionnaires of CSES 1997 and 1999 do not provide an adequate basis for examining all key concerns relating to poverty.
- There is an increasing demand for the collection and compilation of village level data on a census basis. The project should review the survey design and imple

programme-to prioritise province based on poverty levels and, other-indicators.

- The Royal Government, as a priority, should strengthen the legal basis for the collection, compilation and. dissemination of statistical data through enactment of appropriate legislation.

#### *Economic and policy analysis*

- The work on this component will have to be strengthened and for this purpose the recruitment of a qualified mid-level economist, on a long-term basis, will have to be considered.
- This mid-level economist could be tasked with the preparation of sectoral and thematic reports on a regular basis and impart such skills to the national counterparts working with the project.

#### *Staff Training and Development*

The project has prepared a capacity development plan for the national staff. It is necessary to develop a strategy for which additional resources and technical assistance can be harnessed. In particular:

- On-the-job training programmes on the application of relevant software should be continued and the ability of staff to function independently will have to be monitored, evaluated and supported; and
- ~ The project should continue deputising its staff to short-term courses to upgrade their skills and capacity. Preference should be given to benefiting from experiences of other developing countries such as Thailand, the Philippines and India.

#### *Dissemination*

- The dissemination of the project data and results through easy to access user files should be made available in a variety of formats. The project should explore additional avenues of information dissemination and in particular the merits of recent advances in computing methods through the use of and access to the information super highway.
- Within the country, the project should continue to disseminate the data and reports (e.g., by organising workshops in the provinces) and strengthen its networks with both governmental and civil society institutions.



~ Efforts should be made by all participating Agencies to ensure project viability and

- Provision of continued technical assistance is crucial to maintain the momentum and direction of the project. T: 111

#### *Co-ordination and consultation mechanisms*

- The project should continue to define and institutionalise the mandate of the Inter-ministerial Committee and the Technical Task Force. To reap the benefits of this project on a sustainable basis, it is necessary to provide a more permanent role for these bodies in the formulation, implementation and management of socioeconomic surveys and planning processes.
- The project should further strengthen its work with the line ministries, the preparation teams of the PIP and the Five-Year Plan.

## **2. Project Concept and Design**

### **2.1 Context of the Project**

Cambodia is gradually recovering from over two decades of civil strife and dislocation. With an estimated 1998 population of 11.4 million, 85% of whom live in the rural areas, and an average GNP of \$ 260 per capita, the main challenge of the government is to feed a population growing at a rate of 2.4% p.a. and to create rural employment. Furthermore, the Cambodian Government must strengthen its capacity and its ability to plan and execute development programmes. These vital tasks must be undertaken in a country where the legislative and administrative systems, and accountability and control procedures, requires considerable strengthening.

During the 1980s, the then State of Cambodia maintained only administrative statistics. Data that can be used to inform development policy decisions are typically new in Cambodia, where standard policy prescriptions are unlikely to be effective. Interventions based on inadequate information, and thus on generous assumptions, do not always help to achieve the expected results, despite the fact that substantial public or donor interests exist and funds are spent. If strategically designed, a socio-economic survey can help induce policy change by pointing directly to the areas most in need of interventions, making it easier for policy-makers to find solutions. This project of the Ministry of Planning/UNDP/

the World Bank (MoP/UNDP/WB) for "Capacity Development for Socio-Economic Surveys and Planning" was formulated to address the above issues.

enhance sustainability.

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The first set of estimates on the incidence of poverty were obtained from data collected in the first Socio-Economic Survey of Cambodia (SESC)-1993/94 conducted by National Institute of Statistics (NIS) with the support of Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNDP. Based on this data, the incidence of poverty was estimated to be 43% for population in rural Cambodia, 11 % for those in Phnom Penh and 37% for population in other urban areas. The second SESC 1996 conducted with technical as

assistance from ADB/UNDP and other donors, collected information on several socioeconomic topics but contained only a single question on total consumption expenditure so that this survey could not yield consumption based measures of poverty.

At the project preparation stage, Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) had made good progress in re-establishing government infrastructure, a degree of stability and the country enjoyed relatively high economic growth rates. The government also secured assistance from international and national donors for a number of programmes for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia. Recognizing the high levels of poverty in the country the government declared that poverty reduction is the overriding goal of national policy in its First Socio-Economic Development Plan 1996-2000. The MoP was vested with the functions of socio-economic planning, preparation of the Public Investment Program (PIP) and co-ordination of plan implementation. Further, the MoP was also accepted as the focal point for the co-ordination of antipoverty efforts in the government.

While the 1993-94 and 1996 surveys were good beginnings, there was a felt need of building and institutionalizing household survey capability in Cambodia, so that NIS and MoP can conduct national household surveys which focus on living standards and poverty, for use in planning, monitoring and evaluating poverty eradication programmes.

The principal feature of the MoP/the World Bank/UNDP project is that it was built on the experiences of the earlier socio-economic surveys carried out by NIS, in 1993-94 and 1996, for which ADB/UNDP provided support, and on the deliberations of the U.N. Thematic Working Group on Poverty Alleviation. This experience led to a significant improvement in the development and streamlining of the survey formats, and analysis of data of this project. The socio-economic surveys introduced through the project have been extended to all provinces, and the MoP is now the principal agency for co-ordinating efforts

in socio-economic and poverty assessment surveys.

## 2.2 Project document

Poverty alleviation is the ultimate goal of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). For this purpose several measures have been undertaken by national and international agencies, progressing from a rehabilitation and reconstruction phase into long-term development programmes. Moreover, the design and implementation of such programmes was more difficult due to the lack of systematic information on the magnitude, nature and causes of poverty.

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In this regard, the first and the second Socio-Economic Surveys of Cambodia (1993/94 and 1996) suffered from important limitations (e.g., the sample-sizes were not sufficiently large to support nation-wide geographic disaggregation of key variables). Cambodia needed to develop and institutionalise national household surveys with emphasis on living standards and poverty to help in understanding the nature and characteristics of poverty and support the formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of poverty eradication programmes. It necessitated the collection and analysis of data on household consumption expenditure and on related variables like child nutrition, access to health care, schooling, provision of drinking water and gender discrimination.

