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Kairi Komatsu, JICA Expert

Happy New Year! I wish you good luck again this year.

The four-year JICA Project "Capacity Development for Sewerage Management of Phnom Penh Capital Administration and Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT)," which started in April 2019, has just over two months remaining.

The project's most significant outcome was the development of the drafted wastewater law and its transfer from JICA to MPWT in May 2022. MPWT and stakeholders are currently discussing the law. The project did not initially include wastewater law development in its scope, but it was requested and added after I joined the project. Originally, MPWT requested that JICA review the draft law they had prepared, and we provided our comments on it. Lastly, we proofread with great care while respecting the original version. We consulted with a Japanese consultant who has a local office in Cambodia and a Cambodian law firm, and we discussed it every week to refine it. Since many stakeholders are involved in the law development, I am unsure if our draft will remain unchanged. Still, I strongly hope that our work will contribute to wastewater development in Cambodia.

We plan to complete the development of the ministerial ordinance, original target, and technical guideline in January and hand them over to the MPWT in February.



Handover ceremony from JICA to MPWT

In November, MPWT, a wastewater jurisdictional ministry, along with nine DPWT (Department of Public Works and Transport) representatives from Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang, and Sihanoukville, and I, visited Japan for a two-week training program. MLIT, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Kita-Kyushu City, and JS helped us with lectures, practices, and site tours. These opportunities to learn about regulations, finance, water quality exams, operations and maintenance (O&M), and public

relations are widely available. The participants commented that the Japan visits were significant.



Visit JS

I would like to sincerely appreciate the contributions and warm hospitality of the related organizations in Japan, including those to which I was unable to express my gratitude personally.

I will do my best to complete the project in the remaining two months. Cambodia has made some requests for the following technical collaboration project.

* JICA has posted information about the Cambodia project on its website for your reference.

<https://www.jica.go.jp/project/cambodia/032/index.html>

My stay in Cambodia will be three years and nine months, the longest assignment in my career. If we did not have a COVID-19 pandemic, my stay would be two years. The future is unpredictable.

Anyway, we must go grocery shopping to live anywhere in the world. Speaking of shopping in Cambodia, you won't want to miss the markets.

Phnom Penh boasts numerous old and new markets, which are always bustling with residents and tourists. My favorites are the Central Market and the Russian Market.



Central Market

In Khmer, it is referred to as "New Market," despite having a 90-year history. The French colonial-style dome features jewelry shops inside. (Be cautious of fakes!)



Russian Market

The strongly localized market features numerous souvenirs for tourists.

Markets seem to have everything, from a cradle to a coffin, but I often struggle to find the things I need. In my Khmer lesson, I learned that Cambodian people say, "Where are you going?" instead of saying "Hello." When asked this way, people say "Market!" even if they do not go. I have heard that some Asian countries have similar customs to this. This reminds me of the famous Japanese animation, which is interesting.



The light from the broken roof made a beautiful scene.

I wish you a good 2023.

Tourists from Japan are returning to Cambodia in small numbers after the Pandemic. Let me know if you need the latest Cambodian information.