

## **Phnom Penh Holds First Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) DAY**

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

September 3, 2008

The United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Environmental Cooperation-Asia (ECO-Asia) program and the Municipality of Phnom Penh were holding the city's first Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Day on September 3. Phnom Penh has improved access to water through the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority and has been working to address additional wastewater management and public health issues, such as inadequate sanitation services in outer districts.

Phnom Penh's first WASH Day featured a parade of school children in Russei Keo district and remarks by Katherine Crawford, the Director of USAID/Cambodia's Office of Public Health and Education, and Municipal Deputy Governor Mann Chhoeurn, who led a ceremonial hand washing. WASH Day activities were included hand-washing demonstrations, community hand washing led by school children, and the distribution of materials on proper sanitation and hygiene practices. These activities can be replicated throughout the city and nation.

WASH Day was the culmination of months of preparation. The Municipal Development Committee of Phnom Penh, with ECO-Asia's support, conducted an environmental health survey of the water, wastewater, drainage, health conditions and urban sanitation plans in Russei Keo district. The municipality then developed educational materials on sanitation and hygiene. These will be distributed on WASH Day.

Phnom Penh's WASH Day highlighted the need to expedite and increase investments in sanitation improvements, noting that the economic losses caused by poor sanitation justify investment in toilets, treatment facilities and hand-washing campaigns.

USAID's ECO-Asia program promotes regional environmental cooperation by demonstrating best practices and strengthening regional institutions and networks throughout Southeast and South Asia.