The Capacity Development for Socio-economic Surveys and Planning project (hereinafter referred to as "the project") is executed by the World Bank and implemented by the MoP. The overall objective of the project is to institutionalise a process of annual multi-purpose household surveys providing essential data on the nature and depth of poverty throughout Cambodia. Hence the project has two main thrusts: capacity building for survey work and the production of data and other policy inputs for analysis.

Broadly, the project has three main components:

- a. Statistical component: to collect and process household and community data on poverty and human development indicators on a regular basis through annual household and village socio-economic surveys.
- b. Economic analysis and planning component: to analyse the data and disseminate the findings in order to monitor changes in poverty and human development over time and to more effectively design government programmes for the alleviation of poverty.
- c. Policy and co-ordination component: to elevate poverty eradication on the government's policy agenda by developing an institutional basis for inter-ministerial co-operation in this area.

With this end in view, it was envisaged to conduct annual surveys of the following nature:

- i. A core survey - a sample survey of households yielding provincial level

estimates of poverty and welfare, preferably conducted in two rounds to capture the effects of seasonality.

- ii. A rotating specialized module for collecting detailed data on such topics as the social sectors, consumption expenditure and income/employment for analysis of economic and social relationships.
- iii. A community survey providing village level data on physical and social infrastructure in the village, and on wage rates and retail prices.

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- iv. Qualitative assessments of poverty based on a range of methodologies, including Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques.

It was also intended to have qualitative assessments of poverty based on the perceptions of the villagers.

The regular conduct of such surveys would considerably reduce the need for line ministries, NGO's and international agencies to conduct their own surveys for factfinding purposes. It was also hoped that it would encourage sharing of information among these agencies and consultations among them for the improvement of data collection programmes.

### 2.3 Objectives, indicators and major assumptions

The ultimate goal of the project was to have a tangible impact on the well-being of poor segments of the population of Cambodia through eradication of absolute poverty by improving formulation, implementation and monitoring of poverty alleviation policies in the country.

The immediate objectives were to:

Develop institutional capacity of the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), MoP, to implement a demand-driven multi-purpose living standards survey data collection system.

- (ii) Establish an appropriate organisational structure and to prepare and implement a staff capacity development plan for the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), so that its priority functions including the living standards data collection function can be performed effectively.
- (iii) Assist in the designing of self-targeting anti-poverty programmes, and monitor public spending on the social sectors.
- (iv) Build the capacity of the MoP in socio-economic surveys and planning.

The fulfillment of these objectives would be indicated by appropriate improvements in the organisational structure and staff capacity in NIS and MoP, and in the successful conduct of relevant household and community surveys and analysis and utilisation of data obtained through them.

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## 2.4     Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of the project were intended to be the policy and planning staff in the MoP, various line ministries, donors, research and academic institutions and general development community working in Cambodia.

In the medium and long-term, the project was-targeted to contribute toward the socio economic progress of the poorer regions and sections of Cambodia through the formulation and implementation of more effective poverty reduction policies and programmes.

## 2.5     Implementation arrangements

The World Bank involvement with this project began with a mission, in June 1996, to assist the preparation of the project document and subsequently agreed to execute it. The project was formally launched in April 1997, funded by UNDP and SIDA, executed by the World Bank, and implemented by the MoP. The Ministry has a central role in RGC's overall policy focus on poverty and manages the work of NIS. The household and community surveys component of the project was located at the NIS, while the MoP was responsible for the analysis and policy components.

# 3.     **Project Implementation**

## 3.1     Structure, management, and technical assistance

The project's management structure was built on the foundations created by a previous effort on the part of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNDP, who supported the NIS for the 1993-94 and 1996 surveys. Since the beginning of the current project (MoP/ The World Bank/UNDP), technical assistance has been provided through four international staff (a Senior Policy Advisor/Project Co-ordinator; a Senior Statistical Advisor; a Senior Economist; and an Administrator). In addition, the Bank also directly recruited two national staff for administration purposes. Of the directly hired project

staff, two were women (one international and one national). In July 1997, a Senior Economist, international staff, was recruited for the team on the basis of a long-term contract. However, his departure in July 1998 has to some degree disrupted the functioning of the project as per stated schedule. Since September 1997, the international administrator has been teaching English language skills to counterpart staff working with the policy and analysis component (at the MoP premises).

The MoP provided 15 senior staff at the start of the project with one more being added in September 1998. An Under Secretary of State at the MoP was designated as the National Project Co-ordinator. Of the national staff assigned to work with the project, more than one-third were women.

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Changes in personnel within the MoP resulted in the loss of trained staff to other ministries, although they were replaced with new personnel. Such changes, however, to the staffing of the project inevitably led to a slow-down in its output, and continuing depletion in the ranks of national staff, after being trained, is an area of concern.

On matters of finance, programme and management, the project personnel were further supported by the periodic engagement of the Assistant Resident Representative and Programme Officer of UNDP, who in turn were guided by the UNDP Resident Representative. The International and National Project Co-ordinators have the responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the project.

Six short-term consultants were recruited to provide assistance in data processing and analysis, but the number of short-term consultancies has declined in the last year as an adequate number of national staff have gained the necessary competence to carry out the duties formerly undertaken by international consultants. With the departure of the Senior Economist, the analysis component of the project has slowed down and the project should make particular efforts to recruit a qualified mid-level Economist to train the staff and build policy analysis instruments.

Institutional arrangements of the project include:

- (a) An Inter-ministerial Steering Committee on Socio-economic Policy and Planning, designed to be a policy making group, whose main objective is to ensure that findings of the surveys and qualitative data analysis are reflected in the government's Five Year Plan, the Public Investment Programme (PIP) and other major planning and budgeting exercises of individual ministries and of the national budgets; and
- (b) A Technical Task Force has been established to co-ordinate data collection and analysis and to liaise with NGOs, academic institutions and international agencies so as to better address their information needs.

The Inter-ministerial Steering Committee has served as the principal mechanism to ensure that the findings of the survey and analysis are adequately reviewed and reflected in the five-year plan, the public investment programme, and the annual planning and

budgeting exercises of the line ministries and the national budget. The Inter-ministerial Steering Committee has also:

- Reviewed the annual poverty assessment and poverty impact evaluation studies based on the household surveys.
- Prepared recommendations and carried out adjustments to the current socioeconomic plan and policies to achieve better targeting and more cost-effective anti-poverty programmes.

