STORIES FROM A CLIMATE CHANGE HERO
Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Cambodia

Mr. Lim Hak is a member of Cambodia's Department of Meteorology Systems Support team. Playing a crucial yet often unseen role in managing and maintaining the department's various systems, Mr. Hak's job is helping everyday Cambodians to access climate information in a timely way.

Inspecting an Automatic Weather Station; Mr. Hak's role ensures accurate forecasting information. Photo credit: UNDP Camdodia/Manuth Buth/Ratha Soy.

Mr. Hak, who is originally from Banteay Meanchey province and now lives in Phnom Penh, has been part of the Systems Support team for Cambodia's Department of Meteorology for 7 years.

"My job is to check our systems are working, including the automatic weather stations which I help to maintain and service. Each day, if the systems and data are okay, I then check the batteries and check the signals. So I have many responsibilities."

In such a technically complex environment, where the accuracy of climate information is key given the potential ramifications of disasters, Mr. Hak recognises the weight of his role. "Our job is very important – if the systems don't work, then the forecaster can't deliver the forecast! If they can't do the forecast, we can't get information to the public. The public don't need to know our job behind the scenes – they only need to know if it is going to rain tomorrow, and what time."

Often duty calls and Mr. Hak has to travel across the country to work with local provincial officials to manage regional automatic weather stations. "If I see an error [when checking the AWS system], I call the official to see what the problem is. If they cannot fix it, I make plans to go to the station and check the error myself." Maintenance of the stations, including repairs and grass-cutting, is done by hand.

In 2018 and 2019, 24 new weather stations were installed under of a [UNDP-supported project](#) improving climate information and early warning services in Cambodia. Mr. Hak expresses his excitement saying, "I am happy because we have done everything - the weather stations have been installed, the project is completed and from them we get good quality data."

Mr. Hak looks forward to continuing to learn about meteorology with his team. He has been involved in multiple trainings supported by UNDP including learning about forecasting and climate information.

Working together to build the country's forecasting capacities

Project Brief
Duration: 2016-2020
Project Budget: USD $4,910,285
Implementing Partner:
Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology
Funding: GEF-Least Developed Country Fund
Location: Cambodia, nation-wide
**Population to Benefit:** Over 15 million (est.)

Cambodia's geographical exposure and the lack of adaptive capacity make it particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. With over 80% of the population dependent on subsistence farming, rural populations are particularly exposed.

Floods in 2013 affected 1.7 million people, with an estimated loss of US$ 356 million. In 2016, floods affected 2.5 million people. These events are precursors of the impacts of the changing climate. Climate information is essential to prepare farmers.

With support from UNDP and funding from the GEF-Least Developed Countries Fund, the project 'Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems' is supporting the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MoWRAM) to increase Cambodia's institutional capacity, to assimilate and forecast weather, hydrological and climate information, and to improve communities' access to reliable information and early warning systems.

Under the project, 24 automatic weather stations and 29 hydrological stations for surface and ground water have been installed across the country, integrating technology and placing communities at the heart of a people-centred early warning system.

Information from the stations will be key to generating early warning messages, both for planning and for disaster preparedness and emergency response.
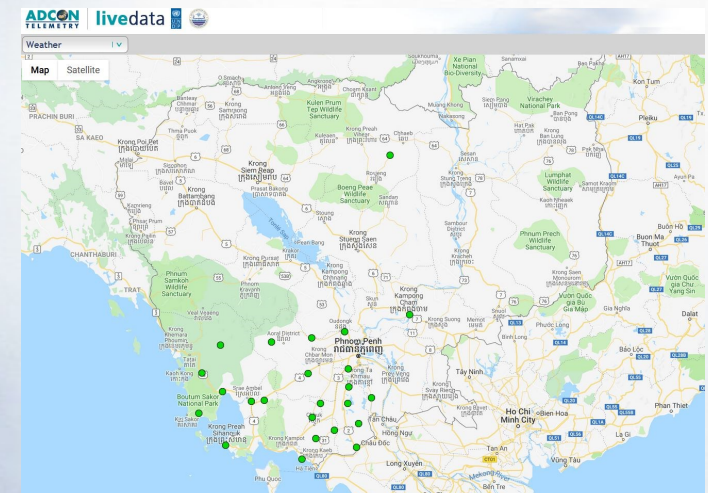
Globally, 45 countries are developing and strengthening early warning systems, with 189 new end-to-end early warning systems established in 26 countries. With UNDP support, nearly 21 million people have improved access to reliable climate information and early warning systems.

WATCH OUR VIDEO

FOLLOW US:

@UNDPCambodia

@UNDPClimate