

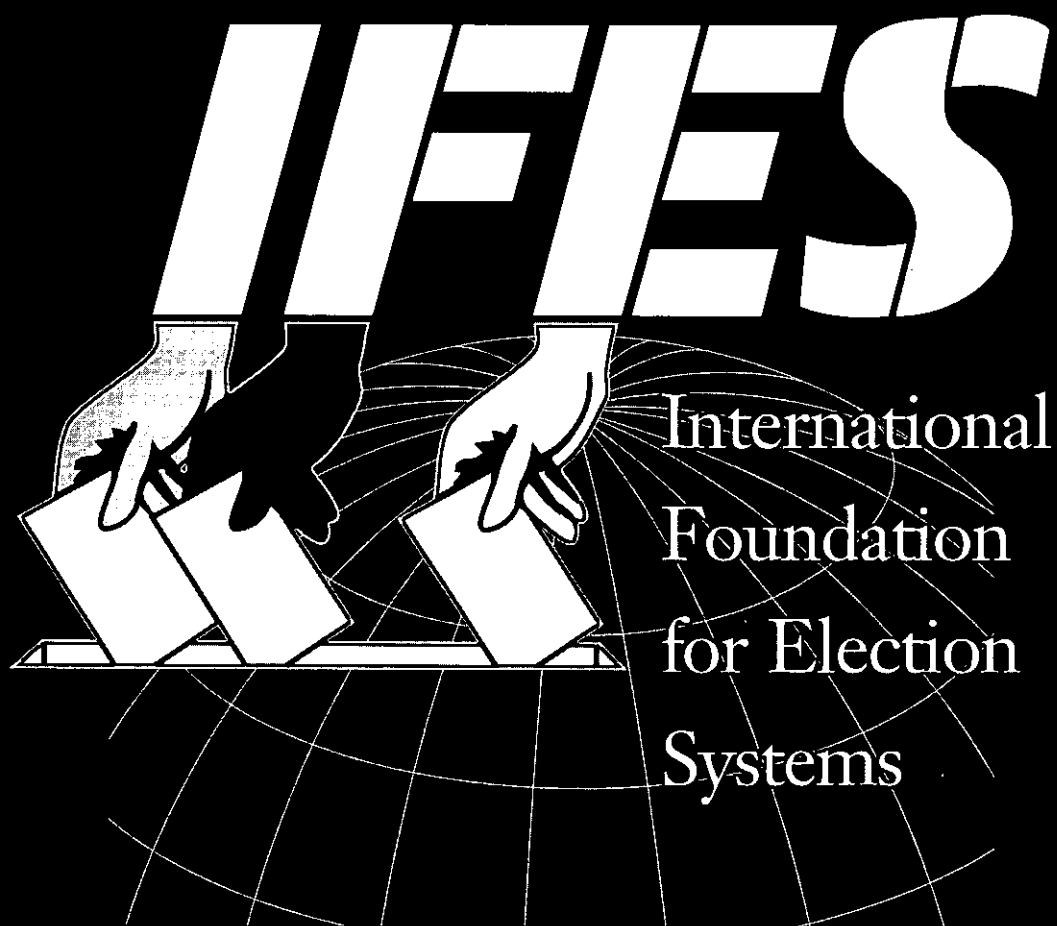
Date Printed: 11/03/2008

---

JTS Box Number: IFES\_2  
Tab Number: 21  
Document Title: AAEA Observation Mission Report:  
Cambodian Elections, July 1998  
Document Date: 1998  
Document Country: Cambodia  
IFES ID: R01550



\* 0 9 4 A 3 9 9 5 - D B D 6 - 4 D 0 B - 9 6 E 6 - 3 D 0 7 A 0 8 B E 9 2 0 \*



International  
Foundation  
for Election  
Systems

***DO NOT REMOVE FROM  
IFES RESOURCE CENTER!***



**AAEA OBSERVATION MISSION  
REPORT  
CAMBODIAN ELECTIONS  
JULY 1998**

*Facilitated by*  
**International Foundation for Election Systems**

---

BOARD OF DIRECTORS					DIRECTORS EMERITI
Charles T. Manatt <i>Chairman</i>	Leon J. Weil <i>Secretary</i>	Judy A. Black Barbara Boggs Dame Eugenia Charles <i>(Dominica)</i> Judy G. Fernald William J. Hybl	Lesley Israel Peter G. Kelly Maureen A. Kindel Jean-Pierre Kingsley <i>(Canada)</i> Sharol W. Siemens	William R. Sweeney, Jr. Richard W. Soudriette <i>President</i> Randal C. Teague <i>Counsel</i>	James M. Cannon Peter McPherson Richard M. Scammon HONORARY DIRECTOR Mrs. F. Clifton White
Patricia Hutar <i>Vice Chair</i>	Joseph Napolitan <i>Treasurer</i>				

# **AAEA OBSERVATION MISSION REPORT**

## **CAMBODIAN ELECTIONS**

### **JULY 1998**

*Facilitated by*  
**International Foundation for Election Systems**

#### **I. BACKGROUND**

Cambodia's national elections, held on 26 July 1998, were conducted in a politically volatile and troubled environment. Prior to election day, it was widely assumed by the international community that there would be problems associated with this election based on the government's reluctance to take measures to ensure an open, transparent, and credible electoral exercise. IFES, in support of the U.S. Government's approach to the elections, worked to improve the political atmosphere surrounding the process by facilitating an international observation effort. The mission reflected the concern of the international community that the elections be conducted in as free and fair a manner as possible for the long-term stability of Cambodia and for the benefit of the Cambodian people.

