



SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHEAST CAMBODIA

26 FEBRUARY - 2 MARCH 1996

BANLUNG, RATANAKIRI  
KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

Sponsored by  
The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Highland People's Development  
and  
The Ministry of Rural Development

Hosted by the Provincial Government of Ratanakiri Province

with support from  
CARERE, IDRC, OxFam UKI/Novib, CIDSE, Health Unlimited, and UNESCO

Proceedings prepared by Sara Colm and Ker Munthit

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the concurrence of the Minister of Rural Development, H.E. Dr. Hong Sun Huot, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Interministerial Committee on the Highland Peoples' Development, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC - an international agency funded by the Parliament of Canada and focusing on research for development at the national and local levels), was approached by several of the international organizations active in this field including: UNDP/CARERE, CIDSE, Oxfam and Health Unlimited, to coordinate the management of an international seminar on "Sustainable Development in Northeast Cambodia", in Ratanakiri province, where development is proceeding the fastest.

The seminar was the result of an August 1995 seminar on "Ethnic Communities and Sustainable Development in Northeast Cambodia", organized by the international NGO CIDSE CAMBODIA, with assistance from the Interministerial Committee on the Highland Peoples' Development, chaired by the Ministry of Rural Development. At that seminar the Co-Prime Ministers of the Royal Government made public commitments to protect and conserve the resources of human cultural diversity and biodiversity, which they regard as national treasures. The seminar produced a number of important recommendations including the holding of follow-up seminar, this time in Northeast Cambodia, in Ratanakiri Province.

The five organizations agreed to establish a "consultative group" for this purpose and to undertake initial pilot research activities in support of the seminar objectives and the development of a longer-term research agenda.

The consultative group members are presently working in Ratanakiri Province in close cooperation with the local communities and local authorities. The main thrust of this cooperation is to respond to the urgent request for up-to-date information and appropriate skills concerning sustainable and equitable development to which communities and authorities have not had access in the past. Information dissemination, local capacity building and participatory planning and management of development are key objectives of their assistance. The seminar was an integral part of IO/NGO cooperation in achieving the objectives of strengthening the local development capacity. Included in the pre-seminar activities was a series of village consultations with *Kbmer Leu* (Highland peoples) leaders, acquainting them with the issues of the forthcoming seminar, to ensure their voice was heard.

The seminar's stated objectives were:

- to create understanding for the richness of ethnic community culture and its value for national cultural diversity, as well as for sustainable economic development;
- to discuss concerns and visions for the future of the

Northeast region from the perspective of indigenous communities;

- to develop a vision of the sustainable long-term development of the region and for appropriate natural resource management; and
- to formulate recommendations for support to local decision making about, and management of, regional and provincial development.

Over 200 local, provincial, national and international participants converged on Ban Lung, Ratanakiri, with representation from Vietnam and Thailand as well. The participants were represented by *Kbmer Leu* (Highland Peoples), at village, commune and district levels, provincial and national government officials as well as IO/NGO's. The seminar was officially sponsored by the Ministry of Rural Development and the Interministerial Committee on the Highland Peoples' Development with the Provincial Government of Ratanakiri hosting the event. The consultative group members were joined by UNESCO for funding and by Adhoc, the Highland Peoples' Project, and Ratanakiri Province for organizing the seminar.

The seminar was opened on 26 February 1996 with welcoming speeches by H.E. Kep Chuktema, Governor of Ratanakiri, UNDP Resident Representative Andre Klap and H.E. Dr. Hong Sun Huot, Minister of Rural Development and Chairman of the Interministerial Committee on the Highland Peoples' Development. The Keynote Address was given by Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, of Chiang Mai University's Social Research Center.

Both First Prime Minister HRH Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh, in opening the seminar, and H.E. Sok An, representative of Second Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, in closing, reaffirmed the Royal Government's pledge not to allow any investment projects to proceed if they threaten the "livelihoods and cultures" of the Highland peoples.

Through a series of plenary presentations and case studies (both foreign and local), issues were presented and debated in group discussions. Simultaneous translation was available for English, Khmer, Brao, Tampuan and Jorai languages. Group discussions were held in Highland languages as well as English and Khmer.

Issues included:

- Natural Resource Management
- (Eco)-Tourism
- Resource Economics
- Sustainable Development of Upland Area
- Land Tenure
- Women and Development

- Management of Animal Systems
- Non-Formal Education
- Participatory Local Decision Making
- Community Management of Natural Resources
- Environmental Impact Assessments

The seminar ended in the drafting and approval by participants of a proposed national policy and action plan for development in the Northeast, as had been requested by the Government.

The draft policy statement calls for an institutional structure including the participation of Khmer Leu leaders in the various committees responsible for development planning at the central, provincial and local levels. IO/NGO's are requested to provide technical assistance and facilitation through this structure.

The policy statement, if accepted by the Royal Government, will put in place interim regulations mandating environmental and social impact assessments to be included in the management plans which are required for all resource and other development projects. Provincial Rural Development Committees would be mandated to carry out public consultations, to accept or reject development project proposals, based on the impact assessment reports which developers would be required to prepare.

Immediate action and local capacity building are proposed,

to ensure that Khmer Leu communities are able to participate fully in these processes. Participatory research on land tenure systems and demarcation of customary land use boundaries, community forestry, watershed and irrigation management and new technologies to raise productivity of swidden agriculture is planned. The community-based management of the Yeak Laum crater lake area will be one feature of the program. Work on health care and non-formal education is ongoing.

The Final Report on the Seminar on Sustainable Development of Northeast Cambodia includes:

- Opening Ceremony
- Plenary Presentations
- Case Studies
- Discussion Group Reports
- Draft Policy Statement
- Group Reports on Policy Statement
- Closing Ceremony
- Evaluation of the Seminar
- Post Seminar Evaluation by Ethnic Community Representatives
- List of Participants

For more information about the seminar, contact IDRC at 203 Rue Pasteur (Street 51), P.O. Box 544, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia. Fax/Tel: (855) (23) 426581, Internet: idrc cambodia@Forum.org.kh or any of the other sponsors.

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**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
 IN NORTHEAST CAMBODIA**  
 BANLUNG, FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 2, 1996

MONDAY  
**26**  
**FEBRUARY 1996**



*" We live because of the forest. Trees are our grandfathers, our sisters and brothers. The trees have value since the time they are small. Some of them even yield fruit for us to eat. The forest is useful for the climate because it can make rain. If all trees were cut, the rain would disappear. Without trees to prevent strong winds from blowing, our crops will be destroyed and the weather will be very hot."*

- Jarai woman

## OPENING CEREMONY

The Seminar on Sustainable Development in Northeast Cambodia opened on February 26, 1996 in Banlung, Ratanakiri with welcoming speeches by His Excellency Kep Chuktema, Governor of Ratanakiri, UNDP Resident Representative Andre Klap and H.E. Hong Sun Huot, Minister of Rural Development and Chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Highland Peoples' Development.

Prou singers wearing traditional black and crimson sampots and loin cloths chanted and beat gongs as they greeted First Prime Minister HRH Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh. In an address, Ranariddh reaffirmed the Royal Government's pledge not to allow any investment projects to proceed if they threaten the "livelihoods and cultures" of the Highland peoples.

"All projects, including those already signed, are required to submit management plans which must include some assessment of the impacts of the project on the local environment, and on local communities," Ranariddh said. He called on the seminar to work on a first draft of a general policy statement on Sustainable Development in the Highlands of Cambodia.

H.E. Dr. Hong Sun Huot outlined the objectives of the workshop:

- to highlight the ethnic minorities' diverse cultures and evaluate their traditional approaches to natural resource management;
- to raise awareness of Northeast Cambodia's development process among government, ethnic groups, international and national organizations, the private sector, and neighboring countries in the region;
- to highlight the rural development structure and to discuss the role of local decision-making within the framework of that structure;

- to formulate strategies that support sustainable development in Northeast Cambodia.

