



NGO Forum
on CAMBODIA

Working Together For Positive Change

Biennial Report 2004-2005



June 2006

Mission

The NGO Forum is made up of local and international non-governmental organizations grounded in their experience of humanitarian and development assistance to Cambodia. The NGO Forum exists for information sharing, debate and advocacy on priority issues affecting Cambodia's development. The NGO Forum has an important role to highlight the impact of development processes and economic, social and political changes on Cambodians.



An NGO Forum Quarterly Members Meeting



National and World Environment Day Parade, June 2005

Vision

Cambodia will have a well-informed and empowered population participating in a strong and vibrant civil society, to the benefit of poor and vulnerable people in Cambodia.

Values

The NGO FORUM believes in working together for:

- Economic and social justice;
- Respect for human rights and democracy;
- Gender equality;
- Peace and non-violence;
- Sustainable use of natural resources;
- Respect for cultural diversity; and
- Development with equity.



Bi-monthly meeting of the Pesticides Reduction Network – Cambodia

Goal

The rights of poor and vulnerable groups in Cambodia are recognised and supported by the policies and practices of Cambodia's government and donors, and by the wider community.

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Message from Chairperson of the Management Committee

The NGO Forum is well respected and appreciated by its members and many non-members, including donors and government officials and institutions. Following the results of the evaluation of the NGO Forum in July 2005, and recognising the increasing capacity and ability of the Cambodian staff, the Management Committee decided to go ahead with the transfer of power from the expatriate "Representative" to a Cambodian, by promoting the Deputy Representative to the new position of Executive Director from the 1st January 2006. The process of handing over power has been planned over many years and carried out concretely and carefully. The previous Representative, Mr Russell Peterson still continues to work with NGO Forum as a Senior Advisor. A new Deputy Executive Director has been recruited and started work on 20 December 2005. In addition, NGO Forum continues its process of organisational development and strengthening with strong internal resources to ensure effectiveness and sustainability of the tasks to be carried out.

On behalf of the Management Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to Mr Russell Peterson for his strong commitment and hard work in the role of Representative for over eight years since 1997 and for his interest in accepting the Senior Advisor position to support NGO Forum and civil society in order to help achieve sustainable development and support for the poor and vulnerable people in Cambodia.

I would also like to take this great opportunity to express out warmest welcome and strong support to Mr Chhith Sam Ath in his new role as Executive Director of the NGO Forum. The Management Committee, and I personally, strongly believe that Mr Chhith Sam Ath has a strong commitment and solid ability and capacity to lead NGO Forum to achieve more and great successes.



Kep Kannaro, Senior Programme Officer, PADEK
Chairperson of The NGO Forum on Cambodia



The NGO Forum Chairperson, Mr Kep Kannaro, addresses a meeting about the World Bank-Civil Society Global Policy Forum, which he attended in Washington DC on behalf of the NGO Forum

Members of NGO Forum's Management Committee 2004-2005

Mr Kep Kannaro, PADEK (Chair)*
Ms Mey Saramy, CARE (Treasurer)*
Ms Houng Nita, Mlup Baitong
Mr Chin Mardy, CYD
Mr Ouk Vandeth, LAC
Mr Son Siveth, LWF
Ms Luy Rasmey, CEPA*
Ms Oeur Sisotha, CHEC
Ms Houng Nita, Mlup Baitong*
Ms Ith Pov, ForumSyd
Mr Sun Kong Sith, World Vision*
Ms Khorn Dinravy, Oxfam GB*

* Current Management Committee as of 31 December 2005.

Message from the outgoing Representative

The NGO Forum on Cambodia was originally a meeting organised by international NGOs in the late 1980s, who met together outside Cambodia to discuss how they could advocate an end to Cambodia's international isolation and the "punishment of the poor" brought about by an international aid embargo. In the 1990s, as Cambodia opened up to the world, new issues arose, but the NGO Forum's commitment to advocating the needs of the poor remained. The NGO Forum became more Cambodian-based, and started to invite local NGOs to its membership. Nevertheless, it was still governed by an international Steering Committee and dominated by international NGOs right up until 1996.

In 1997, a clear decision was made to make the NGO Forum more relevant to the concerns of Cambodians, and many local NGOs joined the NGO Forum that year. The NGO Forum hoped to achieve Cambodian leadership within five years. It was with this mandate that I began working with the NGO Forum as its Representative in December 1997. In the year 2000, the NGO Forum membership voted in a fully Cambodian Management Committee for the first time. Since then, the Management Committee has been fully Cambodian. At the same time, the NGO Forum was growing, becoming more complex, and able to deal with a wider number of issues. The Management Committee had many discussions on how and when to recruit a Cambodian Executive Director, and in what ways the organisation should be strengthened in preparation for this change. As a result of this good preparation, I believe we can achieve a smooth transition. I look forward to assisting Sam Ath in an advisory capacity.

The NGO Forum could not have achieved its many successes over the years without the active participation of its many member organisations. The member organisations of the Management Committee have played an essential role in guiding the strategy of the NGO Forum, while members of the various NGO networks and forums have provided leadership on particular issues.

I expect that in the future the NGO Forum will continue to build NGO cooperation so that together we can tackle tough and sensitive issues affecting Cambodia – issues such as good governance, land rights, environmental sustainability, pro-poor development, gender equality and human rights. In the future, new priority issues may emerge, and the NGO Forum will need flexibility to be able to take on such new issues.

The current situation in Cambodia requires that we take a careful and professional approach, and try to build effective relationships with government officials and other stakeholders. The NGO Forum needs to remain politically neutral, constructive and technically competent. But if Cambodia is to develop into a fair and just society, then we cannot avoid addressing tough and sensitive issues. Working together in the NGO Forum provides a good way to tackle these issues. With the active participation of the NGO Forum membership, NGOs can have a strong and united voice.

With so many committed and capable NGOs working together, I am very confident of the NGO Forum's future and its ability to contribute to the building of a just and vibrant society in Cambodia.



Russell Peterson
The Representative, 1997-2005



*Chhith Sam Ath and Russell Peterson meet with
Foreign Affairs Secretary of State,
H.E. Ouch Borith*

Message from the incoming Executive Director

I would like to express sincere thanks to all colleagues of the NGO Forum, Management Committee members, NGO Forum members and friends who have supported and encouraged me to take this challenging position. Based on this spirit, I will try all my best and commit myself to the work of the NGO Forum to achieve its goal, namely that “the rights of poor and vulnerable groups in Cambodia are recognized and supported by the policies and practices of Cambodia’s government and donors, and by the wider community”. I also would like to thank all NGO Forum members and other stakeholders that constantly support and cooperate with the NGO Forum in its work and I hope this support will be continued.


There have been a lot of lessons learned regarding advocacy and networking in Cambodia from which we can draw good practices. Advocacy should be peaceful and careful, accurate, ensure legitimacy, represent the affected group, encourage participation and be neutral (that is, not take part in or affiliate with any political party). I understand that when we NGOs are doing advocacy we are not working against government or donors, but are trying to solicit their assistance on issues that we NGOs cannot solve by ourselves, in order to help poor and vulnerable people.

I believe that NGO Forum’s existence is important for building cooperation among NGOs, in order to have a strong and single voice on issues of governance, land grabbing and conflict, environment, natural resources management, pro-poor trade policy and other development issues. NGO Forum can play an important role in contributing to the achievement of national policies and plans through coordinating NGOs inputs into the development of policies in all sectors and monitoring the implementation of those policies, through providing information on what is happening at the grassroots level.

In the next five years, I would like to see NGO Forum achieve the following five goals:

- 1) NGO Forum members will commit to work together to achieve common advocacy goals, and will actively participate in discussion, sharing of information and joint action on issues affecting Cambodians. The community people and civil society will also be empowered to speak out by themselves on the issues that affect them.
- 2) The NGO Forum office and NGO Forum members will continue to show good examples of transparency, accountability and best practices, *and practice what we preach*. The NGO Forum also will extend its cooperation to other NGO networks, donor communities, government institutions and other institutions to achieve this goal.
- 3) NGO Forum staff will continue to develop their ability to be responsive to the advocacy priorities of the member organizations and to facilitate member participation.
- 4) We hope that with the help of its members, NGO Forum can effectively represent the members’ concerns.
- 5) We hope that the NGOs, government institutions and other development partners will have good cooperation in order to achieve poverty reduction, democracy and justice in Cambodia.