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~ Met periodically to monitor the progress of the Five-year Plan, and the Public Investment Programme (PIP); and reviewed budgetary allocations and their impact on socio-economic conditions.

The Under Secretaries of State of various line ministries constitute the InterMinisterial Steering Committee. The Technical Task force consists of Directors of Departments from the line ministries, who regularly meet to discuss the questionnaires and findings of the survey at a more technical level. Four members of the Task Force have already received advanced overseas and in-country training, but this needs to be enhanced in terms of additional personnel and their on-going capacity building, emphasising a more focused approach to the end-users of the data which they are collecting. While the Task Force currently meets on a need basis, this situation should be reviewed, with a more permanent role created for it so as to make it more effective. The quality of the contribution of the Task Force is central to the continuing development of the procedures and the implementation of the project.

The project office enjoys admirable physical proximity as it functions from the MoP premises where the General Planning Departments are located and the statistical component of the project is housed at the NIS.

### 3.2 Activities

The current phase of the project has supported the conduct of two large-scale sample surveys: CSES 1997 and CSES 1999, which is still in progress:

#### *The Cambodia Socio-economic Survey 1997*

The Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 1997 (CSES 1997) was the first of the two large-scale multi-objective surveys sponsored by the project. Although the work on the project formally commenced in April 1997, all preparatory stages were completed by end of May 1997 and the fieldwork was carried out between the last week of May and the end of June 1997. The delayed project start up and the need to release NIS staff for conducting the National Population Census, 1998 had impacted on the design, organisation and implementation of CSES 1997. This rapid turnaround time in

designing and implementing the survey had been achieved in part at the expense of staff development. Had the preliminary activities relating to the survey been spread over the required duration, it could have provided greater opportunities for hands on experience for the counterpart staff.

The CSES 1997 canvassed four questionnaires:

- Form 1: Household Listing;
- Form 2: Village Questionnaire (for collecting village level data on socioeconomic infrastructure and facilities, besides retail prices and wage rates);
- Form 3: Core Questionnaire for Households (to collect data on demographic and socio-economic characteristics. and living standards); and
- Form 4: Social Sector Module (to collect detailed information on utilization of and expenditure on education and health services).

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A two-stage stratified random sampling design was adopted with villages as primary sampling units (PSU's) and households as secondary sampling units (SSU's). The sampling frame excluded two provinces and certain communes from 15 other provinces. In the truncated frame, villages were grouped by communes and communes by districts and provinces. Cambodia was divided into three strata, viz., Phnom Penh, Other Urban and Rural Areas; and villages were selected from each stratum by Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) systematic sampling. Ten households were selected from each village in Phnom Penh and Other Urban Areas, while 15 households were selected from each village in Rural Areas by systematic sampling. The distribution of 474 sample villages and 6,010 sample households was as follows:

Phnom Penh: 120 sample villages and 1,200 sample households  
 Other Urban Areas: 100 sample villages and 1,000 sample households  
 Rural Areas: 254 sample villages and 3,810 sample households

A possible 100% response from sample respondents was achieved. The draft report of the survey was prepared within nine months, and the main report released in June 1998 within 14 months from project commencement. In addition to estimates, based on the truncated frame for sample selection, estimates were also presented for important characteristics for Cambodia as a whole, including areas omitted from the frame, adopting suitable extrapolation procedures.

In all, the CSES 1997 (like CSES 1999) was conducted to high standards, following internationally accepted concepts, definitions and procedures which are being comprehensively documented for use in similar surveys in future. For CSES 1997, documents prepared include: "Technical Report on Survey Design and Implementation", "Field Operations Manual" and manuals for Manual Coding and Editing and Computer Editing (range and consistency edit checks).



### *The Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 1999*

This was the second in the series of nation-wide multi-objective sample surveys in Cambodia conducted as part of the project. While CSES 1997 was a one-round survey, CSES 1999 is being carried out in two rounds. The fieldwork for the first round was done in January- March 1999 and that for the second round will be carried out in June-September 1999. Conducting CSES 1999 in two rounds offers an additional advantage of dealing with seasonality in a more satisfactory manner.

Four questionnaires are being canvassed for CSES 1999: While Forms 1, 2 and 3 are revised versions of corresponding Forms used in CSES 1997, modified in the light of

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experience, Form 4 (Income and Employment Module) is a new one designed for collection of comprehensive data on incomes. of sample. households from all kinds of economic activities and other sources and also on employment and unemployment. This was prepared after consultations with the relevant ministries. Draft questionnaires were reviewed with the Inter-Ministerial Committee and UN and other international agencies so that the data collected can meet all user needs.

The sampling design was strengthened utilising the experience of CSES 1997. Again stratified two-stage random sampling was adopted and the two stages of selection were the same as in CSES 1997, but the five zones of the country, namely, Plains, Tonle Sap Lake Area, Coastal area, and Plateau and Mountain Area, and Phnom Penh were each divided into two sectors - rural and urban, to form ten strata. Sample villages were selected from each stratum by Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) circular systematic sampling, and then 10 sample households were chosen from each sample village by circular systematic sampling. The sample of villages from each stratum was drawn in the form of four independent inter-penetrating or replicated subsamples, numbered 1 to 4. Villages in sub-samples 1 and 2 were canvassed in the first round of the survey while those in sub-samples 3 and 4 are being covered in the second round. The selection of sample villages in the form of sub-samples will facilitate the computation of round-wise estimates and the estimation of sampling errors.

The allocation of the sample of 600 villages and 6000 households for CSES 1999 was as follows:

Zone	No. of sample villages			No. of sample households		
	Urban	Rural	total	Urban	Rural	Total
Phnom Penh	68	52	120	680	520	1200
Plains	40	132	172	400	1320	1720
Tonle Sap	52	96	148	520	960	1480
Coastal	40	40	80	400	400	800
Plateau and Mountains	40	40	80	400	400	800
Total	240	360	600	2400	3600	6000

Questionnaires for 300 sample villages and 3,000 sample households were completed

and retrieved by end of March 1999. Again a response rate of 100 % was achieved. Manual editing, data entry and computer processing are in progress. Data collection of the second round has commenced in June 1999 and is expected to be completed by September 1999.

