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The NGO Forum on Cambodia

Working Together for Positive Change



LEADING STORIES

River Coalition in Cambodia and Communities Urge for Don Sahong Dam Discussion at Summit in USA



Phnom Penh, February 11: The press conference called for the discussion on Don Sahong Dam at the Summit in USA 2016 was conducted at the NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) with the representatives of River Coalition in Cambodia (RCC) and community from Steung Treng and Tonle Sap Lake. In the conference, organized by NGOF, RCC along with 13 other NGOs and the communities, released a letter requesting Cambodia Prime Minister Hun Sen claimed the Lao government to withdraw the construction of their Don Sahong hydropower dam and also suspend all hydropower dam projects along the Mekong River until the proper Environment Impact Assessment is being conducted. The request was raised due to the heavy risk of impacting the environment and bio-diversity in Cambodia.

On the conference day, RCC and the communities shared the deep concerns over the

impacts of Don Sahong Dam construction to the environment, fish species and the livelihood of families living along the Mekong River.

Dr. Tek Vannara, NGOF's Executive Director said that the Don Sahong Dam is not an issue to Cambodia alone. It, definitely, causes great problems to Cambodian families, but also to other families in Laos, Vietnam and Thailand. Hence, he mentioned, this project requires to an intervention from the Cambodian and relevant countries to find the better solutions..

"The Laotian counterpart project is a serious concern. Thus, we, as the civil societies, proposed the Cambodian government to take this opportunity during the special Summit 2016 in the USA calling for support from the international organizations," he said. *"The construction of the dam shall be post-*

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poned and the parties need to follow the agreement on the Mekong River, in which requested all parties to discuss before any construction of dams take place on the Mekong River. In the meantime, we also urge the secretariat of state working with the Mekong Committee to independently reexamine the project of the Don Sahong hydropower dam."...

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Don Sahong press conference

The Don Sahong Dam is currently in the construction process. However, Mr. Yok Seng Long, Fisheries Action Coalition Team's (FACT) Deputy Executive Director, at a press conference believed there is possibility to delay until the better solution is being provided.

"This is a long run issue, and we notice that all concerns we shared to the cross governments are being neglected, and they make things seem impossible to stop. But I believe this is not the case, as I believe there are chances of solutions as long the construction and wait for the ideal resolutions to be

provided," said Seng Long.

The extinction of vital fish species, specifically the Irrawaddy Dolphins – which is now less than a dozen along the Mekong River is another major concern to the communities. The loss of species and Irrawaddy meant the loss of food and livelihood related to eco-tourism sector.

"This project doesn't only destroy our sources of food, but our jobs," Sem Von, a village representative from Kratie province, *"how do they expect us to live without food and jobs? We cannot wait to die and we need the support from the government on this issue."*

The Don Sahong Dam, which will be 30 to 32 meters high and seven kilometers long, is being built just 2 kilometers from the Cambodian border. The dam project that own by the chief investor Mega First and Malaysian company is expected to finish by mid-2019 and could generate between 240 to 360 Megawatts of power.

There were over a dozen of media institutions joined the press conference.



Phnom Penh, January 26: Landing in Cambodia for approximately 24 hours, John Kerry, the U.S. Secretary of State spared the time aside of meeting with the Cambodian government and political party leader to meet with the Cambodian NGO and youth leaders to learn and discuss about the Cambodian situations.

Dr. Tek Vannara, Executive Director of the NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) and the representatives of other 9 organizations were invited to the meeting. The main topics for the dialogue were focused on the land reform, environment issue, sustainable energy options, and deforestation challenges,

John Kerry Meets with Cambodian Civil Society and Youth Leaders

economic land concessions (ELCs), Mekong Mainstreaming Dam and Climate Change. Taking the opportunity, the CSO group also suggested and call for more USA investors to invest in Cambodia regarding on all the mentioned issues.