Chhith Sam Ath has been working with NGOs in Cambodia for the last 13 years. In 1992, he was one of the committed group who helped Thun Saray found the human rights group ADHOC, one of the first local NGOs in Cambodia. ADHOC has been a member organisation of the NGO Forum since 1993. Sam Ath worked with ADHOC for over five years, after which he went to Thailand to do a Masters Degree in Regional and Rural Development Planning. Upon returning from Thailand, he was recruited by the NGO Forum to fulfil the position of Development Issues Project Coordinator, a position he held from 1999 to 2001. He then transferred to a senior position within the development NGO CIDSE, which has now become a local NGO with the name Development and Partnership in Action. While working for CIDSE, he was also elected to the Management Committee of the NGO Forum for a period of two years. At the beginning of 2005, he returned to the NGO Forum, and worked as the Deputy Representative for one year before becoming Executive Director from the beginning of 2006.



Chhith Sam Ath
(Incoming) Executive Director

Views from Member Organisations

Oxfam GB

Speaking with one voice

Oxfam GB's mission is to work with others to overcome poverty and suffering. In order to work towards this objective in Cambodia, Oxfam GB has worked closely over the years with the NGO Forum on Cambodia as a member, a donor and on the Management Committee. The NGO Forum plays a unique role in ensuring that Cambodian and international NGOs speak with one voice on issues that concern the development of Cambodia. I personally, and Oxfam GB as an organisation, wish the NGO Forum continuing success in playing this vital role.



Mike Bird, Country Programme Manager
Oxfam GB in Cambodia

Development and Partnership in Action (DPA)

Incorporating Advocacy and Networking into Strategic Plans

Because of the evolving social climate and the strong capacity and commitment of its local staff, CIDSE Cambodia has decided to localize and from this decision has emerged Development and Partnership in Action (DPA) as of 1st January 2006. DPA will assume responsibility for CIDSE Cambodia's work as of 1 January 2006 with emphasis on the need for strategies that *promote community organizing and rights based approaches*. DPA just completed and finalized its strategic paper 2006-2008. DPA includes networking, activism and advocacy as integral components of its programme, in affecting change in the lives of the target beneficiaries in its target areas and partner organizations.

To achieve this, DPA will support program staff and partner organizations to bring issues raised by villagers to the national and regional levels for bringing about changes. DPA will be involved in around 20 different sectoral/working groups/fora. Staff representatives will represent DPA in different networks organized by NGO Forum on Cambodia. In addition, DPA will strongly involve and share specific cases/issues affecting villagers' lives in the land and forestry networks and share case studies with the NGO Forum on Cambodia for inclusion in advocacy, newsletters and bulletins on a regular basis. DPA expects to be an active member of the NGO Committee for the Monitoring of Consultative Group Indicators, facilitated by the NGO Forum, whilst the capacity, skills, and knowledge of DPA staff will become stronger in lobbying and advocacy.



Mam Sambath, Executive Director, DPA

Urban Sector Group

Improving collaboration and advocacy through the NGO Forum

Urban Sector Group (USG) has been an active member of NGO Forum since 1996. USG got involved with NGO Forum because we implemented advocacy projects on issues of the urban poor, and NGO Forum facilitates and supports advocacy work of NGOs. NGO Forum also plays an important role as a representative on certain critical issues for advocacy which individual NGOs find hard to do alone. NGO Forum is a venue to share information and to build capacity of local NGOs on advocacy knowledge and skills that they can apply in their own individual organizations.

Because of NGO Forum, there is improved co-operation, collaboration and working relationships among development actors on many policy issues. Recommendations on policies and draft laws are presented through the NGO Forum and taken into consideration and often incorporated. NGO Forum is important for the advocacy work carried out by the Cambodian NGO community in bringing about changes for the betterment of the Cambodian people.



Lim Phai, Chairperson, USG

Core Programme

Representation

The Representative and core staff members play an essential role in organising discussion and debate among member organisations, responding to requests for information, and representing NGOs' perspectives on a range of development issues. As such, the Core Programme is an essential and permanent feature of the NGO Forum's work.

Activities of the Representative include representing the NGO community to government, donor agencies and the public, through meeting with officials, speaking at workshops and public events, and speaking to the media. The Representative (now termed "Executive Director") is kept up-to-date on important issues by the NGO Forum's networks and other NGO sectoral groups, and frequently refers



Mr. Chhith Sam Ath, Deputy Representative in 2005, addresses a meeting on Land Issues

visitors to these groups for further information. The NGO Forum has become an important focal point for enquiries about NGOs' positions and views on issues affecting Cambodia's development. The NGO Forum also chairs the Commune Council Support Project, a project managed by a group of nine NGOs to improve policy debate and civil society involvement in decentralisation reforms.

Beginning January 2005, the recruitment of Mr Chhith Sam Ath as Deputy Representative and future Executive Director brought a new dimension to NGO Forum's representation, due to his greater ability to interact with the Khmer-language media. He featured on radio talk shows a number of times, speaking on issues such as the results of the Government-Donor Coordination Committee meetings which he attended on behalf of NGO Forum.

Members Meetings

Quarterly Members Meetings, held once every three months, provide an important venue for member NGOs to come together to provide guidance and feedback to the NGO Forum and to discuss important issues of a cross-cutting nature. Elections for Management Committee members are held at Members Meetings, a frequent occurrence due to the overlapping terms of Management Committee members. Representatives of NGO sectoral groups and provincial networks who are not formally NGO Forum members are also invited to NGO Forum member meetings, in order share their ideas and concerns. In 2004 and 2005, Quarterly Members Meetings discussed issues such as the government's Rectangular Strategy, the National Strategic Development Plan, the monitoring of benchmarks, land and forestry problems, and reports on NGO Forum activities. The Annual General Meetings, held in June 2004 and June 2005, provided important input to the NGO Forum's *Strategic Planning*, as described below.

Management Committee

Throughout 2004 and 2005, the Management Committee met monthly to discuss strategy, approve plans, and provide guidance to the NGO Forum's Representative. Issues discussed included membership applications, Action Plan revisions, budget revisions, recruitment of the Executive Director, strategic planning, and extension of the employment contract of the Representative. Minutes of the meetings were circulated to all Management Committee members and NGO Forum staff. Representatives of the Management Committee also joined NGO Forum staff in a number of retreats held to further develop the plans of the NGO Forum.

In mid-2004, the Management Committee considered and approved a request by a group of member organizations to add an indigenous people's land rights network to the existing Land and Livelihoods Programme. In early 2005, the Management Committee held a special meeting with NGOs involved in forestry and human rights issues to consider whether to file a complaint with the World Bank's Inspection Panel in regard to the World Bank's forestry operations in Cambodia (see report on page 20). A list of Management Committee members for the period 2004 to 2005 is shown on page 2.

Evaluation

In June-July 2005, a major independent assessment of the NGO Forum's work was completed: "Building Democratic Practice through Advocacy and Networking – An Assessment of the NGO Forum", by South House Exchange. The evaluation found that "NGO Forum is a strong, healthy and vibrant organization playing an essential role in Cambodia's active civil society." The recommendations contained in this evaluation informed the drafting of the NGO Forum's Action Plan 2006-2008, and will continue to be used in planning and monitoring NGO Forum's activities.

Strategic Planning

NGO Forum's Strategic Plan for 2006 to 2011 appears in the introductory section of the Action Plan for 2006 to 2008. It is the outcome of a lengthy process, which included the Annual General Meetings of 2004 and 2005, a Strategic Positioning study, various staff retreats, Management Committee meetings and the above-mentioned evaluation.

At the Annual General Meeting in June 2004, participants voiced support for the idea of having a Cambodian Executive Director, supported by a foreign adviser. They discussed the advantages of this change and the role they expected to be provided by an expatriate adviser. A "SWOT" analysis, which included input from the 2004 AGM, provided important input to the Strategic Plan. A joint staff-Management Committee meeting in November 2004 reflected on the results of the SWOT analysis and drafted some guidelines on how to enhance the NGO Forum's strengths over the next five years. The Evaluation, conducted in June-July 2005, gave further guidance on management structures and capacities that need to be developed.

