



# German-Cambodian Relations

From the Cold War Legacy to  
a Cooperative Development Partnership

Dr. Raimund Weiß  
Mr. Robert Hör



## THE KONRAD-ADENAUER-STIFTUNG

Freedom, justice and solidarity are the basic principles underlying the work of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). The KAS is a political foundation, closely associated with the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU). As co-founder of the CDU and the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967) united Christian-social, conservative and liberal traditions. His name is synonymous with the democratic reconstruction of Germany, the firm alignment of foreign policy with the trans-Atlantic community of values, the vision of a unified Europe and an orientation towards the social market economy. His intellectual heritage continues to serve both as our aim as well as our obligation today. In our European and international cooperation efforts, we work for people to be able to live self-determined lives in freedom and dignity. We make a contribution underpinned by values to helping Germany meet its growing responsibilities throughout the world.

KAS has been working in Cambodia since 1994, striving to support the Cambodian people in fostering dialogue, building networks and enhancing scientific projects. Thereby, the foundation works towards creating an environment conducive to social and economic development. All programs are conceived and implemented in close cooperation with the Cambodian partners on central and sub-national level.

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# FOREWORD



*Dr. Daniel Schmücking*

This year we are celebrating 25 years of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Cambodia. For this special anniversary we're not only counting the number of years – we are looking back on a successful history of a strong partnership with the Cambodian government, different national and international companies as well as NGOs and various stakeholders. However, the anniversary is not just about our office in the capital Phnom Penh: Twenty five years of KAS means also a quarter century of strong and amicably German – Cambodian relations whereby both countries received a positive impact.

As a political think-tank the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation Cambodia aims to build a dialogue between Germany and Cambodia since the very beginning in 1994. We are building networks and enhancing scientific projects, working towards creating an environment conducive to economic and social development and try to make an improvement for the Cambodian society. For example, last year we organized the very first conference about digitalization and waste management in Phnom Penh and prosperously continued our work in the fields of foreign policy, youth empowerment, international relations as well as strengthening the rule of law. We are glad that all of our programs are conceived and implemented in close cooperation with the Cambodian partners on central and sub-national levels.

As the current country representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Cambodia I am proud to look back on such a successful friendship. Additionally, I want to use this special occasion to focus on the mutual future. Since in today's world political and economic relations are often just an expedient to more prosperity and growth we should use the traditionally strong partnership between Germany and Cambodia in order to continue our work for those who can profit most from it: The Cambodian citizens. Only if we advance a transparent dialogue for upcoming projects and try to integrate all stakeholders in the achievement to our objectives we can assure that our work has a positive outcome. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is already looking forward to continue its efforts together with the Cambodian government and to overcome all the challenges along the way. We want to further promote the principles of our foundation which are closely associated with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) of Germany: Freedom, justice and solidarity!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Schmücking', written in a cursive style.

Dr. **Daniel Schmücking**  
Country Director  
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung  
Kingdom of Cambodia



# GERMAN-CAMBODIAN RELATIONS

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Cooperative Development Partnership

Dr. Raimund Weiß\*, Robert Hör\*\*

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Indien,  
Raum XVII Blick vor  
Kolo 2 nach 6



The photo shows plaster casts of Angkor Wat, exhibited in the ethnological museum of Berlin.  
© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst / Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

## II. First Contact between Germans and Cambodians

### I. Introduction

At this time it is useful for Germany and Cambodia to look back over a turbulent history of bilateral relations that have been shaped by geopolitical constellations of the Cold War and the post-Cold War world. The first contact between Germany and Cambodia can be traced back to the colonial period when the rich cultural heritage of Cambodia, Angkor came to be known in Germany. But it was not until the Cold War that official diplomatic relations were established. A divided Germany pursued with Cambodia opposing foreign policies. Cambodia, divided as well because of geopolitical constellations of the Cold War, either build closer relations with East- or West Germany. With the end of the Cold War, a reunified Germany and a war-torn but stabilized Cambodia, German-Cambodian relations were then able to move toward a more sustainable partnership. Germany supported Cambodia's peace process that began with the Paris Peace Accords in 1991 and was a part of the largest UN peacebuilding mission of that time. Since then, German-Cambodian relations have been guided by a cooperative development partnership as both economic- and cultural relations have gradually deepened.

The history of German-Cambodian relations can be traced back to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the German polymath, Adolf Bastian, brought Cambodia's cultural heritage, Angkor to the attention of Imperial Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II. Adolf Bastian visited Angkor in 1863. His book *'Reise durch Kambodja nach Cochinchina'* (1864), made Cambodia more widely known in Germany. In 1873, Adolf Bastian founded the Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin, and as curator of the museum, organized a mission to Cambodia to produce 300 plaster casts from Angkor, including a plaster cast of a famous 200-meter-long and up to 3-meter-high bas-relief of Angkor Wat. In 1904, the plaster casts of the bas-relief were built into the wall structure of the royal museum, and along with other plaster casts of sculptures, statues and reliefs were photographed and exhibited. The German public could now gain for the first time an



The photo shows plaster casts of Angkor Wat, exhibited in the ethnological museum of Berlin. © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst / Zentralarchiv der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz.



image of Angkor, although not in its original form. During World War II the museum was heavily damaged and had to be torn down. However, parts of the Angkor plaster casts and photographs of the Khmer artefacts were able to be saved. They are until today exhibited in the Dahlem Museum in Berlin.<sup>1</sup>

### III. German-Cambodian Diplomatic Relations during the Cold War

Following World War II, Germany was divided into two states. West Germany represented the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and East Germany, the German Democratic Republic (GDR). During the Cold War, the FRG aligned with the Western bloc led by the United States. The West followed the political ideology of liberalism and established free market economies and liberal democracies. East Germany was integrated into the

Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union. The East followed the political ideology of Marxism-Leninism and established centrally planned economies and communist party states. Antagonistic ideologies divided the GDR and FRG and led both to compete for international recognition. The Cold War also divided the United Nations (UN), which often led to blocked resolutions and political conflicts. In effect, neither the GDR nor the FRG was admitted to the UN as full members until 1973, though in 1952 the FRG obtained observer status.<sup>2</sup> Cambodia's government under the head of state, Norodom Sihanouk, during the Cold War pursued a neutral foreign policy and was a founding member of the Non-Alignment Movement.<sup>3</sup>

#### German Competition for Cambodia's Diplomatic Recognition and the Hallstein Doctrine

The FRG recognized Cambodia as a state in November, 1956.<sup>4</sup> The GDR initiated diplomatic relations with Cambodia in 1959. The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) explained in September, 1959 that 'the current situation in Southeast Asia reveals ... that the USA, West Germany, and other imperialistic powers are increasing their efforts to exploit the financial and economic difficulties



*Cambodian students in East Germany.*



*© Meyer - Cambodian Princess Norodom Buppha Devi during a state visit in East Germany.*

of countries in the region to increase their influence and to pressure the governments of these anti-imperialistic nation states towards a pro-Western orientation.<sup>5</sup> During the Berlin Crisis (1958-61), which led to the permanent division of Germany into two states, Cambodia's government recognized both German states. Thereafter, the FRG and GDR intensified their political competition for diplomatic supremacy in Cambodia.

In 1960, the FRG sent a diplomatic delegation to Phnom Penh and established Germany's first development cooperation with

Cambodia. Until 1965, the FRG spent 10.4m DM (2.6m USD<sup>6</sup>) for infrastructure and education projects. In 1961 the FRG spent 3m DM (750.000 USD) to establish a vocational school in Battambang. In Kampong Som, the FRG financed in 1963 a new railway station, and spent between 1961 and 1963 a total of 6.6m DM (1.65m USD) for the reconstruction of Cambodia's railway system, including the railway connection between Phnom Penh and Kampong Som.<sup>7</sup> The development cooperation allowed the FRG to upgrade its diplomatic relations with Cambodia on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1964 when the FRG

1 Michael, Falser, "Gipsabgüsse von Angkor Wat für das Völkerkundemuseum in Berlin – eine sammlungs-geschichtliche Anekdote, Teil I", *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift: Mitteilungen für Indoasiatische Kunst* 16 (2012): 43-58

2 The GDR obtained UN observer status only in 1972, one year before both states were admitted to the UN.

3 Samuel Joachim Eichhorn, "Die Kambodscha-Kontroverse," in *Durch alle Klippen hindurch zum Erfolg – Regierungspraxis der ersten großen Koalition (1966-69)*, *ibid.* (München: Oldenbourg Verlag 2009), 273.

