



Core Programme's Documents



ANNUAL REPORT 2000

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MESSAGE FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE

During a televised speech in August 2000, Cambodia's Prime Minister characterised some influential NGOs as a "self-appointed democracy" which try to usurp the role of the "elected democracy". Across the world, NGOs have growing influence on government policies and practices that affect the poor and vulnerable. NGOs argue that their efforts to assist the poor will not be effective unless they can ensure that government policies address the root causes of poverty and human rights abuse. At the same time, around the world, questions are being raised about the appropriate role of NGOs, an unelected group, in the policy arena. This presents a challenge to NGOs to better define their role in representing the rights of people in the civil society.

The words "NGOs" and "civil society" are often used synonymously in Cambodia. In Cambodia's nascent civil society, certainly NGOs are one of the most noticeable and vocal section of civil society. The term civil society refers to the social sphere located between families and the state. Civil society organisations, therefore, may be seen to include associations of farmers, fishers, teachers, students and other occupational or special interest groups, village committees, trade unions, the Buddhist clergy, other religious groups, ethnic associations, research institutes and the NGOs. According to some definitions, it also includes the media and private enterprises, though usually not political parties since political parties vie for state power.

All these groups are capable of representing the interests of their constituents. In a healthy democracy, there is a constant interaction between these groups and the government. Democracy does not just involve voting for a political party once every five years, but a constant interaction of people with their government which ensures that the government is following the will of the people.

Most NGOs in Cambodia do not have a broad-based membership. Rather, they are specialised development agencies that work closely with the poor. In this sense, NGOs do not "represent" the people, but rather represent their own specialised knowledge. Individual NGOs may specialise in the development of health services, education, community development, human rights, or other areas. Many donors value the opinions of NGOs, since NGOs often have a closer working knowledge of the poor than they do. NGOs can also provide an alternative view to that of government officials, as they do not share the same vested interests as those in power.

However, in order for NGOs to have a worthy viewpoint to offer, they need to first achieve a number of things. Firstly, NGOs themselves must be good examples of accountable and transparent governance. This includes not only upward accountability to donors and boards, but also downward accountability to the people they are trying to serve. Secondly, they must have well-run ongoing programmes and have built up an adequate level of expertise in their area of specialisation. Thirdly, they must have the ability to reflect on the policy implications of their grassroots experience, using sound research and analysis. Also, where possible, NGOs need to give the poor the chance to speak for themselves.

For the NGO Forum, the implications are that our advocacy will not be effective or well received unless it is properly grounded in the grassroots experience of the member NGOs. As a coalition of both international and local NGOs, it is clear that we do not represent the people directly. We can represent what we believe to be the needs of the poor, but this needs to be backed up by convincing analysis and research.

In Cambodia today, government, donors and international financial institutions are increasingly inviting NGOs to dialogue with them. The Prime Minister in the above-mentioned speech reassured NGOs that he encourages "the coordination and close cooperation between the government, institutions and authorities and the civil society and NGOs." This presents both an opportunity and a challenge to the NGOs that must be handled competently and sensitively. We require both the humility to recognise the limits of our ability to represent the needs of others, and

also the wisdom to recognise the lessons from our own experience that those in power need to hear.

Management Committee in 2000-2001:

Ms Mom Thany, Save the Children Norway (Redd Barna)
 Ms Prok Vanny, Khemara
 Ms Ros Sopheap, Gender and Development/Cambodia (GAD/C)
 Dr Yang Saing Koma, Centre d'Etude et de Developpement Agricole Cambodgien (CEDAC)
 Mr Vann Piseth, Culture and Environment Preservation Association (CEPA)
 Ms Chan Serey, Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
 Ms Hor Phaly, Programme Against Domestic Violence (PADV)



DEVELOPMENT ISSUES PROJECT **Contributing to the Consultative Group Process**

In May 2000, Cambodia's government and international donors met in Paris for the annual Consultative Group (CG) meeting. NGOs prepared for their participation in the meeting by close cooperation between the three peak NGO membership organisations, Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), Medicam and NGO Forum and with input from 17 sectoral groups. A 60-page NGO Statement was prepared outlining NGO observations and recommendations across key development sectors. A copy is available on the NGO Forum web site. NGOs were represented at the CG meeting by Ms Boua Chanthou (from PADEK), Mr Sok Sam Ouen (Cambodian Defenders Project) and support person Mr Marc Bonnet (Handicap International).

NGO Forum assisted NGO representation at the Consultative Group meeting through preparing press statements, lobbying embassies and other donors, preparing various sectoral papers for inclusion in the NGO Statement, and assisting editing of the final document. NGO Forum and its working groups were instrumental in preparing sections of the statement on forestry, fisheries, landmines and decentralisation, and in assisting in preparation of the section on commune elections.

The NGO Forum cooperated with CCC and Medicam to ensure NGO representation in four donor-government working groups. These working groups were set up to monitor progress on government reforms throughout the year in the areas of administrative reform, demobilisation, forestry and social sectors. NGO Forum gave particular attention to the working group on forestry, which was widened after the CG meeting to cover natural resources management, including forestry, fisheries and land management. NGO's offer of involvement in two other working groups, on fiscal management and on governance, were not accepted by other donors.

Nevertheless, NGO Forum helped facilitate communication directly between the Council of Ministers and NGOs on the issue of governance. An adhoc working group was formed, which coordinated NGO input to the government's draft Governance Action Plan. Further dialogue with the government is expected on this issue in 2001.