In October 2004, the NGO Forum undertook a Strategic Positioning study. The study confirmed member support for the current emphasis on land and livelihoods, environment and development issues, with a stronger focus on the involvement of people's organisations at the grassroots level. The AGM held in June 2005 provided a situation analysis and helped to fine tune the project and network objectives for 2006-2008.

Project Management

In addition to its core representational role, the Core Programme provides administrative and management support to ensure effective functioning of the NGO Forum's ten other projects, each of which facilitates an NGO network on a thematic issue.

Between 2004 and 2005, a further 16 staff were recruited to the NGO Forum, while 6 staff left. As of the beginning of 2006, there are now 21 staff, including 3 expatriate Advisers. (See staff list on inside of back cover). Funds were received from 42 different donors, both big and small, some of whom are also member organisations (see page 24).

The Deputy Representative (now termed "Deputy Executive Director") supervises the internal work of the NGO Forum through a Coordination Committee of senior staff, and with the support of the Representative. Participatory staff appraisal and staff capacity building methods were used to further develop the technical and leadership skills which staff members provide to the NGO networks.

Publications and Information Dissemination

The Core Programme assists the projects with information dissemination, which is key to effective advocacy. Regular publications in the Khmer language include The NGO Forum magazine, the *Land and Life* magazine, and various network brochures. The *Cambodia Development Watch* magazine, and NGO statements on the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and for the Consultative Group meeting were produced in both Khmer and English. The "Down River" report, on the impacts of dams on the Se San river, and the "Rethinking Poverty Reduction" report are so far only in English.



Most of these publications may be found on the NGO Forum's web-site at www.ngoforum.org.kh.

Development Issues Programme

Introduction

Cambodia is highly dependent on international aid and concessional loans. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank and International Monetary Fund play a major role in creating and influencing the Cambodian Government's development policies and practices. Loans from these financial institutions will only exacerbate the country's future debt problems, unless they are used effectively and efficiently. The Cambodian Government needs to fully embrace appropriate policies and ensure their proper implementation if poor and vulnerable groups are to benefit. These policies must also address inequality between men and women, and the high prevalence of domestic violence in Cambodia.

Economic development in Cambodia continues to favour the urban areas, while rural areas remain economically depressed. Economic policies tend to favour growth over redistribution. Cambodia continues to rely on high levels of donor support and concessional loans to support its development. The percentage of the budget devoted to repayments is sure to increase in the near future. Cambodia's accession to the World Trade Organization, while creating some new opportunities, will also burden small farmers and small producers with increased local competition. These crosscutting issues are being addressed through the Development Policy, Gender, and Trade and Economic Development Projects.

Development Policy Project

In 2003, the Cambodian Government launched a three-year National Poverty Reduction Strategy. However, despite impressive economic growth, poverty remains high with over 35% of the population living below the official poverty line.¹ NGOs are concerned that the poor and vulnerable are not sufficiently benefiting from Cambodia's economic growth.



NGO sectoral group representatives meet together to prepare a statement on the progress of CG Indicators

In Cambodia, there are a variety of NGO sectoral groups representing NGOs views in sectors such as health, education, natural resource management and human rights. These sectoral groups need to be able to speak with one voice in multi-sectoral development dialogues. Working together is a necessary pre-requisite to influencing the government and donor policies and practices in the interest of poor and vulnerable groups. Providing multi-sectoral input to monitoring of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and to the annual Consultative Group (CG) meetings and CG indicators monitoring requires a coordinated approach, backed by additional information gathering and support.

The NGO Forum on Cambodia believes in working together in order to achieve our intended purpose. The purpose of the Development Policy Project for 2004-2005 is that NGOs cooperate across sectors to influence government and donors' policy and practices so that they benefit poor and vulnerable groups.

Through the joint effort of the NGO Sectoral groups and the facilitation of the project, government and donors have increasingly recognized the contribution of NGOs. The NGO Forum is now regarded as the main contact point for dialogue with NGOs on development policy issues. About one-third of the comments on the draft National Strategic Development Plan submitted by NGOs through the NGO Forum were accepted by government and included in the final document. The quarterly NGO Statement on the Monitoring of CG Indicators has helped draw attention to important issues and has been appreciated and occasionally quoted by donors. Through various statements, the Cambodian

¹ Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2004

government has shown that it recognizes the efforts made by the NGOs towards improving its development policies and practices.

Importantly, the Cambodian government and its donors have now agreed with NGO recommendations for a single development plan, instead of two competing plans as in the past (see box).

The experience of the project has shown that advocacy needs to be supported by good research. Working with donors who can influence the government, such as the World Bank and the UNDP, is often a useful way to channel our concerns. Advocacy which is non-confrontational is better received by government and is usually more effective. Building and strengthening networks and alliances are very critical to ensure all NGOs who are working on the same issue are speaking with one voice.

From Two Plans to One

In 2001, the NGO Forum on Cambodia produced a paper entitled "Rapid Assessment of the PRSP Process in Cambodia: Two Banks, Two Processes, Two Documents." The paper criticised donors for forcing the government to produce two development plans: the Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) supported by the ADB and the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS) supported by the World Bank. The paper requested better donor coordination in support of a single strategic plan, better engagement with civil society, and creation of more 'space' for national ownership of national policies and plans.

As a result, in 2005, the RGC put together a single National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) based on its own Rectangular Strategy. Opportunities for civil society participation in its preparation were still limited, due to time limitations. In addition, in 2004, the Cambodian government set up 18 government-donor Technical Working Groups (TWGs) on different sectoral issues. NGOs are represented on twelve of these TWGs.

Gender Project

As in many countries, Cambodian women play a subservient role in Cambodian society. They typically have had less educational opportunities than men, and fewer opportunities for exercising leadership. Development policies and practices are often gender-blind, and community attitudes reinforce women's subservient role. Issues such as domestic violence are not well understood by many policy makers.

The project's purpose is to ensure that NGOs cooperate to influence government and donor policies and practices and community attitudes so that they consider and mainstream gender.



NGO and government representatives speak at the National Forum on Gender and Food Security.

The Gender Forum held regular discussions and organized various workshops on topics such as: gender mainstreaming into development policies, gender and advocacy, and gender and food security. The project worked in close collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA). The annual Women's Day campaign was organized in collaboration with the MoWA and local authorities. A delegation of five networks, including the Gender Forum, lobbied the MoWA regarding their concerns about the draft Domestic Violence Law.

The project also assisted other NGO Forum projects through providing training on women's leadership and gender to networks and community leaders. The project helped to monitor and ensure consideration of gender issues in all activities of the NGO Forum, based on the NGO Forum's Gender Policy.

Following input from the Gender Forum network, other networks and the MoWA, the Domestic Violence Law was adopted by the National Assembly and Senate in September 2005. The project has

supported and provided ideas for the mainstreaming of gender in government. As advocated by NGOs, the Ministry of Education is providing scholarships for poor girl students.

The project found that, in order to achieve its intended impacts, the Gender Forum needs to work closely with other NGO networks which have overlapping mandates. The Gender Forum cooperated with other networks on the Domestic Violence Law to ensure that all NGOs were speaking with one voice. It also organized a workshop with other networks to provide an opportunity for each to share their work plans and avoid overlaps. In future, to avoid overlap the Gender Forum may focus less on issues of violence against women, and more on the inclusion of gender in national development plans.

Trade and Economic Development Project

Cambodia's recent accession into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is intended to broaden the country's trade opportunities and economic well-being. However, little is known about what will be the impacts of further trade liberalization in Cambodia, especially on vulnerable groups. Cambodian producers are ill prepared to benefit from access to foreign markets, and face stiff competition from imports. Export processing zones, designed to attract foreign investment, may do little to help the poor in Cambodia unless labor and environmental standards are upheld and there are sufficient backward links to the rural economy. Tax and customs exemptions in export processing zones may reduce revenues available for social development, as existing foreign investors shift their operations to the new zones.

Economic development in Cambodia continues to favour the urban areas, while rural areas remain economically depressed. Economic policies tend to favour growth over redistribution. Cambodia continues to rely on high levels of donor support and concessional loans to support its development. The percentage of the budget devoted to repayments is sure to increase in the near future.



Campaign for Promoting Cambodian Organic Products in Takeo province

The intended purpose of the Trade and Economic Development Project is that NGOs cooperate to influence trade and economic development policies so that they benefit poor and vulnerable groups.