IFES' observation team consisted of nine members of the Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA). The remaining four observers/coordinators included a recognized U.S. election administrator, a senior IFES program staff member, an IFES program logistics coordinator, and a Russian interpreter from the IFES/Kazakhstan field office. In Cambodia, the AAEA/IFES team coordinated closely with other international and domestic observation efforts principally through the United Nations. The AAEA/IFES observers, with the exception of the logistics coordinator who arrived a week earlier, arrived on/about 19 July and departed on/about 29 July. The AAEA/IFES contingent participated in briefings and debriefings with other international observers. The following report, compiled by IFES, is based on the input and guidance of the AAEA observers who witnessed the election process and procedures.

#### **A. IFES in Cambodia**

From August 1996 until July 1997 IFES worked closely with the Royal Government of Cambodia to strengthen the electoral process there by improving the electoral framework for the upcoming elections. This assistance came in the form of on-site technical experts -- one in election administration and implementation, and a second in training and education. Beginning in 1996, the expert in Election Administration assisted the Ministry of Interior's (MOI) Election Law Drafting Committee with the drafting of the electoral laws and regulations. This expert has also worked with the MOI's Bureau of Elections (BoE) with initial planning for implementation of the election law and corresponding regulations.

In March 1997 IFES' second specialist arrived in Cambodia to assist the BoE's Training Unit to develop training programs and handbooks for election officials. Both activities focused on building

the institutional capacity of the BoE and its successor election commission to conduct elections and to help promote honest, impartial and efficient administration of the 1998 national elections. Although IFES' direct assistance to the government was suspended by the USG after the events of July 1997, other international donor groups quickly began financially supporting IFES' project. Between July 1997 and July 1998, IFES continued an open dialogue with its former project staff, monitoring the electoral environment, the development of the electoral process, and preparations for the July 1998 elections.

In addition to IFES' long-standing reputation of technical competence and experience, IFES' name brings with it a unique level of non-partisan, non-governmental professionalism that has long been appreciated by the Ministry of Interior and the more recent National Election Commission (NEC). This reputation and experience in Cambodia enhanced the reliability of the observation and the level of its legitimacy in the eyes of the Cambodian Government as it struggled to administer an electoral event congruent with international norms.

#### ***B. Association of Asian Election Authorities***

The Association of Asian Election Authorities was founded in February 1998 to promote and institutionalize open and transparent elections, independent and impartial election authorities, professional development of Asian election authorities, citizen participation in the electoral and civic process, information sharing, and the development of resources for election-related information and research. These objectives will be achieved through an exchange of experiences and information relating to election law and procedure, technology, administrative practice, and voter/civic education programs among Asian election administrators and civic leaders.

There are presently eleven charter members of the AAEA, representing election authorities from south and east Asia, and the Central Asian Republics. The General Assembly of the association has set out activities to be undertaken by the membership. The type of activities the AAEA intends to conduct includes developing an Asian-based election resource center, conducting election observation missions and staff exchanges, distributing election-related materials, arranging for professional development opportunities, etc.

## **II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

#### ***A. Mission Objective***

The AAEA/IFES observer mission for Cambodia's 26 July national elections had the following objective:

*To strengthen the electoral process in Cambodia through objective observation and reporting on the election.*

In response to an invitation from the National Election Committee of Cambodia, the AAEA conducted an observation of the 26 July Cambodian parliamentary elections. This mission marked the AAEA's first activity since the organization was formed in February 1998. IFES, which serves as interim secretariat of the AAEA, facilitated the mission funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). For the observation mission, each AAEA member was invited to send one representative to Cambodia. IFES assembled a team of professional election administrators from throughout the Asia region. These observers provided unique insights into the election process due to their shared collective experience in administering elections. Participants came from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Nepal, India, and Pakistan. IFES also invited a representative of the Indonesian Political Reform Team from the Ministry of Home Affairs to join the mission as a way to prepare for anticipated elections in Indonesia. Members of the AAEA/IFES delegation are listed in Appendix A.

#### ***B. Training and Briefings***

At least ten days prior to the start of the observation mission, IFES delivered comprehensive training materials to all participating observers. For the three non-English speakers on the team, IFES also provided a translation of the materials in Russian.

Upon arrival in Phnom Penh, the team spent four days in training for the mission. Training conducted by the United Nations addressed safety concerns, land mine awareness, NEC and provincial election commission structures, ballot box design, pollworker training methodology, pollwatcher reporting, radio communications and other issues. IFES facilitated additional meetings for AAEA team members with political party representatives, local NGO leaders, and other observer groups.