Providing Input to the Poverty Reduction Strategy

New World Bank/IMF requirements oblige poor countries to produce a Poverty Reduction Strategy as a pre-condition for receiving loans. Some countries, such as Cambodia, which have immediate borrowing needs are also required to produce an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) as a precursor to the final strategy paper, for which more time is given. Civil society participation in the preparation of the final strategy is a conditionality, although it is not required for the I-PRSP. Nevertheless, the NGO Forum organised an NGO consultation on the strategy and submitted the resulting comments to the government.

In September and October, an NGO-based consultant from The Philippines, hired with assistance from UNDP, joined the NGO Forum in order to assist the Forum in organising NGO consultations on the strategy. An NGO Forum team held interviews and workshops in Phnom Penh and four provinces with NGOs that work in sectors such as rural development, urban poor development, health, education, human rights, women's rights and environmental protection. Efforts were also made to meet with other civil society informants, such as indigenous hilltribe leaders, industrial workers, commercial sex workers and urban poor community leaders.

The consultations were aimed at raising awareness about the I-PRSP and the related Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP), and to seek suggestions on how civil society organisations could meaningfully contribute to policy formulation and monitoring. Sectoral summaries in both English and Khmer were developed which highlighted both the relevant sections of the draft I-PRSP and existing NGO recommendations resulting from these and previous NGO discussions. This two-month activity culminated in a National NGO Workshop held on 24-25 October 2000 and attended by 85 NGO and civil society representatives, 13 persons from the government agencies and 9 persons from donor agencies. At the National Workshop, the NGO participants prioritised their recommendations for poverty reduction and began discussions on how NGOs could contribute to a national poverty monitoring system.

Government and donor representatives were briefed on key recommendations arising from this consultation on 3 November 2000. A copy of the final report is available on the NGO Forum web-site. The NGO submission emphasises rural development, reform of the public sector, measures to assist vulnerable groups, disaster preparedness, building capacity for a participatory poverty monitoring system and greater government-NGO cooperation. It also suggests that there needs to be a balance between the objectives of economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability; and for a cautious approach to economic integration in order to avoid the potential negative impacts of economic policies.

Unfortunately, the NGO comments were not incorporated into the strategy, which the government had already finalised in late October. The NGO Forum will have to do timely follow-up work in 2001 to have an influence on the final Poverty Reduction Strategy and related Socio-Economic Development Plan.

Working Group on Development Banks

The Working Group on Development Banks was active in 2000, focusing on three main goals:

1. Strengthening the capacity of Cambodian staff of NGOs to understand the links between community level issues and the macro-economic and development policies promoted by multilateral development banks, the IMF and other development agencies (macro-micro linking).
2. Raising the concerns of NGOs regarding such community level issues with multilateral development banks (MDBs), IMF and the Cambodian government, and improving opportunities for consultation and participation in decision making.
3. Coordinating watchdog actions of NGOs on specific development projects of the government, which are supported by MDBs.

1- Building Capacity

The working group organised a series of four workshops on economic development for about 30 Cambodian NGO staff from the working group and from the provinces. Through these workshops participants were able to learn the economic terms and concepts of micro and macro-economics in order to enable them to understand and analyse economic development. In the last workshop, resident representatives of the World Bank and Asian Development Bank were invited to give a presentation on their institutions work in Cambodia so that the participants could understand the programmes of the multilateral development banks and be better prepared to engage in policy dialogue. The final workshop also included an introduction to civil society participation in the Poverty Reduction Strategy, presented by the NGO Forum Representative.

Two awareness-training seminars on MDBs were provided by the Development Issues Project Coordinator, Mr Chhith Sam Ath, to Cambodian NGO staff in Kompong Thom and Banteay Meanchey provinces respectively. The NGO staff in those provinces now understand more about the process of Cambodian economic development, which is currently highly donor dependent.

NGO Forum, ADHOC and PADEK jointly organised a two-day National Workshop on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Eighty participants from NGOs and related government agencies attended in this workshop. The workshop aimed to familiarise NGOs with the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, for which the government is required to write a report in consultation with civil society.

Key working group members and staff also attended various international training programmes and meetings. Most of these programmes and meetings were funded by the host organisations. One result of such meetings is a greater integration of Cambodian NGOs into international networks dealing with issues of globalisation and human development. The programmes and meetings included:

- The Jubilee South meeting on International Debt Cancellation in Dhaka, and Jubilee South Coordinating Committee of the Asia Pacific Region held in Bangkok.
- The Regional Committee meeting of the NGO Forum on the ADB in Manila.
- The Asia-Pacific Movement on Debt and Development, Jubilee South for Asia and the Pacific Region Regional Assembly in Bangkok, at which NGO Forum on Cambodia was selected as a coordinating committee member of the Asia Pacific Region representing the transitional economic countries.
- A workshop on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in Washington DC organized by the World Bank.
- The training course on Analyzing Development Issues organized by CCC.

All participants of these programmes subsequently reported back to the working group on their return in order to share their knowledge. In addition, the leadership provided by the Development Project Coordinator, Mr Chhith Sam Ath, was strengthened by sending him on a one-month internship programme with the Bank Information Center based in Washington DC. The "Toolkits" of the Bank Information Center were translated into Khmer, in order to enable Cambodians to understand more about the Multilateral Development Banks and how to advocate with them.

2 - Raising the concerns of NGOs

On January 24, NGOs were organized to give comments on the final draft of the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) of the World Bank in Cambodia.

On January 31, the NGO Forum organized a consultation with the ADB on the final draft of the Country Operational Strategy (COS).