In his address, Andre Klap, Resident Representative of UNDP, advocated a "cautious but realistic" approach to exploring the Northeast region's rich potential. "So much more is to be gained by pursuing Sustainable Development, rather than just 'big-quick growth'," Klap said. "Development that is based on full participation of the people and communities concerned. That's why this international seminar is so significant as a means for consultation and consensus-building among all stakeholders on what are the principle development issues and challenges of this region, and on how best these issues and challenges can be tackled."

Speaking on behalf of Ethnic Community representatives attending the seminar, Sal Yuch, a Jarai from O Ya Dao, urged that more needs to be done to help the ethnic minorities. He noted that the hilltribes people never had proper clothing, education, health care system until the 1960s, when then-Prince Norodom Sihanouk ruled Cambodia and living conditions began to change. "We ask Samdech Krom Preah [Norodom Ranariddh] to help solve the difficulties we are facing," Sal Yuch said.

In a keynote speech, "Local Strategies for Sustainable Development," Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, Director of the Social Research Institute at Chiang Mai University, called for a grassroots, participatory approach to sustainable development. Local people must be listened to as part of the development process and their cultural identity, local wisdom and rights respected, Dr. Chayan argued.

"If local strategies in coping with changes are recognized, adopted and strengthened by outside developers," Dr. Chayan said, "then [local people] will be 'empowered' or able to transform themselves to be the owner of their development."

## ECONOMICS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Camille Bann, *Environmental Economics Program of Southeast Asia*

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the current generation without compromising the chances of future generations to meet their needs. Economic analysis is important in understanding and achieving sustainable development. The economy and the environment are not separate; they interact. The way we manage the economy impacts the environment, and environmental quality impacts performance of the economy. For example, if we destroy the forests there will be a loss of revenue and people's livelihoods will be affected.

We need to place a proper value on the services provided by the natural environment. The problem is that many environmental goods and services are provided free. Examples of environmental goods and services that typically do not have a market price include the watershed protection of a tropical forest or a forest's biological diversity.

The basic theory of supply and demand tells us that if something has a low or zero price, demand is likely to be high. This is a problem in the context of environmental resources because a low or zero price can lead to excessive demand which could lead to overuse or exploitation of natural resources. Environmental resources do have a positive price; therefore it is important that we value the environment and include these values in economic decisions.

An economic analysis of tropical forest land use can help us make decisions about the best option for particular areas. Ratanakiri is very richly forested — if the forest is managed wisely it will be able to provide a perpetual or continual stream of income for Cambodia. Therefore it is important that development opportunities based on forest land are not wasted.

Forest land can be used in many different ways: for commercial timber extraction; or it may be converted to commercial agricultural activities like oil palm or rubber plantations; or it may be used for traditional subsistence practices such as collection of non-timber forest products. Another option is to protect areas of forest through the establishment of a national park or wildlife sanctuary. In Ratanakiri, forest land has long served as a base for the

subsistence of indigenous people. So as development plans are refined for the province we need to think of the best way to use the forest land in Ratanakiri; characterizing it in economic terms. Each option for forest land — whether it's used for timber extraction, agriculture or as a protected area — has implications in terms of economic costs and benefits. If we decide to use land for agriculture then there are a number of costs associated with this; for example the cost of clearing the forest and establishing crops. We need to understand the different costs and benefits, advantages and dis-

advantages for each different use of forest land so that we can evaluate the different options and hopefully make a decision that will maximize the benefits of using tropical forests. These benefits should be benefits over the long term and should not only look at environmental costs but also the social implication.

There are different values of the forest: 1) **Direct values:** sustainable timber, non-timber forest products (medicine, wildlife and food collected from the forest), recreation and tourism, medicinal purposes, plant genetics, education, human habitat; and 2) **Indirect values:** watershed protection, nutrient cycling, air pollution reduction, micro-climatic function, carbon store, biodiversity.

We need to include all these values of the forest in our evaluation. Often there's no price but there are a number of ways in which we can establish a price or value. If we don't include all the values of the forest in our evaluation, there's a danger that our decision on how to use the forest will be biased towards those activities that do have a market price and we might then lose important values of the forest.

In the last few weeks a team from the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture and Oxfam/Novib have been looking at the value of non-timber forest products. That research has indicated that there are a variety of products collected from the forest that are extremely important for the livelihood of the people.

## DISCUSSION GROUP

### OPTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Facilitator: **Camille Bann**

This group was composed primarily of government officials. Teak Seng from the Ministry of Environment made a presentation on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports, citing work in progress on an EIA on a 5,000 hectare palm oil plantation along Route 19 in O Ya Dao district. The plantation will affect two communes and approximately 200 families. Initial observations by an EIA team from the Ministry of the Environment point to the need to make an inventory of threatened forests, wildlife and other natural resources in the area, analyze the socio-economic impacts, and evaluate soil erosion and pollution.

Questions that arose in the small group discussions included: 1) How can guidelines be developed for development in Ratanakiri? 2) How can Highlanders be stopped from cutting the forest?

**Director of Ratanakiri Department of Environment:**

1. Educate the people to understand the values of the environment in order to reduce their habit of clearing forest to make swidden farms;

2. Persuade the people to engage in lowland rice farming practices and obtain funding for that purpose from NGOs and the government;
3. Introduce industrial plantations on abandoned land;
4. Establish a clear policy on land title because the minority groups have managed and controlled the land according to their customs;
5. Promote tourism in Ratanakiri in order to increase employment opportunities and a market for people to generate more income from selling their handicrafts;
6. Improve the education system by building more schools for minority children;

**Director of Ratanakiri Department of Tourism:**

1. Educate the people to understand about the objectives of sustainable development;
2. Set a clear government policy on land use;
3. Prepare a master plan/land use plan in order to identify specific areas for different purposes of development;
4. Improve livestock husbandry in order for the people to have meat to eat along with rice because about 600 cattle in Ratanakiri die from disease every year;
5. Introduce industries that can process local products, such as sugar cane, corn, coffee, cashews, ect. and that will create more jobs;
6. We must risk giving 5,000 hectares of land for the oil palm plantation rather than having 1,500-2,000 hectares of the forest cleared every year by the minorities.

**Unresolved Issues:** On several occasions government officials in the group expressed the opinion that deforestation is due to the shifting cultivation tradition of the highlanders, causing a large financial loss when precious wood is cut and burned.

**Group Conclusions – Presentation to Plenary:**

Based on the traditions of the Highlanders, they clear the forests, making this a relevant topic for economics and environment. The question is how to do sustainable development.

1. Develop human resources and help minorities understand the value of the environment through education.
2. Identify main causes of deforestation and shifting agriculture.
3. Use abandoned land to use for agriculture and industrial plantations. Offer alternative crop suggestions to Highlanders such as coffee or lychees. Establish a model village for paddy rice so that minorities can learn the benefits of lowland rice cultivation.
4. Develop policies on cutting trees, and establish a master plan for land use, land tenure, and land capacity classifications.
5. Develop job opportunities through handicrafts and tourism.
6. Prepare for business investments. Develop infrastructure such as roads and local sustainable markets.
7. Increased understanding of environmental impacts.
8. Improve animal husbandry.

## FARMERS' COPING STRATEGIES

Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, *Director, Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University*

Lets visualize that we are in a small village. Surrounding us are natural resources or "environment" — this could be forest resources, land resources, water, or mines. People have to use these resources for their living. In Thailand we say villagers use forests almost like they go to the market. But people do not use the forest without any rules or regulation; otherwise there will not be enough for their community.

The Karen in Thailand have local knowledge; they know where these resources are: different types of trees, plants, animals, fish, etc.; when they can collect them and for what purpose. Ethnic groups in the Northeast of Cambodia have knowledge as well as to how to use their forest. They also have a certain value system, which means using resources with respect.

In Thai we call the river *Menam*. We believe that the river has merit and helps us a lot, so we feel the river is like our mother. People feel if they want to use the forest they have to respect it because it provides food and all kinds of things that people need. So when you want to cut a tree you have to ask permission from the spirit that takes care of the forest. When a baby is born the Karen will bury the placenta underneath a tree and that tree belongs to that baby. The spirit of the tree will protect the baby and when that baby grows up it will have to protect or take care of that tree.

