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PRESS RELEASE

Oxfam and Partners Launch Swiss's Funded Initiative to Strengthen Citizen Voice and Local Budget Accountability in Cambodia

*Phnom Penh, 10 September 2026*_As Cambodia advances its decentralization reforms and strengthens public financial management systems, meaningful citizen participation in budget planning and oversight remains essential to achieve transparent, accountable and responsive governance.

To support these efforts, Oxfam, together with six consortium partners, officially launched the **Citizen-Led Inclusive Planning and Services (CLIPS)** project. Funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the initiative aims to strengthen local governance, improve public financial management, and empower citizen to participate in decision that affect their communities.

Implemented from June 2026 to August 2028, the CLIPS project aims to make local budget planning, service delivery and decision-making processes more transparent, inclusive and accountable. The initiative supports Cambodia's decentralization reforms by strengthening the capacity of sub-national administrations while creating greater opportunities for citizens, particularly women, youth, persons with disabilities, Indigenous people and other marginalized groups to engage in local planning, budgeting and public service monitoring.

The project is being implemented by a consortium led by Oxfam in Cambodia, comprising the Advocacy and Policy Institute (API), Cambodian Journalists Alliance Association (CamboJA), Development and Partnership in Action (DPA), NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF), SILAKA, and Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP).

The CLIPS project contributes to the implementation of Cambodia's National Program for Sub-National Democratic Development Phase II (2021–2030) and aligns with national efforts to enhance public financial management and citizen-centered governance.

H.E. Sambathphalla Chey, Head of Policy and Analysis Unit of the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat (NCDDS) said, "Citizen ownership and participation are key factors in promoting decentralization and decentralization reforms. Citizen participation helps development and public service delivery better respond to local needs. Citizens can participate by providing proposals, making decisions, receiving information, and monitoring the work of local administrations. This project will strengthen local governance, transparency, accountability, and development effectiveness. At the same time, it will contribute to achieving the vision of reform and Cambodia 2050."

Sonia Carlotti, First Secretary and Head of Program Governance and Citizen Participation at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), said, "Citizens are not merely recipients of development; they are its driving force. This project will foster inclusive participation, transparent budgeting and responsive local governance to help build stronger partnerships between citizens and local authorities, creating communities that are more accountable, equitable and resilient".

Over the next two years, the project will be implemented in 14 districts and 60 communes in Phnom Penh, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Mondulkiri, and Ratanakiri provinces. Working closely with government institutions, local authorities, community groups, and development partners, CLIPS will promote evidence-based and citizen-responsive budgeting while leveraging digital tools to improve access budget information and local public services.

Speaking at the launch event, Ms. Sophoan Phean, National Director of Oxfam, said, “The CLIPS project reflects our shared commitment to ensuring that citizens have a meaningful voice in decisions that affect their lives. By strengthening local planning, budget transparency, and public participation, we can help build stronger trust between communities and local authorities while contributing to more inclusive and effective public services.”

The official launch brought together representatives from national and sub-national government institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, media, youth networks and community stakeholders to exchange perspectives on strengthening citizen participation and enhancing the effectiveness of public financial management at the local level.

Through its multi-stakeholder approach, CLIPS seeks to foster stronger collaboration between citizens and local authorities, ensuring that public resources are managed transparently and that local development priorities reflect the needs and aspirations of communities across Cambodia.

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