During the initial meetings, some fear and dissatisfaction were expressed about the electoral process, especially in regard to events leading up to election day. Many players in the electoral arena were also concerned about what would or could happen on election day to prevent the NEC from administering an election according to international norms. Some specific concerns about pre-election and election events were voiced:

- a) the voter registration process was conducted in too short a time frame;
- b) the voter registration process allowed voters only to vote at the polling station where they had registered; in some cases voters were forced to vote at locations far from their residences and might be unable to vote if they could not be at that site on election day;

- c) chain balloting (circulating a marked ballot among people waiting to vote) would be used to steal the election;
- d) early voters would spoil their ballots deliberately, then ask for a new ballot in order to use up the maximum 750 ballots allowed for each polling station, resulting in a shortage of ballots for voters who arrived later to vote;
- e) one day was not enough time to accommodate all voters;
- f) counterfeit national voter identification cards could be used to manipulate the elections; and
- g) domestic observers were not properly trained and would not be appropriately neutral and nonpartisan.

(None of these fears materialized in such a way as to impact the election results, as observed by the AAEA delegates.)

### *C. Deployment and Observation*

Two days prior to the elections, AAEA deployed five teams of observers to four provinces: Kampong Cham, Kampong Chhnang, Sihanoukville, and Kandal. After deployment, the teams met with local political party leaders, provincial and local election officials, local NGO groups, and long-term observers in those areas. They also observed the pre-poll preparations at local polling stations. On election day, AAEA observers visited polling stations and witnessed the voting and ballot counting process. Members spoke with officials from the provincial election commissions (PECs), commune election commissions (CECs), polling station commissions (PSCs), domestic observer organizations, and political parties who were working or observing at the polling stations. Cooperation between these officials and the AAEA observers was considered quite good.

The observers witnessed voting in approximately 60 polling stations. They also observed the counting process in five counting centers representing fifteen polling stations.

At the majority of polling stations observed by the AAEA contingent, procedures were followed consistently. Polls opened at 7:00 a.m. and long lines were observed. In some cases the large numbers of observers contributed to confusion on the part of polling station officials. The AAEA observers noted that the majority of voters registered at each polling station had voted by late morning.

The polling stations were organized in similar fashion. It appeared that pollworker training and instructions to plan the layout of the site one day in advance contributed to good organization on election day. The Chairman at each site oversaw the other four polling station officials who conducted the following functions:

- 1) checked in voters;
- 2) stamped ballot to validate it with a seal and gave it to the voter;
- 3) directed voter to cast his/her ballot behind a cardboard partition and mark the sealed ballot in secrecy;
- 4) supervised the voter as he/she placed the ballot, folded to ensure secrecy, in the ballot box; and
- 5) inked the voter's finger as proof the person voted, to prevent repeat voting.

In 90% of the polling sites visited by AAEA teams, the polling station officials were well-trained, had a good understanding of their job, and actively enforced proper protocol. In most cases, it was noted that the officials had their training manual readily accessible and that it had been marked, highlighted and written upon. It was apparent that the Cambodian people took great pride and felt a sense of ownership in conducting this election with Cambodian human resources. Several AAEA observers noted that the procedures were followed more accurately in Cambodia than in their own countries, including some which have had a long experience with administering democratic elections.

It was also noted that in each polling station domestic monitors and party agents were present. No complaints were reported from either group about the voting and counting process.

Voters without an ID were allowed to vote if they obtained a certification that they were registered. Observers witnessed on several occasions that such voters were allowed to vote.

The counting process was carried out with a certain amount of chaos, mostly due to the large number of people present in a small area. The officials, in spite of the conditions, conducted the process in an orderly manner which appeared to be highly transparent. For example, when an improperly marked ballot was discovered, all five members of the polling station examined the ballot and reached consensus about whether or not it should be counted. The ballots were opened one by one and placed in each candidate's stack of ballots.

The observers had anticipated many problems; but in the locations observed by the AAEA teams, the election was conducted in a remarkably smooth and consistent manner given the politically volatile circumstances. The staff of the NEC anticipated many problems and did a reasonable job of responding to them prior to election day. The following are examples of positive aspects of the elections:

- a) All election supplies were designed and manufactured in Cambodia with the exception of the ink and ballot boxes. This reduced costs and potential procurement and logistical problems.
- b) The recruitment and training of the polling station officials was impressive in that officials had to pass a stringent screening process in order to pass training.



- c) The mix of ballots from at least three polling stations during the counting process ensured the secrecy of the voting patterns of particular villages so that reprisals would be minimized.
- d) Blue canvas bags were used to completely wrap the ballot boxes to prevent possible weather damage to the ballots. They were fastened with security ribbon to add another security feature to the ballot protection process.
- e) The counting of the ballots and the reconciliation of the ballot accounting form were carried out in a thorough and transparent manner. Some polling stations had to count ballots twice in order to account for all ballots -- voted, spoiled and unused.
- f) Parallel vote counts conducted by NGO pollwatchers (from COMFREL in the AAEA sites) and political party agents reflected the Commune Counting Center totals.