The data set will be cleaned and the statistical report for CSES 1999 is scheduled to be released by December 1999. Preparation of the Poverty Profile for Cambodia 1999 and the sectoral reports on income and employment will then be taken up and completed by April 2000, without the requirement of any additional budget. The survey data may be used to produce important analytical reports on topics such as health, education or children.

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In both CSES 1997 and 1999 surveys each field supervisor re-interviewed 10 per cent of the sample households as a part of quality control of data.. Call back interviews were conducted wherever field editing cast doubt on data quality. In CSES 1999, it was anticipated that the data on household income could be weak, owing to the nearly universal tendency of under-reporting self - employment and property income. Validation interviews of households, for which the data appeared to be incomplete or ambiguous, were built into the field operations procedures.. Consistency checks were built in for important variables in the data entry program itself.

### *Capacity Building on Survey Tools and Mechanisms*

The ultimate objective of the project is to develop the institutional capacity of NIS and MoP to conduct multi-purpose, integrated household surveys with emphasis on living standards and poverty and to provide regular and timely information required by the policy makers. The project has prepared a "Capacity Development Plan" for the NIS, based on an extensive review of the organisational structure, staffing and skills background of the statistical staff. The Capacity Development Plan had concentrated on strengthening the NIS to institutionalise the project and sponsored household surveys as a national household survey program. For this purpose, the establishment of the Survey Planning and Implementation Bureau, and the Survey Processing Centre was recommended and MoP implemented the recommendations. The Capacity Development Plan had also assessed the statistical training needs and proposed several types of training including survey related training, in-country training programmes and institutional foreign training. The training programmes were identified and cost estimates of operationalising the training prepared. (Annexes 1, 2 and 3 to the Capacity Development Plan provide details of training programmes.)

The survey related training and on-the-job training of counterpart staff progressed as planned. However, due to budget constraints it has not been possible to implement several training programs, which were identified in the plan (vide Annexes 1, 2 and 3 to the Capacity Development Plan). These initial efforts need to be reviewed and built upon with a view to establishing household survey capability in the national statistical

set up in Cambodia.

The draft policy on dissemination of statistical data delineated the responsibilities of the data producers and users and also established guidelines and conditions on data usage. The data dissemination policy was adopted by MoP, with statistical materials from CSES 1997, namely, the printed copies of the survey report and the data files in diskettes and CD-ROMs provided by NIS for sale. This is intended to meet the special requirements of all line ministries and national and international agencies.

Much has been done to augment physical accommodation and other facilities of NIS. The total staff strength has increased from 120 in early 1997 to 196 at present of which more than one-third are women and at least four of them holding senior positions. All staff receive on-the-job training on various survey tools and techniques.

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For CSES 1997, survey design provided for the conduct of fieldwork in only one round. The sample size was, however, maintained at 6,000 households to ensure that

reliable estimates could be obtained on key variables of interest. 212 enumerators and

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supervisors for field work were trained and deployed.

For the second survey, the preliminary work of the survey started in early 1998, but the funding of the survey, was approved, only in August 1998. Again, preparatory work including sampling design, questionnaire design and the training of field staff had to be completed in less than four months, so that fieldwork could commence immediately after the main harvest.

Meeting the above deadlines were made more difficult as time was spent to circulate the draft questionnaires, elicit and incorporate views and suggestions from the line ministries, the international agencies and consultants and staff members of the World Bank. However, the fieldwork was planned to be carried out in two rounds, so the size of the field team was less than 100 and a two-week training could be arranged.

Training placements overseas are being impeded by high costs of training in advanced countries. So far, the impact of training given at middle levels is evident from one comparison. The number of expatriate staff working on CSES 1997 and CSES 1999 has been much smaller (4) than the number of such staff (10) working on earlier sample survey projects during 1992-95.

The Senior Economist, responsible for capacity building tasks within the economic analysis of data, initiated a series of training programmes in September 1997. It included regular training on the principles of macro-economics and statistical interpretation and analysis. His work was complemented by a short-term Junior Economist (in 1997) and experienced faculty members from the Thammasat University (Thailand). At these sessions, participants examined several case studies, practised data analysis and

interpretation, and prepared brief reports. However, the departure of the Senior Economist left a vacuum and since then little progress has been made in the area of economic analysis of data. At the time of this evaluation, a short-term Junior Economist has been recruited to recommence capacity building. Financial constraints had prevented inviting experts from abroad to provide short-term inputs. English language training provided by the project administrator complemented the above and enhanced the competency of the national staff.

Continued financial support for such training programmes is extremely important to sustain the momentum gained and to ensure that the objective of skills upgrading and capacity development is secured.

### 3.3 Monitoring and backstopping

The World Bank, as the executing agency, has provided support for monitoring project's progress through the submission of quarterly progress reports prepared sepa

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rately for the different components of the project. In addition, financial control has been exercised by submission of financial, statements and payment documents on a regular basis. For this purpose, the project has adopted Bank's standard procedures and formats have been use. In addition, Bank's Task Manager had maintained close supervision of the project through missions undertaken by him at critical phases of implementing project activities. Apart from the Task Manager, the Bank had engaged the services:of.a senior: consultant to provide:technical inputs and advice on.prepará--. !` ~ tion of survey instruments and data management at the stage of determining the scope of the survey and again at the stage of questionnaire design. Inputs of Bank staff who had been responsible for living standards measurement surveys had also been provided to improve the content and design of survey questionnaires.

In addition to the monitoring of the project exercised by the Bank, as the project is financed by UNDP, the first tripartite progress review (TPR) was undertaken in June 1998 after completion of first year of project operations. The second TPR is scheduled for 29 June 1999. A detailed and comprehensive Project Performance Evaluation Report (PPER) had been prepared by the Project and the copy of the report was provided to the Evaluation Team.

## 4. **Project Results**

### 4.1 Relevance

The 1997 data base was used in preparing reports such as 'The Poverty Profile of Cambodia 1997', technical report titled 'Estimation of Updated Poverty Rates for Cambodia 1997' and two sector reports on education and health titled 'Schooling and the Poor in Cambodia' and 'Health utilisation among the poor in Cambodia', respectively. In addition, the survey data had been extensively used in the preparation of the Human Development Report of Cambodia 1998. Data has also been used by a number

of national and international agencies for varied purposes including national accounts compilation (NIS/ADB), for country assessment reports by the World Bank, nutritional status assessments by FAO, and by EU for evaluation of salaries of government staff. Ministries like Education, Agriculture and Health are relying on the project for socio-economic data and limit their own data collection to sectoral areas. The officials interviewed at these ministries informed the team that most data generated by the project match their own data sets and differences are negligible. The project has taken into consideration all their comments and improvements have been made.