In understanding the relationship between people and forests it is important to understand how people feel about ownership. I was in a Kreung village in October, and I was told that the paddy field belonged to the community; anyone can use it. This is very important to understand in resource management: if people do not have communal ownership of land they will not protect it. Similarly, if people don't have the sense of ownership of communal forests they will not take care of them. In Kreung and Tampuen and Jarai villages they have their own organization, so if government officials appoint a new village committee without understanding that there is already a village committee or village leaders, there will be conflict between these two sets of leaders.

Prince Ranariddh talked about Globalization. A new social and cultural system is coming soon. Even in very remote areas, a market economy is now coming and there are many changes, particularly with regard to technology. Because both Thailand and Cambodia want to develop economically, there will be a lot economic changes and development at a very fast rate. There will be a large demand to extract forest resources, to extract soil or sand from the rivers and rocks from the mountains to build roads and bridges. There will be several dams built on the Mekong River because Mekong countries need more electricity. There will be more build-

ings, schools, shops which need wood, bricks, etc. If we do not pay attention to this and we don't use these resources carefully we will not have enough resources to go on.

The northeast of Thailand has only 11 percent of forest left. Now Thai businessmen are coming to Cambodia and Laos for more forests. If we want to help villagers cope with changes, meaning that they select what they want to have based on their existing value system and local knowledge, then we need to strengthen coping strategies — the ability to select and deal with problems based on one's own ability. For example, next time I come to Ratanakiri you should be able to provide training. I am an outsider. If every year I have to give a lecture or training like this I am not strengthening your own ability but am creating a dependency relationship. So we as development workers have to try to help villagers stand on their own feet; help them to re-think and revitalize their culture and their knowledge. It is a social learning process that doesn't assume that development workers know more than villagers. Villagers and development workers should learn from each other. Through this process villagers will reach some autonomy and pride in their own culture. If they want to use herbal medicine, they should be proud of that. But I do not mean that all traditional medicine is good; sometimes it is but sometimes we also need modern medicine. We should help them think about what is good and what is bad so that they can make their own decisions.

What I mean by Sustainable Development is that people have the power of control and the ability to make choices, using the strengths they have. The people must be the center of development. This doesn't mean villagers can do this by themselves. They need assistance from other partners such as NGOs, researchers, government and so on. Sustainable Development is a social process, a social movement — it cannot be achieved by one village on its own.

## PLENARY

### COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT

**Ardhendu Chatterjee, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Advisor, Japanese Volunteer Center**

My talk concerns the following:

- Why we must protect forests
- Why we must protect indigenous culture
- Why this work has to start at the community level.

#### 1. Why we must protect forests:

We have many kinds of natural resources — minerals, met-

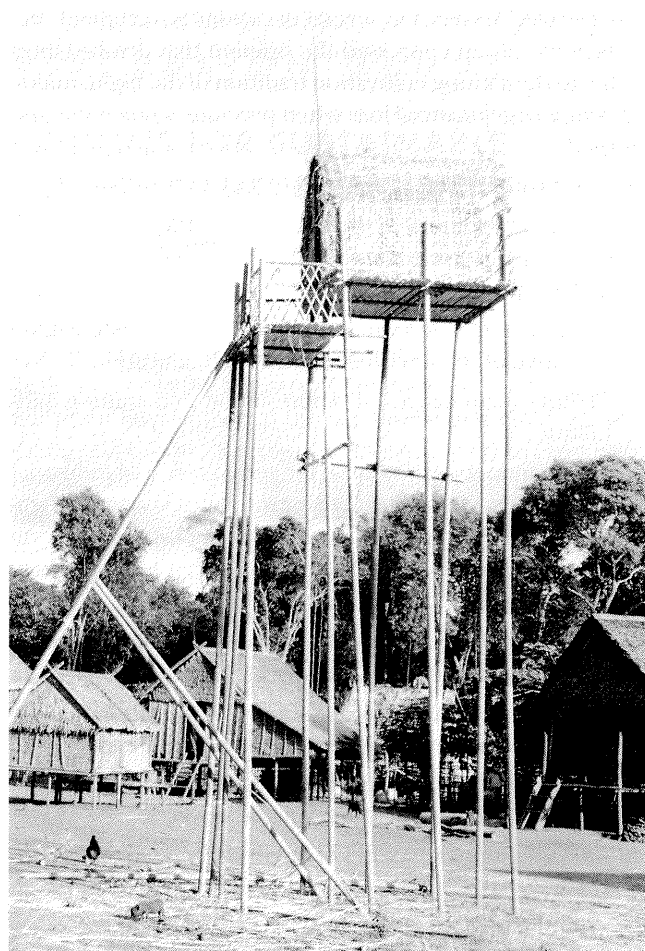
als, etc. — but forests, hills and lakes are a different kind of resource because once we destroy them they can't be created again in our lifetime. We can make a plantation, a pond but we can't make a hill, forest or lake even if I give you a lot of money.

The value of the forest is not just the timber; it contains many other valuable things such as honey, resin, oils, fuelwood, medicine, craft material, and fodder. We in the lowland gain the benefit because the forest controls the flow of the water. This is why forests and lakes must be protected.

#### 2. Why we must protect indigenous communities:

Most of the South Asian countries have one thing in common; many were colonies of European countries 400 years ago. In the beginning it was the big companies like East India or it was the missionaries who came. They believed that they came to develop; they said local people don't know how to read and write and there's no industry so we must develop them and give them schools, hospitals, roads and so on. They felt they had a superior culture. Two or three hundred years later, most of the countries became independent. Now we know that much of what was called development then is now called exploitation. Hundreds of thousands of people were taken from one country and sold to another, mineral resources taken out, all in the name of development. We should think about whether what we call development today is really development — how will history look at it later?

Today we are talking about a global market where those who have money can buy what they need from any part of the



world. Today most countries in Asia and the Third World have a problem: if they enter the market they can get loans, they can get help; it is very attractive. But if they try to say this local tree is only for local people, or this local rice for local people then they get punished.

Our values, our thinking — the people in this room — we are the transition generation; those who are 30 years old and more. We were born as our countries were getting free. However our minds are not yet freed. We have neglected the culture of our own people, our own roots, our own people's knowledge. In the Forestry Department here, there are big thick reports on eucalyptus or acacia but very little information on local trees. This is because we have not spent time finding out about our own resources and our own people. That's why we need the little bit of our original culture that is left with the indigenous people to discover that wisdom; our roots.

#### 3. Why we do community forestry and how it differs from other kinds:

Community Forestry is not the same as social forestry. Social forestry is when trees are planted by the Forestry Department for the benefit of the people. People may benefit but it is managed by state authority. Community forest means community control and management.

When forests are gone, local communities suffer the most. When forests, hills, lakes are protected, everyone gains. Because our mind is influenced by western education we only complain about peoples' destruction of the forest. When they do some slash and burn agriculture we say we are losing all the forest land. But when much forest is lost when we make a road, mine, or dam, we say those are necessary for the country so it is okay to lose some forest. We must consider whether the indigenous people living without so much help from outside — whether those indigenous people are necessary for this country or not. If we feel they are necessary, then without their involvement we cannot protect the forest.

What government can do to promote community-based resource management:

- Government has to play not only a regulatory role but also a facilitative role. The role of controlling is very important but it is not the only role — the government has also to help those people who want to protect the forests.
- Local authorities need to become stronger because they are near the people. People cannot go to Phnom Penh but maybe to Banlung. Local authorities should not depend only on money from Phnom Penh but must generate local revenue; local development taxes to develop local schools, etc. We cannot have a strong local authority if it doesn't have resources to work with, and if the local authority is not strong it cannot implement strong conflict resolution at the local level.
- We need to develop concepts of partnership: discuss things together and decide which roles can be played best by the central government, by local government, etc. So we can have national forests, also state forests and local protected areas.

**What kind of new, future development we must look towards:**

1. Survival needs must be met first.
2. Weak points must be strengthened first. Today we are starting from things which are most profitable, not the weakest. Everything needs help but the local government is the weakest.
3. Peoples' initiatives must be supplemented, not replaced.

