



Press Release On A Successful Voluntary Income and Asset Declaration Online (VIADO) Program In Cambodia

Accountability Cambodia (AC) was registered with the Ministry of Interior (MoI) on September 2nd 2015 as a non-government organization (NGO) and non-partisan, based in Cambodia. AC has a vision to introduce greater accountability within the public and private sectors, as well as in society as a whole, in order to enhance public service delivery and combat corruption. AC's mission is to enhance accountability, integrity and transparency through the use of technologies; to underpin bottom-up empowerment by linking this with a bottom-up approach. AC's value is: Accountability, integrity, transparency, democracy, rule of law, justice, and an inclusive society.

During the last 25 years, many donors have spent millions of dollars annually to lobby the Cambodian government to adopt an Anti-Corruption Law in exchange for grants, loans, and technical assistance. However, the Cambodian National Assembly adopted an Anti-Corruption Law in 2010 which required all high ranking officials to declare their assets in a closed envelope. Only the head of an Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) is authorized to open it. Since the ACU is highly politicized and influenced by the ruling party, this law and practice have been criticized as a weak enforcement against corruption. So far, no Cambodian can access information about officials' assets, although corruption is widespread.

This is one of the main reasons that AC has introduced a Voluntary Income and Asset Declaration Online (VIADO) against corruption by encouraging NGOs, students, low ranking officials, employees of private companies and political parties to practice it as a model of the public sector. It has a purpose to encourage every citizen, officials and leaders of NGOs, unions, associations, political parties, and the public sector to demonstrate their integrity by themselves through disclosure of information on income and assets online. It provides an opportunity for community members to check information of those officials check whether they have any conflict of interest or are involved with any corruption during their leadership. Then, community members can report or criticize those officials through social media if they find evidence of conflict of interest or corruption.. This initiative has received much support from the public. So far, there are nearly 40 NGO leaders, government officials, employees of private companies, students, politicians, and members of the assembly who have voluntarily implemented it. Recently, AC has received an additional three high ranking officials and politicians to enforce VIADO as follows:



His Excellency Hing Yoeun, Deputy Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the Senate.



Mr. Sourng Sophorn, a Former Candidate of the Assembly of the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) in Pailin province.



Mr. Men Chheng, a candidate of the commune chief of the Grassroots Democratic Party in Kor Kos Commune, Santok District, Kampong Thom Province.

Here is some of our previous high ranking officials who implement VIADO



His Excellency Kim-Ya Lim, a member of Parliament of the Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP) in the Kampong Thom province constituency.



Mr. Sourn Serey Ratha, President of Khmer Power Party.



Mr. Pen Bonna, Senior Official of the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC).



Mr. Chhang Youk, Executive Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam).

Today, we are proud to inform the public that AC has initiated a successful VIADO program in Cambodia due to four main reasons:

1. The Open Asset Declaration is one of the high controversial and sensitive issues. However, we can make it. All of us are volunteers, but we have attracted officials and leaders across sectors including private, public, NGOs, political parties, and students implement VIADO with zero funding from any foreign donors.
2. Cambodians and foreigners can check asset information of those officials with laptops and computers. They can use smart phones to view with bi-lingual (English and

Khmer) to check and report information of those officials through social media in the next few weeks by using social media.

3. AC's website has become a single platform for any officials who are interested to demonstrate their integrity through VIADO.
4. VIADO has been recognized widely among Cambodians and politicians.

As AC does not have state power to require all of the government officials to implement an open asset declaration, we do not have ambitions to have all of them implement it. This is because political corruption and nepotism are rooted both in the ruling party and the opposition parties. Although we have achieved these remarkable achievements, our lobby work with the government officials and politicians will end after the national election in 2018. Now, the government officials and political parties have a platform to enforce an open asset declaration if they wish to update their asset information in the following years. This is our sustainability work. It means that people can check information about officials' assets at any time in the future, and those officials can update their asset information if they wish to. Since AC has very limited resources, it would be appreciated if any interested officials and political parties choose a second option by creating their own website and enforce it by themselves if they want to demonstrate their integrity to the public and gain support.

Please feel free to see the personal commitment of HE Kim-Lim Ya, a member of the Assembly, and HE Hing Yoeun, a Deputy Secretary General of the Secretariat of the Senate who implement VIADO through Accountability Cambodia's Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/Accountability-Cambodia-275625816108919/?fref=ts>

If you are interested to see their asset declaration online, it can be accessed through this link: http://www.accountabilityinternational.org.au/?page_id=1166

In this occasion, I would like to thank to all interested stakeholders and supporters who participate and contribute to this program. If you need further information, please contact Mr. Kuy Mearssamnang, Tel: 011-433444, Email: mearssamnang.kuy@gmail.com