On 24 July, the coordinator of the working group, Mr Chhith Sam Ath, attended the ADB's Long Term Strategic Framework meeting in Hanoi. He presented a paper on NGO's concerns to the meeting, highlighting the impacts of economic integration and development on the poor.

On 13 October, NGO representatives were organized to meet with ADB President Tado Chino. NGOs sent 14 questions of NGO concerns to the ADB President prior to the meeting. In addition to discussing the questions at the meeting, the ADB President followed up with a written reply to all questions after the meeting.

3 - Monitoring projects

The Working Group on Development Banks conducted a field survey of people affected by the National Highway 1 Improvement Project funded by the Asian Development Bank. While involuntary relocation is a problem in many parts of Cambodia, citizens living along National Highway One are theoretically protected by the ADB's strict policy requirements for involuntary resettlement. The survey found that many people felt that the compensation provided was inadequate, especially those who had no remaining land on which to reconstruct their houses. LICADHO conducted the preliminary survey, with a questionnaire prepared jointly by NGO Forum and LICADHO. Other working group members joined the subsequent mini-surveys and meetings with provincial authorities. The results were combined with information from the official monitor, NICFEC.

As a consequence of NGO intervention, the ADB negotiated with the government changes to the way that compensation was being calculated, and agreed to provide more external expertise to the monitoring process.

Discussion Group on Development Issues

The Discussion Group on Development Issues continued to discuss NGO values and ethics. In order to advocate people-centred development, it is important that we first clarify our own values and development strategies. The main thing the group is wishing to advocate is for NGOs themselves to be effective, transparent and accountable institutions which empower local communities to take charge of their own development.

A simple survey conducted by the group found these to be important issues for many NGOs. In October, the group organised a workshop on NGO Values and Developing a Code of Ethics. Ethical dilemma exercises, developed by ACR and VBNK, were used to highlight the practical importance of organisational values.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP

Contributing to Environmental Awareness

Working Group Meetings: Monthly meetings of the working groups continued to attract around 30 NGOs, government officials and environmental specialists. Presentations were made on a broad range of topics, precipitating lively debate among participants. Sub-groups were formed to concentrate on particular issues or to arrange particular events.

World Environment Day: On 4 June, Phnom Penh residents awoke to witness an elephant walking down the main street, accompanied by children from many schools, floats and banners declaring World Environment Day. The parade began at Olympic Stadium and proceeded to Wat Botum Park, where H.E. To Gary, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Environment addressed the crowd. The event was organised by NGOs Mlup Baitong, Sangkrohs Satprey, Kaapia, CVCD, YCP and CARITAS together with NGO Forum. This was followed in the afternoon by a mass clean-up of the Tonle Bassac squatter community organised by the NGO CVCD in conjunction with local community leaders.

On 5 June, NGOs held a special event in Makkak Commune, Ang Snoul District, featuring a drama performance by children from the Street Children Assistance and Development Program and well-known comedian Ta Salath. A thousand people came out to see the event, organised by NGO Forum in cooperation with the JVC, CEDAC, CEPA, KYDO, Leacastincoco and Kheiv Baitong. Provincial Governor, H.E. Tep Nonry, and Under-Secretary of State for Environment, H.E. Roth Sandap, gave the keynote speeches.

Pesticides: In May, the Environment Working Group in association with the local NGO CEDAC (Centre d'Etude et de Development Agriculture Cambodian) organised a workshop on pesticides. According to research done by CEDAC, Cambodian farmers use many types of pesticides banned in other countries, typically used without any protective clothing or safety measures. The workshop resulted in some 30 NGOs which work in rural areas understanding more about the dangers of pesticides and able to promote alternatives and better procedures in their project areas. Further consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture is being pursued to prevent use of these pesticides, and media spots warning farmers about these pesticides are planned.

Environment Newsletter: In the year 2000, the NGO Forum also cooperated with CEDAC to produce four editions of an Environment Magazine. Five hundred copies of each edition were distributed to government, NGOs and the public, informing readers about important issues in areas such as fisheries, forestry, toxic waste, Mekong developments and pesticides, which have been the focus of the working group's advocacy efforts.

Update of Mekong Directory: Towards the end of the year, a consultant was employed to update NGO Forum's Mekong Directory, which was first produced in 1997. The Mekong Directory is a directory of NGOs and other organisations working on environmental issues in the Mekong Basin in Cambodia. It is intended as a useful tool in networking for advocacy on Mekong issues. The new edition will be distributed and placed on the NGO Forum web-site in 2001.

Study Tour: In November, nine NGO representatives participated in a study tour to Thailand, where they learnt about Thai NGO approaches to environmental issues, the impact of large dams on local communities, and methods of community organising.

Other planned activities: The working group is also intending to hold a workshop on Gender and the Environment, and a second workshop on Environmental Education. Due to a very full agenda in 2000, these activities were postponed to the following year.

Protecting the Mekong

Throughout the year, working group members continued to monitor planned developments in the Mekong river basin. NGOs in Ratanakiri province reported on the downstream impact of the Vietnamese Yall Falls dam. Remote villages on the Se San River reported erratic water flows and flash floods, resulting in lost lives, destruction to cattle and crops, reduction in water quality, and loss of livelihoods. As a result, NGOs launched a campaign to persuade the Asian Development Bank to not finance a second dam, the "Sesan III" on the same river. As part of this campaign, the Environment Network Coordinator, Mak Sithirith, addressed a conference of the Australian Mekong Resource Centre at Sydney University in June. The ADB agreed to remove this dam from its list of projects, and it is reported that the Vietnamese Government is having trouble finding other suitable sources of funding.