## DISCUSSION GROUPS

- **COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT**
- **FARMERS' COPING STRATEGIES**
- **SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Facilitators: **Camille Bann, Ardhendu Chatterjee, and Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti**

Ethnic community representatives broke into language-groups to discuss the talks by Camille Bann, Ardhendu Chatterjee and Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti. The following are some of the comments made during the discussions.

#### Jarai woman:

*We live because of the forest. Trees are our grandfathers, our sisters and brothers. The trees have value since the time they are small. Some of them even yield fruit for us to eat. The forest is useful for the climate because it can make rain. If all trees were cut, the rain would disappear. Without trees to prevent strong winds from blowing, our crops will be destroyed and the weather will be very hot.*

#### Jarai man:

*The trees must be preserved as much as possible and we must stop cutting them for they can extract the rain and provide a home for animals. We must not cut large trees. Places that are already depleted of trees must be replanted. This is the value of trees: preventing strong winds, bringing the rain and providing a sanctuary for animals. If we cut them we have to replant them, or at least replace them with trees which can bear fruit for us to eat.*

#### Tampuen man:

*We consider the forest as equal to our lives. If there's no forest, we will die. We want to keep the forest but we can not avoid cutting it. If we don't cut it, we have no chamkar (swidden plots) to farm. This has been our tradition since the old time.*

#### Tampuen man:

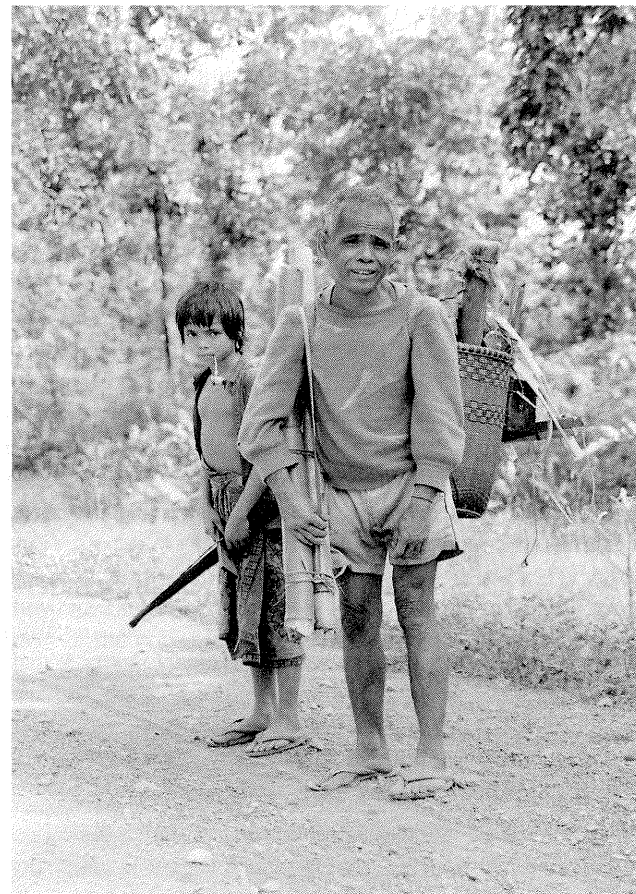
*The forest exists in a great amount but we don't know how to manage it. We also want to live in wooden houses but we don't know how to get them. We depend upon the*

forest, we live because of it and when I die I take it with me, in my coffin. Now the companies ruin the forest; they use tractors to clean it up. It is impossible to make chamkar and there is no coolness either.

**Kreung man:**

We use the forest for housing, to collect firewood. We go into the forest to look for all means that can support our lives. We never cut big trees, but there are now logging companies and companies that buy land that are bringing disaster to the people. I don't want them [government] to sell land to companies because I'm afraid that there won't be land and forest for the people to use anymore.

I'm taking part in this seminar in order to solve problems of our minority people. This is important because we want to develop our community for the people to live a stable and prosperous life. I want development but I don't understand much about it. I am very concerned about those companies. Wherever they come, the trees go. They always come with a paper [land title]. I think it is very difficult to prevent them [companies from taking away land] because they are not minor like we are. They have guns, power, cars and "big bellies." If they intend to bring progress to the village, I should thank them and persuade people to participate with a clearer understanding about development. But there are a lot of signs [of land ownership] and they are spreading. They keep moving close to other people's land and one day they may approach mine.



did not use money, only going to the market once or twice a year. But now in many villages they've opened shops to sell their products to the city. In the past the people would give and share with each other but now they concentrate on profit. Eating habits have changed — you see candies and junk food from the cities coming to the village.

But the road also means that it's easier to bring products to sell and it also helps create income for the tourism industry. The hilltribe people want to integrate into Thai society. The children learn in Thai and their own local language. They want to be accepted as Thai citizens.

The hilltribes still have a peaceful way of life, although from international standards of development, it is seen as a low standard. Everyone in the hilltribe community has a job, their own responsibility. The women stay at home to weave their cloth, carry firewood and water, and so on. The men sometimes lead special ceremonies such as the swinging ceremony of the Akha people during the rainy season to bring good fortune of the next year.

The Karen people are one of the best examples of people who live peacefully with nature. In many places where they live, afterwards the government will announce it is a national park or wildlife sanctuary because of how well the Karen have taken care of the forests.

One objective of the Hill Area Development Foundation (HADF) is to encourage and strengthen the hilltribe people to strengthen their natural resource in the primary watershed area. HADF realizes we need cooperation from many

areas — technicians, academics, villagers, monks. We recognize the important role of gender.

In terms of education, there's a special curriculum for hilltribes provided by the Thai government. If outside teachers come, they must learn the local language and local culture. There are special classes for women at night because they work at day. Also sometimes if they study with men they will be very shy.

The forests provide everything the hilltribe people need for their life. The community organizes themselves to take care of the forest — if someone wants to cut the forest they have to inform the community. The people believe that without forests there will be no water. The hilltribe area is the main watershed area in Thailand. In the past they practiced shifting cultivation because they thought the forest was everywhere and would never be used up. But recently the limited land base, high population growth, new government policies on land use, and the process of watershed identification has forced the hilltribe communities to stop moving around. Now settled in one place, they can no longer depend on natural regeneration of the forest as a management technique. Thus it has become necessary for communities to be actively engaged in resource management, and to learn new sustainable techniques such as contour farming to prevent erosion of the hillsides.

The communities' actions alone are not enough. Outside cooperation from NGOs, government, academics, business and the media is essential for the future of community resource management because too many external factors influence its success.

**DISCUSSION GROUP**

**COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

Facilitator: **Lara S. Johnson**, *Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University*

**A. Presentation:**

Tuenjai Deetes from the Hill Area Development Foundation in Thailand made a presentation in which she made the following points:

- Local wisdom of ethnic communities is usually related to their culture. Elders have a lot of wisdom from which the young generation should learn.
- Education does not just take place in school, but in many other forms.
- Mistakes have been made in Thailand's social and economic development plans. Rapid growth has caused many problems, including the widening gap between the rich and the poor.

- In community development work, men and women should have an equal chance and both should cooperate together.
- In managing natural resources, communities may have their own systems which may need to be strengthened, improved, and continued.