***D. The AAEA Statement***

Based on findings during the election observation, the AAEA issued a statement saying that it considers the Cambodian elections to be credible and acceptable. The elections serve as an important first step to put Cambodia on the path to democracy. The full text of the AAEA statement is contained in Appendix B. A summary of the statement is given below.

The AAEA recognized reports by non-governmental organizations and political parties of intimidation of voters, misuse of state media by the government, and inaccessibility to media by opposition parties during the election campaign.

AAEA applauds voter education efforts undertaken for the elections, but recommends a more intense and widespread effort in the future, especially to inform voters about political parties' platforms. The AAEA realized that, due to the large number of parties involved in the campaign, and unequal media access, it was impossible for the electorate to receive a balanced view of all party platforms. However, political parties, through provincial and district offices, were able to spread their messages at the grassroots level by word of mouth.

Cambodian election officials overcame serious obstacles to register voters, train election officials and workers at the provincial, commune, and polling station levels, and distribute election materials in a timely way. Irregularities during the voting and counting process reflect uneven training of commune and polling station workers, and indicate a need for uniform training of these workers throughout the country.

Voter turnout was large and impressive--over 90%. The vote was secret, and despite previously-mentioned attempts at intimidation, voters were generally able to express their will and vote their conscience. The polls were organized, voting took place in an orderly fashion, and voting procedures were followed well in the stations observed.

Nearly 11,000 polling stations were in operation on election day. The electorate had adequate time to vote. AAEA members observed no serious violations of the voting process and polling regulations. Security was good.

The counting process following election day went well at the Commune Counting Centers visited by AAEA observers. The process was transparent, and well-attended by observers and political party agents. The reporting forms provided accountability of the vote, insured its accuracy, and provided the means for investigating allegations of fraud. In fact, AAEA thinks this reporting process is in need of simplification in order to make the procedure easier and smoother for the polling station commissions and the commune election commissions. Regarding election-related allegations, the government must now process complaints and adjudicate election grievances in a fair manner.

The AAEA found the election credible and acceptable, particularly in the context of Cambodia's history, its internal strife, and its inexperience with the democratic process. This credibility is due in large part to the organized administration of the election, the large voter turnout, and the ability of the voters to cast their ballots freely and secretly. Elections do not guarantee democracy. It is the hope of AAEA that this election will lay the foundation for democracy and peace in Cambodia.

The formal statement and press release was shared with USAID, the U.S. Embassy in Cambodia, and international media immediately after the elections and was released on the AAEA home page of the Internet along with other valuable information pertaining to the elections in Cambodia and the AAEA ([www.ifes.org/Cambodia/index.htm](http://www.ifes.org/Cambodia/index.htm)).

### **III. EVALUATION**

#### **A. Irregularities**

AAEA observers visited approximately 60 polling stations on election day, and five commune counting centers on counting day. They observed irregularities which were minor infractions and did not impact the voting results. Further, these infractions were without malicious intent to corrupt to election, and were due to a lack of consistent training and experience on the part of the polling station and commune officials. There was no pattern to these irregularities, although several polling stations in Sihanoukville Province misinterpreted improperly folded ballots as spoiled. However, this was not a significant number of ballots. Other irregularities observed by the AAEA team are noted below, by province.

- One polling station chairman suggested to old people where to mark their ballots. (Kandal)
- Two polling stations didn't check fingers for ink marks. (Kandal and Sihanoukville)

- In two polling stations secrecy screens were turned around to expose voters to the polling room. (Kandal)
- Three polling stations did not receive their materials on Saturday, the day before the election. (Kandal)
- One older woman arrived at the polling station with a note telling her for whom to vote. (Kandal)
- Several people noted that CPP gave money and gifts to people in an effort to secure votes. (Kandal, Kampong Cham) (AAEA observers believe voters may have accepted gifts, but chose the candidates they wanted on election day.)
- Crowd control was weak in some polling stations, outside of the voting room, during the first 2-3 hours of voting. (Kampong Cham, Sihanoukville, Kandal)
- Some young people were carrying guns outside a counting center, which created an unfavorable atmosphere during the counting exercise. Security was in place but did not take measures to prevent the carrying of guns. However, there were no incidents. (Kampong Cham)
- Voter had the wrong polling station number on his registration card, but was allowed to vote. (Kandal and Kampong Cham)
- Ballot clerks were pre-stamping ballots in three polling stations. (Sihanoukville)
- Ballot paper books were kept with the third-ranking pollworker instead of the captain in several polling stations. (Sihanoukville)
- Ballot box seal numbers were not recorded, so they have no validity. This could have legal implications in adjudicating disputes. (Sihanoukville)
- Observers and party agents were not given copies of the results at the polling stations and counting centers. This has implications for transparency. (Sihanoukville, Kampong Cham, Kampong Chhnang) (It is noted that domestic observers and party agents conducted their own count which agreed with polling station and counting center totals.)
- One ballot box had no seal, but it was padlocked. (Kampong Cham)
- One ballot box had no polling station number on it. (Sihanoukville)
- Party agents were too close to the ballot box in one polling station. (Kampong Cham)
- Party agents were too close to the ballots in one counting center. (Sihanoukville)
- There was inadequate space between counting stations in one counting center, and outsiders were too close to the ballots. (Kampong Cham)
- The counting center was poorly furnished--no tables or chairs--in one location. (Kampong Cham)
- Transport of the ballot box wasn't secure in three polling stations. (Kampong Cham)
- Three polling station committees had some difficulty reconciling the vote count at the close of polls. (Kampong Cham, Sihanoukville, and Kandal)
- Children took down the voters list at one polling site and played with it. (Kampong Cham)
- Many polling stations were at schools built by, named after, and emblazoned with the logo of Hun Sen. (Sihanoukville)