Focus on Fisheries

Fisheries became a major focus in the year 2000 after provincial NGOs brought to the attention of the working group growing conflicts between local fishing communities and commercial fishing lot owners. Lot owners were accused of acting together with armed gunmen and sometimes with local officials to prevent local villagers from fishing in areas around their villages. As this is a sensitive issue for provincially-based NGOs to deal with, the provincial NGOs asked the NGO Forum for help.

In January, NGO Forum produced a report on fishery problems in Stung Treng province. Provincial authorities had signed an illegal fishery concession which was preventing local communities access to fishing areas. Pesticides were being used to kill fish in the ponds. Those affected included community fisheries organised and assisted by NGOs.

In February, a Fisheries Workshop, organised by NGO Forum and local NGOs in Battambang province, brought together government officials, parliamentarians, NGOs, fishing communities and fishing lot owners. Members of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Fishery Conflicts heard firsthand from villagers about threats to their subsistence livelihoods from commercial fishing operations. Some promises were given regarding solving the people's problems.

Following the success of this first workshop, NGOs in other provinces also asked for NGO Forum's assistance. Workshops were subsequently held in Pursat, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Cham, Kompong Thom, Kratie, Stung Treng, Sihanoukville/Koh Kong/Kampot area and again in Battambang. Reports about fishing conflicts in Battambang and Kompong Chhnang appear on the NGO Forum's web-site.

Efforts were made to ensure that these workshops were not once-off events, but connected to a national process for change. The workshops were used to select participants which reported to a national workshop organised by Wetlands International and the Department of Fisheries in November. The intention was to influence the contents of a new Fisheries Law being developed by the Department.

Oxfam GB and NGO Forum cooperated in an aquatic resources and livelihoods study project to produce a detailed technical report on problems in the fisheries sector. This report provided a valuable input to the national workshop, and helped people working in the fisheries sector including foreign consultants better understand the realities of fisheries in Cambodia.

Momentum for change came from the Prime Minister, Samdech Hun Sen, who issued a number of decrees opening up some Department-run fishing lots for public bidding, and opening up other fishing lots for community use. The head of the Department of Fisheries was removed from his current position. In a letter to the NGO Forum, the Prime Minister thanked NGO Forum for its support for fisheries reform and requested NGO Forum's continued cooperation with the Department and Ministry on this issue.

The Department of Fisheries has now asked the NGO Forum to assist community consultations on the draft Sub-Decree on Community Fisheries, which will take place in 2001. Community fisheries is seen as the only viable alternative to the current commercial lot system, if sustainable use of fishing areas is to be achieved.

Focus on Forestry

The year 2000 was also a critical year for forestry reform. While donors focussed attention on the need for logging revenues to reach the national budget, the NGO Forum focussed attention on the rights of forest-dependent communities, which often come into conflict with the activities of concessionaires. The Cambodian government, together with many donor organizations, currently discounts the value of Cambodia's forests for local communities. This skewed valuation is highlighted in the push by donors (principally the World Bank) for the centralized control over the management of forest resources and their rapid exploitation through logging. Perhaps for this reason little attention has been devoted to how forest tenure systems can be structured to protect the rights of local communities and provide them with incentives to conserve forest areas.

These concerns were raised by the NGO Forum in the Donor Working Group on Forestry, and in the NGO Statement to the Consultative Group Meeting. On 14 June, NGO Forum submitted to the National Committee on Forestry Policy Reform comments on a draft Forestry Law which was prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, following technical assistance received from the Asian Development Bank. The comments dealt with issues of governance, participation and people's rights, sustainable forest management and ambiguities in the law.

Subsequent drafts of the law did little to remove the problems that had been discovered. In October, NGO Forum stepped up its lobbying on the draft forestry legislation by employing a full-time consultant to work on forestry issues. A new, more detailed submission on the forestry law was prepared in discussion with provincially-based NGOs and representatives of forest-dependent communities. Various research and advocacy activities were commenced. The research component of this consultancy involves documenting how local communities currently use forest resources. The studies are focusing initially on parts of Kampong Thom, Preah Vihear, Stung Treng, Kratie, and Kampong Cham. The advocacy and policy-making components entail building up the capacity of local NGOs to advocate on behalf of the interests of local communities living in forested areas. These activities seek to complement Cambodia's domestic political processes by raising the profile of forest issues on the domestic political agenda. It is expected that this project will have some significant impact on policy and legislative decision-making in the year 2001.

CIVIL SOCIETY WORKING GROUP

The Civil Society Working Group aims to facilitate discussions and organise advocacy activities on issues of concern to Cambodian civil society such as human rights and impunity, democratisation, commune elections and decentralisation. Meetings are a lively mix of Phnom Penh-based activists and local community workers from the provinces. Meetings in the year 2000 included discussion on the draft law for the Khmer Rouge tribunal, providing NGO feedback to government plans for weapons reduction, discussions on provincial networking for improved advocacy, and developments in the draft law on commune elections.

A major focus for the working group in the year 2000 were plans for decentralisation affecting Cambodia's 1609 communes (sub-districts). The decentralisation is to be introduced in conjunction with elections for commune councils, which will replace the previously appointed commune chiefs. For the first time, commune councils will be charged with setting local taxes, devising commune development plans, and supervising the implementation of those plans. For ordinary villagers throughout Cambodia, this is the most important and visible of the government's administrative reforms.