Trade liberalization and WTO accession are creating new impacts on Cambodian small producers and farmers, so awareness raising on these issues is very important. The project organized training workshops for provincial NGOs and farmers, communities and local authorities. The project also has shared information on WTO negotiations with NGO members, lobbied institutions to conduct research on trade's impact on the rural poor, represented NGO views to key

government and donor institutions and provided women opportunities to speak out about the impacts of development policies on their lives. The project also assisted in organizing the international conference "Least Developed Countries (LDC) People's Forum" which focused on issues in the current "Development Round" of WTO negotiations. In addition, the project helped to organize two public campaigns for "Promoting Cambodian Organic Products" in Battambang in 2004 and Takeo province in 2005.

As a result, NGOs, grassroots organizations and poor people now better understand the impacts of trade liberalization, and they are better able to express their concerns on this matter and speak out in forums and public gatherings regarding the impacts on their livelihoods.

In the future, the project will endeavour to build a strong trade network at national level and nurture cooperation between its NGO partners and relevant ministries so that trade policy will be pro-poor and build a better future for all. This work will build upon the existing LDC People's Forum secretariat whose members include partners such as Action Aid, CEDAC, Womyn's Agenda for Change, and Oxfam GB.

Environment Programme

Introduction

Rapid economic growth and re-integration into the world economy are causing serious environmental impacts in Cambodia, particularly reduction of forest cover and biodiversity, reduced access to common property resources, changes to river systems, and threats to sustainable agriculture. The Environment Program is responding to these threats through three projects: the Environment Awareness Project, the Mekong Basin Community Rights Project, and the Pesticide Reduction and Sustainable Agriculture Project.

Environment Awareness Project

Cambodia faces serious environmental threats, and these threats are compounded by poor public awareness of environmental issues, poor enforcement of environmental laws and inadequate environmental legislation. Environmental issues are crosscutting and linked to ecosystem management, preservation of local livelihoods and the promotion of sustainable development. For protection of the environment and conservation of natural resources to become national priorities, there needs to be widespread awareness of environmental issues. Therefore, there is a need to promote environmental awareness and debate and to bring the voice of NGOs and communities to decision-makers, government institutions and development agencies in order to protect the environment for the benefit of the local communities reliant on natural resources.

In response to this need, the Environment Awareness Project has been working with its Environment Forum members and Environment Forum Core Team in order to discuss critical environmental issues and government policies and to raise NGO and community concerns regarding the decreasing availability of forest, fishery and other natural resources that communities have relied on for their livelihoods. The project has built the capacity of the NGO network and mobilized them to participate in the protection and conservation of natural resources and the environment. Moreover, in working together with the Environment Forum members and other NGO networks, the project has influenced decision-makers, government institutions and development agencies through raising concerns and promoting awareness of critical environmental issues affecting community livelihoods and society.

To achieve awareness and protection of the environment, the project with its forum members and core team have been working to develop strategic plans for advocacy campaigns, to influence government policies, to promote awareness and to strengthen the capacity of NGOs and communities to understand environmental issues and the legal framework. Forums, meetings and trainings have provided platforms for the forum members, NGO network and communities to share information, issues and experiences, engage in consultation on relevant draft legislation (e.g. legal framework of forestry, fisheries and protected areas) and to provide comments and inputs to development projects that may have impacts on environment and society. Moreover, the project and its network has brought together NGOs, government and local authorities, officials, students and the public to participate in environment awareness campaigns such as National Environment Day, Clean Up the World Day and an Environment Debate, which were broadcasted to a wide audience via television, radio and the press.



A televised Environment Debate jointly organised by NGO Forum and the Ministry of Environment

The main achievements have been increased participation and the greater attention given by government and donors to environmental concerns raised by NGOs and the public. The project has built a good working relationship with government allowing sharing of confidential information. For

example, the Ministry of Environment sent draft Environmental Impact Assessments about proposed tourist projects in protected areas and gold mining projects to NGO Forum to review and give comments. The NGO Forum mobilized NGOs and local communities to provide comments on the expected impacts.

Furthermore, trainings, meetings and regular forums have provided opportunities to discuss current critical environmental issues, to devise investigation strategies and to quickly respond to government and development agencies. The project coordinated the Environment Forum Core Team to investigate pollution from factories, pig farming, gold mining and plantations, and passed the results of these investigations to local and government authorities. The pig farmers agreed to rectify their waste discharge by building a fence and by considering transforming their waste into biogas rather than directly discharging it to vacant land and waterways.

With the continuing rate of “development” in Cambodia, the project still faces difficult challenges. Communication with some sections of government, particularly the Forestry Administration and some local authorities, continues to be a challenge. Nevertheless, NGOs and communities are committed to continue influencing government through promoting awareness, discussion and debate about government and donor policies and voicing their concerns about natural resources and environment protection.

Pesticide Reduction and Sustainable Agriculture

In Cambodia, more than 85 percent of the total population are farmers, with many of them using dangerous pesticides for their agriculture in ignorance of the threats to their health and the environment. In 1993, following the adoption of a free market economy, importation restrictions on pesticides were relaxed and private traders began to import pesticides, resulting in more pesticides being freely available in the market. Product labels are often in foreign languages. Cambodian



The Pesticide Reduction Network visits pesticide-free farms in Banteay Meanchey province.

farmers have increased their use of pesticides from year to year, leading to greater insect resistance. The Cambodian farmers relative inexperience with the use of pesticides soon produced a predictable outcome of adverse health and environmental effects as a result of the overuse of dangerous pesticides, some of which are banned in other countries.

In response, the project has facilitated the work of the Pesticide Reduction Network in Cambodia (PRN-C), a coalition of mostly Cambodian NGOs, in order to raise awareness among NGOs, governments institutions, local authorities (village development committees and commune councils) and the public (farmers, pesticides retailers, local NGOs and youth) about the impacts of pesticides on health, the

environment and the economy. The project reached out to the general public regarding the risks of pesticides through media campaigns. PRN-C members encourage farmers to decrease their chemical pesticide and fertilizer use and to use alternatives such as botanical pesticides and organic fertilizers. The project also has had good cooperation with the Department of Agronomy and Agricultural Land Improvement (DAALI) and the Bureau of Agriculture Material Standards (BAMS) within the Ministry of Agriculture, the Department of Cam Control within the Ministry of Commerce, and the National Laboratory for Quality Control within the Ministry of Health. As a result, there has been a reduction in the import of illegal pesticides and the some labels are now in Khmer language.

The project helped PRN-C members to develop a pesticide market survey, to understand Sub-Decree 69, and to understand the World Health Organization’s (WHO) classification scheme for dangerous pesticides. Network meetings were used to share up-to-date information, to prepare a strategic work plan, to design and distribute posters about pesticides, to organize provincial and national workshops,

and to discuss how to organize No Pesticides Day. The workshops were conducted with the participation of PRN-C members, local NGOs, farmers, commune councilors and government officials, and focused on the impact of pesticides and the sharing of information, experiences and alternative farming techniques with each other.

As a result, there is now a greater understanding of the impacts of pesticides on health, the environment and the economy. Farmers have learnt how to produce and use organic fertilizers and botanical pesticides. These farmers are now sharing information about the impacts of pesticides with NGO networks, local authorities and farmers. Most farmers have witnessed signs or symptoms of poisoning that they attribute to pesticide use. Information about pesticides has been broadly disseminated. This was made possible by good cooperation between PRN-C members, local authorities and farmers. Four more Cambodian local NGOs have now joined PRN-C, namely, KBPO, CMFE, PNKS and Environment Beauty. The project also organized a study tour with the participation of PRN-C and Environment Forum members to collect information on rice-field fish and vegetable systems, organic rice farmers associations, organic vegetable cropping, and sustainable agriculture methods.

The project was not without difficulties. Some provincial workshops were delayed due to provincial agricultural officials being busy with other responsibilities. The No Pesticide Day campaign failed to obtain cooperation from the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Phnom Penh municipality refused to allow the public parade. It took two months of continuous effort to get permission for the event to be held in Kandal province. It was the first public parade on this issue ever held in Cambodia, so some authorities hesitated to support it.