- Military troops reportedly threatened the ballot boxes overnight at one counting center. The boxes were not disturbed. (Sihanoukville)
- A large number of cast ballots (32) were unmarked in one commune counting center. This perhaps shows these people were uneducated or unaware of how to mark ballot the paper. It also may have been a protest vote. (Sihanoukville)

***B. Impressions and Conclusions***

Voters did not know enough about party platforms. There were too many parties--39--for them to focus on and learn about. Voters in rural areas do not have access to television and newspapers, so grassroots efforts in these areas must be well organized. There is a need for better dissemination of information and fair access to the media in future elections.

Despite reported efforts by the ruling party to intimidate voters, voters were able to chose candidates freely by secret ballot.

Most pollworkers and election officials were well-trained, had an excellent attitude, followed procedures effectively, and could resolve problems on site. They had to pass an exam on the Cambodian election law during the recruitment process. Most polling stations were equipped with procedure and training manuals. Stations in Sihanoukville Province were an exception, and PSC and CEC officials had some difficulty there resolving problems. Consistent training is needed nationwide for CECs and PSCs to avoid confusion over and misinterpretation of voting and counting procedures. Procedures need to be simplified and training should be intensified, especially in problem areas.

The ballot counting process and forms were difficult for many of the officials. It took time to recount ballots and reconcile votes; however, pollworkers didn't sacrifice accuracy for expediency. Some counting centers were poorly organized and furnished. These issues can be addressed through more stringent recruiting of pollworkers, more training in the counting process, simplified reporting forms, and better organizational training for the CECs.

There were too many ballots given to each polling station. Pollworkers were honest, so this did not lead to ballot tampering. However, it should be avoided in the future.

Voter turnout was impressively high. Confusion and disorder in the crowds outside the voting stations had been brought under control in the first two hours of voting, at most polling sites. There was adequate time for voting. Using ink as a security feature worked well and was accepted by the voters. Security personnel were present at the voting and counting stations.

Domestic observers and/or political party observers were present in all polling stations visited by AAEA teams. They were satisfied with the proceedings and results.

There was no multi-party representation on many, if not most, elections commissions throughout the country. This is in violation of the Cambodian election law.

It was difficult for AAEA teams to judge the pre-election period because they were not present in Cambodia during this period, and there was insufficient time to interview voters about events over the last year. However, it is clear that CPP was in control of the media and administrative bodies at all levels, and they used this to their full advantage. NEC, PEC, and CEC representatives were selected to eliminate politically-motivated members from the opposition. Media were essentially closed to the opposition for most of the pre-election period, so information on parties was spread by word of mouth. Efforts at vote-buying and intimidation and threats made to opposition party members were reported throughout the country. However, AAEA members believe that voting was conducted in a transparent manner, and that votes were cast in the hope of peace and stability.

### *C. Role and Impact of AAEA Delegation*

The Asian election commissioners participating in this observation mission thought the mission was very important and beneficial to Cambodian voters and election officials, and to the delegation members themselves. The AAEA promotes orderly and transparent elections in the region with the objective of supporting good governance and democracy. The commissioners believe they genuinely assisted in this effort in Cambodia.

The presence of international observers gives confidence to voters and election organizers at the provincial, commune, and polling station level that objective participants are watching the process. This monitoring encourages legitimacy in election operations.

The presence of Asian observers shows that democracy and free and fair elections are not just western ideas, but global ideas. Their presence brings pressure to ASEAN and other Asian countries to institute democracy. A joint observation promotes constitutional democracy for all countries involved, not just the host country. This is particularly true for countries on this mission such as Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, because they are beginning to build democratic systems. For example, commissioners from these countries witnessed a multi-party system in practice, when they don't yet have such a system in their own countries.

The AAEA was the only professional organization of election practitioners to observe the elections. It was not politically motivated, and it looked beyond politics to observe the details of the elections. As election administrators, the AAEA members knew what to look for and how to understand the

election process. As Asian commissioners they could evaluate the Cambodian election in its cultural, historical, and developmental context.

The mission was a learning experience for AAEA team members, as well. Members of the delegation shared information and experiences among themselves, taking the best ideas back to their own countries. This included ideas and information on training programs for pollworkers, voter education materials, features of the party list system, and security features during the voting process (e.g., inking voters' fingers to prevent repeat voting and posting voters lists). This learning experience will enable them to improve election processes in their home countries, and raise their countries' standards closer to international norms.

