

STORIES FROM A CLIMATE CHANGE HERO

Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Cambodia

Mr. Nuon Vuthy has been village chief of Tuol Dambang for almost 20 years. While being chief has its challenges, he is excited about being involved in the development of early warning systems in the area.



Having grown up as a farmer in Beong Pruol commune, and with almost 20 years of experience in his role as Tuol Dambang village leader, Mr. Nuon Vuthy is no stranger to the impact of weather events. “There have been floods and storms every year since the previous generation – I have been living with floods for at least 50 years. Before we had a safe site structure, we would have to go back and forth (returning from the safe area at night to sleep at our houses). We would still have to look after the livestock at the safe site, and that’s also where the sellers were, but we would have to buy petrol for the boat to get there so we ended up spending more than we could earn.”

Life in the agricultural industry, particularly in a flood-prone area, requires significant planning. When weather events like flooding occur, it is important that farmers can take proactive approaches to mitigate the risks to their families, crops and livestock.



Mr. Vuthy and his village at the new safe site. Photo credit: UNDP Cambodia/Kelsea Clingeffer.

To do this, [1294 Early Warning System](#) (known as ‘EWS 1294’) has been implemented under a partnership between the [United Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP) and [People in Need \(PIN\) Cambodia](#) in Mr. Vuthy’s village. The partnership has also been instrumental in establishing water sensors and buildings on the safe sites, to which Mr. Vuthy said: “Having a building on the safe site cannot help solve everything, but it is an important part of the solution.”

Mr. Vuthy explains why having early warning is so important for his village, “This year we were informed by the system. This is important because every day we have to go by boat to another village to get grass for the cows. We cannot go if it is too windy or during a flood or storm – the alert helps us know whether to go or not and whether we have to find food elsewhere.”

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.)

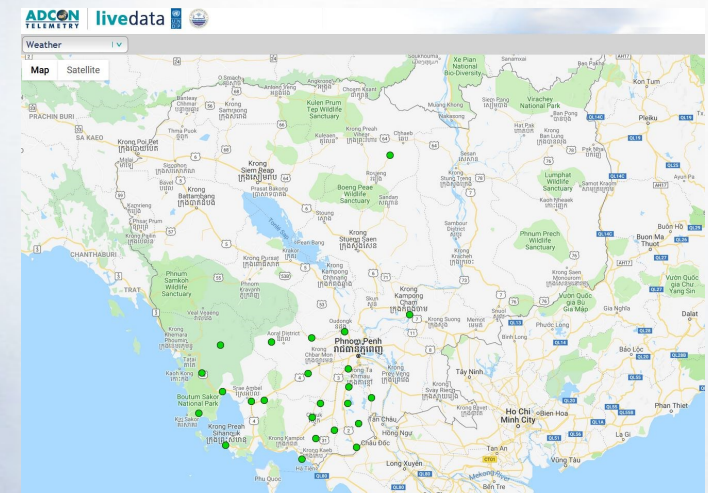
Cambodia's geographical exposure and the lack of adaptive capacity make it particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. With over 80% of the population dependent on subsistence farming, rural populations are particularly exposed.

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.

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