A statement concerning the draft Commune Administration Law, accepted by the NGO Forum membership in November 1999, was further developed for inclusion in the NGO Statement to the CG meeting. The statement voiced support for the proposed decentralisation, but called for greater consultation with civil society and better inter-ministerial cooperation on aspects of the law. Provincially-based members of the Civil Society Working Group promoted further discussion of this proposed law in the provinces.

In August, the working group organised a workshop on the impact of decentralisation and elected commune councils on the development programmes of NGOs. Around 250 NGO participants joined the workshop from 22 provinces and municipalities around Cambodia. Special guests came from the National Assembly, Senate, government ministries and international development agencies. H.E. Prum Sokha, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Interior, and H.E. Ngy Chanphal, Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Rural Development, informed the participants about the new decentralised government structure and the role of commune councils and villagers in local development planning. Leading Filipino Senator, Aquilino Q. Pimentel, addressed the workshop on The Philippines' experience of decentralisation. NGO participants discussed ways in which they can help improve the success of decentralisation, through:

1. Capacity building of new commune councils aimed at improving technical skills, accountability and opportunities for villager participation;
2. Capacity building of villagers and community groups in order that they may understand the reforms and improve their ability to contribute constructively to the decision-making of their elected commune councils;
3. Suggesting improvements to the legal framework for decentralisation;
4. Assisting in voter education and poll monitoring to ensure free and fair elections.

Following the workshop, a number of NGOs began to develop further plans to improve the success of decentralisation. This includes a Commune

Council Support Project, governed by a group of NGO leaders including the NGO Forum Representative, which will further engage with government and NGOs in seeking to influence the direction of Cambodia's decentralisation.



WOMEN WORKING GROUP

The aim of the Women Working Group is to advocate, support, train, educate and disseminate information in order to improve the self-confidence of Cambodian women working for NGOs to do advocacy.

In the year 2000, the Women Working Group continued its monthly NGO meetings, often in cooperation with the Gender and Development Network, which aims to encourage gender mainstreaming in development projects. About 30 Cambodians, mainly women, met on a monthly basis to discuss and plan joint actions on subjects such as women and the law, women health issues related to the marriage law and abortion law, women and culture, domestic violence, prostitution, and discrimination against disabled women.

Beijing Plus Five Conference: Following the production of an alternative NGO report on the situation of women in Cambodia, representatives of the working group were sent to both the UN Beijing Plus Five' Conference on the Advancement of Women in New York in June and to a prior preparatory meeting in March. The conference evaluated the progress made by member states in the platform for action established at the previous conference held in Beijing five years ago. Ms Oeung Youk Khorn, the Director of AMARA, reported on the conference to the Annual General Meeting of the NGO Forum on her return.

International Women's Day: In early March, members of the Women Working Group and GAD Network travelled to Preah Sdach District, Prey Veng Province, to organise a village-based celebration of International Women's Day. The purpose was to celebrate with villagers the conviction that women's rights are human rights, enabling women to be integrated into all aspects of social, economic and political life within the nation. The Provincial Governor, H.E. Chuong Si Vuthy, gave the keynote address and comedian Prom Manh entertained the 2,000-strong crowd. There were presentations on the history of International Women's Day, domestic violence, trafficking of women, HIV/AIDS, and discrimination against women. The working group also arranged for these messages to be heard nation-wide through TVK television.

Women in Commune Elections: The working group sought to encourage women to become candidates in the upcoming commune elections, in cooperation with other NGOs and coalitions involved in election monitoring and awareness raising. A proposal was submitted to the National Assembly asking for changes to the draft Law on Commune Elections in order to reserve forty percent of seats to eligible women candidates. The working group joined a rally outside the National Assembly which called for these changes, and met with the President of the National Assembly, Prince Norodom Ranariddh. While the suggested changes were not accepted by the National Assembly, the main political parties all reported an strong commitment to increase the number of women in their party lists standing for election.

CAMBODIA CAMPAIGN TO BAN LANDMINES

The Cambodian Campaign to Ban Landmines was formed in 1994 as a co-ordinated response to the legacy of landmines and UXO's left by more than 30 years of civil war. The Cambodian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCBL), a part of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), continues to respond to the situation left by the aftermath of war.

During the Year 2000, the goals of the CCBL were to:

- monitor the implementation of the treaty in Cambodia,
- universalise the Ban Mine Treaty,
- raise awareness for funding of mine clearance,
- raise awareness of the needs of victims and mine affected communities.

In 1999, a law to prohibit the use, production and stockpiling of Anti-Personnel Mines was adopted by the National Assembly and signed by the King, leading to Cambodia's ratification of the international Ban Mine Treaty. At a meeting publicizing the new Cambodian Mine Action Authority (CMAA) involving diplomats, donors and humanitarian and human rights organisations, including the CCBL, Prime Minister Hun Sen said "As you are well aware, mine clearance activities are considered by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) as our top priority in the rehabilitation and development of the country, in particular in light of achieving poverty reduction in Cambodia. Mine clearance is not merely a matter of social security, but it is also relevant to economic issues and development in general, especially in terms of providing land and safety of livelihoods to poor farming households in remote areas. Recognizing the importance of this agenda, Cambodia has wholeheartedly become a signatory to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Storage and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines and the Destruction of All Kinds of Landmines on 3 December 1997 in Ottawa."

"Effective demining and the subsequent use of demined lands is one of the few means at the disposal of the Government to address directly and quickly the plight of the poor. It is a privileged tool to eradicate misery, alleviate poverty and set in motion sustainable development across the country" continued H.E. Sok An.