4 Christian Oesterheld, "East German Socialism and the Khmer Rouge Revolution: Insights from the GDR's Diplomatic Archives," in *Proceedings of the 10th International Academic Conference Vienna*, ed. International Institute of Social Sciences and Economics Prague (June 2014): 561. [www.iises.net/proceedings/10th-international-academic-conference-vienna/table-of-content?cid=2&iid=71&rid=843](http://www.iises.net/proceedings/10th-international-academic-conference-vienna/table-of-content?cid=2&iid=71&rid=843)

5 Protokolle des ZK der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschland (SED), Protokoll Nr. 45/59, Anlage Nr. 1, 28.9.1959, [www.bundesarchiv.de](http://www.bundesarchiv.de)

6 The exchange values should only be considered as benchmarks, they are based on calculations of the author and exchange rates provided by Oanda, [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com) and Statista, [www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com)

7 Auswärtiges Amt (Federal Foreign Office), *Projektaufträge mit Auftragswert, Mittelabruf und Restmitteln nach Ländern – Technische und Finanzielle Zusammenarbeit Kambodscha*, 21.08.2017

established consular relations and opened a representative office in Phnom Penh.<sup>8</sup> Three years later, on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 1967, the FRG established official diplomatic relations and opened the first German embassy in Cambodia.<sup>9</sup>

At the outset, the GDR lost the political competition with the FRG for diplomatic supremacy in Cambodia. Despite Cambodia's neutral foreign policy, which would have required Cambodia's government to provide both German states equal diplomatic status, the FRG had closer relations to Cambodia than the GDR. Because of this development cooperation, the FRG held diplomatic supremacy until 1968. A GDR delegation was sent to Phnom Penh in 1961 with the expectation to establish consular relations with Cambodia after signing and ratifying financial agreements in the preceding year (1960). However, the GDR was only allowed by Cambodia to establish a trade mission.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, the GDR succeeded one year later in establishing consular relations and even opened the first German General Consulate in Phnom Penh (1962). However, it took the GDR five years to upgrade the General Consulate to a Representative office in 1967. This was at a time, when the FRG had already established official diplomatic relations with Cambodia.<sup>11</sup>

In response to the diplomatic defeat, the GDR tried in 1968 to persuade Cambodia's government that the FRG opposed Cambodia's neutral foreign policy and was leading a smear campaign against the head

of state, Norodom Sihanouk. Sihanouk had been criticized in West Germany for his controversial position on the neighboring Vietnam war. He had granted arm shipments to North Vietnam and the Vietcong through the seaport of Kampong Som and tolerated sanctuaries for their forces on Cambodian territory along the border with Vietnam. Norodom Sihanouk had in return obtained assurances from North Vietnam that Cambodia will be kept out of the war and that troops of the Vietcong and North Vietnam would withdraw from Cambodia after unification.<sup>12</sup>

According to GDR documents from 1968, the GDR Minister of Foreign Affairs, Otto Winzer traveled in February 1968, just three months after the recognition of the FRG, to Phnom Penh and met with his Cambodian counterpart, Norodom Phurissara, a cousin of Norodom Sihanouk. During the meeting, Otto Winzer appeared to have persuaded Phurissara that the FRG opposed Sihanouk. Just one month before the meeting, an influential West German newspaper of that time, the 'Christ und Welt' had called Cambodia's head of state a 'Seiltänzer' (tightrope walker).<sup>13</sup> During the meeting, Phurissara was recorded as having said to Otto Winzer, '[that]... the exchange of opinions has been beneficial for our relations and that the exchange has been highly appreciated in the context of West German's smear campaign against Cambodia's neutral foreign policy.'<sup>14</sup>

One year later, on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1969, German-

Cambodian relations appeared to be turned after Cambodia's government decided to establish official diplomatic relations with the GDR. Even though the diplomatic recognition of the GDR complied with Cambodia's neutral foreign policy, the FRG government considered severing the diplomatic relations. At that time, the FRG foreign policy was bound to the Hallstein Doctrine. This doctrine stipulated that any state providing diplomatic recognition to the GDR commits an 'unfriendly act against the FRG' and leads to the severance of diplomatic relations. In West Germany the doctrine prompted the so-called 'Kambodscha-Kontroverse'. This was a political stand-off in the great coalition government of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU)/Christian Social Union (CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Complying to the Hallstein Doctrine, Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger (CDU) demanded to sever the diplomatic relations with Cambodia. But the Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister Willy Brandt (SPD) questioned the Hallstein Doctrine and demanded to continue diplomatic relations. Ironically, the controversy took place in the 'Hallstein-Room' named after Walter Hallstein, a former advisor of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. Hallstein originally developed the doctrine in 1955. The German newspaper 'Der Spiegel' reported about the controversy and quoted the Justice Minister, Horst Ehmke (SPD) mocking the CDU after an unsuccessful meeting: 'I doubt, that just the Hallstein-Room will lead you to a wise decision. I advise you, to look for another room.'<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, it took four weeks of tense negotiations that almost broke-up the coalition government before the so-called 'Kressbronner Kompromiss' ended the controversy. On 4<sup>th</sup> June 1969, the coalition

partners agreed not to sever but to 'freeze' diplomatic relations with Cambodia. The FRG recalled the German Ambassador and suspended the operations of the embassy in Phnom Penh. By then, the diplomatic relations with Cambodia had reached its lowest point. Norodom Sihanouk declared on 17<sup>th</sup> May, at a time when the Kambodscha-Kontroverse was still ongoing, that he wished to sever the diplomatic relations. On 11<sup>th</sup> June, one week after the FRG decided to 'freeze' the diplomatic relations, Cambodia's Ambassador to Germany, Sisowath Mathevi was recalled and the embassy in Bonn closed.<sup>16</sup> The Cambodian government allowed only a small FRG diplomatic delegation led by Counsellor Walther Marshall von Bieberstein to stay under the protection of France in Phnom Penh. The delegation implemented cooperation agreements of the FRG and Cambodia that had been already signed before Cambodia's recognition of the GDR. By 1970, apart from humanitarian aid projects and consular duties for nineteen Germans residing in Cambodia, the FRG delegation was out of work. The Federal Foreign Office first considered to recall the delegation, but later decided to leave the delegation in Phnom Penh. Following the advice of the head of the delegation, Bieberstein, it was decided the delegation should demonstrate West Germany's presence in Phnom Penh's diplomatic corps to counterbalance the GDR and other Eastern European states represented in Cambodia. The FRG delegation stayed in Cambodia until March 1975 when they were evacuated to safety, just one month before Pol Pot took power.<sup>17</sup>

### Germany and the Khmer Republic

Triggered by the neighboring Vietnam War, Cambodia fought a civil war between

8 A Representative Office has higher diplomatic status than a General Consulate because it provides diplomatic privileges and immunities and is seen often as an 'embassy in all but name'. See G. R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, Fifth Edition, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2015), 237-238.

9 Eichhorn, 2009, 273.

10 Protokolle des ZK der SED, Protokoll Nr. 32/61, Anlage Nr. 6, 7.7.1961, www.bundesarchiv.de (English translation by the author)

11 Oesterheld, 2014, 561-562.

12 Tim Szatkowski, "Von Sihanouk bis Pol Pot. Diplomatie und Menschenrechte in den Beziehungen der Bundesrepublik zu Kambodscha (1967-1979)." *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 61/1, (2013): 9.

