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Statement

For Immediate Release

Cambodian Prime Minister Endorsed Tiger Reintroduction Plans

23 August 2017, Phnom Penh – WWF congratulates the Royal Government of Cambodia for the Prime Minister’s endorsement of plans to reintroduce wild tigers to northeastern Cambodia. The commitment is a positive signal of the government’s commitment to ensure the protection of tiger habitat in the Eastern Plains Landscape, increased enforcement against poaching and illegal logging, and engagement of all stakeholders, especially local communities.

The Prime Minister’s commitment was made during the **Cambodia National Forum on Protection and Conservation of Natural Resource** today. It comes 10 years after the last evidence of a wild tiger in Cambodia was captured by a remotely triggered camera trap in the Eastern Plains Landscape, leading scientists and officials to confirm that there are no viable tigers left in Cambodia.

As one of 13 tiger-range countries, Cambodia plays an important role in TX2 - the global goal to double wild tiger numbers by the year 2022, committed to by 13 governments at the St Petersburg Tiger Summit. TX2 (‘T times two’) is one of the most innovative and ambitious conservation goals ever set that has managed to halt the sharp decline in wild tiger numbers for the first time in conservation history.

“We are deeply encouraged by the full support of the **Samdech Akeak Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen** for reintroducing wild tigers to the Eastern Plains Landscape in northeastern Cambodia, and congratulate the Royal Government of Cambodia for taking a bold and critical step toward fulfilling the TX2 goal,” said Teak Seng, Country Director of WWF-Cambodia.

The tiger reintroduction in the Eastern Plains Landscape offers a major opportunity for Cambodia to reach its national commitment toward Tx2, as well as contributing significantly to the global goal of doubling wild tiger numbers.

The announcement yesterday came after the recent legal designation of increased new protected areas and wildlife corridor connectivity under the Ministry of Environment, with a total 7.43 million hectares - almost half of the country’s land - for legal protection.

The Eastern Plains Landscape, which covers most of northeastern Cambodia, is also an important habitat for many other endangered species, including the Asian elephant, leopard, banteng and Giant Ibis. Protecting these species and restoring tigers in the landscape will offer economic potential through developing attractive ecotourism products.



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“The hard work is ahead of us,” said Teak Seng. “We have to redouble our efforts to make this landscape ready for tigers and involve all stakeholders throughout the process. That means effective enforcement against poaching and illegal logging, well trained and equipped rangers, thriving prey populations and engaged local communities.”

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About WWF-Cambodia

WWF was established in Cambodia in 1995 as a part of the WWF Greater Mekong Programme. WWF’s mission in Cambodia is to ensure that there will be strong participation and support from all people to conserve the country’s rich biological diversity. Through the encouragement of sustainable use of natural resources, WWF-Cambodia promotes new opportunities for the benefit of all people, enhancing local livelihoods and contributing to poverty reduction in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Go to cambodia.panda.org for more information.