The Cambodian Landmine Monitor team completed a new detailed report covering production, transfer, stockpiles, destruction, mine clearance, survey and assessment, mines awareness, mine casualties and assistance to mine victims in Cambodia. Mine clearance is carried out in Cambodia by the mine clearance organizations CMAC, MAG and Halo Trust, and by military and villagers.

Mr Ny Nhar participated in meetings in Belgium, the Netherlands and Thailand with other researchers. A copy of the Cambodian Landmine Monitor 2000 (covering 1999) is available on the NGO Forum's web-site. The report for 2001 covering 2000 till March 2001 will be released at the meeting of State Parties in Managua in September 2001.

Interesting issues discussed in the report include:

- the formation and role of CMAA,
- the presence of anti-personnel mines in military storehouses,
- a study on village demining,
- allocation of demined land, and

- a 12 point plan of the disabled for "victims assistance".

The CCBL is represented on the Cambodian Demining Coordination Meeting, at the new regulatory authority (CMAA) and is in communication with the Disability Action Council. It is also a member of the International Steering Committee of the ICBL.

Now there are many meetings for the Mine Action Sector in Cambodia, and CCBL ensures that the campaign's voice is heard in these meetings.

CCBL contributed to a plan of action for 2001-2004 for the whole of the international campaign. The focus for 2001 is:

- universalising the treaty,
- strengthening the role of youth in the campaign,
- monitoring implementation of the treaty in mine clearance, victims assistance, destruction of stockpiles, and the ban on production and use of mines.

To raise awareness for funding for mine clearance and victim assistance, the CCBL has facilitated its landmine survivor campaigners to tell their stories and make their own appeal. From May 15 to 17, 2000, Mr Ny Nhar went to The Netherlands to attend the international Landmines Monitor meeting in order to prepare for the final draft of the worldwide mine monitoring for the year 2000.

Ms Song Kosal has been a strong animating force. She promoted the Youth Against War campaign, which now has youth campaigners in many countries. Ms Song Kosal and Man Sokheurm travelled to many countries promoting the campaign. They visited schools in USA, Australia, France, Belgium, Switzerland and Japan.

The "Landmine Ambassador", Mr Tun Chan Nareth, went to several countries, including some that have not yet signed and ratified the Ban Mine Treaty as follows:

- USA in January to support the Iowa landmine campaign and to meet the officials from the State Department in Washington, D.C.,
- Spain in April to give a talk on landmines at the University of Comillas in Madrid,
- Great Britain in June to celebrate the jubilee of NGO "CAFOD", and to continue the work he began there in 1994,
- Japan in July to attend the symposium "US bases and Anti Personnel Mines" in Okinawa,
- France in August to speak along with other Nobel Laureates in Lourdes, France, and
- Singapore's Institute of International Affairs, to encourage students to urge Singapore to join the treaty.

Ms Sok Eng, Mr Tun Channareth, and Ms Hiroko Horiuchi represented the campaign in Fiji, and felt gratified when two more countries of the Pacific Region joined the ban.

The CCBL farewelled the Paralympic Team (mostly land mine survivors) to the Sydney Olympics, where they promoted the Mine Ban Treaty. Many journalist and TV crews and filmmakers have been hosted and briefed by the Campaign.

Ms Srey Mom, a child survivor, with funding from NGO Forum, accompanied the Ban Mine Dancing Troupe to Spain. Spain destroyed the last of its stockpiles during the visit.

The CCBL contributed to the NGO Statement to the Consultative Group donors meeting in May, calling on donors to renew support to mine clearance, victim assistance and public awareness, to strive for better coordination, and to organise titling of de-mined land to protect the rights of poor mine-affected communities.

Jesuit Service continues to act as lead agency and give office support to the campaign. Meetings of the CCBL are now held mostly in the provinces, where the issue of landmines is most pressing. Overseas trips are typically paid by the host organisations. In the year 2000, the NGO Forum funds were used to pay for travel costs where other sources of funding were not available. Also to be covered by NGO Forum funds are the printing of leaflets in the year 2000 for encouraging non-signatories in the region, namely Laos, Vietnam, Burma and Singapore to join the treaty.

Leaflets for the Youth Against War campaign were also produced calling all to Ms Song Kosal's five points:

- spend five minutes every day reflecting peacefully,
- solve arguments without violence,
- help landmine and other war victims,
- safeguard the environment and do not destroy it,
- do one thing every day to make peace grow like a flower.



SPECIAL PROJECTS

Information Project

The Cambodia Information Project continued to compliment the work of the working groups through providing a range of information services as follows:

