

NOW, TO CAMBODIA!

Kairi Komatsu, JICA Expert

I have just arrived in Cambodia as a JICA expert. During my assignment of two years, I will deliver newsletters about the project I'm involved in or everyday life in Cambodia occasionally. I hope you enjoy them.

When I was offered a new post in Cambodia, I did not even know exactly where the country was. Things coming to my mind were the famous Angkor Watt and Civil War (1970-91.) My impression of Cambodia is the mixed place of "peace" represented in the renowned world heritage, idyllic landscapes, and "conflict" that generated hundreds of refugees and tons of mines.

Like me, people involved in the water business may remember the "Miracle of Phnom Penh," Water Supply Reform in Cambodia of the JICA project carried out by Kitakyushu City.



My image of Cambodia: peace and conflict

"The Project for Capacity Development for Sewerage Management of Phnom Penh Capital Administration and Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT)," which I work for, is jointly executed by the Department of Public Works and Transport, Phnom Penh Capital City (DPWT) and MPWT. Two Japanese experts, Mr. Hirano of Kitakyushu, who helps DPWT, and Mr. Hayashi who coordinates two organizations, have already participated in the project since April.

My role is development support for ministry ordinances and technical guidelines to enhance the framework of laws and regulations for wastewater management.

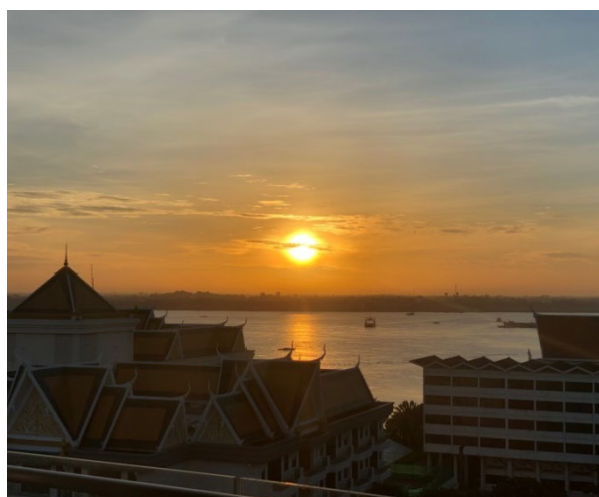
Currently, wastewater treatment plants with stabilization ponds are under construction in Siem Reap, Preah Sihanouk, and Battambang, supported by ADB, EU, Korea, and so on. On the other hand, Phnom Penh has no public wastewater facilities yet.

Statistics claim more than 90% of households have septic tanks in Phnom Penh. However, the figure includes families with no septic tanks or tanks under the minimum volume of 3m³.

Other than this, it seems there are many problems. In some cases, sludge is not withdrawn adequately from septic tanks. Besides, since septic tanks treat only human waste, domestic wastewater, which occupies the sludge burden, is discharged to rivers directly.

Now, I'm still staying in a hotel in Phnom Penh. My new life in Cambodia has started with a briefing at the JICA office, house hunting, and an opening of a bank account. I am building up the base of my new life in a hurry to deal with many things since two other Japanese have already worked on the project since April. I feel this project is more expected, and the counterparts are more motivated than other projects in this country. Since the project has already started in April, there have already been many things I should do. Compared to other JICA projects, our counterparts look positive and expect much from the project.

As a twenty-fifth JICA expert from JS, I'd like to be familiar with Cambodia



as soon as possible and do my best for the success of the project.

I appreciate again all the people who helped and gave me valuable advice on my departure. I would be grateful if I ask you for continuous cooperation and guidance.

If you have a chance to visit Cambodia, feel free to drop by my place any time.

For your information, "Kairi Komatsu," my name, is described as ***** in Khmer, the official language of Cambodia. Every mail addressed to me is required to have this Khmer (Only kidding.)

Thank you.