**B. Small Group Discussions:**

**Problems and needs of villages in Ratanakiri:**

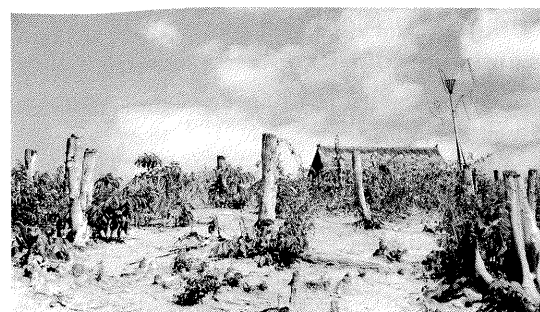
- Provide technical assistance to increase agricultural yield and agricultural tools;
- Provide education for illiterate people, especially women;
- Educate people to stop cutting the forest by explaining no trees means no rains and thus no crop yield; Provide training in managing natural resources effectively and sustainably.
- Assist orphans in the villages;
- Re-arrange ethnic community villages to be more orderly and less transient;
- Encourage and/or train people to grow wetland rice or stable upland farms without moving plots;
- Explain to the people that forest resources are not limitless;
- Train the buffaloes to plow for wetland rice growing;
- Address heavy workload issues for women;
- Alter animistic/tribal beliefs which waste animal resources in sacrifices;
- Provide medicine for humans and animals alike;
- Rebuild respect and teaching roles for ethnic elders who are now more isolated because the younger generations doesn't want to learn from them because they reject the traditional ways;
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of the community before getting help from outside, especially in the case of community natural resources;
- Encourage people to value education more; sending their children to school and offering women the opportunity to learn.

**Unresolved Issues:**

- Is it possible for ethnic minorities to learn to read and write in their own script?
- The transfer of language and culture is by person to person through generations. This may lead to extinction of language or culture if there is a gap between generations.

**Quote:**

*"Who needs to stop cutting the forests — the ethnic minority farmers? or commercial loggers?" (Jarai)*



*"People will not get into a boat with you unless they know where you are going."*

- Kon Mum District Official

DISCUSSION GROUP

**COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT OF  
 NATURAL RESOURCES**

Facilitator: Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti

The session started off with a general discussion about sustainable development. Most participants agreed that sustainable development must not destroy the environment or culture and it must include community participation so that it meets people's needs.

Seng Hkun, CARERE staff, shared the results of CARERE's Agricultural Sector Study, which identifies key features of each agro-ecological zone in Ratanakiri (center plateau, hilly region, lowland plains and rivers; mountainous region). The group looked at problems people face in each zone. Seng noted the need for small changes in techniques and ideas, pointing that large-scale changes and high technology have not worked to date.

The group was given two discussion questions: 1) Why do we need sustainable development and 2) How can we achieve sustainable development?

**1. Why we want sustainable development:**

- To eliminate economic and educational poverty and the destruction of the environment.

- Have to improve the education and knowledge of the communities; otherwise their actions will adversely affect the environment.
- 2. How to achieve sustainable development:**
- Education: Let the people know about sustainable development. If the ethnic people do not understand what sustainable development is, we cannot develop.
  - Research, analyze and prioritize the needs in all areas. The people have many needs; focus on crucial points and develop from there.
  - Make a participatory plan so that development projects can respond to their needs. Planning, evaluation and implementation must include the people. Need cooperation from the international organizations, NGOs, and government for this to work.
  - Train people how to use their internal resources from their own communities, including natural resources, and appropriate technology.
  - Build human resources. We need training for local people, both cultural and technical training. There's a strong concern that when outsiders come to implement development programs, the local people participate but when the outsiders leave the people cease their development activities.
  - Need to find a sustainable and accessible market. A program may be successful in gaining people's participation and planting corn, but if there's no market to sell the produce the project fails.

DISCUSSION GROUP

**CONSTRAINTS TO SUSTAINABLE  
 DEVELOPMENT**

Facilitators: **Ouch Sarom**, *Natural Resources Management Project, Oxfam UKI/Novib* and **Srey Vanthon**, *CARERE*

Two case studies were discussed: the Oil Palm Plantation in O Ya Dao and a Soy Bean plantation in Tong Krabu, O Chum.

**A. Case Study: Oil Palm Plantation**

A large concession has been granted to an Oil Palm Company to clear forest in O Ya Dao district. Three communes and more than 3,000 people will be affected: Saom Thom, Pak Nyai and Ya Tung. Villagers are concerned about a lack of consultation from the company, loss of farm land and cattle grazing areas and possible loss of ancestral burial grounds by clearing of land for the plantation. In addition, villagers say they have been intimidated by armed plantation guards, who have shot and eaten some of the villagers' cattle, and that it's been difficult to obtain compensation for work they've done for the company.

"We cleared the land for the company because they paid us 90,000 a hectare. We did not know all the problems [clearing the land] this would cause," said one villager. "We are worried that when we lose our *chamkars* (swidden plots) we can't move to make farms in the big forest because that is prohibited by the government. So we don't know how we will grow our food."

Group participants agreed that a major problem was that there was no information flow between villagers and the company; no connection between the high and low levels. Villagers said they *might* agree to the changes brought about by the plantation, but they want to know more information about the company's plans and what will happen to the villagers in the future.

For example, if villagers give up farming and agree to work on the plantation, what will this mean for them and what do they do while waiting for the oil palm trees to grow? If villagers move to 50 x 100 meter plots along the Highway 19, as they are being encouraged to do by local authorities, can they obtain legal title to that land? And can they retain their traditional rice paddies, *chamkars*, and ancestral burial lands in areas near the planned oil palm plantation?

Because they lack clear information from the company, villagers say it's impossible to make decisions regarding their future livelihood or to work together with the company to solve livelihood issues caused by the development of the plantation. If there was more consultation with the villagers, they might end up supporting the project, but at this point they don't have enough information.

**B. Case Study: Tong Krabu Village, O Chum District.**

In 1995 "outsiders" — a private company — came to the village asking permission to make a 85 hectare farm. They

got the village leader drunk and then gained his permission to take the land. There was no consultation with other villagers. The chief was originally told that the company wanted to borrow the land and would return it to the village. The villagers want the land returned but have been told by the company that the company now owns the land and will not give it back. The villagers are very concerned about this loss of land as it is part of their ancestral farm lands.

**Points of Discussion:**

1. The villagers feel powerless because apparently an agreement has been signed. The villagers are afraid to discuss things with the company and do not know what the company's plans are.
2. Lack of documentation about the land transaction.
3. There should have been consultation between the company and all villagers. One person should not give permission for the whole village.
4. By "Khmer" law the village leader can't give land without the permission of the province, but the province already knew and presumably approved the land transaction.
5. Villagers are very worried about loss of land and what will happen to their children who need to inherit the land.

**Conclusions:**

The group discussed both case studies together, examining the constraints and impacts of these kinds of developments on socio-economic and cultural factors.

**Economic constraints** include loss of trees, animals, non-timber forest products, family income, grazing land, arable land, traditional medicine.

**Cultural impacts** include erosion of spiritual beliefs (by loss of spirits that live in forests/large trees, loss of ancestral grave sites, the impact of new culture coming in with outsiders) and loss of customary land management, traditional handicrafts and ancestral lands. In addition, some families will be forced to split up to look for other sources of livelihood.

**Solutions:**

- Companies should have relationships with people first before they start a project. If people don't approve, then project shouldn't proceed.
- Don't let the companies cut trees or clear land anymore.
- If they cut trees must let local people know the location first.
- Replace trees that they cut already.
- Need more schools and teachers and better salaries for teachers.
- The company needs to respect the people.

**Quotes:**

"They look down on us poor people." (Jarai)

"They signed as they thought it was development." (Jarai)

## CUSTOMARY MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN RATANAKIRI

Facilitator: **Gordon Paterson**, *Natural Resources Management Project, OxFam UKI/Novib*

### Gordon Paterson:

When we consider options for development, we need first to consider what management systems exist already and how the existing population can participate in planning and implementing management options for the future. From our work in Kreung and Tampuon villages we have learned that we need to consider the following:

**a) Food Security and Agricultural Systems:** Indigenous groups practice swidden agriculture, where the forest is cut and cultivated in a cyclical fashion. Plots are left fallow 5 to 12 years for the forest to regenerate. With this system, given the typically low population density, forest cover and soil fertility is maintained and the watershed is protected. These are all elements of a sustainable system.

Boundaries of cultivation areas may be clearly demarcated by streams, mountains, forests and old garden sites. There is no concept of individual land rights — it is believed that access to forest land has been allocated by the ancestors and it is used by communal agreement of the villagers. The forest is occupied by guardian spirits, of whom permission must be given before clearing old growth forest. It is common for a family to plant kapok or fruit trees when they fallow a garden plot to signify their intention to return and cultivate the plot in the future or to pass on the plot to children or grandchildren.