13 Quote from 'Christ und Welt' in Eichhorn, 2009, 273. (English translation by the Author)

14 Büro Erich Honecker im Zentralkomitee der SED, Protokoll Nr. 4/68, Anlage Nr. 6, 6.2.1968, www.bundesarchiv.de

15 Der Spiegel, Bonn/Hallstein Doktrin. Zwischen Null und Eins. 2.6.1969, www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-45741000.html

16 Eichhorn, 2009, 280.

17 Szatkowski, 2013, 12-13.



1970 and 1975. On 18<sup>th</sup> March 1970, Prime Minister Lon Nol overthrew Norodom Sihanouk and proclaimed the 'Khmer Republic'. He sided with the USA and its allies against North Vietnam. Sihanouk responded with a declaration of war against his own former government, established a counter-government in exile in Beijing and allied with the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot. The counter-government was called the 'Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea' (GRUNK) and its military arm operating in Cambodia, the 'National United Front of Kampuchea' (FUNK). China, North Korea, and North Vietnam supported Sihanouk's counter-government in exile.<sup>18</sup> Also, the GDR as an Eastern bloc state recognized Sihanouk's government and downgraded its embassy in Phnom Penh to a representative office. The former Cambodian ambassador to the FRG, Methavi Sisowath (1967-69) joined Sihanouk and became Cambodia's ambassador to the GDR in 1974.<sup>19</sup>

The FRG responded to the civil war by neither recognizing the Lon Nol government nor Norodom Sihanouk's counter-government in exile. However, the Lon Nol government repeatedly requested the FRG to establish official diplomatic relations. Among others, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Khmer Republic, Long Boret met informally with his counterpart, Walter Scheel (FDP), during a private visit to Germany in 1973. Still the FRG coalition government, led by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Liberal Democratic Party (FDP) under SPD Chancellor Willy Brandt (1969-74), delayed negotiations over diplomatic recognition. It would have jeopardized the 'Ostpolitik' of SPD Chancellor Willy Brandt that aimed to normalize relations with Eastern European

states, including the GDR. During the Cambodian civil war, the FRG and GDR signed and ratified the 'Grundlagenvertrag' (Basic Treaty 1972) in which both governments recognized each other as international personalities and this paved the way for the admission of both states to the UN as full members in September, 1973. The FRG also delayed negotiations over the diplomatic recognition of the Lon Nol government on the ground that diplomatic relations can only be established when a political solution is found to end the civil war. The Cambodian civil war would continue until 17<sup>th</sup> April 1975 when Lon Nol's government collapsed and Pol Pot took power.<sup>20</sup>

### Germany and Democratic Kampuchea

During the first year of 'Democratic Kampuchea' (DK), as the state had been named by Pol Pot, Norodom Sihanouk remained head of state. This indicated that the political situation in Cambodia would normalize and led the FRG government at first to consider re-establishing diplomatic relations. But this position would soon be reversed after it became known in 1976 that Sihanouk had been put under house arrest and a senior leader of the Khmer Rouge, Khieu Samphan replaced him as head of state. The FRG government instructed its embassy staff in Bangkok not to participate in official events organized by the DK and not to invite DK representatives to official FRG events.<sup>21</sup> In September, 1976 Bieberstein, now Head of the Department for International Law of the Federal Foreign Service, wrote that 'the establishment of diplomatic relations with [the DK] is incompatible with the FRG's unconditional commitment to human rights.' Bieberstein further described the human

rights situation in the DK as 'situations of unimaginable horrors, which could only be compared with the witness testimonies during the Frankfurter Auschwitz trials.'<sup>22</sup>

Whereas the FRG had no diplomatic relations with the DK, the GDR instantly welcomed the Khmer Rouge for their 'historic victory over the people traitor and betrayer [Lon Nol] regime.'<sup>23</sup> On 21<sup>st</sup> April 1975, just four days after the Khmer Rouge took power, the Cambodian ambassador to the GDR, Sisowath Methavi was received by Willi Stoph, the President of the GDR State Council in East Berlin. Willi Stoph was at that time the second highest GDR official after the Secretary-General of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), Erich Honecker. He expressed his satisfaction with the victory and assured the new government, East Germany would provide solidarity and aid.<sup>24</sup> The GDR also sent an extra diplomatic delegation to Phnom Penh to welcome the Khmer Rouge during their take-over. But to the surprise of the GDR delegation, they were not welcome. Khmer Rouge soldiers forced the GDR delegation at gunpoint along with 600 other foreigners, including diplomatic staff, to gather at the French embassy. From there they were then transported to the Thai border and expelled from the country. A journalist witnessed the forced evacuation of the East Germans and recalled that 'they... were very, very, very bitter... I remember how angry the East Germans were because they flew in specifically for the victory, [but] they were not invited.'<sup>25</sup>

Further attempts by the GDR to establish official diplomatic relations with the DK through 'comrades' in Vietnam and Laos failed. Also, Erich Honecker's New Year's wishes to the head of state Khieu Samphan in December 1977 via the Cambodian embassy in Hanoi went unanswered. Only the Cambodian embassy in East Berlin continued to operate until May 1977 when the Cambodian Ambassador to the GDR, Methavi Sisowath was recalled by the Khmer Rouge. Mathevi Sisowath would later be purged along with other family members of Norodom Sihanouk, including his former Minister of Foreign Affairs Norodom Phurissara. Both are believed to have been executed in 1978.<sup>26</sup> Until 1977 the embassy in East Berlin produced propaganda materials about the alleged successes of the revolution and looked after forty Cambodian students and graduates, who lived in the GDR at that time. The GDR film studio DEFA produced six propaganda films for the DK.<sup>27</sup> A bulletin of the embassy titled 'Democratic Kampuchea, a Workers' and Peasants' State in Southeast Asia' claimed that 'this year's good rice-harvest fully satisfies national consumption. Reserves could be stored and seed stocks doubled. Furthermore, there is a surplus for export.'<sup>28</sup>

East German-Cambodian relations took a new turn in 1978 when the Cambodian-Vietnamese War began. The Khmer Rouge had gone against Vietnam because of an alleged subversion of the revolution by Vietnam as well as border conflicts. Pol Pot could rely on the military and economic

<sup>18</sup> William Shawcross, *Sideshow - Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: Cooper Square Press 2002):125.

<sup>19</sup> Oesterheld, 2014, 562.

<sup>20</sup> Szatkowski, 2013, 13-14

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>22</sup> Bieberstein quoted in Szatkowski, 2013, 19. (English translation by author)

<sup>23</sup> Quote from Die Zeit (German Newspaper), "SED-Moral", 6.2.1979, www.zeit.de/1979/06/sed-moral

<sup>24</sup> Oesterheld, 2014, 567.

<sup>25</sup> Quote from Oesterheld, 2014, 563.

<sup>26</sup> Cat Barton, "King Norodom Sihanouk holds ECCC at bay", 6.9.2005, www.phnompenhpost.com/national/king-father-sihanouk-holds-eccc-bay

<sup>27</sup> Oesterheld, 2014, 563.

<sup>28</sup> Embassy of Democratic Kampuchea in East Berlin, "Democratic Kampuchea, a worker's and peasant's state in Southeast Asia (East Berlin, March 1977): 3.



support of the People's Republic of China (PRC), who saw in the DK a close ally to counter an alleged imperialistic foreign policy of the Soviet Union to expand its influence through Vietnam in Southeast Asia.<sup>29</sup> Because of the Sino-Soviet split and the Sino-Soviet border war in 1969, the communist world had split into a pro-Chinese Maoist bloc and a pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist bloc. The Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK), originally a Marxist-Leninist party, became dominated by the Maoist faction led by Pol Pot. In 1977, the CPK split over the failed revolution and border conflicts with Vietnam. Defectors of the CPK fled to Vietnam and formed the 'Kampuchean United Front for National Salvation' (FUNSK). On 18<sup>th</sup> December 1978, the GDR responded to these changes and officially pronounced support for FUNSK.<sup>30</sup> One week later, Vietnam launched with FUNSK a full-scale military intervention in Cambodia. On 7<sup>th</sup> January 1979, within only two weeks, the Pol Pot regime collapsed. The new Vietnam-backed government in Phnom Penh established a communist party state and proclaimed itself the 'People's Republic of Kampuchea'.<sup>31</sup>