- *Research assistance* and fact checking (for NGOs, consultants, journalists and other researchers). This involves maintaining active contact and information exchange with the NGO Forum members, working groups and other public policy advocacy groups, government officials, members of the National Assembly and Senate, diplomats and other analysts. These services are increasingly used by professional journalists and other researchers whose news articles and books are read throughout the world and will become part of the literature about contemporary Cambodia.
- *Media monitoring* (in both English and Khmer) and contributing to improved media coverage (through letters and opinion pieces, maintaining contact with a variety of correspondents and analysts, providing documentation, arranging interviews, etc.)
- *Email Distribution Network* - Through a number of topical email distribution lists, the Project provides timely information directly to hundreds of subscribers worldwide who have expressed interest in particular aspects of contemporary Cambodia (e.g. the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, Human Rights, the Media, HIV/AIDS, etc).
- *Electronic index* to the Cambodia-related articles in *The Cambodia Daily* - sent daily or weekly to more than 100 Cambodia specialists worldwide. The Index serves as a dynamic and searchable chronology of events in Cambodia.
- *The NGO Forum Web Site* [<http://go.to/ngoforum/>]- The Project has established an Internet site in the service of the full range of NGO Forum interests and activities. The site includes many reports, statements, contact information, news items and links to many other sources of information. Designed and maintained by Khmer technicians, the site is updated frequently.
- *Cambodia Today Web Site* [<http://go.to/CambodiaToday/>]- The Projects maintains a web site devoted entirely to current news about Cambodia (and includes a special section on news and analysis of the KR Tribunal). The site is updated daily (7 days per week) by Project staff and the internal links to news sources are updated continuously. The site includes links to many other sources of information on Cambodia and a photo album with frequently updated images from contemporary Cambodia.
- *"Virtual Working Groups"* - On occasion, special email lists are created to provide a channel for exchange of information, analysis and opinion on an issue of particular urgency or interest. These lists serve as "virtual working groups" in which interested persons in different parts of the world can participate in something approaching real time. This procedure has been used to edit documents, gather legal arguments and otherwise share ideas among a diverse group of specialists. Action on a number of urgent human rights issues have benefited from this service.

International NGO partners, development consultants, scholars, journalists and other researchers now have easy access to information through the NGO Forum and they are able to share their own experiences, observations and analysis with Cambodia-based colleagues - and with each other - quickly and easily. This should have a far-reaching impact on the way Cambodia's development is regarded, reported and assisted.

Advocacy Skills Strengthening Project

The series of advocacy skills training courses, begun in 1999, was completed in August 2001.

In the year 2000, the overall aim of the project remained the same: To strengthen the ability of the NGO Forum on Cambodia and other networks of NGOs in Cambodia to advocate on issues of concern to the Cambodian people. As a result of the external evaluation conducted in September 1999, the project focus in 2000 was on strengthening NGO Forum working groups and staff, following up previous training recipients, testing training materials, and documenting Cambodian advocacy experiences.

1- Strengthening working groups and staff

In February, the Advocacy Skills Trainer provided assistance to the Development Project Coordinator in planning a workshop series on economic development and to the Environment Network Coordinator in preparing for a public forum on fishing rights in Battambang province.

In March, a Presentation Skills Workshop was given to the Civil Society Working Group. This workshop was included in the group's Work Plan in order to assist members to deal with different groups of people – rural residents, NGO workers and high-ranking government officials. The same workshop was given to the NGO Forum staff.

In June, the Advocacy Skills Trainer helped facilitate the monthly meeting of the Discussion Group on Development Issues to decide on future action regarding survey results on organizational values and code of ethics. She also helped make a tentative design of a workshop on clarifying organizational values and developing a code of ethics and explored possible resource persons who would share their experiences in formulating a code of ethics and practicing organizational values.

In July, training on designing and running workshops was given to the Women Working Group. It was thought that the skills and knowledge they acquired would be useful when they embark on their campaign for more women candidates during the upcoming commune elections.

In July and August, planning and facilitation assistance was given to the Working Group on Development Banks for the fourth and final workshop in the series of economic development workshops.

2- Following up previous training recipients

As the focus for 2000 was following-up previous training recipients instead of providing basic advocacy skills training, a new selection criteria for advocacy training and advocacy assistance was formulated.

A total of 15 workshops were given during the period. This included an Advocacy Refresher's Course and consultancy services for the local NGO, Urban Sector Group (USG); a workshop to strengthen the advocacy component of the National Community Forestry Program of Concern Worldwide; and an advocacy workshop to provide a theoretical framework to the work already being done with urban poor communities by the Urban Resources Center (URC).

Half of the workshops during this period were given to Star Kampuchea and its cooperating organizations. Topics ranged from advocacy analysis and problem solving, project monitoring and evaluation, effective network management, proposal writing, conflict resolution and non-violent people's assemblies. Significantly more workshops were provided to Star Kampuchea staff because the skills and knowledge that they acquired would be transferred to the cooperating organizations in their network of Cambodian NGOs in the provinces.

3- Testing and Developing Training Materials

A draft Advocacy Training Manual, developed by the Advocacy Skills Trainer during training programmes in 1999, was distributed for comment and subsequently updated. Editing the Khmer version of the Advocacy Manual took much longer than expected. A final version in both English and Khmer was distributed to NGO Forum member organizations. Two master copies of both English and Khmer versions with transparencies are available now for lending out in the NGO Forum office.

The time taken to edit the manual left little time for documenting advocacy experiences. However, the advocacy experience of Kongkea Phos, an urban poor federation supported by the Urban Sector Group was documented and translated into Khmer. These materials are also available in the NGO Forum office.

4- Future directions for capacity building

The advocacy skills training mentioned above was intended as a short-term intervention to strengthen NGO Forum's ability to achieve its mandate as an advocacy organisation. The second component of the Advocacy Skills Strengthening Project is a study of future advocacy capacity building needs of Cambodian NGOs. The success of this component will depend partly on the interest and cooperation of other NGO coalitions with whom NGO Forum wishes to do this study. Discussions in the latter half of 2000 indicated that other NGO coalitions would prefer that this study be done through organising an NGO workshop on advocacy experiences. Star Kampuchea is now planning this workshop, along with the NGO Forum and other local NGOs, to be held in 2001.

In order to further build advocacy skills, the NGO Forum invited Star Kampuchea and a local NGO coalition for Capacity Building in Cambodia (CBC) to join a regional NGO advocacy capacity building coalition, the South-East Asian Coalition for Advocacy (SEACA). In September, Ms Thida Khus (chosen by Star Kampuchea and CBC) and Ms Prok Vanny (chosen by NGO Forum) attended a SEACA meeting in Bangkok. This coalition is planning advocacy strengthening activities on a regional level.