Mekong Basin Community Rights Project

In the Mekong River Basin, the Sesan, Srepok and Sekong Rivers in northeast Cambodia are some of the most important tributary rivers, together contributing about 19% of the Mekong River's total annual discharge. These rivers are critical for fish species migrating to and from the Tonle Sap Lake in Central Cambodia, and from upstream parts of the Mekong River basin in Laos and Thailand. These three rivers are also critical for the livelihoods of the hundreds of thousands of people that live near them. Dam development projects on the three rivers are increasing, while previous harm has not been addressed.

There are not yet any medium-size or large hydropower dams in the Mekong Basin within Cambodia. However, large numbers of Cambodians have been adversely affected by the impacts of dam development in neighboring countries, especially the Yali Falls Dam on the Sesan River in Vietnam, which has affected water quality and flow resulting in deaths due to flash floods and water-borne diseases, destruction to livestock and crops, and losses to fisheries and other subsistence livelihoods.

In respect to these problems, the Mekong Project is working with a small network of mainly Cambodian NGOs, the "3S Working Group", which focuses on the Srepok, Sesan and Sekong Rivers and the rights of local communities living along these three rivers to access and protect resources and livelihoods which they have traditionally relied on for their social, economic and culture development. Empowering local indigenous communities and building grassroots and national networks are the basis for holding responsible institutions accountable for their decision-making related to equitable and balanced development in the Mekong basin.



Ratanakiri's Deputy Governor gives a speech at the 3rd Annual Sesan Protection Network Celebration

In order to achieve this, the network has been working to influence the policies and practices of governments and international aid agencies, to build the capacity of NGOs and local communities to understand the rights of project-affected-people and the legal framework, and to develop strategies for advocacy. Meetings, workshops, forums and trainings have provided the platform for NGOs, communities representatives and elders and local authorities to share information, problems and experiences, find solutions, develop plans, coordinate activities and engage in consultation on Mekong Basin development issues. The project conducted a baseline study on livelihoods along the Sre Pok River, which will be used as a baseline for monitoring future changes to the river. It also published and released the report "Down River – The Consequences of Vietnam's Se San River Dams on Life in Cambodia and Their Meaning in International Law", prepared by a team from the Harvard Law School. Through meetings with high-level government officials, the impacts of the Vietnamese dams and suggestions for various remedies have been brought to the attention of the Cambodian government, Vietnamese authorities and donor agencies.

The main achievements of the project to date have been the mobilization of affected communities, awareness raising within government and donor agencies, and the provision of well-researched information. Communities understand the issues and have been empowered to voice their concerns. Community concerns have been recognized by some local authorities and provincial government officials. Cambodian and Vietnamese authorities have agreed on an early warning mechanism to warn downstream villages of water surges, although this mechanism is still largely ineffective.

Despite these gains, high-levels of government continue to avoid meaningful negotiations with Vietnam over operation of the dams or to seek compensation for lost lives and livelihoods. Cambodian authorities are also seeking funding sources for the building of new dams on the Cambodian portion of the same rivers, and appear intent on avoiding any precedent for providing just compensation to project-affected people. Consequently, the project has experienced a polite but non-cooperative response from government agencies, and access to government-held information has been difficult and time consuming.

Mekong Basin Community Rights Project Lessons Learnt

- Local knowledge about water management is an important aspect in negotiating environmental flows.
- Community organizing and building capacity among villagers is empowering and enables them to more fully engage in decision-making, which impacts their future.
- There are many opportunities for linkages between NGOs and government. NGOs can provide important knowledge to help governments make decisions.
- There is ample opportunity for replication of this type of network building that enables communities to be fully engaged in all aspects of project development and implementation.
- The network has been able to highlight specific opportunities for decision-makers to address specific conflicts in a peaceful manner.
- Nevertheless, where national government interests and international relations are involved, the best advocacy efforts of local communities and NGOs can be thwarted. The Cambodian government is planning to construct hydropower dams along the Sesan and Srepok Rivers in Cambodia and has ignored calls for further negotiation on compensation, water flow management or improving safety.
- Sometimes the institutions with the clearest responsibility to help are the least active. The responsible international and national institutions have not disclosed critical information to NGOs and communities or helped them to participate in key meetings.
- Capacity building takes time. Local NGOs and communities both still have limited knowledge and skills and do not fully understand the connection between the operation of the dams and their impacts on natural resources and people's livelihoods. This makes advocacy toward government officials difficult.
- Research alone cannot convince a government to take action. Although NGOs and research institutions have produced relevant documentation, research and studies, these have not been fully recognized by some government institutions even though their provincial departments were in some cases involved in the research.

Land and Livelihoods Programme

Introduction

At the NGO Forum's 2003 Annual General Meeting, the majority of participants rated land issues as the top priority issue for the NGO Forum to work on in its 2004-2005 Action Plan. Almost all NGOs in Cambodia are aware of land tenure issues in their project areas and the frequent conflicts that arise over rights to land and natural resources. As Cambodia develops, poor and vulnerable groups are increasingly losing their access to land and natural resources and thousands of families are faced with relocation and resettlement. The NGO Forum on Cambodia has been involved in various aspects of these issues through its Land and Livelihoods Programme. The programme comprises four projects:

- Land issues project
- Resettlement project
- Indigenous Minority Rights project
- Forest Livelihoods and Plantation project

The following is an overview of achievements, challenges, and lessons learned of the Land and Livelihoods Programme in 2004 and 2005.

Land Issues Project

Over 90 percent of Cambodia's poor are living in rural areas². Land tenure security and improved access to land and natural resources are therefore the main pillars for the country's strategy on poverty reduction. In 2002 the Royal Government of Cambodia initiated the Land Management and Administration Project (LMAP) as the first phase of the Land Administration, Management and Distribution Program³. In the multi-partner project LMAP, the Royal Government cooperates with development partners to implement the 2001 Land Law and the 2002 Interim Strategy of Land Policy Framework, pursuing overall goals of poverty reduction, social stability, and equitable economic development.

Despite these efforts, the land reform process in Cambodia progresses only slowly. The number of land disputes, including cases of land grabbing and land speculation by powerful actors, is increasing at an alarming rate⁴. The lack of law enforcement favors the wealthy and well-connected at the expense of poor and vulnerable groups that are often victims of land grabs and land conflicts. Poor people have been targets of the violence of powerful actors and victims of land conflicts have been injured, imprisoned, or even killed.



Workshop on the Land Law and Land Registration, September 2005

In response to this situation, civil society groups have formed a network to be united in their advocacy for pro-poor land reform in Cambodia. The Land Law Implementation Network (LLIN)⁵ is coordinated by the Land Issues Project of the NGO Forum on Cambodia. Established in the second half of 2004,

² UNIFEM, WB, ADB, UNDP and DFID/UK (2004): A Fair Share for Women: Cambodia Gender Assessment. Phnom Penh, pg. 55.

³ The program aims to strengthen tenure security and land markets, prevent and resolve land disputes, ensure the equitable, sustainable and efficient management of land and natural resources, and promote land distribution with equity.

⁴ According to a forthcoming report by Oxfam GB and NGO Forum, the number of land disputes arising between poor farming families and powerful people has doubled in 2004 compared to 2003.

⁵ In a meeting in December 2005, network members decided to change the name of the network to Land Network for Development (LAND).

the network has contributed to increased Land Law awareness of communities at the grassroots level. Improved knowledge of the legal framework supports communities in defending their rights, creates confidence for victims to speak out and provides them with peaceful means in dealing with the problems they are facing. LLIN has furthermore organized meetings, workshops and consultations on land reform issues in Cambodia in order to develop a joint strategy and to lobby the government and donors to strengthen and implement the legal framework so that land disputes can be prevented or effectively resolved and communities can obtain secure tenure to their lands.

Partly due to the successful advocacy work of LLIN, government and donors have begun to realize that the concerns and recommendations of communities as well as civil society groups are useful for the land reform process in Cambodia. In consultations, government and donor agencies have shown increasing openness to suggestions and recommendations from affected communities as well as non-governmental organizations. Many key elements brought forward by civil society groups were included in draft government policies and regulations. For example, the Council for Land Policy accepted the recommendations of an NGO submission on the draft Sub-Decree on Economic Land Concessions which lobbied for agro-industrial tree plantations to be included within the definition of economic land concessions and thus subject to the size restrictions provided by the Land Law.

During its two years of operation, the project has learned that the cooperation between NGOs and government agencies at the national level can be difficult at times. In dealing with this problem, the project has therefore actively encouraged NGO-government cooperation on provincial and district level. Several successful meetings were held with the Land Departments in the provinces.

