



**Welcome Speech of Mrs. Bodil Pallesen , Directress of ADDA
in Closing Workshop on
“Empowerment of Civil Society in Oddar Meanchey” (CISOM I) Project and the
Opening Workshop for CISOM-II**

Firstly, on behalf of ADDA and the project partners READA, CIDO, KBA, RCEDO and myself, I would like to pay my respect to:

- 1- **His Excellency Sy Prasith, Acting Provincial Governor of Oddar Meanchey and**
- 2- **H. E. Thon Nol (member of provincial council)**, who agreed to spend his valuable time to chair the Closing Workshop on the project called **“Empowerment of Civil Society in Oddar Meanchey” (CISOM) I” and the Opening Workshop for CISOM-II.**
- 3- **Acting director of Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDA) Mr. Kam Vuthyhton and**
- 4- **Deputy director of Provincial Department of Women Affaires (PDoWA)** for their participation and support in the organization of the workshop.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman, present here. I am very happy that you all responded to our invitation and thank you for attending in the workshop.

First allow me to briefly introduce ADDA and its main activities in Cambodia: ADDA is a Danish NGO that was established in 1994 by Danish and Cambodians living in Denmark with personal contacts in Cambodia and Vietnam. ADDA is a non-profit international organization working in Development in Southeast Asia and Africa.

In Cambodia, ADDA has cooperated with the Royal Government of Cambodia and local institutions since 1996 to contribute to the poverty reduction of Rural Cambodians, and successfully closing 2 other projects in Siem Reap:

- 1- the Integrated Women Empowerment Project (IWEP) in 5 target districts of Siem Reap covering 130 villages, and approximately 30.000 farmers- funded by DANIDA.
- 2- and the Innovative Approaches to food insecurity for urban and peri-urban poor (INFOSE) in Siem Reap, covering 7 sangkats and approximately 1,800 households- co-funded by the EU.

In Siem Reap, we are still implementing 2 more projects:

- 1- COCIS
- 2- CISUP

ADDA’s strategies’ core elements include formation of **Farmer Field Schools** and development of democratic **Self Help groups**, with a **majority of women**. Over the years it proved to have significant positive impacts on agriculture, economics, social development as well as environment. Especially it contributes to generally double the farmers’ income and provide the basis for development of well-functioning CBOs (community based organizations).



Emphasis of ADDA activities is also the capacity building of local partners which eventually lead to a stronger civil society.

In 2010, I-NGOs working in Oddar Meanchey have encouraged ADDA and its implementing partner READA to implement their concept in ODM province and recommended to work with reliable and experienced local NGOs (RCEDO, CIDO, KBA).

Followed then a rather long and careful project preparation had been designed.

The design of CISOM project is indeed the result of a careful analysis of the situation of the poor people, intensive stakeholders involvement and of course negotiation with the donor- a Danish fund in favor of civil society Development (CISU).

As the result, last 3 years, we officially launched the CISOM project, and this was a success for all of those who contributed to its preparation.

And NOW, today, we are officially closing the CISOM project with the great achievements and we are also very proud to declare the continuation of the **CISOM II Project today.**

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman..!!

We now all make this project a success..!! The successes are highlighted as following:

- Grassroots' civil society such as SHGs are established, capacity built, and proved to be functioning for the benefit of members
- Living standards of the poor and poorest are improved and they can have better dialogue with the decision maker
- Increase in technical vegetable growing skills, higher diversity in products grown, higher yields, larger fruit; increased movement in selling (selling to other members, and in some cases to outside sources); widespread action in terms of families implementing vegetable and/or livestock activities (all SHG members involved), with translation into savings either through direct sales or through lowered costs of purchase
- CPs (community professionals) are more empowered and have ability to discuss problems, find solutions, and work actively with village chief and commune councils
- Increasing knowledge from small business training and motivation to apply skills; initiative to start own businesses.
- Women take more of a decision making role (within the family and at meetings), are more likely to speak their minds, and are participating in village meetings more actively
- People starting to look more to transparency and expect accountability; open forum seen as an effective form of communication, but by SHGs and by local authorities
- Commune councils are increasingly seeing integration in the CIP (commune investment plans) process and the open forum process as beneficial for themselves, as it raised issues rapidly, gets to the point, and avoids misunderstandings; they can use the platforms to dispel false information and have communities understand both the role and limitations authorities face; the ability of the duty bearer during the forum to explain scenarios relieves tension between parties



Today, we can prove that democratic civil society organizations have developed and efficiently advocate on behalf of poor people to defeat poverty and hunger. It can be said that we are playing important roles to complement to the government in order to reach out for the Millennium Development Goal in ODM.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman..!!

We are now having 3 more years to gain more successes, and this requires that we join efforts to implement the projects; therefore we are looking for fruitful cooperation with the government; line departments, especially PDA and PDoWA, with commune and village authorities in the target area and effective coordination with other projects to avoid duplication of the action but rather develop complementarities.

This workshop is a good opportunity for you to get to know the details of the CISOM II project and start collaboration. Your feedbacks and recommendations at the early stage of project implementation are most welcome.

I also would like to thank our donor CISU/DANIDA for the grant making all this possible.

Finally, on behalf of ADDA, project partners and myself, I gratefully thank Her Excellency, His Excellency, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen for your attention and wish you a fruitful workshop. *Thank you.*