NGO FORUM STAFF ARRANGEMENTS

The NGO Forum began the year with eight staff, of which four were the core staff of Representative, Deputy Representative, Admin/Project Officer, and Messenger/File Clerk. Four project staff were employed for the Development Issues Project, Environment Project, Information Project and Advocacy Skills Strengthening Project respectively.

The international consultant employed under the Advocacy Skills Strengthening Project

left the NGO Forum following the completion of her assignment in August. Efforts were made to nationally recruit an Information Project Officer to take over some of the duties of the Information Project Coordinator. A candidate recruited in March was found to be not suitable, and was discontinued at the end of her probation period. Another candidate was recruited, and began work in September. The Information Project Coordinator will continue to be employed in 2001 on a part-time basis.

The Deputy Representative went on study leave for one year from June 2000 to do a Masters Degree in Development Management at the Asian Institute of Management in The Philippines. Interestingly, he was encouraged to choose the topic of localisation of the NGO Forum's Representative's position as a theme for his research work. The NGO Forum's Management Committee continues to approach the subject of localisation cautiously, due to fears that the NGO Forum's external and internal environment is not yet ready for the change. A survey of member organisations, while supporting eventual localisation, expressed the same fears regarding any immediate change. The Management Committee made a list of pre-requisites for the change to occur in the future.

The Deputy Representative was not replaced during his absence, but an additional Administrative Assistant was added to the staff to respond to the increasing administrative load of the expanding programme.

In response to NGO Forum's growing leadership in environmental advocacy, an Environment Project Assistant was added to the staff in May. This has allowed the staff to spend more time networking and organising advocacy actions with local NGOs in the provinces. Opportunities for advocacy on forestry legislation led to the employment of a forestry consultant in October.

Core Staff:

Representative	Mr Russell Peterson
Deputy Representative	Mr Yeng Virak (on study leave from June 2000)
Admin/Project Officer	Ms Ek Sophanna
Admin Assistant	Ms Che Boramy (began July 2000)
Messenger/File Clerk	Mr Thou Chhun Leap

Project Staff:

Advocacy Skills Trainer	Ms Ana Clamor (finished August 2000)
Development Project Officer	Mr Chhith Sam Ath
Environment Project Assistant	Ms Tan Sokhom (began May 2000)
Environment Project Coordinator	Mr Mak Sithirith
Forestry Consultant	Mr Andrew Cock (began October 2000)
Information Project Coordinator	Mr Bill Herod
Information Project Officer	Mr Chea Sovirak (began September 2000)

American Friends Service Committee

Angkar Aphiwat Chong Krei Kror

Association of Protection Development for Cambodia Environment

Australian Catholic Relief

Australian Volunteers International

Banteay Srei (formerly IWDA)

Cambodia Canada Development Programme

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 2000

Cambodia Women Culture Development

NGO FORUM MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS IN 2000

~~Cambodian Disabled Peoples Organisation~~

Cambodian Health Education Development



Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)

Cambodian Rural Economic Development Organisation (CREDO)

Cambodian Women's Development Association

Catholic Relief Services

Centre d'Etude et de Development Agriculture Cambodian (CEDAC)

Christian Outreach for Relief and Development

Christian Reform World Relief Committee

Church World Service

Community Aid Abroad

Concern Worldwide

Cooperation International pour le Development et la Solidarite (CIDSE)

Culture and Environment Preservation Association (CEPA)

Forum Syd

Health Unlimited

Healthcare Centre for Children

Hurredo

Gender and Development./Cambodia

Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz (HEKS)

HelpAge International

Indra Devi Association

Japan International Volunteer Centre

Jesuit Service Cambodia

Khemara

Khmer Community for Agriculture Development

Khmer Women's Voice Centre

Legal Aid of Cambodia

Lutheran World Service

Maryknoll - Cambodia

Meada Khmer Development Organisation

Mennonite Central Committee

Mines Advisory Group

Mlup Baitong

New Humanity

Oxfam Great Britain

Oxfam Hong Kong

Partnership for Development in Kampuchea (PADEK)

Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT)

Project Against Domestic Violence

Quaker Service Australia

Save the Children - Norway (Redd Barna)

Save the Children - Australia

Save the Children Fund (UK) Cambodia

Socio-Economic Development Organisation of Cambodia (SEDOC)

Sor Sor Troung

Urban Poor Women Development

Urban Sector Group

Vicheasthan Bandosbondal Neakropkrong Kangea Aphivath (VBNK)

Violence Against Women and Children of Cambodia

Voluntary Service Overseas

Women's Media Center of Cambodia
World Vision International - Cambodia

Associate Members

Christian Aid
DanChurchAid
Don Bosco Foundation of Cambodia
U.N. World Food Programme

Supporters in 2000

Oxfam America
Oxfam Great Britain
Norway Government
Catholic Institute for International Relations/South-East Asian Committee for Advocacy
DanChurchAid
Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation (NOVIB)
Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD)
Cordaid
The Asia Foundation
Diakonia
Christian Aid
Interchurch Aid for Development Cooperation (ICCO)
United Nations Development Programme
Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF)
Misereor
Concern Worldwide
ForumSyd
Japanese International Volunteer Center
Cooperation International pour le Development et Solidarite (CIDSE)
Bank Information Center
Mennonite Central Committee
Cambodian Rural Economic Development Organisation (CREDO)

