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Press Release

Government announces official HIV prevalence rate

The Cambodia Ministry of Health has announced an official estimate of HIV prevalence of 0.9% among adults. This estimate means that almost one in 100 Cambodians aged 15 to 49 years is living with HIV infection, and represents a decline from the last official estimate of 1.2% from 2003.

The estimate has been derived by a team of national and international experts at a Consensus Workshop on 2007 HIV Estimation in Cambodia organized from 25 to 29 June 2007 by the Cambodian Ministry of Health, the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology, and STDs.

The new estimate of 0.9% was calculated using data from the HIV Sentinel Surveys (HSS), most recently conducted in 2006, and the 2005 Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS 2005), combined with National Institutes of Statistics population data. The expert group noted that the use of data from various sources helps to validate the results, as no single source of data can provide a perfect estimate.

The official HIV prevalence estimate of 0.9% is higher than the percentage found by the CDHS 2005. The reason for the difference is that the CDHS, a household survey, is likely to exclude people from various population groups at higher risk of HIV infection.

Although HIV prevalence in Cambodia has declined considerably, approximately 65,000 Cambodian adults are living with HIV. New HIV infections, as well as deaths from AIDS among people with HIV infection, continue to occur.

The expert group noted that the fall in HIV prevalence is a long term consequence of a dramatic fall in new HIV infections that is estimated to have started in the late 1990s. The programs put in place by the Royal Government of Cambodia have ensured that there has been no resurgence of infection rates since then.

These programs need to be sustained to make a long lasting impact on the lives of thousand of Cambodians. The Royal Government of Cambodia is committed to continue sustaining efforts to fight against the HIV epidemic and to ensure that access to prevention and treatment is a reality for all those in need. Continued support from national and international partners is necessary to sustain and accelerate the national response to HIV/AIDS and to prevent a resurgent epidemic in the future.