

The views expressed in this paper are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), or its Board of Directors, or the governments they represent. ADB does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this paper and accepts no responsibility for any consequences of their use. Terminology used may not necessarily be consistent with ADB official terms.

INTERVENTION OF Mr. EK SONN CHAN  
G.D. of P.P.W.S.A. at 2<sup>nd</sup> SEA Water Forum  
August 29, 2005 Bali-Indonesia

+++++++

### **SECURING POTABLE WATER FOR PHNOM PENH INHABITANT**

Phnom Penh, the capital of the Kingdom of Cambodia, lies at the confluence of 3 rivers; namely the mighty Mekong, Sap and the Bassac Rivers. The level and the quality of water in these rivers change with the changing of seasons.

Over the years, this water utility organization expanded with the growth of the city. In 1975, the production capacity was 150,000m<sup>3</sup>/day with a supply network of 282 km. However, during the Khmer Rouge regime, from 1975 to 1979, the water supply was out of operation and many of its production, distribution facilities and equipment were destroyed. Many of its qualified personals were also killed.

The water supply utility was made operational again in 1979 when the people returned to the City. With many of its facilities and equipment destroyed, the utility company had a hard time repairing and trying to supply water again. They managed to produce only 65,000m<sup>3</sup>/d, 45% of its initial capacity. The lack of electricity, chemical, funds, and qualified personnel to undertake proper operation and maintenance, restricted the utility to carry out its service to only a few hours a day and with a very low service pressure. The pressure of the piped water in the area surrounding the treatment plants reached only a few meters. The problem was further compounded when the public took matters into their own hands and made thousands of unauthorized and illegal connections with illegal underground tanks.

In 1986, the water utility company was authorized to bill the consumers for the water supplied within its network. 26,880 customers were registered but less than 40% actually paid their water bills. Non-revenue water exceeded 70% and the total revenue covered only about 50% of operational expenditure.

After the Paris Agreement in 1993, the utility company received more international assistance and grant aids, namely from the Government of France, the Government of Japan, UNDP, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. This enabled the water utility company to begin the rehabilitation of its production and distribution facilities and the training of its manpower.

In a dozen years, from 1993 to 2004, the water production capacity of PPWSA did passed from 65 000m<sup>3</sup>/d to 235,000m<sup>3</sup>/d, almost 4 times of its initial capacity. The distribution network had been rehabilitated and expanded to 1300km. 140,000 customers enjoy 24hr service with average pressure of 2bars.

The quality of the service appreciably improved, the NRW were brought back from over 70% to only 10% as of today. The collection ratio reaches a record of 99.7%, and the served area increases each day from 20% to 90% of the city superficies. More than 120 km<sup>2</sup> are covered by our network and we plan to double this surface in the ten years down the road. PPWSA is now has a healthy financial situation.

## **CONCLUSION**

There are many factors contributing to the improvement in the operations of PPWSA.

### **1- The commitment of the government is vital.**

a-The RGC did approve PPWSA to have a water tariff do reflect the cost. Actually, the access to water does not need to be free nor subsidized. The urban poor will be considerably better of paying for safe, piped water than they would be buying water of questionable quality from private vendors with 5 to 10 time higher price.

b- The water company need to operate independently rather than being government run organizations. Autonomous give the flexibility on management, responsibility, efficiency and motivation of staffs.

C- Many public enterprises could be operated as efficient as many private companies if they have the same condition than the private.

### **2- Financial assistance from different donors:**

Cambodia is a least developing country because of the long civil war. The public fund is always not enough to build the infrastructure of the country which was destroy by the disturbances. The external assistance is absolutely necessary for first investment. PPWSA did enjoy the assistance from ADB, WB, the Government of France and the Government of Japan in the past decade. Without this, we could not achieve our goal: bring safe water for Phnom Penh habitants. We commit to pursuit relentless effort to sustain our operation

### **3- The spirit of ownership:**

Many public enterprises could be operated as efficient as many private companies if they have the same condition than the private. The self-motivation, efficiency, transparency and responsibility are the factors of our team work. Today, PPWSA takes pride in its team of people who are hard working, responsible and self-motivated. This team of people has indeed worked hard with

a common goal to overcome the difficulties in the past and shall be ready to face the challenges of tomorrow.

By Mr. Ek Sonn CHAN  
General Director of P.P.W.S.A.