In bringing together communities, human rights, development and legal NGOs, donors, research organizations as well as government agencies on all levels, the Land Issues Project has contributed to an improved work environment as a necessary basis to effectively assist affected community people and build consensus on hot and controversial land issues in Cambodia.

Resettlement and Housing Rights Project

For many Cambodians the country's rapid development comes at a price. Urban developments, power line projects, and new or upgraded roads are forcing people to relocate and/or lose their source of livelihood, particularly as the rights of project-affected-people are often unclear. A prime example is the Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded Highway 1 improvement project that involved the forced relocation of more than one thousand families⁶, many of them receiving none or inadequate compensation⁷.



Community participatory planning meeting

The Resettlement and Housing Rights project aims to examine issues regarding resettlement and land tenure security. Presently, there are no policies or provisions governing resettlement in Cambodia. Donors and multilateral development banks have their own resettlement standards, but these are unlikely to be enforced unless there is effective monitoring and project-affected-people are given a chance to speak out about their situation.

Building the capacity of community representatives and of NGOs supporting project-affected-people is the key to empowering communities and to strengthening their lobbying and advocacy work. NGOs in the

⁶ Asian Development Bank (2005): Resettlement Audit: Phnom Penh to Ho Chi Minh City Highway Improvement Project (Loan 1659-CAM).

⁷ Legal Aid of Cambodia and NGO Forum ON Cambodia (2002): Report on Compensation for Three Groups of People Affected by National Highway 1 Improvement Project – Neak Leung to Bavet.

Resettlement Action Network (RAN) coordinated by the Resettlement and Housing Rights project have therefore taken a rights-based approach to analyze and influence policy development. The approach emphasizes the principles of participation, accountability, empowerment and non-discrimination with explicit linkages to international human rights standards and norms.

The activities of the network have resulted in a stronger voice for NGOs and communities in their dialogue with donors and government. Supported by RAN, communities have formed networks that can address the issues by themselves. Through community advocacy, donors and government have gained a better understanding of resettlement issues and have shown increasing openness to the concerns of project-affected-people and communities in informal settlements. Concrete achievements include the agreement on grievances of people affected by Highway 1 and the successful lobbying of donors to take necessary steps towards helping develop a standard compensation policy for Cambodia.

The Resettlement Action Network has proven to be a powerful mechanism for consultations and dialogue with multi-lateral banks, donors and government in order to influence design and implementation of development projects, as well as to provide input to legal and policy developments, such as the Sub-decree on Resettlement and the Housing Policy. RAN also collaborated with international NGOs to obtain information, analyze policy violations of multi-lateral banks, and lobby banks and donor governments.

Other lessons learnt include early involvement in public awareness raising before the start of development projects and closer cooperation with local NGOs. Local NGOs can play an important role in providing information to local communities, facilitating negotiations between decision-makers and communities, documenting of project activities and lobbying. Through cooperation with local NGOs more project affected people can be reached and the work of the project can be enhanced and expanded.

Indigenous Minority Rights Project

Alienation of land and forest has now become the major threat to the local livelihoods, culture and traditional knowledge of indigenous people in Cambodia and is devastating the local community landscape. Indigenous people are being marginalized from their ancestral domains. Indigenous communities are affected by land concessions for logging and mining, tourist sites, military concessions, agro-industrial areas and hydropower projects. Anarchic sale and seizure of land by non-indigenous Cambodians and the encroachment of non-indigenous farmlands into state forestland has affected the land tenure and traditional agricultural practices of indigenous people. This, in turn, has weakened the traditional culture, de-stabilized communities and has led to damage of the forest environment. Although the 2001 Land Law recognizes communal ownership of indigenous land, titling of indigenous land has not yet commenced. Senior officials of the Ministry of Land have declared that the Land Law prohibits the sale or transfer of indigenous people's lands prior to titling, but this interpretation is not widely accepted or followed.

Through the support of this project, NGOs are cooperating to strengthen and support the work of NGOs and indigenous organizations to help people secure indigenous rights to land at the grassroots level and to advocate at the national level. The project is providing information, networking support and advocacy assistance to NGOs already engaged in indigenous issues. The primary goal is to support the development of a national network of indigenous people and assist that network to develop its capacity to carry out advocacy activities.

The main achievements of the Indigenous Minority Rights project to date include:

- Support to the creation of a national level network of representatives from indigenous



*Indigenous people's meeting,
Stung Treng province*

communities in 15 provinces – the Indigenous Rights Active Members (IRAM).

- Enhancing the knowledge and capacity of indigenous representatives through national and regional trainings and workshops.
- Increased awareness among government officials, donors, NGOs and the general public of indigenous issues through trainings, workshops, dialogue and media work.
- Increased awareness among local government officials of the situation of indigenous people through provincial and district meetings. Prior to these meetings, many provincial and district government officials were not aware of indigenous communities in their provinces.
- Better coordination of the advocacy and capacity building activities of NGOs working with indigenous people through regular national level network meetings.
- Increased appreciation of the role of indigenous women through gender and women's self-empowerment workshops.

Awareness raising, publicity and advocacy on all levels have been among the strengths of the Indigenous Minority Rights project. Supported by advocacy reports, briefing papers and visual material such as short videos and narrated slideshows, the project has informed indigenous communities, government, donors, NGOs and the general public of the issues faced by indigenous peoples in relation to social, economic and cultural changes in tandem with the loss of access to land and forest.

However, only small steps could be taken towards the registration of the rights of indigenous peoples to their lands and natural resources. The process of land registration is currently delayed by an incomplete legal framework. Since the development of legal procedures for the registration of indigenous collective land title requires inter-ministerial cooperation, the process is slow. By facilitating a dialogue between policy-makers and indigenous communities, the project has contributed to moving the process forward. However, political will is still needed to implement registration of the collective rights of indigenous people to land.

As expected, creating venues for exchange of information and common strategizing strengthened the cooperation and efficiency of NGOs and civil society on the district, provincial and national level. Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of NGO network members and the NGO Forum staff has also helped to prioritize and focus activities and develop clear work plans for network activities.

On the other hand, despite education and awareness raising and several meetings and workshops at the district and provincial level on the issue of illegal land transactions, the selling of indigenous peoples' land continues largely unabated. A forthcoming project report on the issue of land alienation in Ratanakiri demonstrates that the situation has worsened and that the problem has progressed to the stage where some communities have disintegrated and there has been a severe loss of cultural and social resources.

In the future, the project will continue to strengthen indigenous peoples' organizations and networks to peacefully advocate for land and forest tenure security, as guaranteed in Cambodia's legal framework. Facilitated by the Indigenous Minority Rights project, NGOs and international organizations working on indigenous issues will continue to meet regularly and coordinate their activities. The network will further be strengthened by developing clear procedures and terms of cooperation, including 2-monthly work plans.

Indigenous Minority Rights Project Lessons Learnt

- Advocacy is most effective when indigenous peoples themselves are the proponents.
- Indigenous peoples need to be actively engaged and in control of advocacy activities regarding their rights to land, natural resources, cultural integrity and self-determined development.
- Before conducting a meeting or workshop in the provinces, local authorities should be informed at least one week beforehand.
- Applying a participatory approach to all project activities increases the sense of ownership and encourages partnerships.
- Effective implementation of project activities is based on the cooperation of all stakeholders.
- Before facilitating trainings, outside facilitators should have a clear understanding of objectives and topics, as well as the specific rights of indigenous people.
- Visual materials respond well to the particular needs of indigenous communities, characterized by high rates of illiteracy.

Forest Livelihoods and Plantations Project

In the mid-1990s, forest concessions were granted over more than 35 percent of Cambodia's surface area, including almost all tracts of valuable forest. Since that time, logging concession companies have significantly degraded these forest areas and constructed roads that have opened up forest areas in a manner unprecedented in Cambodian history. As a result, conversion of forest areas to other land uses including agro-industry, rubber plantations and plantation development is increasing. Furthermore, the cutting and replacement of natural forests with agro-industrial plantations is having significant negative impacts on the environment and on the livelihoods of forest dependent communities.



The Environment Forum Core Team visits a community forest in Oddar Meanchey province.