### Germany and the People's Republic of Kampuchea

Vietnam's intervention and twelve-year long occupation of Cambodia ended the totalitarian rule of the Khmer Rouge but initiated a new civil war over the legitimacy of the new government in Phnom Penh and Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia. In addition, this second civil war became a proxy war between the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc on one side, and China, the USA and the Western Bloc on the other side. Most

states of the Western bloc (including the FRG), and China voted for the four United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions between 1979 and 1982 accepting credentials for the UNGA seat to the DK governments in exile. These were the 'Government of Democratic Kampuchea' (1979-81), and later the renamed 'Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea' (1982-90). Most states of the Eastern bloc (including the GDR) voted against the four UNGA resolutions and recognized the Vietnam-backed government in Phnom Penh led by the 'Revolutionary People's Party of Kampuchea' (RPPK) under Heng Samrin.<sup>32</sup>

The Khmer Rouge leadership had escaped during Vietnam's intervention with most of its military units to the Thai border, where they formed a new party, the PDK (Party Democratic Kampuchea). In 1982 the PDK joined the royalist civil war faction FUNCINPEC (National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia) and the republican civil war faction KPNLF (Kampuchea People National Liberation Front) to form the 'Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea' (CCDK) led by Norodom Sihanouk. The CCDK fought in the 1980s mainly with the support of China, a civil war against the Vietnam backed government in Phnom Penh.<sup>33</sup>

Following the GDR decision to support FUNSK during the Cambodian-Vietnamese war, the GDR government recognized the Cambodian government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK). Already in 1979, the GDR dispatched legal advisors to the People's Revolutionary Trial, which

was held in August 1979 in what is today the Chaktomuk Conference Hall in Phnom Penh. The trial handed death sentences in absentia for Ieng Sary, the Foreign Minister of Democratic Kampuchea, and Pol Pot. The GDR also helped to establish the Tuol Sleng Museum, which is one of the best known and documented memorial sites of Khmer Rouge crimes.<sup>34</sup> Tuol Sleng is the name of a former primary school, which became a Khmer Rouge security prison, also known as S-21. An estimated 15.000 persons were imprisoned, tortured and killed in S-21.<sup>35</sup> To raise public awareness of the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge, a GDR film studio produced in 1980 and 1981 two documentaries that have become well-known historical documents, and are still screened in Cambodia and overseas (f. ex. Kampuchea: Death and Rebirth, 1980 and The Angkar, 1981).<sup>36</sup>

On 18<sup>th</sup> March 1980, the GDR and the PRK signed a 'Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation' during a summit of Erich Honecker and Heng Samrin in East Berlin.<sup>37</sup> Thereafter, the GDR provided humanitarian aid and development support to the PRK. Among others, the GDR sent technicians, health professionals, and jurists as advisors. In January 1982, the GDR Defense Minister Heinz Hoffmann visited Cambodia and signed a military cooperation agreement aiming to build up PRK armed forces with training programs in the GDR and develop air defenses.<sup>38</sup> In January 1986, a GDR delegation led by Gerhard Schürer met with

Minister President Hun Sen (since 1985) and the Minister for Planning, Chea Chan Thou to elaborate economic and development cooperation projects.<sup>39</sup> In the 1980s the GDR provided annually an estimated 5m U.S. dollar aid, making the GDR the third largest donor of the PRK after Vietnam and the Soviet Union.<sup>40</sup> The GDR was in the 1980s also an important source for educational exchange programs. An estimated 4,000 Cambodians studied at universities or vocational training schools in the GDR until 1989.<sup>41</sup>

The FRG government responded to the political situation in Cambodia in a similar manner to the preceding regime change and civil war in 1970. Thus, the FRG did not establish official diplomatic relations with the DK governments in exile nor with the PRK government. The FRG decided that diplomatic relations should only be established when a political solution to the civil war was found that would lead to an interim government and free elections.<sup>42</sup> However, different from the first civil war in 1970, the FRG condemned Vietnam for breaching international law because of its intervention in Cambodia and demanded the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops. In the UN General Assembly (UNGA) the FRG voted with a majority of states for the 34<sup>th</sup> (1979) and 37<sup>th</sup> (1982) UNGA-Resolutions. The resolutions decided that the DK governments in exile should keep the UN seat because the DK had been the last internationally recognized government.

29 Michael Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific*, 2nd Ed. (London/New York: Routledge 2004): 137.

30 Szatkowski, 2013, 566.

31 Yahuda, 2004, 138.

32 Elizabeth Becker, *When the war was over – Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge Revolution*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Persus Book Groups 1998): 457-459.

33 Ibid.

34 Oesterheld, 2014, 567.

35 David Chandler, *Voices from S-21. Terror and History in Pol Pot's Secret Prison* (Berkeley: University California Press 1999).

36 Nico Mesterharm, "Die Kunst des Überlebens", *Südostasien 3* (Asienstiftung Essen, Deutschland 2011): 27-30.

37 Büro Erich Honecker im ZK der SED, *Internationale Beziehungen*, 18.3.1980, [www.bundesarchiv.de](http://www.bundesarchiv.de)

38 Neues Deutschland (SED Zeitung), *Militärdelegation auf Meeting in Phnom Penh*, ND Archive, [www.nd-archiv.de](http://www.nd-archiv.de)

39 Büro Egon Krenz im ZK der SED, *Internationale Beziehungen*, 5.1.1986, [www.bundesarchiv.de](http://www.bundesarchiv.de)

40 Oesterheld, 2014, 566-567.

41 *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, "Kambodschaner in der DDR: Erinnerungen ans 'Paradies'", 15.6.2014, [www.lvz.de/Nachrichten/Kultur/Kambodschaner-in-der-DDR-Erinnerungen-ans-Paradies](http://www.lvz.de/Nachrichten/Kultur/Kambodschaner-in-der-DDR-Erinnerungen-ans-Paradies)

42 *Deutscher Bundestag*, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Frau Kelly und der Fraktion DIE GRÜNEN", Drucksache 11/3962 – Khmer Rouge und Haltung der Bundesregierung, 8.2.1989, <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/11/039/1103962.pdf>

Further, the resolutions demanded the withdrawal of foreign troops from Cambodia and the self-determination of Cambodian people through free elections. On 13<sup>th</sup> September 1983 the FRG support for the UN resolutions was also demonstrated during a meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hans-Dietrich Genscher (FDP) and Norodom Sihanouk in the Federal Foreign Office in Bonn.<sup>43</sup> The opposition in West Germany questioned their government's human rights commitment after having voted for keeping the UN seat with the DK governments. The FRG defended its position in the German parliament on legal grounds and explained it had repeatedly condemned the human rights violations of Democratic Kampuchea in UN General Assembly meetings in the years 1979, 1981 and 1988, and had never provided political recognition or support for the Khmer Rouge.<sup>44</sup>

## VI. German-Cambodian Relations in the Post-Cold War Era

The end of the Cold War paved the way for a political solution of the Cambodian conflict. The five permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC) unanimously backed the 'Agreements on a Comprehensive Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict' (the Paris Peace Accords), that had been successfully mediated by France and Indonesia in the preceding two years. The Cambodian civil war factions signed the Paris Peace Accords on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1991. Soon after began the UN peacebuilding mission in Cambodia named the 'United Nations Transitional Authority of Cambodia' (UNTAC).