**b) Village Residential Arrangements:** Villagers prefer to stay at one site as long as there is health and prosperity. If there is excessive illness or if the villagers have recurring bad dreams, the elders will decide to shift the village; ideally within the customary cultivation boundaries of the villages. Except in extreme cases, villagers do not resettle outside ancestral land. The traditional outlay of highland ethnic villages is circular with a central meeting hall. Safety and security — both practical and spiritual — and a strong communal system of organization contribute to preserving this arrangement. Any plan for development must integrate traditional management of resources in order for it to be sustainable.

**c) Forest Conservation Areas:** Apart from garden fallows, each village has areas of old growth forest which they conserve either because the soil is rocky and unproductive or because spirits of the forest have forbidden cutting and/or hunting. Other areas of forest which lie outside the customary boundaries of the village may be accessed by two or more villages simultaneously for hunting and collection of forest products.



### To sum up:

1. Villages have long established systems of allocating access to cultivating land which involves consensus and adjudication by the elders.
2. Village communal boundaries have been, in most cases, stable since ancestral times and are respected.
3. Continued food security, cultural integrity and environmental sustainability depend very much on the body of local knowledge that these people have developed over the generation.

### Points of Discussion:

1. Why do we want to recognize customary management of resources? What happens when a company takes possession of native land?
2. How do you protect land which is not formally recognized by the government against a body that recognizes neither ethnic communal law nor the international law pertaining to land ownership.

### Conclusions/Main points to present to Plenary:

- 1) Request that the government recognize ancestral land boundaries.
- 2) Request that the government set these boundaries to make a map of the village areas.
- 3) Request that land titling research and documentation be carried out at no cost to the people.

- 4) Request that there be full consultation with the indigenous people of Ratanakiri in any land issues.
- 5) Request that the Chiang Mai sustainable development model be adopted and adapted to suit our own circumstances.

### Quotes:

"The forest, the land around us is our life. We are nothing without our land, our forest, our streams." (Jarai)

"Development of our home inevitably will impact on our environment; in other words, on our very own life." (Kreung)

## DISCUSSION GROUP (KREUNG)

### COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

#### Ardhendu Chatterjee

In general before colonial rule villages owned property and villagers decided who used common property and how. During the period of foreign rule, property began to come under individual or state ownership and group property disappeared in most areas except remote places like Ratanakiri. Now foreign rule is over and our countries are independent but most of the laws made under the former era have not changed. Our countries need to think which laws to keep and which ones to change. Often indigenous people have their own laws about how to manage property, but this is not known to outsiders; people from the plains, NGOs, government, etc. We need to learn and to listen to the indigenous people as to how you manage and use resources and how you settle conflicts. Government can then integrate this information into its policies and laws.

#### President of Ratanakiri Court (Kreung):

Before the colonial period, for the Kreung minority, the way of land management was subjected to the rule of the clan chief lord (*mé kantreanh*). The people believed in the clan chief who was the one who organized spiritual ceremonies for *Neak Ta* (forest spirit). They never destroyed the big trees or trees that bear fruit. For example, in the past, traditional beliefs prohibited the people from cutting *samrong* trees for malva nuts, but now everyone is running after money and ignoring that custom.

Land management was practiced in a broadly democratic context. There was no boundary, nor written paper or sign which would indicate this portion of land belonged to this or that person. Streams, rivers, mountains and lakes marked the boundaries. In cultivating, each village cannot encroach upon the *chamkars* (swidden plots) of the neighboring village. Each village had *mé kantreanh* in whom the people strongly believed. It was him who prayed to *Neak Ta* for access to the land. Common people could not carry that

function to ask for the land from the jungle spirit. It is the same with deciding where to settle. If the clan chief said that the people can live in this or that place, they begin to create their community and manage the use of land and resources surrounding them. But no one was able to utilize the area without permission from the lord first.

That was in 1940s, 50s and 60s. But now, cutting the forest is beyond the control of the clan chief. Chiefs of villages are appointed by the government. The hilltribes have learned how to do business like other people. Although there are still clan chiefs, they can not continue to perform their duties in preventing people from cutting the trees because the structure is appointed by the royal government. The people have ceased to listen to the clan chief but they listen to the chiefs of their villages. They ask why should we believe in the clan chief because he does not work to feed us anyway.

### Points of Discussion:

What's the best way to manage the land use and get the land title: Should the government or the people themselves decide?

### Unresolved Issues:

1. When land is located near a road the government doesn't allow us to cultivate; the government says it's their land.
2. The indigenous people feel the government cuts the big trees for the companies while the government blames the people for destroying the trees.

### Conclusions/Presentation to Plenary:

1. Traditional management of land and forestry resources are centered around *mé kantreanh* (clan chiefs) — who decide who uses which land, where used, etc. The authority of this traditional leader has now been undermined and many people don't respect the *mé kantreanh* because now village chiefs are appointed by government. Today the only thing respected is money.

It is recognized by the indigenous people that there may be some negligence of traditional values by their own people, but they are also concerned that the authorities never discuss with them when they cut timber or allot titles to outsiders on the lands which they have been using for generations.

2. The indigenous people do cut some trees but mostly small ones for their basic necessities such as housing and not for profit. They do not destroy the forest as they get fruits, wild animals, birds etc. to support their livelihood. They feel that the government should also not cut old trees; and in areas where timber is sold, half of the resources should be given to local communities to develop services such as schools, hospitals, etc.
3. Some participants said they want to manage the forests by themselves. Other participants would not mind having the government manage the forest, but suggested that before they go to cut trees in a village, they should contact the people in that village because they have to pray and pay their tribute to the forest spirit first.
4. The communities expressed their feelings that if government and NGOs want to work in a friendly way with them they would welcome them and work together, not only to protect the existing forest, but also to reforest the degraded land.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RATANAKIRI

H.E. Kep Chuktema, *Governor of Ratanakiri*

Ratanakiri is in the northern part of Cambodia, bordering with Attapeu province of the Lao Republic, two provinces of Vietnam in the east, Stung Treng to the west and Mondol-kiri to the south. We have fertile, red soil and rubber plantations which the French put in the beginning of the 19th century.

We have 9 districts and 49 communes, 236 villages, 76,000 people, divided into 8 ethnic groups: Tampuan, Jarai, Kreung, Prou, Kachok, Kavet, Lao and Khmer.

The ethnic minorities are the original people of this land. They live with the environment and use the nature sustainably. The natural resources they live with provide everything for their culture and for their livelihood. They know how to manage the environment and understand why natural resources are important. The environment in which they live defines the identity of each minority group. The power of money is destroying the natural resources of Ratanakiri.

Tourism is developing in this region. The beauty of the nature and the environment is an attraction for tourists. But we also have to be careful in the process of development and the flowing of a lot of money. We all know the businessmen are attracted to money and will destroy the environment and the minority culture. We have to pay attention to the AIDS virus that will come to this region.



This morning we exchanged ideas about sustainable development. In my opinion sustainable development must preserve the culture and the way of life of the minorities. Despite some changes in the past, they still survive even with impacts from outside. The development of this region depends totally on their will and their involvement. As Second Prime Minister Hun Sen said in the previous workshop: All the development in this region has to be done in a proper way and has to raise the standard of living of all the minorities living in every community and district and provide jobs for them in order for them to live, and education for them to learn the culture of their own society.

We need cooperation from the local authorities in the districts and in the province; that for development to happen there has to be input from the minorities. I believe sustainable development will happen if we all respect each other and exchange ideas with each other.

Another problem is the need to promote and create better human resources in this region. To lift their standard of living, we suggest building dormitories for children to study in the province. You see only one lycée in this town — and only a very small number of minority children go there.

Finally, we need to develop a market, and for the market we need roads. Ratanakiri is a long way from the market — the only way to transport is by airplane. There are problems with taking airplanes, as you all know. In the wet season the only road is by Vietnam. I want to talk frankly that we have to go through Vietnam — you might ask what is the provincial authority here doing, and I'd like you to know that my pocket doesn't have any money. The provincial authority has the responsibility for 72,000 people in this province. By asking a seminar of this kind to come here, it is the first time in the history of Ratanakiri. Hopefully we can create some sort of master plan for our future.