Further, valuable data is expected to be obtained from CSES 1999 where the village and core questionnaires were strengthened by incorporating additional topics on village level infrastructure, availability of land and indebtedness and through the module on income and employment and child labour through the Module which canvassed detailed data on these topics and on child labour.

The Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with MoP and NIS, will utilise the CSES 1999 data-base to disaggregate details on child labour. For this purpose, additional data would be gathered on children working in hazardous industries to assess the incidence and status of child labour. ILO has also agreed to provide support to canvass the requisite details from their project areas.

There is a continuing need for household survey based information for poverty eradication and other programmes of the RGC. The approach to data collection through sample surveys of villages and households conducted by MoP was quite appropriate and should be maintained in future surveys.

On the side of policy analysis and dissemination of findings with line ministries and development community, the project had the distinction of preparing the detailed poverty profile for the country, based on internationally acceptable standards and methodology. It provided poverty estimates, explained the characteristics of the poor and produced a set of welfare indicators. This helped the Royal Government to internalise the causes and consequences of poverty and the effect of changes in government policy. All the reports published by the project are now being used as standard reference points for the targeting of anti-poverty programmes in the country and serve as indicators for developing projects by the government and non-government agencies. For example, the UN systems paper on poverty and development, prepared for the Consultative Group meeting in February 1999 has been extensively referred by donors to review their portfolios.

#### 4.2 Efficiency

The two sample surveys, CSES 1997 and CSES 1999, have been well formulated, executed and managed. The deadlines were met on time and personnel and resources were judiciously used and managed. The training programmes were conceived in ad-

vance, properly sequenced, implemented and follow-up maintained.

Realising the financial constraints, the project has managed to budget its resources to cover three years (instead of two years originally planned) and yet maintain standards and schedules.

#### 4.3 Outputs

Based on the results of CSES 1997, the "Report on the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 1997", and a Technical Report on Survey Design and Implementation were published. Computerised survey data files in ASCII and dBASE formats are in CD ROMs and diskettes were made available, at cost price, to all those interested for further reference and use. The project also prepared additional tabulations to meet specific needs, including on rural infrastructure sought by the Asian Development Bank and other data for experts attached to the European Union.

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The CSES 1997 and CSES 1999 also produced the following manuals and documents for the guidance of the statistical staff and for use in future surveys:

- (i) CSES 1997 Selection of Sample Villages
- (ii) CSES 1997 Field Operations Manual
- (iii) .. CSES 1997 Instructions for Manual Processing (Coding and Editing) (iv) .
- CSES 1997 Range Edit Checks (v) CSES 1997 Consistency Edit Checks (
- vi) CSES 1997 Data Entry Procedures (vii) CSES 1999 Sampling procedures and
- Selection of Sample Villages (viii) CSES 1999 Field Operations Manual
- (ix) CSES 1999 Instructions for Manual Processing (Coding and Editing) (x)
- CSES 1999 Data Entry and Data Management

The CSES 1999 field operations for round I which sampled 3,000 households has been completed and data processing and validation are in progress. Field operations will be carried out for the second round during June-September 1999. Apart from the four questionnaires, items (vii) to (x) listed above have been finalized. Manuals for the other stages of work and the Technical Report on survey design and implementation will be brought out and the main report on the survey based on practically cleaned data will be released in December 1999. The documents listed above were of good quality and were brought out in time.

#### 4.4 1997 survey results

A sample of the findings are cited here, obtained from CSES 1997, to illustrate the diversity and value of the data gathered by the project.

- For Cambodia as a whole, among persons aged 15 years and over, the literacy, rate was about 68 %, 80% for males and 58% for females.

- The enrollment rate for the age group 5-14 years was about 58%.
- The labor force participation rate (for persons aged 10+) was 66% for males and 65% for females. Open unemployment was small as the agriculture sector absorbed surplus labor in peasant farming activities. Wage employment was about 10% of total employment in Cambodia.
- For Cambodia as a whole, 16% of households mainly used electricity for lighting and 79% used kerosene lamps for this purpose. Only 8% of the households used public/ piped water supply for drinking. Unprotected dug wells, ponds, or rain water etc. was used for drinking water by 61% of the households.
- The average monthly consumption expenditure was 286,585 Riels (or about US\$ 60) per household per month and the share of food in total expenditure was about

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64%. Households in the bottom decile (poorest 10%) spent nearly 80% of total, expenditure on food

~ Only 15 per cent of the villages had electricity and only 2% had piped water supply within the village-itself

In: terms of analysis and dissemination of the results, the end-users interviewed: by the evaluation team confirmed that the reports were easily available. The project has made particular efforts to ensure that its contents are presented in an easy-to-read format and that information is readily accessible to the development community.

Sectoral studies assisted the project in strengthening its coordination with the Ministry of Education and- the Ministry of Health. Minor disagreements on the methodology and data analysis had been resolved by the project personnel by clarifying the purpose of the studies and their usefulness. However, the delay in publication of the studies on health and education reduced their utility. As the line ministries (e.g., Education and Health) themselves conduct their own detailed research and analysis into their operations, the stakeholders (line ministries and the project) will have to make additional efforts to ensure that complementarity is achieved.

It is the view of the evaluation team that given the fact that several line ministries have been pursuing their own sectoral studies, the project could better focus its work on poverty-focused thematic or cross-sectoral analysis. For example, continued support to the production of Cambodia Human Development Report and UN Systems papers to develop common donor strategies should be explored and institutionalised.

The reports (including data) produced by the project have been utilised and cited in numerous research reports and documents. These reports have also been used in the preparation of project design and targeting. For example, UNICEF, World Food Programme and the Social Fund of the Kingdom of Cambodia have used the poverty estimates and details on socio-economic characteristics in the programming and targeting of their rural development strategies.

In preparation of the PIP, 1999-2001, reference was made to the work produced by the project. The PIP staff noted that in future they would refer to the project data and results more intensely than in the past. As work on the preparation of the second five year plan will soon begin, the project will have to work more closely with, and endeavour to influence the direction of that plan.