"We called for move investment from the US because we believe the US investors would have a better understanding and concerns more on the negative impacts to the villagers, such as Environmental Impact Assessment and the deforestation form the ELC," said Dr. Tek Vannara.

The meeting went for the few hours at Raffles Hotel Le Royal, and each participants managed to share the point of view on different scoops. Kerry at the same has shared the positive view on the Cambodian economic growth.

According to the CNN, it mentioned that Kerry praised Cambodia's "remarkable" growth and modernization and the trade relationship between the two countries.

"I think it's quite remarkable that the United States is, in fact, Cambodia's largest export market even though we have half the world between our countries," Kerry said. *"And we will continue to explore ways to deepen our trade and investment relationship, including by helping to tackle corruption and exploring ways to strengthen Cambodia's legal institutions."*



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HIGHLIGHT STORIES

The NGO Forum and Oxfam Dialogue on Agriculture Issue with MAFF



Phnom Penh, January 13: Dr. Tek Vannara, Executive Director of NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) together with Oxfams' representatives met with H.E Ty Sokun, Secretary of State of Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry (MAFF) at the MAFF office to discuss about the agriculture issues in Cambodia.

The meeting was specifically focused on agriculture policy development, strengthen existing agriculture mechanisms to support Cambodia farmers, and agriculture project development that responses to poor farmers.

Dr. Tek Vannara said that this meeting was conducted prior to the 6th National Farmer Forum (NFF), which is going to happen for two days from March 8 to 9.

"This meeting will give us ideas on our upcoming NFF is being conducted," he stated. *"We already have the main three issues that we collected from the sub-national farmer forum in late 2015 in five regions - water, capital and market - but this further meeting in seeking for collaboration and concepts will help us in better organizing and planning in the next NFF."* ...

Read more at <http://bit.ly/1UWtYSd>

The First Meeting between Ministry of Rural Development and NGOs to Discuss on the Concerns of Indigenous People

Phnom Penh, January 20: The representatives from 15 organizations, working on the Indigenous People (IP) rights, attended the first time meeting with Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), facilitated by NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF), to discuss on the cooperation opportunities and challenges that the civil society organizations (CSOs) experienced in their work between IP NGOs and the local authorities in different regions on Cambodia. Additionally, the NGO working group was met to seek for collaboration and support from the MoRD for the future activities. H. E. Hap Phuong Maly, Under Secretary of State of MoRD was the chair of the meeting and accompanied by Mr. Yim Chong, Head of IP Department of MoRD.

One of the important agendas, which proposed for the discussion, was sought for partnership between NGOs and MoRD in



organizing the IP celebration day in 2016, in order to raise awareness and bring the issues of IP to the public.

"Through our partnership experience, we have learned that the coordination work between IP NGOs at the national level is going smoothly, while there are some challenges at local level that sometimes the authorities attempt to block our meeting or any IP event celebration," ...

Read more at <http://bit.ly/1pTLLhO>

CSO Governance Structure for Engagement in Sustainable Development Goals in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, January 28: In order to respond well to the demands of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) in collaboration with Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) and Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC) and other key networks jointly organized a series of discussions, one of which was the first kick start meeting with leaders of umbrella organizations and sectorial networks.

The discussion theme was "CSO Governance Structure for Engagement in Sustainable Development Goals in Cambodia," and the objectives were:

1. Sensitization of the process and contents of SDGs and Financing for Development, and



Paris Outcome: Climate Change.

2. Mapping out current institutions of CSOs about their key focuses and how are they related to SDGs
3. Discussion on governance arrangement within the NGOs/CSOs for engagement in localization of SDGs in Cambodia...

Read more at <http://bit.ly/1UR8urb>



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Cambodian Youth Take Action to Protect the Last Remaining of Prey Lang



Phnom Penh, January 31: Dr. Tek Vannara, Executive Director of NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF), was proudly participated as scoring committee member for Prey Lang Forum initiated by the Cambodia Youth.