*"Who needs to stop cutting the forests?  
 The ethnic minority farmers? or commercial  
 loggers?"*

- Jarai

## ECOTOURISM IN RATANAKIRI

Ron Renard, *Manager, UNDP Highland People's Programme*

You can look at tourism in two ways: it has a good image and a bad image. In some countries tourism is seen as harmful. If too many tourists come they can hurt the local economy and culture. But to many others tourism is seen as profitable, a big source of foreign exchange. So the question is, what kind of tourism will come to Ratanakiri.

Maybe 500 years ago there were no tourists. Everybody worked all the time. Only after the industrial revolution was there tourism; it comes with time for leisure. Tourism started 200 years ago when rich young men from England would tour France and Italy to learn about European culture. The first main purpose of tourism in history was traveling to learn. But when there were railroads and other forms of mass transportation, large groups of people were able to take tours. These people went mostly to escape, to get away from home and go to beaches or casinos. That's when the bad image of tourism developed.

Tourism made money and it spread to Asia: to Thailand, China, Cambodia. Seventy years ago before there was a road to Siem Reap, tourists would take boats across the Tonle Sap to Angkor Wat. But they did not come to Ratanakiri.

I will compare tourism in Thailand and Cambodia. After World

War Two, tourism developed tremendously in Thailand, especially during the 1980s. Thailand developed the best hotels in the world, famous attractions, and made lots of money. But Thailand also faced problems from tourism: it is now the commercial sex capital of the world. Thailand attracted many tourists who came to escape. Together with this kind of tourism came pollution, disease and crime — together with the money.

There's a famous beach resort call Pattaya. Pattaya has many nightclubs, many shows and a long, long beach. But the water is so dirty no one swims in the ocean. Besides Pattaya sometimes tourists go to festivals. In Chiang Mai every year so many tourists go to the New Year festival that many local people leave. So the traditional festival has become a show for the tourists, not a religious festival for the local people.

Another attraction of Chiang Mai is jungle tours. These developed very quickly without any help from the government or NGOs. Sometimes the tour guides laugh at the hill people in Chiang Mai or let the tourists smoke opium. Sometimes a few of the hill people become prostitutes.

Because of these problems in the late 1980s and 1990s the Thai government felt it needed a new policy. Thailand was afraid it was losing money and its reputation. So in 1992 they advertised the "natural wonders" of Thailand. Thai International made a map of beautiful green Thailand. Just last year Thailand came up with policies on Ecotourism.

Ecotourism means balanced tourism: between people and nature, between local people and outside people, between learning and escape. Some of the policies the Thai government came up with promote cultural attractions and historical sites. Do not damage the environment. Promote tourism

that supports the environment. Plan tourism that brings tourists together with local people. Encourage the local people to be involved and to benefit from tourism.

Ratanakiri is very lucky. There has been almost no tourism. But it will come for sure. If Ratanakiri wants to use tourism for development, it must prepare. Local people must play an active role in tourism. Maybe we can do some Participatory Rural Appraisal and ask people what they want, what they think about tourism. We can ask the people what they want tourists to know about their village; what in their culture they are proud of.

There should be tourist educational centers about the province and the local people. Maybe once the local people say what they are proud of you can put that in the tourist center. Maybe in the tourist center there can be handicrafts, maybe local music and dance, local food. Invent new types of food, new types of handicrafts, new music — part Khmer, part Western, part Kreung.

Culture has life, if it does not change it is not alive. The traditional way of life should always be changing. But the local people should be the boss of this change; they should be the ones to decide how the culture changes. There can be shops and guides run by highlanders. The local people can make books and movies about themselves, not the people from Phnom Penh. So when tourists come here they will be interested in the local people and the local people will want to tell them about themselves.

These are just my ideas; tourism in Ratanakiri will develop in its own way. Ratanakiri is a beautiful place but it is a small place. It is very gentle. The lake is small, the waterfall is small, there are not so many people. If mass tourism comes, the attraction of Ratanakiri will probably be lost. I would like Ratanakiri to stay as nice as it is and develop in some ways even better than it is. I wish you all the best in making all this possible.

## PLENARY

### ECOTOURISM AS A TOOL FOR NATURE CONSERVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Veasna Pok, UNESCO

Ecotourism is the fastest growing sector of tourism. In the Khmer language ecotourism is a new word. It is also known as nature or green tourism. Ecotourism involves travel and environment. It is ecologically and culturally sensitive, responsible tourism. It is based on nature, managed sustainably, supporting conservation and environmental education. Tourism which has a negative effect on the physical and social

environment is contrary to the objectives of ecotourism. Ecotourism contributes to the conservation of natural resources. Ecotourism started when two trends crossed: the supply trend, which is the conservation need; and the demand trend which is the travel industry need.

**Supply Side:** It's important to incorporate local communities who are dependent on the natural resources into conservation strategies. Local communities need to understand the importance of maintaining natural areas and the benefits of this process, as they may be able to find alternative sources of employment through the tourism industry. Ecotourism can enhance the local culture, subsistence economies and life-sustaining natural resources base.

**Demand Side:** The interest in global environment issues has created more interest in learning about ecosystems, endangered species, and conservation issues such as deforestation. More travelers are visiting parks, wildlife sanctuaries and nature reserves. More travelers want to see isolated and remote places. Tourists are becoming more adventurous, more participatory, and more nature oriented. People in general are concerned about the well being of the places they are visiting and the communities that live there.

#### Opportunities and benefits of Ecotourism:

- Generate revenue on national and local levels.
- Employment opportunities for local residents.
- Environmental education for visitors and communities.

#### Potential costs or risks of ecotourism:

- Environmental degradation.
- Economic instability.
- Social and cultural changes for local communities.

There can be risks if ecotourism is not well managed. Ecotourism needs planning, guidelines, and the participation of local communities and authorities.

## DISCUSSION GROUP

### DEMARCATIION OF CUSTOMARY RESOURCE BOUNDARIES

**Facilitator:** Gordon Paterson, *Natural Resources Management Project, OxFam UKI/Novib*

Kreung villagers presented a case study from Svay Village in O Chum district. The history of the Kreung people is the history of one elder, Ta Ka-Ol, the originator of the taboos (such as cutting wild bamboo) and customs which have contributed towards preserving the forests, lakes, streams and mountains which are the sources of life for both villagers and animals living nearby.

The people believe in ancestor spirits who live in the village and look after its welfare, and forest spirits, who reside in forests, streams, and mountains. They have to respect the forest spirits and not cut the large trees or harm the mountains or we may get sick. There is a kind of collaboration between domestic spirits and forest spirits. If a villager does something wrong the domestic spirit will send a message to the forest spirit so that the person will get sick or die.

Demarcation of land is by natural boundaries such as streams and mountains which mark the border between villages. Cultivation of the land is on a three-year migrating basis within the boundary, never across village boundaries. Until recent times the people have never practiced or known commercial exploitation of their land, having used their land and forest only for their own subsistence.

#### Gordon Paterson:

In the Kreung villages we have studied, we have found that they have clear boundaries and traditional natural land management. This kind of village boundary can be recognized by local authorities but has not been so far. In each village there are conservation forest areas.

Most of the ethnic minorities prepare their villages in the form of a circle surrounding the communal meeting hall, with all front doors looking to the central hall. The land in the village is communal land, not separate property. *Chamkar* (swidden plots) land is also for common use. The people can shift the village from one area to another, but not outside their overall village boundaries. Most people don't want to move a village unless there's a lot of illness, fire, bad dreams there.



Villagers consider water sources, security and the ability to live communally in selecting a village site.

#### Discussion:

The group discussed different ways that land tenure might be secured for indigenous communities, but arrived at no definite conclusions because of lack of time. The following options were considered:

1. Moving the village along the road and distributing several hectares to each family as their property.
2. Settling the village in the traditional way, with land (*chamkars* and fallow plots) distributed to extended families.
3. Distributing land communally. The ministries of Environment and Agriculture could research the land and conservation areas and make a map.