Overall, with the successful completion of the CSES 1997, immediate objectives were significantly realised. The report of the CSES 1997 offered important information on living standards in Cambodia and helped in developing poverty and sectoral profiles for the nation. These are being used by the line ministries and development community, as evidenced in the interviews, in formulating poverty alleviation programmes.

The CSES 1999 reports and related studies will take further these gains and help to consolidate the role of CSES in development planning, especially in focusing on the poorer areas and the poorer households particularly in need of attention.

Anti-poverty programs would benefit more if similar surveys are conducted by MoP on a continuing basis. The data base. could have been stronger if an inquiry on consumption expenditure had been conducted using a detailed questionnaire..and\_.if the village questionnaire had been canvassed on a census basis as stated in the project document. Training for national staff has been useful in developing a cadre on socio economic surveys and analysis.

#### 4.5 Effectiveness

As noted above, a detailed inquiry of consumption expenditure would have yielded more valuable data for studies on poverty. However, data on income and employment collected, in place of consumption data in the CSES 1999 survey, would also be valuable. Canvassing the village questionnaire on a census basis could have been very useful, but cost of data collection would have been much greater. The cost of resources used by the project for data collection and data dissemination would be easily justified by the results



obtained.

On completion of the reports, the project circulates the draft with concerned line, ministries and experts in the field to elicit their comments. Based on the feed-back received, the final report is then completed and the project disseminates the results of its efforts, based on a mailing list of about 500 recipients, including ministries, international organisations, academic institutions, and NGOs.

Further, initiatives attempts have been taken to share the contents of the reports at various workshops organised by the line ministries or the UN agencies. Despite this, the evaluation team would like to suggest that the dissemination of the reports be upgraded so as to realise the full value of the data being provided. The present work plan is addressing some of the issues.

To date the project has limited its efforts to the national level. Recently, it has provided support to the statistical office in the province of Kandal. However, expanded coverage is required to other provinces in order to fully realise the project's potential.

The publication of reports helped to improve the data analysis. This component, however, needs further strengthening. For example, detailed regional analysis has not been carried out and provincial or district level analysis could not be attempted. This is partly due to limitations of sample size and partly due to lack of comparable data and the inexperience and lack of exposure on the part of national staff to this type of methodology.

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#### 4.6    Capacity development

The project has made considerable progress in upgrading the technical capabilities of its counterpart staff and provincial planning departments in conducting the field operations of large-scale surveys, data entry and computerised data processing. Much of such training has been in the form of on-the-job training. In implementing CSES 1997 and 1999, ..the NIS.senior staff were associated at all stages, .including preparation-of questionnaires, sampling frame, scheduling field operations and data processing and gained immense experience.

For the CSES 1997, 212 staff from NIS, MoP and the Provincial Offices were trained in two batches, each for one week, on interviewing and supervision including the preparation of sketch maps for household listing and sample selection, and field editing, among others. They then worked as enumerators or supervisors for a little over one month to collect data for sample villages and households. In addition, 39 NIS and MoP staff were trained and deployed on manual editing and coding. The data entry was undertaken in-house by training 33 NIS staff on key entry, verification and error correction using IMPS.

For CSES 1999, 95 enumerators and supervisors were trained in two separate batches

during 7-21 December 1998 on various aspects of data collection just before CSES 1999 round 1. Further, a one week refresher training program was conducted for them prior to the round 2 of the survey. Eleven manual processing staff were trained in coding and editing before round 1, besides 15 staff on data entry, verification and error correction under IMPS.

Efforts are being made, in CSES 1999 to decentralise data entry with computerised editing at the stage of data entry, providing necessary equipment and training to the staff in provincial offices.

Three Cambodian statisticians were trained in ten-month Diploma Programmes in statistical theory and methods at the International Statistical Education Center, Calcutta, India during June 1998-March 1999, and two more are following the same programme during June 1999-March 2000. In addition, one statistician was trained on Sampling Design and Application in a Masters level seminar offered by University of Michigan, USA, in June-July 1998 and another on IMPS Programming offered by the US Bureau of the Census, Washington D.C., USA, in September-October 1998. Besides these, 30 members of staff of NIS, MoP, National Bank and line ministries were trained through a Country Course on Survey and Sampling Techniques conducted in collaboration with SLAP, Tokyo.

A Survey Processing Centre was established within NIS in September 1997 with necessary hardware and software to meet the data processing needs of the survey programme. The Survey Processing Centre was equipped with 14 PCs and peripherals to operationalise a networked system. The software installed to support survey process

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ing operations include IMPS, dBase, SPSS, EXCEL, MS WORD, MS-DOS etc. Physical accommodations and facilities have also been augmented.

Under the economic analysis component, for more than a year, 3-days a week regular coaching sessions were held on principles of economic development and basic statistics. Short-term consultant and.. faculty members from Thammasat University, Thailand, have also conducted similar special-input sessions.

Although national staff working on the project are experienced and capable of implementing basic functions at a level sufficient to ensure the proper operation of their activities, there are two areas of weakness that the evaluation team would like to note. Middle-level national staff interviewed had received basic education but less professional training particularly on statistical or analytical areas. Almost everyone have had to rely on on-the-job training for much of their skills, and appear keenly aware of the gaps in their knowledge. While most Khmer staff are capable of operating the systems currently in place, few have any formal training in the areas in which they are working. In that sense, the project suffers from some of the key weaknesses in internal capacity seen in other agencies. It must be stressed that staff are well-motivated and are anxious to fill in the gaps in their training so as to better carry out their work.

The in-house training and upgrading of skills have been enthusiastically received by the national staff, who stressed that they found them pertinent and useful. Perhaps more impressively, mid-level staff interviewed after completing the training had done the follow-up paper work and planning recommended in the courses, and said that they intended to implement some of the strategies learned on the course.

Overall, national staff appreciate the effort and work together with the technical advisors, but there is a limit to what one can learn without more formal and specialised training. Each of the national staff interviewed indicated that additional training in the areas of data processing, analysis and dissemination of information are required.

Continuing an intensive training for national staff members on poverty analysis and the application of data collected is required to develop the project to its full potential. This facet of the project is important and requires immediate attention.

