Cambodia's latest report on the progress of the Millennium Development Goals was officially launched today, drawing attention to the needs for greater interventions to address three goals in particular: tackling extreme poverty, reducing maternal death and protecting natural resources.

The Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs) Update 2010 said the country's progress towards its Millennium Development Goals has been substantial but varied. The greatest progress has been made in CMDG4 (Reduce child mortality) and CMDG6 (Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases). There has been slow progress made in trying to achieve universal primary education (CMDG2), promote gender equality and empower women (CMDG3), and clear land mines and explosive remnants of war (CMDG9).

In remaining years leading up the 2015 target date, more attentions will be needed on CMDG1 (eradicating extreme poverty and hunger), CMDG5 (improve maternal health), and CMDG7 (ensuring environmental sustainability). Some aspects of the three goals are "worryingly off-track", according to the report which was launched during a workshop in Siem Reap today.

"The new CMDG report shows us clearly what we can achieve by 2015 and what we might not achieve," H.E. Chhay Than, Senior Minister and Minister of Planning, said at the launching ceremony.

"We need to put emphasis on the economic development aspect as it is the first and foremost means to achieve social development. For instance, we say we want to reduce poverty but how can we do so if we still have no food in the plate and no hospital for the sick," he added.

The 2010 report was prepared by the Ministry of Planning with the technical assistance from the

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is the fifth report on the achievements of CMDGs.

The new report pointed to rural-urban income gap, high maternal deaths and lack of access for women to emergency obstetric care, and high dependency on wood for fuel and issues surrounding land titling as among the factors behind the lack of progress in the CMDG1, 5 and 7.

“With less than five years left to the MDG 2015 target date, this report represents an important milestone for UNDP’s work in Cambodia,” Mr. Natharoun Ngo, assistant country director and team leader of the Poverty Reduction unit at UNDP Cambodia.

By AKP