Two important topics were placed on the debating table. The first one was the “Forest decentralization could enhancing local livelihoods and ensuring effective forest management within Prey Lang Landscape” and the “Forest Privatization in Prey Lang contributes toward poverty reduction and sustainable development”.

Approximately 300 university students attended this event, organized by young people who aim to protect the remaining Prey Lang, to learn and gain more knowledge about the Prey Lang deforestation in Cambodia

Dr. Tek Vannara contributed that sustainable Prey Lang mean the sustainability of fishery resource, agriculture system, tourism, environment, temples and welfares of people who living in and around Tone Sap River, and the organizing of this event did make such at impact to the society because both you and deforestation got a lot of attention from the public now.

“Preserve Prey Lang (forest) is saving ...

Read more at <http://bit.ly/1UWtLyn>

UNDP and NGO Forum Seek for Cooperation to Climate Change Solutions in Cambodia



Phnom Penh, February 03: The NGO Forum on Cambodia attended the meeting with UNDP representative at the UNDP office in order to strengthen working collaboration and seek for support to climate change (CC) and environmental issues in Cambodia.

During the meeting various working activities on CC in Cambodia were raised including the pre and COP 21 activities and plans as well as the further action plans to be

taken in the coming period.

Dr. Tek Vannara confirmed in the meeting that Cambodia is currently in a highly vulnerable to CC, due to both high levels of poverty and the frequency of disasters. Also and was named as one of the most at-risk countries in the world – in 2014. He also shared that we, as the CSOs, who are contributing and working on the Sustainable Development Goals need to take a serious action in this CC issue and together we are optimistic that Cambodian case can be put for the discussion in the internal stage to get attention and acceptable resolution to our nature hazard and disasters because of the climate change.

“Cambodia is further one of the most ...

Read more at <http://bit.ly/1UWtCv3>

Quarterly Land and Housing Rights Network Meeting



Phnom Penh, February 4: The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) organized a Quarterly Land and Housing Rights Network Meeting with 26 participants from 13 organizations, based in Phnom Penh and other provinces.

The meeting was conducted in order to equip network/members with additional work experience and practical skills. The topic on “Investigation Techniques”, focusing on

Land Issues and Natural Resource Management, was included in the meeting.

The specific objectives of the meeting were:

1. Presenting the outcomes of Annual Network Reflection 2015
2. Presenting NGOF Operation Plan 2016
3. Updating the progress of focus and hot cases in 2015, and the identification and selection of new cases by network
4. Presenting and update LAHRIN ToR
5. Reinforcing the knowledge and capacity of network/members on the techniques of investigation skills.

The one-day meeting yielded the following results: ...

Read more at <http://bit.ly/1RwajnF>



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River Coalition in Cambodia Brings Don Sahong Dam Concern to the US Embassy in Cambodia



Phnom Penh, February 12: The steering committee members of River Coalition in Cambodia (RCC) included the NGO FORUM on Cambodia (NGOF), Culture and Environment Preservation Association (CEPA), Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT) and Northeastern Rural Development (NRD) attended a meeting with Ms. Julie Chung, Deputy Chief of Mission of Embassy of the United States of America to Cambodia to have the dialogue on Don Sahong Dam at the international attention.

The agenda meeting was discussed on concerns over the impacts of the Don Sahong Hydropower Dam's construction, and other Mekong Mainstream Hydropower Dams. RCC also took this chance to present a letter "request for consideration of the concerns of people living in the Mekong River areas over the development of the Don Sahong Hydropower Dam in Laos and the development of hydropower dams on the Mekong mainstream" to Mr. Barak Obama, to U.S. president during the ASEAN-U.S. Summit to be held on 15-16 February 2016 in Rancho Mirage, California, the United States of America".

As a result, Ms. Lulie Chung was warmly welcome and appreciated the cooperation works with civil society. She mentioned that she will deliver the letter, studied reports, RCC's statements and other at...