In sum, all of the above efforts were undertaken and completed despite many difficulties faced during the course of the project, which had a direct bearing on its implementation. The most notable of these impediments were the loss of trained and competent national staff to other ministries, the departure of the Senior Economist and the political upheavals in the country during 1997-1998.

#### 4.7 Sustainability

Even though much work has been done to build the capacity of MoP to continue conduct of socio-economic surveys on a regular basis, international assistance will be

crucial. Support will be needed for overseas training to upgrade the statistical staff in a number of statistical specialisations in well-designed training programmes: It would take some time for the Cambodian academic institutions to develop and administer statistical training programs to produce survey statisticians, computer programmers and persons with related specialised skills. The ultimate objective of capacity building will not be completely fulfilled and dependence on expatriate technical advisors would be: unavoidable unless requisite skills are inculcated through training abroad. The project has to explore various options and modalities, such as seconding staff for training under TCDC, specially in neighbouring countries.

Certain specialised skills and expertise would take longer than project life to be perfected (e.g., expertise in survey sampling, survey design including questionnaire design and-survey data processing). Adequate knowledge in computer programming may however be imparted in a shorter time span and the project has already initiated steps to pursue this as part of in-service training. Even in such areas international technical assistance will be needed for short or medium-term appointments of experts from abroad. The needs in such areas will be greater whenever the subjects of inquiry taken up in the surveys are different from those canvassed in the first few years of the project.

The present Evaluation Team has heard of and concedes that the successful implementation of CSES 1997 and learning in economic analysis training owes much to payment of salary supplements to the counterpart staff working on projects financed through technical assistance programmes. The success of future surveys will depend on the adoption of more realistic rates of compensation to maintain the motivation of staff working on such complex projects.

#### 4.8 Follow-up

The PPER, prepared by the project management, explains the need for extending the project for several activities including the preparation of analytical reports by-project consultants on poverty, income and employment; for evaluating and refining the methodology used in the survey programs; and for reviewing and updating questionnaires and manuals to address issues and problems observed during the implementation of the survey. The annex 1 to this report provides details on follow-up and exit. In addition to above, follow up support for a few years will be essential if NIS and MoP were to institutionalise conduct of large scale national household surveys regularly in future which has been the objective of the project.

### **5. Conclusions**

The accomplishments and difficulties confronted by the project reflect the ground realities in Cambodia. Despite facing uncertainties, the project was able to maintain vitality and pragmatism. In addition, the project's work has created a pool of staff who

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have gained the experience and confidence to pursue socio-economic surveys and planning. The <sup>economic-analysis</sup> and planning component has positively contributed to elaborate understanding on poverty. The project has provided institutional identity for development planning and has given inspiration to national staff, who have enhanced their skills.

#### Findings

- a. In developing and operationalising this project, the MoP has made a good beginning and covered considerable ground in the area of socio-economic surveys, analysis and planning. To this end, the Minister of Planning and senior officials underscored their confidence in the current conduct and achievements of the project and its advisors, reiterating the importance of extending the work of the project.
- b. However, critical data gaps remain. Therefore, the institutionalisation of an annual national household survey pursuing different thematic modules is necessary to meet the present data requirements.

- c. Considerable progress has been made through this project in upgrading the technical capabilities of the national staff working with the project in conducting the field operations of surveys and in different stages of data entry and computerised data processing. These initial efforts will have to be reviewed and built upon with a view to establishing household survey capability in the national statistical set up in Cambodia.
- d. The smaller than originally envisaged sample size has hindered preparation of consumption-based regional or provincial estimates of poverty.
- e. Available resources were not adequate to implement the proposed work plan and realise the full potential of the project and this situation is continuing. To ensure sustainability of the project's accomplishments and to consolidate the gains made in the last two years, continued donor assistance would be essential.
- f. Due to financial and supervisory constraints, the CSES 1997 and CSES 1999 covered fewer number of villages than recommended for the community survey component. The MoP has evinced its interest on pursuing this component. Therefore, the project should seriously consider conducting community surveys and qualitative assessments covering 100% of the villages in the forthcoming rounds.

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Various sets of community level and sector-specific data are already available with different agencies of the Royal Government (e.g., the Ministries of Health, Education, and Agriculture and with international agencies like CAREERE, UNICEF and World Food Programme). Therefore, the project should carefully assess the prevailing gaps in data and should adopt a targeted approach so as not to duplicate earlier efforts.

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- h. The delayed project start up had resulted in short circuiting several important steps of CSES 19-97 survey implementation. This, in combination with the time constraints imposed on the need to make available statistical staff for population census programmes, had affected staff development and training. This issue has been addressed in recent times.

National staff have enthusiastically participated in the training programmes organised by the economic analysis component and increased their command of the issues as evidenced from their contributions to the preparation of the reports and documents. However, the vacuum left by the departure of the Senior Economist has adversely affected this vital component.

- j. -The project had made endeavours to develop Inter-ministerial Committee and the Technical Task Force as consulting mechanisms, to forge partnership and commitments among line ministries and other institutions. This arrangement has been working well. The MoP should take additional efforts to further institutionalise these mechanisms and define a permanent role for them.

- k. The project had produced and disseminated reports and information on time. It is possible for the project to develop additional ways to strengthen this dissemination process and ensure that the dialogue with line ministries, donors and development community is maintained

### *Lessons Learned*

Given the volume and nature of information provided by this project, it is beyond doubt that it has served an indispensable function. Those interviewed for this evaluation are aware of the project's particular contribution in their area of activities, and the project efforts to institutionalise poverty assessment is greatly appreciated.

At the national level, the project has contributed to the creation of working groups and task forces to address the issues of poverty eradication and sustainable development. The co-operation among ministries has improved, thus reducing the chances of duplication of efforts and wastage of resources.

In the current phase of the project, the experimenting stages have been completed, and the phase of establishing and transferring knowledge to national staff has just begun. The current work of the project thus needs to be continued to achieve critical mass. Development of analytical comprehension simultaneously with the transfer of a set of values and systems is a long-term process and there are no short-cuts. Our conclusions will have to be viewed against that background.

The issue of sustainability of the entire project is serious. The key components are yet to integrate well and gain rhythm. All activities depend on infusions of financial re

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sources. Measures for achieving domestic resource mobilisation are difficult at the present moment.