UNTAC was given the task to repatriate Cambodian refugees from Thailand, oversee the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops (if any were still stationed in Cambodia), disarm and demobilize the civil war factions and conduct free and fair elections under a Cambodian interim government named the 'Supreme National Council' (SNC). The SNC included all civil war factions and was led by Norodom Sihanouk, who should be reinstated after the election as head of state and King and would than proclaim a constitutional monarchy under a new constitution.<sup>45</sup>

The UNTAC mission held the first free election since Cambodia's independence but failed to disarm the civil war factions leading only to a fragile peace. After the election, an all-party coalition government of all former civil war factions, except the Khmer Rouge, was formed. The Khmer Rouge boycotted the UNTAC election claiming that Vietnamese troops were still present in Cambodia and continued their military campaigns. UNTAC did not find proof for these allegations. In 1994, when UNTAC left, the Khmer Rouge were at first outlawed by the new Cambodian government, but later given amnesty to end the civil war. In July 1997 this difficult process led to a brief revival of the civil war between forces loyal to FUNCINPEC and led by Co-Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh and forces loyal to the successor party of the RPPK, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and led by Co-Prime Minister Hun Sen. CPP forces gained the upper-hand in the military clashes in September 1997. New elections were held in July, 1998. After election disputes and a crisis of government formation, the CPP and FUNCINPEC compromised to form



*Audience by the former Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk (middle) with the first country director of KAS Cambodia Dr. Peter Schier (left to the King) and election experts on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 1995.*

a new two-party coalition government under Prime Minister Hun Sen with Norodom Ranariddh becoming the President of the National Assembly. The Khmer Rouge and their leaders except for Pol Pot, who died 1997, defected after the 1998 election to the government. Since then, there have been ongoing peace between the former main adversaries.<sup>46</sup>

The end of the civil war allowed Germany to re-establish diplomatic relations with Cambodia. A newly reunified Germany (since 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1990) was able to merge its dual relationship with Cambodia to develop new and more sustainable relations. Germany

established its first diplomatic relations with the SNC in 1991, and full diplomatic relations on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1993 with the re-opening of the German embassy in Phnom Penh. During the UNTAC mission, Germany provided financial support and sent paramedics. However, one German paramedic, Alexander Arndt (26) was murdered during the mission.<sup>47</sup> On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1993, the German parliament reconfirmed Germany's 'continuing engagement with Cambodia' and the 'willingness to support peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations in the country' by voting for the accession of Germany to the Paris Peace Accords. The accession law went into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1994.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, "Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Bundesminister des Auswärtigen (r.), empfängt Prinz Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Präsident der provisorischen kambodschanischen Gegenregierung, im Auswärtigen Amt", Bild Bundesarchiv, Bonn 13.9.1983, [www.bundesarchiv.de](http://www.bundesarchiv.de)

<sup>44</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Frau Kelly und der Fraktion DIE GRÜNEN", Drucksache 11/3962- Khmer Rouge und Haltung der Bundesregierung, 8.2.1989, <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/11/039/1103962.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Peter Hazdra, Die UN Friedensoperation in Kambodscha - Vorgeschichte, Konzept, Verlauf und kritische Evaluierung des internationalen Engagements (Wien: Peter Lang Verlag 1997).

<sup>46</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), Back from the Brink, Cambodian democracy get a second chance (Brussels/Phnom Penh 1999), [www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/cambodia/back-brink](http://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/cambodia/back-brink)

<sup>47</sup> Michael Sinclair, "Murder hardens German resolve", Phnom Penh Post, 13.10.1993, [www.phnompenhpost.com/national/murder-hardens-german-resolve](http://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/murder-hardens-german-resolve)

<sup>48</sup> Bundesgesetzblatt, "Bekanntmachung über das Inkrafttreten des Übereinkommens über eine umfassende politische Regelung des Kambodscha-Konflikts und des Übereinkommens über die Souveränität, Unabhängigkeit, territoriale Unversehrtheit und Unverletzlichkeit, Neutralität und nationale Einheit Kambodschas vom 20.7.1994", Bundesgesetzblatt, [www.bgbl.de](http://www.bgbl.de)





*Young diplomats from Cambodia and Laos during a three week training course in the Federal Republic of Germany. The invitation was extended to the young Cambodian diplomats in the framework of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of Cambodia. © Foreign Office.*

## German-Cambodian Diplomatic Relations

Since then, German-Cambodian diplomatic relations have steadily improved. Over the past three decades, government meetings between Germany and Cambodia took place on a bilateral ministerial level and through informal exchanges at the bi-annual Asia-Europe Summits and Minister meetings (ASEM). The first bilateral ministerial meeting

took place in November 1995, when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Klaus Kinkel (FDP) met the Co-Prime Ministers, Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen. Klaus Kinkel was also received by King Norodom Sihanouk and Queen Monique.<sup>49</sup> SPD Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Prime Minister Hun Sen met at the sidelines of the ASEM summit in Hanoi in October 2004.<sup>50</sup> The Federal President of Germany, Horst Köhler (2004-2010) and Cambodia's new head of state, King Norodom

Sihamoni jointly opened an Angkor exhibition in Bonn, Germany in December 2006.<sup>51</sup> In 2007, the former Cambodian Foreign Minister, Hor Namhong met with his counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the EU-ASEAN Minister of Foreign Affairs Meeting in Nuremberg, Germany.<sup>52</sup> Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Minister Hun Sen met at the sidelines of the ASEM summit in Brussels in October 2018.<sup>53</sup>

Most government meetings since the 1990s have focused mainly on development cooperation and were held at the bilateral ministerial level. Recent visits to Cambodia have also included the Secretary of State of the BMZ, Friedrich Kitschelt. He discussed Germany's development policy commitment in the area of rural development.<sup>54</sup> In June 2016, Dr. Gerd Müller, Minister of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) held talks with Prime Minister Hun Sen and the Vice-Chair of the

Council of Development, Chin Bun Sean on development cooperation. He also met with opposition leader Kem Sokha to better understand Cambodia's human rights situation and express his concerns.<sup>55</sup>

In September 2017, opposition leader Kem Sokha was arrested on various charges. In response, the German government paused the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for regular political consultations and delayed a planned visit to Germany of the Cambodian Minister of Interior, Sar Kheng. On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018, Germany suspended preferential visas for private travel of Cambodian government officials, including Prime Minister Hun Sen.<sup>56</sup> In a telegram sent by German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Prime Minister Hun Sen, two months after the 2018 national elections in which the CPP won all 124 parliamentary seats, she stated: 'as you begin your new term in office, I wish you every success. Our two countries and peoples enjoy good relations. The friendship between our countries finds expression not least in a long tradition of cooperation on development policy. This cooperation is rooted in the Paris Peace Agreement of 1991 which also provides for the respect of human rights, principles based on the rule of law and democracy, as well as free and fair elections. For your

<sup>49</sup> Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, "Der Bundesminister des Auswärtigen, Klaus Kinkel (l.), wird zu einem Gespräch mit Prinz Norodom Ranariddh (Mitte) Ministerpräsident Samdech Hun Sen (r.) empfangen", Bild Bundesarchiv, Bonn 05.11.1995, [www.bundesarchiv.de](http://www.bundesarchiv.de) und "Klaus Kinkel, Bundesminister des Auswärtigen (l.) und Ursula Kinkel (r.) werden von König Sihanouk (2.v.l.) und seiner Gattin empfangen", Bild Bundesarchiv, 03.11.1995, [www.bundesarchiv.de](http://www.bundesarchiv.de)

<sup>50</sup> Deutschland Radio, "Schröder nimmt am Asien-EU Gipfel teil, 08.10.2004, [https://www.deutschlandradio.de/schroeder-nimmt-an-asien-eu-gipfel-teil.331.de.html?dram:article\\_id=198569](https://www.deutschlandradio.de/schroeder-nimmt-an-asien-eu-gipfel-teil.331.de.html?dram:article_id=198569)

<sup>51</sup> Getty Images, "Bonn, GERMANY: Cambodia's King Norodom Sihamoni (L) and German President Horst Koehler pose next to a remains of a statue featuring a 'Visnu Anantasayin' after they opened the exhibition 'Angkor - Sacred Heritage of Cambodia' at the Kunst und Ausstellungshalle in Bonn, 14 December 2006", [www.gettyimages.in/detail/news-photo/cambodias-king-norodom-sihamoni-and-german-president-horst-news-photo/72822910](http://www.gettyimages.in/detail/news-photo/cambodias-king-norodom-sihamoni-and-german-president-horst-news-photo/72822910)

<sup>52</sup> Getty Images, "German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (L) [s]hakes hands with his Cambodian counterpart Hor Namhong 14.3.2007 in Nuremberg, southern Germany, at the start of the meeting of the Foreign ministers from the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)", [www.gettyimages.in/detail/news-photo/german-foreign-minister-frank-walter-steinmeier-qhakes-news-photo/73574823](http://www.gettyimages.in/detail/news-photo/german-foreign-minister-frank-walter-steinmeier-qhakes-news-photo/73574823)

