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Cambodia Gets Development Loan from China

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Cambodia on Tuesday received a loan of nearly \$200 million from China for infrastructure projects promoting economic development in the country's remote areas.

The money will be used for building two roads that will stretch about 147 miles in Cambodia's eastern and northeastern corners and two bridges across the Tonle Sap and Mekong rivers.

The loan was part of a \$600 million aid package pledged by China Premier Wen Jiabao during his visit to Cambodia in April, Cambodia's Finance Minister Keat Chhon said after signing the agreement with Chinese officials.

He said Cambodia wants to secure another \$100 million in loans from China for other development projects when Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen visits China later this month.

Hun Sen has praised China for its generous aid to Cambodia, which is given without the kind of criticism that comes from Western aid donors about lack of good governance.

China maintains a high profile in Cambodia despite having strongly backed the former Khmer Rouge regime that caused the deaths of some 1.7 million people in the late 1970s.

Along with millions of dollars in aid for the last decade, China has also promised to write off Cambodia's past debts and granted it tariff-free status for some 400 export items.

Cambodia, one of the world's poorest nations, relies heavily on foreign aid for development.

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