Read more at <http://bit.ly/22GT1ig>

The NGO Forum's 2016 Quarterly Members Meeting to Update Achievements and Further Action Plans



Phnom Penh, February 5: Annually, NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) always organize the Quarterly Members Meeting (QMM) to report on the progress works of the NGOF during the last quarter at Phnom Penh Ecumenical Diakonia Centre (PPEDC) Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The specific objectives of the meeting are to:

1. Report the progress of NGOF's activities from the last quarter
2. Present roles and functions of TWGs on Agriculture and Water
3. Instruct the election of New Management Committee's member

4. Illustrate the functions of Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
5. Demonstrate the updated Compensation and Resettlement Policy

The meeting was opened and welcomed by chairperson of meeting Mr. Ngin Satorath, Management Committee member of NGOF and Director of Cambodian Disabled People's Organization (CDPO). He shared during the opening speech that QMM was conducted was the quarterly gathering between NGOF and its network/member in order to update information and to discuss on emerging issues that NGOs/CSOs in Cambodia need to work together for positive change.

The first QMM of 2016 focused on different agenda including:

1. Reporting on progress works of the NGO FORUM in the last quarter by Dr. Tek V...

Read more at <http://bit.ly/1RJAk8n>

NGO Forum on Cambodia Continues to Build Financial Management Knowledge to NGO Network/Members

Phnom Penh, February 16 - 17: The two-day training workshop on "Public Financial Management Mechanism and Result on Budget Analysis on Health Sector", was organized by Development Issue Program (DIP) of the NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) to approximately 26 participants as the representatives from different NGOs as the network/members of DIP. The training took place at Tonle Bassac 2 Restaurant.

The purposes of the workshop were to build capacity and knowledge of participants including Budget Working Group (BWG), Development Issues Forum (DIF) members and other NGOs on the Public financial manage-



ment and mechanism. The other aim was to provide knowledge to BWG and sector NGOs in the DIF understand on how important budget is in relation to development...

Read more at <http://bit.ly/1Sgj2tX>



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Investment and EIA in Cambodia Meeting between MoE and Civil Society Organizations



Phnom Penh, February 23: The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the CAI Co, Ltd. was raised during the discussion. After having properly consulted with stakeholders including CSOs, local authority and the communities, one agreement between the stakeholders was proposed and submitted to the Ministry of Environment, advisory and investment companies.

The concerns of the working group, which mentioned in the meeting included:

1. The limitation of the Public participation, especially, the number of community representatives and women. Plus, Consultations should be conducted to fully consider the concerns and suggestions of the people who are directly affected by the project.
2. The benefits to the particular social and environmental funds should be increased while the community has lost many benefits because of this investment project.
3. The environment management plan and compensation should be detail and be able to provide the acceptable solutions to the community.
4. Even the process is a bit behind the track, the relevant ministries and company shall avoid in granting or investing on the projects that could be harmful to ...

Read more at <http://bit.ly/25s1C7i>

Council of Ministers Opens Dialogue with over 70 Local and International NGOs to Update on Cambodian Situation



Phnom Penh, February 17: Council of Ministers' Department of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) arranged a dialogue between Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs Cambodia (MoFAC), and approximately 70 CSOs representatives of various sectors in Cambodia. Within this rare dialogue opportunity, CSO Representatives have raised the most concerns and problems, which have been facing in Cambodia. Those include:

1. Restriction from authorities to implement their activities-asking permission where the law allows notification only
2. Limitation of freedom of expression
3. Arresting of the environmentalists

4. The slow respond of competent ministry on administrative procedure regarding registration application or change the head of NGOs
5. Concern on the implementation of LAN-GOs and
6. Collaboration between CSOs and all level of authorities to conduct the activities smoothly to contribute developing the country, especially asking for formal meeting between CSOs and Prime Minister.