<sup>53</sup> Getty Images, "Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen, Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov, Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel and Brunei Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah pictured during a round table at the start of the ASEM Asia-Europe Meeting", Thursday 18 October 2018, at the European Union headquarters in Brussels, [www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/cambodia-prime-minister-hun-sen-bulgarian-prime-minister-news-photo/1052469582](http://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/cambodia-prime-minister-hun-sen-bulgarian-prime-minister-news-photo/1052469582)

<sup>54</sup> Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Entwicklung (BMZ), "Staatssekretär Kitschelt: "Kambodscha und Vietnam sind auf einem guten Weg", [www.bmz.de/20](http://www.bmz.de/20)

<sup>55</sup> Khmer Times, "German MP Calls for Reform", Phnom Penh 16.6.2016, [www.khmertimeskh.com/news/26183/german-mp-calls-for-reform/](http://www.khmertimeskh.com/news/26183/german-mp-calls-for-reform/)

<sup>56</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Dr. Frithjof Schmidt, Uwe Kekeritz, Margarete Bause, Kai Gehring, Dr. Franziska Brantner, u. a. und der Fraktion BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN." – Bundestagsdrucksache Nr.: 19-604, Demokratie und Menschenrechte in Kambodscha, 19.2.2018, <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/008/1900816.pdf>

great task of strengthening democracy and participation through open political discourse in your country, you can count on Germany's assistance. Let me wish you a sure hand and every success for the important task that lies ahead.<sup>57</sup>

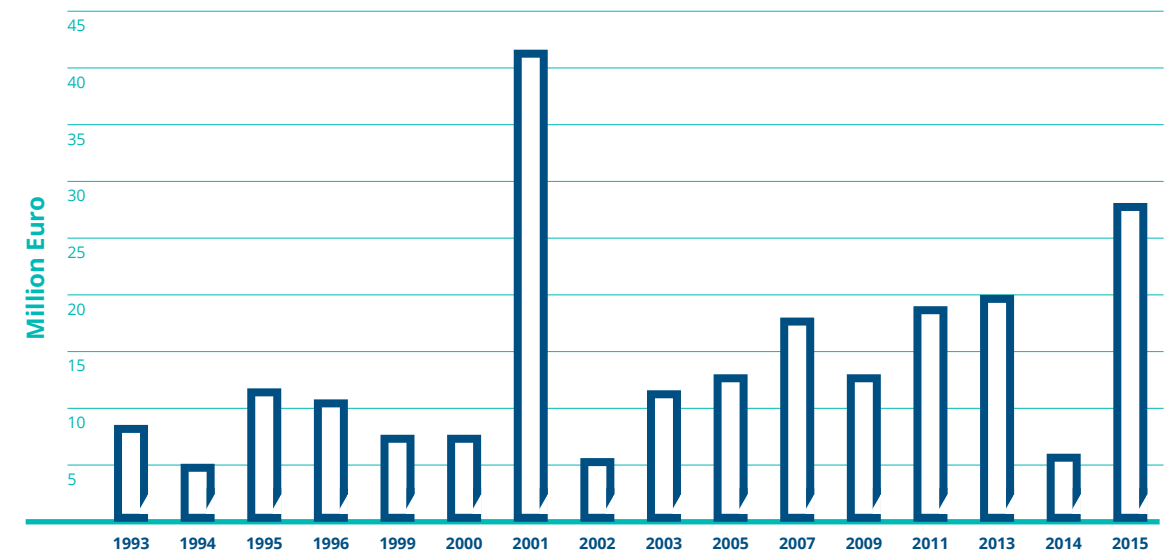
### German-Cambodian Development Cooperation

German-Cambodian development cooperation has gradually progressed and grown over the past three decades. Between 1994 and 2018, Germany and Cambodia signed fourteen technical and financial cooperation agreements and three joint development cooperation strategies. An Investment Protection Agreement was signed in 2002. Since 1994, Germany's government provided official development assistance (ODA) in the framework of technical and financial cooperation agreements of at least 380m Euro (430m USD) making Germany one of Cambodia's primary bilateral donors.<sup>58</sup> Projects have generally been implemented by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), formerly the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the German Development Agency (DED). Between 2004 and 2014, Germany spent 219m Euro (290m USD) ODA and provided 120m U.S. dollar in loans through the state-owned German Development Banking Group (KfW - Kreditanstalt für den Wiederaufbau).

In the field of humanitarian aid, Germany provided from 2014 to 2018, 4.5m Euro (5m USD) to remove explosive remnants of the wars (ERWs), and 480.000 Euro (540.000 USD) emergency aid for flood victims. Germany also supported German non-governmental organizations for humanitarian projects, including poverty alleviation (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, Misereor, Malteser International and German Agro Action).<sup>59</sup>

Germany's development cooperation with Cambodia mainly focuses on rural development and health. Rural development projects include the development of infrastructure, electrification, and support for small- and medium-sized companies. Health aid includes projects for reproductive health and public health insurance.<sup>60</sup> The strengthening of civil society, rule of law and reconciliation, human rights, democratization, and good governance are cross-sectoral topics, which are integrated into all projects. Among other infrastructure projects, Germany financed 2.100km of roads, 72 bridges, established 10 regional markets and built 48 schools and 700km of transmission lines in rural areas. The latter benefited 25.000 families with cheaper and more stable electricity.<sup>61</sup> In 2015 the German Investment and Development Group (DEG), a subsidiary of the KfW, provided 15m U.S. dollar of quasi-equity loans to the Cambodian company, Angkor Kasekam Roongroeng Co. Ltd, to expand a rice mill, safeguard the income of small-scale farmers and to provide rice

Figure 1: Financial support for Cambodia from 1993 to 2015



Source: German embassy in Cambodia 2017

husk for renewable energy production. In November 2018, KfW provided a Cambodia loan of 30m Euro (34m USD) for improved access to power grids in rural areas.<sup>62</sup>

To improve Cambodia's reconciliation and the rule of law, Germany has supported the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC) since its establishment in 2006 with approximate 1.2m Euro (1.14m USD) annually. The ECCC has prosecuted those crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide that were committed during the Pol Pot regime. Germany also supports the Victims Support Section of the ECCC, and various Cambodian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the fields of justice and reconciliation. Projects are among some run by the German Civil Peace Service and GIZ in cooperation with the Cambodian partners, Alliance for Conflict Transformation, Kdei Karuna, Transcultural

Psychological Organization, Youth for Peace, Documentation Center of Cambodia, Khmer Community Development, Minority Rights Organization and the Youth Resource Development Program. Likewise, support for the Tuol Sleng Museum that initially began in the 1980s through the GDR, has been continued by Germany.<sup>63</sup>

Development cooperation has also grown through public funding of other various German and Cambodian NGOs, especially the political foundations, including Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, and Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung. Their projects cover areas like democratization, good governance, the rule of law and human rights, minority rights, economic development, environment, peace, conflict resolution, gender and social justice, media freedom and labor rights. These political foundations have been

57 Official translation as received from the Federal Foreign Office on 01.02.2019. The German version can be found at Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, "Telegramm von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel an den Ministerpräsidenten des Königreichs Kambodscha, Herrn Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, anlässlich seiner Wiederwahl", 6.9.2018, [www.bundeskanzlerin.de](http://www.bundeskanzlerin.de).

