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Ministry of Environment and WWF co-host a press trip program in Cambodia's Mekong Flooded Forest Landscape

A total of thirty journalists from 17 news media outlets will participate in a two-day press tour in the Mekong Flooded Forest landscape in Kratie province, from 16-17 June 2022. **His Excellency Neth Pheaktra**, Secretary of State and Spokesman to the Ministry of Environment, will lead this jointly organized trip by the Ministry of Environment and WWF, with the aim to provide journalists with an opportunity to gain first-hand experience of the wildlife situation in the area, understanding the landscape's unique wilderness value for the recovery of globally significant wildlife and for natural resources management, contributing to the improvement of local communities' livelihoods and economic development.

Officials from the Ministry and the Kratie Provincial Department of Environment, members of the local communities, Mr. Seng Teak, WWF-Cambodia Country Director, and WWF staff, totaling about 60 participants will take part in this Mekong field trip.

According to **His Excellency Neth Pheaktra**, the objective of the press trip is well aligned with the Ministry of Environment's principle that is to promote and increase professional media reporting on the environment, natural resources and biodiversity conservation in Cambodia.

"The information people receive will help increase their environmental knowledge and contribute to nurturing the public appreciation for the environment, natural resources and biodiversity, and thus inspire their action in protecting the Kingdom's natural resources and wildlife for many generations to come," he said.

In the Mekong Flooded Forest landscape, the Ministry of Environment and WWF together work with the provincial and local communities and authorities in saving the country's forests and endangered species in two protected areas totaling more than 62,000 hectares. The press trip will take the participants to explore some of the area's most important wildlife habitats in Prek Prasob Wildlife Sanctuary for hog deer, muntjac, leopard cat, civets, and in Sambo Wildlife Sanctuary for eld's deer, and many important bird species including vultures, giant ibis, white-shouldered Ibis, woolly-necked stork, lesser adjutant, green peafowl, and river tern, one of the rarest bird species in South East Asia.

Mr. Seng Teak outlined the importance of this press tour for bringing the interaction between the media and scientists closer, promoting better conservation communications and boosting quality news reporting among the general public and all stakeholders.

"This press trip will provide the journalists with new information and fresh knowledge which can help them develop greater perspectives of the public information, increasing public awareness and understanding about the unique value of the landscape for conserving many globally irreplaceable wildlife species, its critical role as life support system and the need to safeguard the forests landscape for people and nature," he said.

The realization of the press tour constitutes an important aspect of the public relations component both the Ministry of Environment and WWF continuously promote. Building on this effort, the Ministry of Environment and WWF will continue strengthening their cooperation and partnership on the continued efforts in managing, restoring and protecting natural resources and important wildlife of global conservation value, while actively engaging the local communities in conservation and livelihoods initiatives to sustainably manage the natural resources in the protected areas.

Prek Prasob Wildlife Sanctuary has a total area of 12,770 hectares and is situated in Prek Prasob district. Sambo Wildlife Sanctuary has a total area of 50,093 hectares situated in Sambo district, Kratie province. The two sanctuaries support a total of at least 11 large mammal species, 56 species of amphibians and reptiles, 683 species of plants, more than 200 bird species and 223 native fish species. In addition, their forests and rivers are vital sources of income and resources for local communities, in addition to preventing climate change, floods and droughts. We thank for the funding and support from WWF-Belgium, Belgium Government (DGD), Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Binco.

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