In response, the Department of CSOs of the council of ministers committed to:

1. Arrange such event happen quarterly
2. MoI will host Dissemination and Consultative Workshop on Implementation of LAN-GOs
3. Accelerate the registration procedures and firmly responsive
4. Create technical working group to handle the specific issues
5. Create a new Facebook page to response the issues on time and
6. Reporting to supervisor to intervene any other issue raised in the meeting.

Council of Ministers and NGOs Plan for a Visit to Boeung 5 Land Dispute Area, Battambang

Phnom Penh, February 26: Four NGO representatives including NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF), DanChurchAid (DCA), Community Legal Education Center (CLEC) and Life With Dignity (LWD) attended the meeting with Council of Ministers (CoM), chaired by Mr. Duong Viroth, a Head of Department of Civil Society NGO, and Human Rights (DCSNHR), to discuss on "Land Disputes at Boeung 5, Bovil district, Battambang province". After the discussions the NGO and CoM agreed on the arrangement of an exposure visit, which is scheduled from March 14 to 17, 2016 to the Boeung 6, Bovil District, Battambang province.



The main purposes of an exposure visit is to seek further understanding on the land disputes, data verifying and collecting all relevant document and information regar...

Read more at <http://bit.ly/1MMIZ3I>



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ON THE MEDIA



Topic: Interview with PNN TV on “The Effectiveness of a New Measurement to Control Illegal Logging in Cambodia”

Location: The NGO Forum on Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Date: January 21, 2016

Speakers:

Dr. Tek Vannara, Executive Director of NGOF



Topic: Radio Round Table Talk Show on “Citizens and panelists debate to contribute and find solutions to the current issues in Cambodian society.”

Location: VOD - Sarika Radio, FM 106.5MHz, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Date: January 25, 2016

Speakers:

Gen. Eng Hy, A spokesman for the National Commission to Prevent and Suppress Forest Crimes

Mr. Sam Somony, Forestry Rights Project Coordinator of NGOF

Mr. Ouch Leng, President of the Human Rights Task Force



Topic: Interview with Thai PBS TV about “The Impacts on Lower Sesan 2 Dam to the Mekong River and the Communities”

Location: The NGO Forum on Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Date: February 4, 2016

Speakers:

Dr. Tek Vannara, Executive Director of NGOF



Topic: RFI Radio Talk Show about “Areng Valley and Potential to Create and Eco-tourism Community”

Location: RFI, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Date: February 21, 2016

Speakers:

Dr. Tek Vannara, Executive Director of NGOF



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UPCOMING EVENTS/HOLIDAYS 2016

28 - 29 March

Consultative Workshop on Agriculture Land Law in Sihanouk Ville

28 - 29 March

Organize Negotiation Training in Phnom Penh

28 - 29 March

Training Workshop on Land and Housing Rights Network in Phnom Penh

13 - 16 April

Khmer New Year Day in Cambodia

29 April

The NGO Forum on Cambodia Quarterly Member Meeting in Phnom Penh

01 May

International Labor Day

13 - 15 May

King's Birthday, Norodom Sihamoni in Cambodia

20 May

Visak Bochea Day in Cambodia

24 May

Royal Plowing Ceremony in Cambodia



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Warmly welcome Mr. Ear Chong, the Land and Livelihood Manager of NGO Forum. Mr. Chong has over 20 years of working experience with local and INGOs on various skills including management, land, livelihood, human rights, research and advocacy.



Please contact Sochea at
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Join us in welcome Mr. Pheap Sochea, our Indigenous People Land Rights Project Coordinator. Sochea has many years of experience working with local and international NGOs on indigenous people rights, human rights, advocacy and environment.



Please contact Bunly at
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Join us in welcome Mr. Keo Bunly, Resettlement and Housing Rights Project Coordinator of NGO Forum on Cambodia. Bunly has many years of working experience in local and international NGOs, focusing on Land and housing rights and human rights.





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