In response to these problems, the Forest Livelihoods and Plantations project has been working with a network of mostly Cambodian NGOs in order to empower local communities living within or near forests or areas converted to plantations to gain secure tenure over the forest and other natural resources they have traditionally relied upon for their social, economic and culture development. Empowering local communities and a nation-wide grassroots-based network to advocate their rights also helps to hold the Cambodian government accountable for its decision making in relation to the use and management of forestlands and forest resource and assists in the transformation of government policy related to forest and plantation development issues.

In order to achieve this, members of the forestry and plantation network have been working together to influence government policies and to build the capacity of NGOs and local communities to understand the legal framework and develop strategic plans for advocacy activities. Meetings, trainings and forums provided the platform for NGOs, community leaders, and human rights organizations to share problems and experiences, develop plans, coordinate activities, and engage in consultation on relevant draft legislation. The forestry and plantation network also assisted affected local communities to do petitions, statements and complaint letters. Supported by the Forest Livelihoods and Plantation Project, NGOs of the network, members of the Environment Forum Core Team, reporters and media met with affected communities and collected primary information on land, forestry and plantation issues.



Forest Livelihoods NGO network meeting

In 2004, the network facilitated community consultations, involving 2492 people from 18 communes, on the revised Forest Concession Management Plans and Environmental Impact Assessments of the six remaining concession companies. The consultations highlighted the deficiencies of the plans produced by the concession companies, in particular their continued disregard of the rights of resin tappers.

In 2005, the capacity building and networking functions of the NGO Forum's Forest Livelihoods project were transferred to Oxfam GB. However, NGO Forum continued to coordinate national level advocacy on forestry livelihood issues, and increasingly on the

sensitive issue of plantation developments. This included organising a submission to the World Bank Inspection Panel to review problems associated with the World Bank's support to the forest sector in Cambodia (see box below). The project was also successful in bringing the situation of indigenous communities affected by the Wuzhishan company's pine tree concession in Mondulkiri to the attention of the Government-Donor Coordination Committee meeting. The Council of Ministers called for a temporary halt to work on the concession. The NGO Forum called for cancellation of the concession, which was operating illegally, but also helped negotiate NGO assistance for participatory land use planning in order to better define the land of the indigenous communities.

Due to the sensitive governance issues involved, the project has faced many challenges. Encouraging the participation and understanding of the Forestry Administration and Ministry of Agriculture has been especially difficult. One lesson from the project has been that, despite these difficulties, the need to build communication with government institutions cannot be ignored.

Nevertheless, partly due to the achievements of the network, the importance of forests for local communities now receives greater attention from both the Cambodian Government and donors. Forest concessions have been cancelled, and alternative ways of managing forests are being discussed. The adequacy of concession companies' forest management plans and their violations of community rights to forest resources were put under intense scrutiny. Community forestry associations and by-laws have been recognized by some provincial government officials. Some land concessions and plantation developments were stopped or delayed and communities have been strengthened in their ability to be heard by government officials and donors.

**Request for Inspection of the World Bank's
Forest Concession Management and Control (Pilot) Project in Cambodia**

In January 2005, the NGO Forum, acting on behalf of affected communities, submitted a request to the World Bank's Inspection Panel for an inspection of the World Bank's Forest Concession Management and Control (Pilot) Project. The NGO Forum's Management Committee heard opinions from NGOs involved in forestry and human rights issues and from NGOs operating in the project-affected areas before deciding to submit the request.

The request claimed, among other things, that:

1. Through flawed project design and poor implementation, the World Bank has promoted the interests of the logging concession system and the concessionaires.
2. By allowing its project to endorse the sustainable forest management plans and environmental impact assessments of six of these companies, the World Bank has increased the likelihood that they will continue to maintain control of their concessions. At the same time, the Bank has not succeeded in introducing any additional checks and balances to the concession system that would compel the companies to operate differently from the way that they did before.
3. The project violated a number of World Bank operational policies, including those to do with Forests, Environmental Assessment, Indigenous Peoples and Project Supervision. In particular, an Indigenous People's Development Plan should have been prepared and a full Environmental Assessment carried out at the beginning of the project.
4. Through its acts and omissions, the World Bank has contributed to a set of outcomes that stand to inflict harm on forest-dependent communities. These include a continuation of logging activities which harm the environment, threats to local communities, reduced community access to non-timber forest products, and the logging of resin-producing trees which are important for community livelihoods.

The NGO Forum produced documentation for the Inspection Panel and helped organise their site visits. The Inspection Panel is scheduled to release its final report in 2006. The results of the inspection are expected to bring about changes in future World Bank operations in the forest sector, in Cambodia and elsewhere. In fact, already in November 2005, the Bank wrote to the Royal Government of Cambodia to express the view that, in the light of independent evaluation, they perceive that concessionaire performance is unlikely to improve and that the government should exercise its legal right to cancel concessions and plan for sustainable management of forest areas through other means, including community or commune-based forest protection.

Financial Statement

STATEMENT OF SOURCES AND APPLICATIONS OF FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2005

	2005	2004
	US\$	US\$
	<hr/>	<hr/>
SOURCES OF FUNDS		
Opening balances		
Cash at banks	237,070	114,266
Advance account	1,938	36,319
Cash on hand	1,144	281
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	240,152	150,866
Receipts for the year		
Grants for The NGO Forum Action Plan	494,302	512,257
Membership subscriptions	5,100	7,310
Other receipts	9,202	2,740
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	508,604	522,307
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<u>748,756</u>	<u>673,173</u>
APPLICATIONS OF FUNDS		
Core Project costs	153,509	117,514
<u>Land and Livelihoods Programme costs</u>		
Land Issues and Resettlement Project costs	132,283	44,437
Indigenous Minority Rights Project costs	89,235	30,299
Forest Livelihoods Project costs	21,890	75,661
Environment Programme costs	92,881	47,052
Development Issues Programme costs	77,417	54,229
Trust Fund Payments	2,968	-
Separation of Fisheries Action Coalition Team	-	63,829
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	570,183	433,021
Closing balances		
Cash at banks	177,769	237,070
Advance account	-	1,938
Cash on hand	804	1,144
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	178,573	240,152
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<u>748,756</u>	<u>673,173</u>

Financial Report 2004-2005

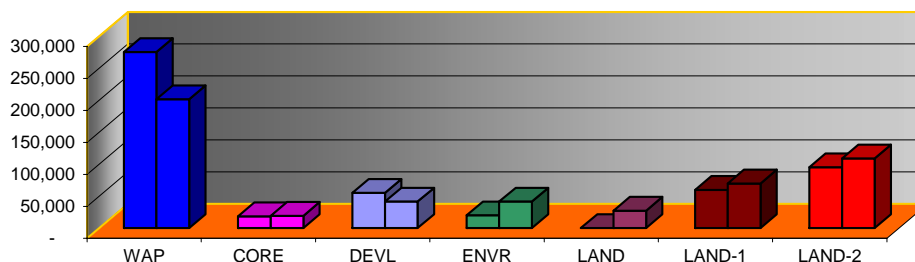
Comparison of Income for the years 2004 and 2005

Projects/ Programmes' name		2004	%	2005	%	Total
Whole Action Plan	WAP	275,017	53%	201,346	40%	476,364
Core Project	CORE	18,213	3%	19,030	4%	37,243
Dev'l Issues Programme	DEVL	54,871	11%	41,456	8%	96,327
Env'r Programme	ENVR	19,689	4%	41,409	8%	61,098
Land & Live. Programme	LAND	-	0%	27,000	5%	27,000
Land (Component 1)*	LAND-1	59,543	11%	69,594	14%	129,137
Land (Component 2)**	LAND-2	94,974	18%	108,769	21%	203,743
Total Income		522,307	100%	508,604	100%	1,030,912

*- Land (Land reform, Resettlement)

** - Land (Forests, Indigenous Rights)

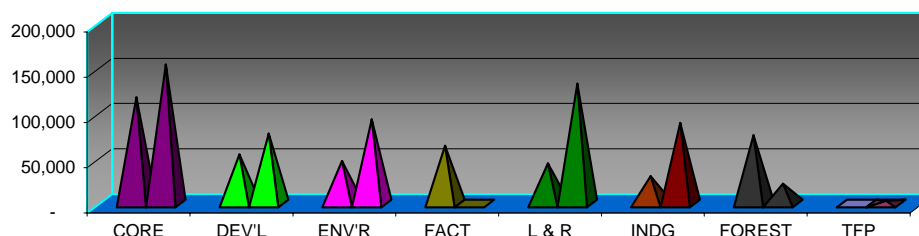
COMPARISON OF INCOME BY PROJECTS 2004-2005