Modelling the project The project has developed sufficient tools, and systems for socio-economic surveys, and for the planning of anti-poverty programmes. The MoP/Royal Government should articulate this through a single policy mandate. Proven aspects of the project should be documented, emphasised and institutionalised not only for pedagogical reasons but also to stimulate project staff to share their experiences with others. Such positive externalities will be cost-effective in the long run.

Overall, the project has performed an important role by developing much needed data and analysis on living standards and poverty in Cambodia. Expected future funding constraints have, no doubt, impeded the progress of the economic analysis component which would have otherwise rendered the project even more successful. The possibility of the project losing donor support for the second phase (due to begin in January 2000)

will jeopardise the invaluable groundwork laid during the first phase and the enviable gains made therein. It is necessary to ensure that momentum is sustained.

As observed earlier, a departure from the project document, due to financial and other considerations, was made and the special subject module for CSES 1999 was changed from "consumption expenditure" to "income and employment" and opting to conduct community surveys on a sample basis. Such changes will have to be justified and recorded. In the absence of proper documentation, in the long run, MoP may find it difficult to provide reasons for such moves.

An enquiry on consumption expenditure using a detailed questionnaire should be conducted as soon as possible in a sufficiently large sample of households so as to obtain reliable province level estimates of poverty. Consumption data collected through abridged modules in the questionnaires of CSES 1997 and CSES 1999 do not provide an adequate basis for examination of all issues relating to poverty.

The project has contributed adequately to develop a discussion arena and quantifiable indicators in support of sustainable human development including poverty alleviation in Cambodia. The networking capacities of the project, and its host institutions, are considerable and well exploited to date, while leaving ample opportunities to be pursued.

It is possible to continuously improve poverty alleviation programmes using the data and findings of the Project. However, in-depth analysis of the CSES 1999 data would be required for optimal use of the data. Also, a community survey on a census basis could be extremely helpful. This demands immediate strengthening of the economic analysis component.

The project has been successful in conducting on-the-job training in various types of survey-related operations for large numbers of staff at middle levels and to arrange training for them through in-country courses and workshops and even training in for

eign countries for some of them. The technical skills of staff have been considerably upgraded. As a result of training many of them have assumed more demanding positions and responsibilities. It is also important to point out that these are committed individuals as very few of them have left their positions. The system of payment of supplementary salary for working on internationally assisted projects has been of crucial importance in this regard.

## **6. Recommendations**

### *Organisational commitment*

- A key recommendation that this evaluation team makes is that all participating agencies reaffirm their commitment to the objectives of this project and support for its goals.

- The participating agencies should continue to emphasise the primary objective of the project in its role of capacity development and for the institutionalisation of procedures and practices that will ensure the capability of local expertise to carry out and perform assigned tasks. This is necessary to ensure that high quality personnel will be available for conducting future socio-economic surveys and policy analysis.
- A detailed Exit Strategy is proposed (refer Annexure 1) by the evaluation team.

### *Survey tools and mechanisms*

- In order to institutionalise the household survey methods and techniques, the project should review the survey methods and techniques; survey instruments and manuals and computer processing programmes, modify and standardise them from the experience gained in implementing the surveys.
- The CSES 1999 module of the survey programme is expected to generate a valuable database on child labour and other thematic issues. Such efforts *will* permit the detailed analysis of policies pertaining to the needs and welfare of children and offers an opportunity to strengthen inter-agency co-operation.
- It is necessary to review the design and sampling plan of the survey, including sample size and allocation, in a manner aligned with the project document so that regional and provincial level estimates of poverty and estimates of other socioeconomic indicators can be prepared.
- The return of political stability creates opportunities for the conduct of highly disaggregated surveys by increasing geographical coverage and hence the sample size. It is timely to conduct the household consumption surveys using a detailed questionnaire that will provide a better handle on the incidence of poverty in

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Cambodia. The sample size should be sufficiently large to provide reliable provincial/regional level estimates of poverty. This is essential for strengthening the credibility and wider use of the results of socioeconomic surveys. It is to be pointed out that the consumption data collected through abridged modules in the core questionnaires of CSES 1997 and 1999 do not provide an adequate basis for examining all key concerns relating to poverty.

- There is an increasing demand for the collection and compilation of village level data on a census basis. The project should review the survey design and implementation procedures for conducting the village survey on a census basis, and as a programme to prioritise provinces based on poverty levels and other indicators.
- The Royal Government, as a priority, should strengthen the legal basis for the collection,



compilation and dissemination of statistical data through enactment of appropriate legislation.

#### *Economic and policy analysis*

- The work on this component will have to be strengthened and for this purpose the recruitment of a qualified mid-level economist, on a long-term basis, will have to be considered. ;
- This mid-level economist could be tasked with the preparation of sectoral and thematic reports on a regular basis and impart such skills to the national counterparts working with the project.

#### *Staff Training and Development*

The project has prepared a capacity development plan for the national staff. It is necessary to develop a strategy for which additional resources and technical assistance can be harnessed. In particular:

- On-the-job training programmes on the application of relevant software should be continued and the ability of staff to function independently will have to be monitored, evaluated and supported; and
- ~ The project should continue deputising its staff to short-term courses to upgrade their skills and capacity. Preference should be given to benefiting from experiences of other developing countries such as Thailand, the Philippines and India.

#### *Dissemination*

- The dissemination of the project data and results through easy to access user files should be made available in a variety of formats. The project should explore additional avenues of information dissemination and in particular the merits of recent

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advances in computing methods through the use of and access to the information super highway.

- Within the country, the project should continue to disseminate the data and reports (e.g., by organising workshops in the provinces) and strengthen its networks with both governmental and civil society institutions.

#### *Resource mobilisation and technical assistance*

- Efforts should be made by all participating agencies to ensure project viability with coherent exit strategies.

- Provision of continued technical assistance is crucial to maintain the momentum and direction of the project.

*Co-ordination and consultation mechanisms*

- The project should continue to define and institutionalise the mandate of the Inter-ministerial Committee and the Technical Task Force. To reap the benefits of this project on a sustainable basis, it is necessary to provide a more permanent role for these bodies in the formulation, implementation and management of socioeconomic surveys and planning processes.
- The project should further endeavour to strengthen its work with the line ministries, the preparation teams of the PIP and the Five-Year Plan.