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Press Release

This morning, the Minister of Culture and Fine Arts inaugurated the Indigenous Cultural Centre in Ratanakiri. It will be the first ethnological center in Cambodia, promoting the identity of the minorities living in Ratanakiri province which represents the majority of ethnic minorities still living in Cambodia. The center will be used as a multi-purpose space for indigenous cultural events, exhibitions, craft fairs, workshops and gatherings.

“This represents an exceptional opportunity to combine cultural facilities with a strong indigenous character and identity, linked with local socioeconomic needs,” said the Minister of Culture and Fine Arts this morning.

To meet the cultural specificities and the needs of the inhabitants, representatives of indigenous communities and local actors were involved throughout the process. “Inspired by the vernacular architecture, the center has been elaborated according to sustainable development principles. It has been equipped with a solar panel and natural ventilation, and decorated with local handicrafts” said Mr. Andeol Cadin, the architect of the building. The center will also be surrounded by a botanical garden and an arboretum of endemic flora.

This center was conceived within the MDG-F Creative Industries Support Programme which has been implemented for three years in four provinces, namely Kompong Thom, Preah Vihear, Mondulhiri and Ratanakiri. The general objective of the programme was to improve Indigenous People’s livelihood and safeguard their traditions through cultural entrepreneurship and enhancement. “This challenging programme contributed to promote cultural diversity and demonstrated that culture can be a driving force for sustainable development,” said Ms. Anne Lemaistre, UNESCO Representative in Cambodia.

This joint UN-Royal Government programme was sponsored by the Spain-UN Millennium Development Goals Achievement Funds (or MDG-F) and coordinated by UNESCO in close collaboration with ILO, FAO and UNDP as well as with the Ministry of Cultural and Fine Arts, the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Commerce, in partnership with numerous local and national stakeholders.

Throughout its implementation, the Creative Industries Support Programme supported over 1000 Indigenous and Khmer artisans and artists in the four target provinces by providing them with intensive training on financial literacy, rural marketing and entrepreneurial skills. The programme also fostered commercial networks at the local, provincial, national and international levels.

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