Comparison of Expenditures for the years 2004 and 2005

Projects name		2004	%	2005	%	Total
Core Project	CORE	117,514	27%	153,509	27%	271,023
Development Issue Program	DEV'L	54,229	13%	77,417	14%	131,646
Environment Program	ENVR	47,052	11%	92,881	16%	139,933
Separation of FACT	FACT	63,829	15%	-	0%	63,829
Land (Component 1)	L & R	44,437	10%	132,283	23%	176,720
Land (Component 2)	INDG	30,299	7%	89,235	16%	119,534
Land (Component 2)	FOREST	75,661	17%	21,890	4%	97,551
Trust Fund Payment	TFP	-	0%	2,968	1%	2,968
Total expenses		433,021	100%	570,183	100%	1,003,204

COMPARISON OF EXPENDITURES BY PROJECTS 2004-2005



List of member organizations

International NGOs

ActionAid International Cambodia
Action on Disability and Development
American Friends Service Committee
Australian Catholic Relief
Canadian Centre for International Studies and
Cooperation
Care International
Catholic Relief Services
Christian Outreach for Relief and Development
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
Church World Service
Concern Worldwide
Deutsche Welthungerhilfe - German Agro
Action
Enfants et Développement
Forum Syd
Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges
Technologiques
Health Unlimited

HelpAge International
Japan International Volunteer Centre
Jesuit Service Cambodia
Lutheran World Federation
Maryknoll
Mennonite Central Committee
Norwegian People's Aid
Oxfam Community Aid Abroad
Oxfam Great Britain
Oxfam Hong Kong - Womyn's Agenda for
Change Project
PACT Cambodia
Plan International Cambodia
Save the Children - Norway
Swiss Interchurch Aid (HEKS)
Wild Aid
World Vision International - Cambodia
World Wildlife Fund for Nature

Local NGOs

Association of Protection Development for
Cambodia Environment
Banteay Srei
Buddhism Community for Development of
Cambodia
Buddhism for a Progressive Society
Cambodia Women Culture Development
Cambodian HIV/AIDS Education and Care
Cambodian Human Rights and Development
Association (ADHOC)
Cambodian Labour Organisation
Cambodian League for the Promotion &
Defence of Human Rights (LICADHO)
Cambodian Rural Economic Development
Organization
Cambodian Sanitation and Recycling
Organisation
Cambodian Women's Development
Association
Cambodian Youth Development
Centre d'Etude et de Développement Agricole
Cambodgien (CEDAC)
Community Legal Education Center
Cooperation for Development of Cambodia
Culture and Environment Preservation
Association
Development and Partnership in Action
Farmer Livelihood Development Organization

Gender and Development for Cambodia
Healthcare Centre for Children
Human Rights Vigilance of Cambodia
Hurredo
Indra Devi Association
Khemara
Khmer Community for Agricultural
Development
Khmer Farmers Association
Khmer Women's Voice Centre
Legal Aid of Cambodia
Meada Khmer Development Organisation
Mlup Baitong
National Prosperity Association
Organisation for Assistance of Children and
Rural Women
Partnership for Development in Kampuchea
Project Against Domestic Violence
Socio-Economic Development Organisation of
Cambodia
Sor Sor Troung
Strey Santepeap Deiombeiy Parethan
Urban Poor Women Development
Urban Sector Group
Vicheasthan Bandosbondal Neakropkrong
Kangea Aphivath
Violence Against Women and Children of
Cambodia

Associate Members

DanChurchAid
Oxfam America

Donors in 2004-2005

(listed in order of size of contribution, starting from the largest)

Oxfam GB*
Oxfam America*
Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF)
Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)*
European Union (EU)
Foundsvoor Ontwikkelings Samenwerking (FOS)
Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)
Christian Aid
Department for International Development of the British Government (DFID)
The Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD)
Diakonia
East-West Management Institute (EWMI)
Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO)
DanChurchAid (DCA)*
Action Aid*
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Misereor
Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC)
Australian Embassy
Global Greengrants Fund (GGF)
Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples Network (IKAP)
International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)
Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR)
United Nations Industrial Development Organisation/UNDP (UNIDO/UNDP)
Forum Syd*
Lutheran World Federation (LWF)*
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Community Legal Education Center (CLEC)*
Womyn's Agenda for Change project (WAC)*
Church World Service (CWS)*
Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBF)
Asia Forestry Network (AFN)
Cooperation Int'l pour le Developpement et la Solidarite (CIDSE)*
Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP)
International Rivers Network (IRN)
DanChurchAid* fund for CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women)
NGO Forum on the Asian Development Bank
Community Sanitation and Recycling Organisation (CSARO)
Women's Rights Action Watch (WRAW)
Cambodian Association for Informal Economy Development Concern
Caritas
Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)

* Organisations marked with an asterisk are **member organisations** of the NGO Forum on Cambodia. Member organisations also pay a membership fee. Local NGOs are eligible to apply for an exemption to the membership fee requirement.

The NGO Forum on Cambodia would like to thank all organisations that supported the NGO Forum's work in 2004 and 2005, through financial support, technical assistance, or active participation.

NGO Forum Staff

(as of 1 February 2006)

Executive Director	Mr. Chhith Sam Ath*
Deputy Executive Director	Mr. Ngy San*
Senior Advisor (previously Representative)	Mr. Russell Peterson
Development Issues Programme Coordinator	Mr. Ek Siden*
Development Issues Programme Adviser	Mr. Gijs Koop*
Gender Project Officer	Ms. Ky Nimol*
Trade and Economic Development Project Officer	Mr. Ros Khemara*
Environment Programme Coordinator	Ms. Lam Saoleng*
Environmental Awareness and Protection Project Officer	Mr. Sam Chanthy*
Pesticide Reduction and Sustainable Agriculture Project Officer	Ms. Men Vannavy*
Land and Livelihoods Programme Coordinator	Mr. Touch Sokha*
Land and Livelihoods Programme Adviser	Ms. Katrin Seidel*
Resettlement and Housing Rights Project Officer	Mr. Kol Leakhana
Indigenous Minority Rights Project Officer	Mr. Ek Yothin*
Forest Livelihoods and Plantation Project Officer	Ms. Tan Sokhom
Administrative Officer	Mr. Moeun Lin*
Finance Officer	Ms. Sek Mala
Cashier/ Accountant	Ms. Han Sodany*
I.T. Officer	Mr. Kong Piseth*
Office Clerk	Mr. Thou Chhuon Leap
Driver/ Messenger	Mr. Prak Ratha*

* Staff recruited during 2004-2005

Staff who left NGO Forum during 2004-2005

Deputy Representative	Mr. Sok Somith	(left Aug 2004)
Environment Programme Coordinator	Mr. Ea Sophy	(left June 2004)
I.T. Officer	Mr. Chhay Sovann	(left May 2005)
Gender Project Officer	Ms. Ek Sophanna	(left Aug 2005)
Gender Project Officer	Ms. Tim Sopheap	(left Jan 2006)
Trade and Economic Development Project Officer	Mr. Keo Chamroeun	(left Jan 2006)

Volunteers during 2004-2005

(Volunteers are young people seeking work experience and may join NGO Forum for up to 6 months.)

Finance: Eing Soy, Yim Kimchhean, Keat Thida.

Admin: Or Sovanak, Kun Salin, Sao Sophea, Srey Maluch, San Sethy, Pen Chan Chakrya, Nheb Sorphorn, Va Visal, Mao Sowannary.

Development Issues: Kim Net Setha, Heng Thona, Long Thy, Sok Chamroeun, Khim Sosamrach, Men Makara, Lee Kimsras, Lay Nara. Also, Chad Conlin (research student from the U.S.).

Environment Issues: Sen Sambo, Hourn Ratana, Chab Vila, Chorn Vichhay, Seng Korngyou, Neang Sotana, Neou Reaksmeay, Say Chamrong, Nguon Haing.

Land & Livelihoods: Lim Chhay, Kry VongSocheat, Sam Bunthorn, Tep Chansothea, Khorn Vireak, Leang Lumneuk.

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