***D. Deliverables***

1. A team of nine AAEA observers and three IFES election professionals were briefed and deployed in time to observe the July elections and the vote counting process;
2. A statement including initial findings of the team was issued by IFES/AAEA and released on July 28, 1998; and
3. A final report of quantitative and qualitative information on the observations of the team and practical recommendations for improvement in the electoral process was released in September 1998.

**IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Registration Process**

Voter registration reportedly went well. However, there were reports of over-registration at polling sites, and registration of non-Cambodian citizens. (To date, the latter has not been found in sufficient numbers as to impact the election results.) The United Nations also noted a lack of information on the appeals process related to the voter registration campaign. Consequently, the appeals process was not followed. CECs and PECs heard a relative few number of appeals. Complaints were brought directly to the NEC, which crowded the system. In future, political party representatives and election officials at all levels should be clearly informed about proper appeals procedures. Finally, every effort should be made to allow voters to register to vote at their home polling stations, so as not to inconvenience them or discourage them from voting on election day.

## 2. Training

AAEA suggests that polling station official training, although very good in this election, be conducted in a more uniform and intensive manner in the future. This will ensure consistent implementation and enforcement of procedures on election day. For example, in Sihanoukville Province the rules for determining a spoiled ballot were misunderstood by several polling stations. When AAEA observers ask to see the instructions mandating this, polling officials could not find the instructions. Polling station officials should be required to bring reference and training materials and a copy of the election law to the polls on election and counting days to use as ready references. Officials should also be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the training and election process that would contribute to improvements in the future.

## 3. Voter Education

Although the voter education materials were impressive, voters need to receive more information about the different candidates and political party platforms. For example, information such as a popular tabloid newspaper outlining party platforms--a voters guide-- should be distributed more extensively. In all, 600,000 copies were printed and distributed with USAID support. This is one guide for every 8.8 people, given the 5.3 million voters in Cambodia. While posters showing the secrecy of the vote were in evidence in every polling station, the voters guide was observed nowhere in public by the AAEA team. Several Cambodians who were informally asked about the guide had never seen or heard of it, and wanted a copy. The NGO that created the guide was asked to print and distribute more copies, but it didn't have the funding to do so.

The NEC must also address procedures which would give fair and open media access to all candidates.

## 4. Ballot Design and Distribution

Economy is advised in regard to size of the ballot papers. This would enable larger logos to be used which would minimize the chance of a voter accidentally voting for the wrong party. It would also reduce the blank spaces on ballots in provinces where not all nationally-registered parties are running.

In addition, too many excess ballots should not be given to each polling station. Each polling station was given 750 ballot papers even if only 350 people were registered at that location. In other AAEA countries the number of ballots given is rounded up to the nearest hundred over the number of registered voters, thereby minimizing the chance of fraudulent ballots being cast.

## 5. Voting Process

Aged and handicapped people should be allowed to have assistance from relatives, especially in a country such as Cambodia where the percentage of handicapped people is high. Efforts should be made to ensure that polling station officials do not help these people vote.

The NEC should consider using security guards present outside the polling stations to help in crowd control efforts.

Spoiled ballots should be voided to prevent tampering, or the suggestion of it.

Voters should be required to wait until indelible ink dries before leaving the polling station.

## 6. Observation

In the future, the NEC should assign party agents to a specific location at the polling station or establish a rotating procedure at the polling station. This would help prevent a party agent from standing behind the election official who checks the voters' names. In some cases this could have been interpreted as a form of intimidation to the voter.

AAEA team members would have benefitted by spending more time in the field to interview voters about the pre-election and campaign period, in order to better understand the electoral environment in which they were observing.

## 7. Counting and Reporting

The AAEA observers believe the reporting forms need to be simplified in order to match competence and level of training in the PSC and CEC staffs.

Seal numbers should be recorded on statutory forms.

The gap between the conclusion of the counting process and the announcement of results should be minimized. A long delay in reporting compromises credibility of the NEC and the voting results, and encourages charges of fraud and tampering with the vote count. Copies of results from each counting site should be given to party agents and observers at the conclusion of counting -- the day after the election. This would provide a check on the NEC as it consolidates results and would provide official and public information necessary to conduct or confirm a parallel vote count. Parallel vote counts were shared and accepted at polling stations, but this process can be formalized to add legitimacy and transparency to the vote count.



AAEA observers believe that the presence of armed security personnel near the counting center may have created an atmosphere of intimidation, although the degree to which this happened is impossible to ascertain and the need for a certain level of security is recognized.

Efforts should be made by CECs and PECs to see that Commune Counting Centers are properly organized and furnished: there should be adequate space between counting tables, observers should maintain their distance from the ballots, and outsiders should be kept well away from the counting room.

