



MEDIA RELEASE

20 June 2006

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN SANDERSON AC (Retd) RETURNS TO CAMBODIA AS AUSTCARE AMBASSADOR

In the fight to eliminate landmines and combat poverty, Lieutenant General John Sanderson AC (Retd), former Governor of Western Australia and former Force Commander of the UN Peacekeeping mission in Cambodia is visiting the kingdom in his new role as AUSTCARE's Ambassador for Cambodia.

AUSTCARE, an Australian-based, humanitarian aid and development, non profit organisation, has worked in Cambodia since 1979 to reduce poverty and rebuild communities.

Lieutenant General Sanderson's tireless peacekeeping work and strong association with the people of Cambodia has earned him lasting respect from the Cambodian royal family, government and its people.

CEO Michael Smith AO said AUSTCARE was delighted to announce Lieutenant General Sanderson's appointment as AUSTCARE's Ambassador for Cambodia.

"His work, especially during the early 90's, is truly inspirational – providing much needed security and protection to the people of Cambodia.

"I have the utmost confidence that as AUSTCARE's Ambassador for Cambodia he will be a guiding force in our ongoing commitment to integrated mine action and eradicating poverty in Cambodia," he said.

Lieutenant General Sanderson is visiting two of AUSTCARE's landmine action program sites in Cambodia at Banteay Meanchey on Monday 19th June and Kampong Chhnang on Tuesday 20th June. The programs clear landmines, support landmine survivors and help rural communities to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

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AUSTCARE in Cambodia.

AUSTCARE has been working in Cambodia since 1979, with integrated land mine action commencing in 2001. AUSTCARE's Cambodia programs aim to reduce poverty among mine-affected communities in Cambodia, with a particular focus on the north/northwest border areas; strengthening of local partner organisations, sub-national government institutions and civil society; and integrating mine action with community development.

The AUSTCARE integrated mine action approach

Cambodia is one of the most mine-affected countries in the world. Mine-affected communities often fail to benefit from mine clearance because they lack the resources to maximise the use of mine cleared land, such as limited understanding of agricultural practices, loss of crops to pests, lack of resources to build houses, limited access to water, lack of basic health services, lack of road access to isolated villages and illiteracy. Integrated community development provides sustainable impacts to the lives of people in mine-affected communities, and increases the development and economic security of the nation as a whole.

Landmine Facts.

Cambodia has suffered 60,000 landmine casualties since 1979 with 891 new casualties in 2004. Up to 70 million landmines are currently underground in over 80 countries – destroying lives, adding to the poverty cycle, and rendering land unfit to cultivate. Landmines cause up to 20,000 preventable casualties every year – largely innocent men, women and children.

Media please note: Lieutenant General Sanderson is available for interview in Cambodia or on return to Australia from Monday 26th Jun 06. To arrange an interview in either country please contact the relevant person below.

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For further information on AUSTCARE's work in Cambodia please read the attached document, AUSTCARE our program in Cambodia.

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AUSTCARE is a wholly Australian-based, independent, specialist humanitarian aid and development organisation that is non-profit, non-sectarian and non-political. Since 1967, AUSTCARE has worked in over 30 different countries to reduce poverty, build local capacity and enhance human security. AUSTCARE's mission is to assist refugees overseas, displaced people, returnees and those affected by landmines to rebuild their lives and to reduce poverty through the expert delivery of development programs in partnership with local communities and other agencies.

AUSTCARE is fully accredited with the Australian government aid agency AusAID, and a full member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

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