58 Auswärtiges Amt (Federal Foreign Office), Projektaufträge mit Auftragswert, Mittelabruf und Restmitteln nach Ländern - Technische und Finanzielle Zusammenarbeit Kambodscha, 21.08.2017

59 Deutscher Bundestag, "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Dr. Andre Hahn, Sabine Zimmermann, Göky Akbulut, weiterer Abgeordneter und die Fraktion DIE LINKE. - Drucksache 19/3659 - Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und den ASEAN-Staaten (Brunei, Indonesien, Kambodscha, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippinen, Singapur, Thailand, Vietnam)." Drucksache 19/4300, 14.9.2018, <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/043/1904300.pdf>

60 Auswärtiges Amt (Federal Foreign Office), Projektaufträge mit Auftragswert, Mittelabruf und Restmitteln nach Ländern - Technische und Finanzielle Zusammenarbeit Kambodscha, 21.08.2017

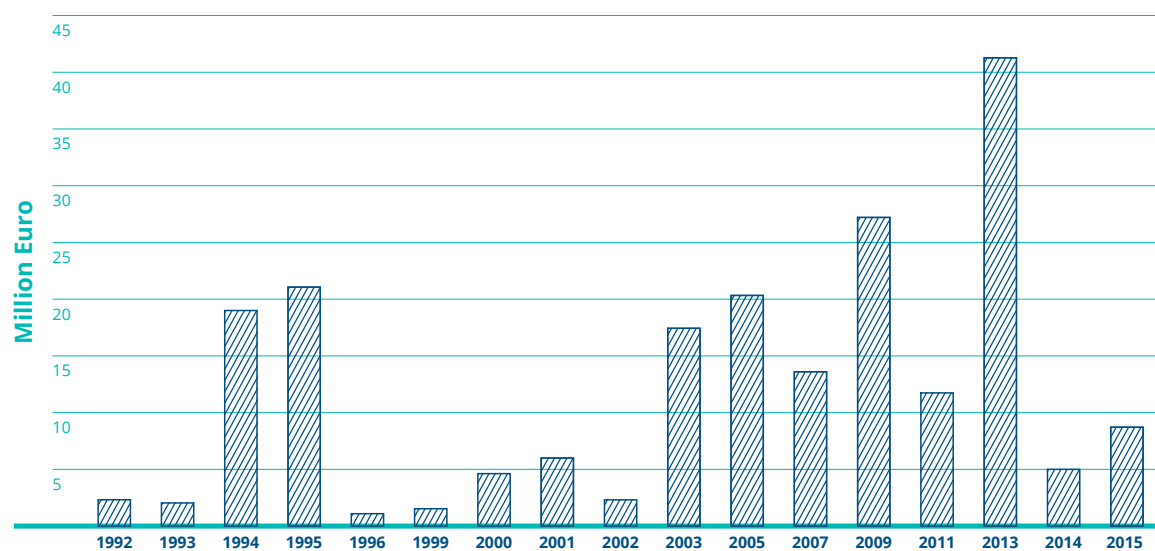
61 KfW DEG Pressemitteilungen, DEG invests in Cambodia, 24.6.2018, [www.deginvest.de/Presse/News/Pressemitteilungen-Details\\_283968-2.html](http://www.deginvest.de/Presse/News/Pressemitteilungen-Details_283968-2.html)

62 Phnom Penh Post, "Germany set to launch first loan in Cambodia", 30.11.2018, [www.phnompenhpost.com/business/germany-set-launch-first-loan-cambodia](http://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/germany-set-launch-first-loan-cambodia)

63 Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/383.html>



Figure 2: Technical German support for Cambodia from 1992 to 2015



Source: German embassy in Cambodia 2017

working over the past two decades in close cooperation with Cambodian governmental and non-governmental organizations. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung are currently the most active German foundations in Cambodia. KAS lists nine and the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung fourteen Cambodian cooperation partners for various projects. In addition, Germany supports human rights NGOs. The Cambodian Center for the Protection of Children Rights is supported by Federal Foreign Office. GIZ is a partner and supporter of the Cambodian Center for Human Rights, the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association and the land-right NGO STAR Kampuchea.<sup>64</sup>

### German-Cambodian Economic Relations

Germany is today Cambodia's second largest trading partner in the European Union (EU) with a trading volume of 1.8b Euro (2b USD) and a Cambodian trade surplus of 1.2b Euro (1.4b USD).<sup>65</sup> Cambodian exports to Germany increased by 48 percent from 958m Euro (1.3b USD) in 2014 to 1.5 b Euro (1.7b USD) in 2017. German exports to Cambodia tripled from 72m Euro (81m USD) in 2014 to 254m Euro (287m USD) in 2017.<sup>66</sup> Cambodia exports to Germany comprise a variety of products but mainly focus on garments and footwear (75%). Well-known importers are the companies Adidas, Puma, Deichmann, C&A, Aldi, Lidl, and Tchibo. Recently Cambodia has also become the main

exporter of bicycles to Germany and leads the bicycle export market in the EU.<sup>67</sup> Other exports include leather products, vehicles, electronic equipment, chemical products, rubber and plastic products, agriculture and hunting products, and food and animal feed. Germany exports to Cambodia mainly included machines, motor vehicles, vehicles parts, pharmaceuticals, food, animal feed, paper, cardboards, beverages, chemical and metal products, data processing equipment and textiles.<sup>68</sup> The tourism industry has also grown. According to Cambodia's Ministry of Tourism, 113,935 German tourists visited the country in 2016. This is an increase of almost fifty percent when compared to 63,398 Germany tourists in 2011. Between 2011 and 2017 annually about 88,000 German tourists visited Cambodia. Cambodia's economic recovery also now allows more Cambodians than ever to travel to Germany. According to the World Tourism Organization, Germany had a total of 286,967 arrivals from Cambodia between 2014 and 2017.<sup>69</sup>

While German-Cambodian trade in goods and services has significantly increased, investment relations are yet to develop. In 1999, Germany and Cambodia signed an investment promotion and protection agreement that came into force in April, 2002. In the same year, Germans formed the German Business Group Cambodia ADW to promote German investment in Cambodia.<sup>70</sup> The business association has currently 35 members, among them well-known companies of Germany's car industry, including Audi, BMW, Mercedes and Porsche, the logistic companies DB Schenker and

DHL, and the technology companies Bosch, Siemens, Würth and Rieckermann. However, large-scale investments in industrial high-tech production have yet to develop. Cambodia lacks high-skilled workers and transportation infrastructure, has high electricity costs when compared with the region, and the current legal frameworks are not fully effective. Also, demand for German high-tech end products has yet to grow as Cambodia's middle-class cannot yet afford them. It was only recently in 2016 that Cambodia's economy was upgraded by the World Bank to a low-middle-income economy. For these reasons, German companies are currently mainly involved in trade, sales, marketing or distribution businesses. The only exception is the German company, ECO PARTS CO Ltd., who manufactures textile products for the car industry in the ASEAN region.<sup>71</sup>

### German-Cambodian Cultural Relations

The intensification of development cooperation and economic relations over the past two decades has been complemented by deepening cultural relations. It has been now twenty years that Germany supports the preservation of Cambodia's cultural heritage, Angkor. It has founded the German Apsara Conversation Project (GACP) which works closely with Cambodia's governmental preservation authority APSARA, and is the longest running international cultural preservation project of Germany. Since 1997, 4m Euro (4.5m USD) were provided for conservation measures that have been conducted by the Köln University of Applied Sciences in cooperation with the Cambodian

<sup>64</sup> See webpages of the mentioned organizations.

<sup>65</sup> According to trade statistics of the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce, Cambodia has trade surpluses with following EU states: the UK ranks first, followed by Germany, Belgium, Spain, Netherlands, Italy, Poland, and Sweden. In Asia, Cambodia runs trade surpluses only with Japan. In the Americas, Cambodia has the greatest trade surplus with the USA and Canada. South America, Africa and the Middle East are far less significant in regard to their trade volume, see Cambodian Ministry of Commerce, Trade Statistics, September 2018, <https://www.moc.gov.kh/en-us/Trade-Info/Trade-Statistics> retrieved on 1 February 2019.