#### 8. Adjudication of Grievances

The grievance process should be addressed and improved. From interviews it appears that the average Cambodian citizen would not feel comfortable raising a concern about the process for fear of reprisals. The NEC, Constitutional Council (the court of last resort in election disputes), and political parties must respect the procedures established to register, hear, and appeal grievances. Unless the process is followed and upheld, the rule of law pertaining to this process will continue to be ignored and subverted, and Cambodian citizens will continue to mistrust and fear the grievance system.

#### 9. Multi-party Representation on Election Bodies

Composition of the National Election Committee, Provincial Election Commissions, and Commune Election Commissions must be multi-partisan for balance and fairness. The presence of three or more parties and/or civil society representatives creates a system of checks and balances, and encourages fairness, accuracy, and transparency on the commissions.

September 1998

## **V. APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A.       Members of AAEA/IFES Delegation**

(Please see charts on the following pages.)

## **ASSOCIATION OF ASIAN ELECTION AUTHORITIES (AAEA) REPRESENTATIVES**

<b>AAEA MEMBER COUNTRY</b>	<b>NAME AND PASSPORT #</b>	<b>CURRENT POSITION</b>	<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b>
India	Mr. Ashok Kumar Basu	Chief Electoral Officer State of Bihar	DII/ 272, Vinay Marg, Chanakyapuri New Delhi-110021, India Delhi: 91-11-467-3339 Patna: 91-612-224-856, 226-181 91-612-224-611 – fax OR c/o Subas Pani Deputy Election Commissioner Election Commission of India 91-11-371-5028, 91-11-335-5623 - fax
Indonesia *	Dr. Andi Alifian Mallarangeng	Indonesia Political Reform Team	62-21-780-6602 62-21-782-4157

Kazakhstan	1) Mr. Kuandyk Turgankulov S0000071 Exp. 20 April 2000	Deputy Chairman Central Election Commission	Central Election Commission of Kazakhstan 4 Mira Street Astana, Kazakhstan 3172-321-139, 3172-151-290 3172-333-388 -fax
	2) Ms. Saule Buldekbayeva N0873777 Exp. 9 July 2041	IFES Program Coordinator, IFES/Almaty and Interpreter	International Foundation for Election Systems 96 Kunaeva street, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Almaty 480100, Kazakhtan 7-3272-608-512 Saule@ifes.almaty.kz
Kyrgyzstan	Mr. Kokumbay Turusbekov AO376136 Exp. 29 June 2008	Member Central Election Commission	Central Election Commission of Kyrgyzstan Chui Prospect 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor room 307 Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan 3312-217-585, 3312-219-376 3312-620-825 -fax

Nepal	Mr. Bishnu Pratap Shah  003667 (Nepal) Exp. 1 April 1999	Chief Election Commissioner Election Commission of Nepal	Election Commission of Nepal Kanti Path Kathamandu, Nepal 977-226-092 977-1-229-984 - fax e-mail: bpsah@mos.com.np
Pakistan	Mr. Ijaz Hussain Raja  S029788 (Pakistan) Exp. 22 June 1999	Deputy Election Commissioner & Personal Secretary to Secretary Election Commission of Pakistan	Central Election Commission Pakistan Secretariat Block "S" Islamabad, Pakistan 92-51-920-1915 92-51-920-5402 - fax
Papua New Guinea	Mr. Andrew Sean Trawen, MBE  OP 06826 (Papua New Guinea) Exp. 28 August 2000	Deputy Electoral Commissioner Electoral Commission of Papua New Guinea	Electoral Commission of Papua New Guinea Angau Centre P.O. Box 5348 Boroko, N.C.D. Papua New Guinea 675-325-8155 675-325-7418 - fax
Philippines	Mr. Rex Borra  00932854 (Philippines) Exp. 7 July 2008	Executive Director Philippine Commission on Elections	Philippines Commission on Elections General Luna Street Intramuros, Philippines 632-527-0838 632-527-2998 - fax

Tajikistan	Mr. Abdumanon Khalikov  010014255 Exp. 8 November 1999	Deputy Chairman Legal Committee of Majilis Oli	Majilis Oli, Dushanbe 42 Rudaki Street Room 96 Dushanbe, Tajikistan 3772-316-891 3772-219-281 – fax/tel

\* Although Indonesia is not an AAEA member yet, we expect their signature to the Charter soon after an independent Election Commission has been established and becomes fully functional.

NAME	CURRENT POSITION	CONTACT INFORMATION
Mary Lou Schramm	Deputy Director for Europe and Asia  014978832 (U.S.) Exp. 2 February 2003	International Foundation for Election Systems 1101 15 <sup>th</sup> Street, NW Washington, DC 202-828-8507 202-452-0804 – fax marylou@ifes.org
Jessica Hunter	Program Officer for Asia IFES/Washington  014604496 (U.S.) Exp. 30 May 2001	International Foundation for Election Systems 1101 15 <sup>th</sup> Street, NW Washington, DC 202-828-8507 202-452-0804 – fax jessica@ifes.org
George Russell	IFES Consultant	Executive Director KY State Board of Elections 140 Walnut Street Frankfort, KY 40601 502-573-7100 ext. 112 502-573-4369 – fax grussell@mail.state.ky.us

**Appendix B.            AAEA Statement and News Release**

***INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTION SYSTEMS***

1101 15th Street NW, 3rd Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • (202) 828-8507 • Fax (202) 452-0804

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 30, 1998**

**CONTACT:   TorieKeller  
1-202-872-4822**

**ASSOCIATION OF ASIAN ELECTION AUTHORITIES**

**OFFICIAL STATEMENT  
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN CAMBODIA  
26 JULY 1998**

The Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA), a professional organization representing election bodies in member countries, participated as international observers of the parliamentary elections in Cambodia. AAEA deployed five teams of observers to four provinces. We visited polling stations and witnessed the voting and ballot counting process. We talked with officials from the National Election Committee, provincial election commissions, commune election commissions, polling station commissions, domestic observer organizations, and political parties. The cooperation of these officials with the AAEA observers was very good.

Based on our findings during the election observation, AAEA considers these elections to be credible and acceptable. The elections serve as an important first step to put Cambodia on the path to democracy.

A final report containing a more detailed assessment will be released by the International Foundation for Election Systems, acting as interim secretariat for the AAEA. It will be available approximately one month after the official results of the election are announced. Following are the major conclusions reached by the AAEA observers.

We recognize reports by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and political parties of intimidation of voters, misuse of state media by the government, and inaccessibility to media by opposition parties during the election campaign.

Although efforts to educate the voters about the election process are to be applauded, there is room for a more intensive voter education effort in the future. We realize that, due to the large number of parties involved in the campaign, and unequal media access, it was impossible for the electorate to receive a balanced view of all party platforms. However, we understand that political parties, through provincial and district offices, were able to spread their messages at the grassroots level by word of mouth.



The Cambodian election officials, especially the National Election Committee, are to be commended for a job well done in preparing for the elections. The officials showed great resolve in overcoming obstacles to complete the voter registration process, to provide training to election officials at the provincial, commune, and polling station levels, and to distribute election materials in a timely and efficient way.

Some irregularities were observed during the voting and counting process, but these were minor infractions. They were due in large part to confusion about procedures and regulations. They were not intentional or malicious, and did not impact the results of the vote, as observed by AAEA members. These irregularities, however, suggest uneven training of commune and polling station workers, and indicate a need for uniform training at the commune and polling station level throughout the country.

Voter turnout for the election was large and impressive, with the great majority of Cambodian voters exercising their right to vote. They started gathering at some polling stations by 6 a.m. The vote was secret, and despite previously-mentioned attempts at intimidation, voters were generally able to express their will and vote their conscience. The polls were organized, the poll workers maintained control inside the polling stations, and voting took place in an orderly fashion. Voting procedures were followed well in the stations observed.

Nearly 11,000 polling stations were in operation on election day, and no problems were cited by AAEA observers in opening and closing the stations on time. The electorate had adequate time to vote between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. AAEA members observed no serious violations of the voting process. There was a large showing of Cambodian observers and political party agents at the polling sites. Security was good.

The counting process following election day went well at the commune counting centers visited by AAEA observers. The process was transparent, and well-attended by observers and political party agents. The reporting forms provided accountability of the vote, insured its accuracy, and provided the means for investigating allegations of fraud. In fact, AAEA thinks this reporting process is in need of simplification in order to make the procedure easier and smoother for the polling station commissions and the commune election commissions. Regarding election-related allegations, the government must now process complaints and adjudicate election grievances in a fair manner.

In summary, AAEA finds the election credible and acceptable, particularly in the context of Cambodia's history, its internal strife, and its inexperience with the democratic process. This credibility is due in large part to the organized administration of the election, the large voter turnout, and the ability of the voters to cast their ballots freely and secretly.

Elections do not guarantee democracy. It is the hope of AAEA that this election will lay the foundation for democracy and peace in Cambodia. More importantly, this is the hope and desire of the Cambodian people. Therefore, we call upon all political parties to respect and live by the results of the election, and honor the will of the Cambodian electorate.

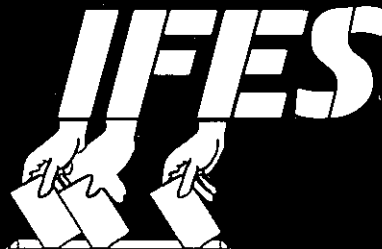
Mr. Bishnu Pratap Shah  
Chairman, AAEA and Chief Election Commissioner, Election Commission of Nepal

For more information on the AAEA's role in the Cambodian elections, please visit the following IFES link:  
<http://www.ifes.org/cambodia/index.htm>.

The AAEA's homepage can be found at <http://www.ifes.org/AsiaAssocSite/index.htm>.

*The International Foundation for Election Systems has been working in Asia since 1989 and currently serves as the interim secretariat for the AAEA, whose observation mission to Cambodia was funded by the United States Agency for International Development. Since its inception in 1987, IFES has provided nonpartisan assistance to develop or refine election systems in more than 100 emerging and established democracies around the world.*

###



International Foundation for Election Systems  
1101 15th Street, N.W.  
Third Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
TEL (202) 828-8507 FAX (202) 452-0804