<sup>66</sup> Bundestag Drucksache 19/4300, see footnote 56

<sup>67</sup> Hor Kimsay, "Kingdom becomes top bicycle supplier to the EU." Phnom Penh Post, 27.6.2018, [www.phnompenhpost.com/business/kingdom-becomes-top-bicycle-supplier-eu](http://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/kingdom-becomes-top-bicycle-supplier-eu)

<sup>68</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt, [www.destatis.de](http://www.destatis.de), Wiesbaden/Germany 2018

<sup>69</sup> See footnote 56

<sup>70</sup> German Business Group Cambodia, ADW (Arbeitskreis der Deutschen Wirtschaft), [www.adw-cambodia.org](http://www.adw-cambodia.org)

<sup>71</sup> Röhrig, Sylvia. 2017. "Kleine Tigerwirtschaft sucht deutschen Mittelstand." ExportManager 2, März 8, [www.exportmanager-online.de/nachrichten/verkaufen/kleine-tigerwirtschaft-sucht-deutschen-mittelstand-4426/](http://www.exportmanager-online.de/nachrichten/verkaufen/kleine-tigerwirtschaft-sucht-deutschen-mittelstand-4426/)



preservation authority APSARA.<sup>72</sup> In 2006/7 a large exhibition of Cambodia's culture heritage titled 'Angkor - Cambodia's Divine Heritage' was held in the Art and Exhibition Hall of the FRG in Bonn. One-hundred and forty stone sculptures, bronze figures as well as silver objects and paintings made their way from Cambodia's National Museum in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap to Germany. The Federal President of Germany, Horst Köhler (2004-2010) and Cambodia's Head of State, King Norodom Sihamoni opened the exhibition on 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2006.<sup>73</sup>

Besides the cultural preservation of Angkor, academic and educational exchange programs have brought German and Cambodian academics and students closer together. In 2001, the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung founded the Department of Media and Communication (DMC) at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP). The DMC provides for undergraduate programs for Cambodian students in the fields of journalism, communication, and media. Approximately 30 to 40 Cambodian students have enrolled in the program each year. In 2019 the number of students increased to 60.<sup>74</sup> Germany also co-finances two German media organizations with projects in Cambodia. Those are the taz Panther Stiftung and the Deutsche Welle Academy.<sup>75</sup>

Likewise, university cooperation in other academic fields have grown. In 2018 the German's Rector Conference listed seven university cooperation projects between

Germany and Cambodia. These include the Institute of Technology (ICT) Phnom Penh with the Bauhaus Universität Weimar, the Royal University of Fine Arts cooperating with the Eberhard Karls University Ebingen, the Royal University of Phnom Penh working with the Friedrich Alexander University Nürnberg, the Royal University of Agriculture joining with the Georg-August-University Göttingen, the University of Health Sciences with University Köln, the Royal University of Phnom Penh with the University of Köln, and the Highschool for Applied Sciences Weihenstephan-Triesdorf with the Chea Sim University of Kamchaymear.<sup>76</sup> The Freie University Berlin, Center for Global Politics had run since 2011, the Global Politics Seasonal Summer School in Phnom Penh and Hanoi. Each year the summer school brings 30 to 40 students, lecturers and scholars from the ASEAN region together to discuss various international relations topics. The summer schools are co-supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. In Phnom Penh, the summer schools are hosted by RUPP/DMC and the Faculty of Social Sciences and International Relations, Pannasastra University of Cambodia (PUC/SSIR).<sup>77</sup> Since 2017 PUC/SSIR has also cooperated with the Philipps-University Marburg through the EU-funded Erasmus Plus program.<sup>78</sup>

German-Cambodian university cooperation has increased the number of Cambodian students coming to Germany from 15 in 2008 to 45 Cambodian students in 2017 and

averaged between 40 and 60 Cambodian students annually from 2008 to 2017.<sup>79</sup> Data of the European Union-funded Erasmus program found that 80 Cambodian students and 12 scholars visited twelve European Countries in 2018. However, the number of Cambodian students still falls far short of the number of Cambodians who went through exchange programs with Germany before the 1990s. As outlined earlier up to 4,000 Cambodian students studied in East Germany until 1989.

In 2007, the first Cambodian-German Cultural Center in Cambodia named 'Metahouse' opened in Phnom Penh. Metahouse supports and promotes Cambodian artists and contemporary Cambodian art. It seeks to be 'a meeting place for artists and art lovers' and an 'intercultural networking platform for Cambodian-based artists, Cambodian artists living overseas and their international colleagues'. Metahouse has organized various local and international exhibitions, workshops, community-based projects and artist exchange programs. Metahouse also has gained a reputation for screening a wide range of documentaries, feature films, and video art. These include historical documentaries and films about past and contemporary Cambodia. Some notable examples are the films 'Same Same but Different' (2009), 'Kampuchea: Death and Rebirth' (1980), 'The Angkor' (1981), 'Far Away from Angkor: Cambodians in East Germany' (2015) and 'Bonne Nuit Papa' (2014).<sup>80</sup> The Metahouse also hosts the Goethe Zentrum, which offers German language courses with the support of the Goethe Institute since 2009. Recently, the Goethe Zentrum has opened German language programs at RUPP/DMC and the University of Cambodia.<sup>81</sup>

## V. Summary and Prospects for German-Cambodian Relations

German-Cambodian relations significantly altered after the Cold War and the end of the Cambodian conflict. A reunified Germany was able to build on its Cold War legacy and renew diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with Cambodia. West German governments built the first development partnership in the 1960s and have exercised political restraint in Cambodia's conflicts. This approach has continued to reflect in Germany's pragmatic diplomacy towards Cambodia. In the 1980s, East Germany laid the foundation, though ideologically-colored, for a renewal of the development cooperation and cultural relations with Cambodia. Cambodia learned in this way to know both sides of Germany during the Cold War. From this perspective, Cambodia and Germany share today a common history. The new relations built by a reunified Germany and a pacified Cambodia over the past three decades have led to a cooperative development partnership that has been complemented by deepening economic and cultural relations. This has enhanced trust and mutual understanding between Germans and Cambodians and provides a solid foundation for the future.

To sustain this remarkable outcome, Germany and Cambodia should continue their development cooperation and further strengthen their cultural relations, particularly in the field of education. The current number of Cambodian students in Germany should be increased to surpass the number of students who studied before the end of the Cold War in East Germany. In

<sup>72</sup> Federal Foreign Office, "20 Years of German support for the restoration of Angkor Wat", 13.12.2017, [www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/themen/kulturdialog/09-kulturerhalt/-/1031892](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/themen/kulturdialog/09-kulturerhalt/-/1031892)

<sup>73</sup> See footnote 51

<sup>74</sup> Department of Media and Communication (DMC), Royal University of Phnom Penh, <http://dmc-cci.edu.kh>

<sup>75</sup> See footnote 56

<sup>76</sup> Quoted from Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD). 2018. Kambodscha. Kurze Einführung in das Hochschulsystem und die DAAD Aktivitäten 2018. DAAD-Zentrale Bonn, [www.daad.de/medien/der-daad/analysen-studien/laendersachstand/kambodscha\\_daad\\_sachstand.pdf](http://www.daad.de/medien/der-daad/analysen-studien/laendersachstand/kambodscha_daad_sachstand.pdf)

<sup>77</sup> Center for Global Politics/Freie Universität Berlin, [www.seasonal-schools.org](http://www.seasonal-schools.org)

<sup>78</sup> Pannasastra University of Cambodia, [www.puc.edu.kh](http://www.puc.edu.kh) and Philipps-Universität Marburg, [www.uni-marburg.de/en](http://www.uni-marburg.de/en)

<sup>79</sup> see footnote 76

<sup>80</sup> German Cambodian Cultural Center METAHOUSE, [www.meta-house.com](http://www.meta-house.com)

<sup>81</sup> Rebecca Heliot, "Language classes open new door", 01.10.2015, [www.phnompenhpost.com/post-plus/language-classes-open-new-doors](http://www.phnompenhpost.com/post-plus/language-classes-open-new-doors)



addition, Cambodia needs more vocational schools and Germany is in this regard a role model. Perhaps both countries can revisit the Sihanouk era initiative when Germany founded a vocational school in Battambang in 1961. Moreover, the investment relations should be improved to sustain the recent expansion of the German-Cambodian trade volume and to promote the diversification of Cambodia's export industry. On diplomatic level, bilateral ministerial and chief executive meetings should increase to further strengthen the German-Cambodian economic and cultural relations.