## PLENARY

### YEAK LAOM LAKE: A CASE FOR PARTICIPATORY COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

Dominic Taylor-Hunt, IDRC and Yem Sokhan, *Ministry of Environment*

To begin the process of drawing up a management plan for the area surrounding the 50-meter volcanic lake on the outskirts of Banlung, the International Development Research Center and the Ministry of Environment assembled a research team that included staff and officials from the Ministries of Environment and Tourism, village and commune chiefs from the Yeak Laom area, and local villagers. The following are their preliminary findings:

Yeak Laom is a lake, a protected area and a community. There are many habitats in Yeak Laom: Lake and lake forest; Old forest mainly on the hilltops; Wetland forest pockets; Regenerating evergreen forest; Swidden (shifting) agriculture (*chamkars*); Rubber plantations; and Village areas.

There is a lot of bamboo near the lake, in areas farmed in 1983 which are now regenerating into a natural habitat. Farming is one of the major sources of food for the people, with more than 30 species of crops grown — mostly for subsistence but some for sale. New fields are cleared by cutting and burning of the vegetation. Each family has one field, averaging two hectares in size. The families use the fields for about 3 years and then move and cut a new field, leaving the old field to regenerate.

There are many examples of what they take from the forest such as bamboo, timber for building houses, traditional medicines, resins, and many different types of vegetables, fruits

and fish. However the environment around Yeak Laom is slowly being degraded. Vegetation has been cut and holes dug in and around the crater to construct a building on the lakeside and several brick kilns. Traps are set to catch wildlife, and fire is used to clear new fields and clear undergrowth and also as a hunting technique.

**Factors Contributing to the Degradation of the Environment:**

- Reduction in land available for indigenous groups due to complex pressures from outside area
- increasing land sales
- expanding the area devoted to plantations.
- Increase in population.
- Cutting of forest for new *chamkars* (swidden plots) by the indigenous people.
- Unsustainable resource use from lack of a long-term view.
- Fire in the forest.
- Unplanned development in the area.
- Pollution.

**Problems with the livelihood of the people:**

As the environment gets more degraded the access to resources decrease. Fields that haven't been used for some time

get covered with weeds, which end up growing faster than the crops, and cause the people to shift the field to a new site. Lack of natural fertilizers causes soil quality to degrade. Many resources are decreasing in availability, such as bamboo. Eight communes are harvesting the bamboo from the Yeak Laom area. Continuing loss of the forest will result in contenting loss of resources and will decrease the enjoyment of tourists.

**Research Team Proposal:**

The research team suggests that management options used to protect the environment also be used to protect the livelihood of the people so that they don't need to depend on using the forest as much as they do now. The communities know the area better than anyone else. They have a greater understanding of what resources are most wanted. We suggest that management is done in cooperation between the government and the community. This means sharing research and decisions and increasing the responsibility community members have towards their environment combining with relevant ways of helping their livelihood security. They will be able to participate without a loss of freedom and resource access so that the environment is conserved and there are resources available for future generations.



DISCUSSION GROUP

**YEAK LAOM LAKE**

*Facilitator: Dominic Taylor-Hunt*

**Group's Recommendations to Plenary:**

1. Designation of area into different zones of activity such as tourist, community use and agricultural. Example of this would be a tourist zone around the lake.
2. Need to consider examples of other countries in terms of balancing tourism and environmental concerns.
3. Examine Cambodian government policy in terms of balance between tourism and industry.
4. Technical assistance regarding land use. Need for assistance in community organization in order to enhance local participation and assistance in handicraft production and sale
5. Promote health aspects of the lake, i.e. pure water and bathing
6. Restrict hotel construction to (Ban Lung) town
7. Educate local people on dangers of environmental degradation
8. Develop regulations in regard to resource use for the community
9. Look at ways of enhancing present agricultural techniques to make them sustainable.

**Unresolved Questions:**

1. If you bring rules and regulations into the area how do you enforce them?
2. Is introducing new techniques easier or is enhancing traditional techniques easier?
3. What do the local people want?
4. How do you decide where the boundaries go?

DISCUSSION GROUP

**WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT**

*Facilitator: Ouch Sarom*

The group discussed the issues that affect women from ethnic minority communities and looked at the available opportunities for their socio-economic progress.

**Issues:**

- Social attitude towards women continues to be negative.
- Parents are often not willing to send girls to school. Reason: schooling is expensive, parents are afraid of western/Khmer values affecting girls, it's considered not im-

portant for girls to receive education, and the workload at home does not allow them time to attend school.

- Health status of women is poor: pregnant women face many critical problems. Reasons: lack of midwives, ignorance about prenatal and postnatal care, women prefer traditional home medicines, sometimes families prefer to follow spiritual practices rather than take western medicines.
- Workload: women are excessively loaded with lots of work that takes up most of their time. They get up at 4 a.m. and work until evening, carrying water, caring for children, doing domestic work, caring for animals, preparing food, helping plant rice, etc.
- In the family women do not have the right to make decisions. In theory women have equal access to land and property, but in practice it is men who control assets and decide on their use.

**Suggested Solutions:**

**1. Education:**

- Help establish a Women's Association, which could help provide educational programs and provide incentives to girls to attend schools.
- Create more schools and non-formal education programs for women in the villages where they live.
- Station more trained teachers and playing materials in every center.
- Make education of girls and women a governmental priority by linking activities at various levels of the administration — commune, district, province. Government should also work to change attitudes of ethnic communities towards education of their girl children.

**2. Health:**

- More women should be trained as midwives to work at the community level.
- Men should be made part of health education in the communities so that men take care of their pregnant wives.
- Simple nutrition education, personal health, hygiene, etc. should be introduced among women.

**3. Reducing Women's Workload:**

- Men and women should be brought together to discuss the division of work and help men to understand and share the burden of women, especially when pregnant.

**4. Agriculture and Upland Rice:**

- Commune, district, and provincial officials should arrange for appropriate training in upland agriculture so that production is better.
- Joint training programs for women and men so that labor in the paddy field is shared.
- Agricultural extension services should become a government priority, with women included in the programs.

**Summary:** For ethnic communities, progress will come with the advancement of the women. For this purpose men and

communities will have to change their attitude and outlook, working together to share responsibilities and providing more opportunities for girls and women to learn and participate in all aspects of development work.

## DISCUSSION GROUP

### MANAGEMENT OF ANIMAL SYSTEMS

Facilitator: **Murray McLean, CAREER**

Animal raising plays an important role in economic survival of the indigenous people of Ratanakiri province. Murray McLean presented a case study of a village near the San River, where out of 50 families, 20 owned no buffalo at all, another 20 had one or two each and another 10 families had 8-10 each. Plenty of grazing land is available, so lack of grass is not the reason for the shortage. The group discussed problems minority groups face in raising animals, examining in particular why some families have shortages of buffalo while others have plenty.

#### Problems identified were:

1. Shortage of cattle for agricultural purposes. Causes are animal disease as well as illness among people, which requires animal sacrifice;
2. Lack of training or educator about animal raising and nurturing;
3. No medicine or vaccination available.

Sal Yuch, a Jarai from O Ya Dao district, said that 1991 was a bad year for his village. Buffaloes begin to die as soon as they are herded into the village in preparation for the new crop season which starts in May-June. Animals usually suffer convulsion and die immediately. "Raising animals according to the old customs is not working for us," he said. "New diseases decimate our animals."

The number of cattle owned varies between families and in many cases a family does not have a cow or buffalo at all. Raising cow is less common than raising buffaloes, while raising chicken and pig is considered subsidiary for use as meat and supply to the market.

According to the hilltribes' tradition, when the farming season is over cattle is released to the field without being looked after by their owners. This practice starts in December until June of the following year when the new farming begins.

In some communities, villagers let their buffaloes roam in the forest for months. According to the participants in the discussion, the longer the animals stay in the forest, the more they become adapted to jungle animals. That is why, it always takes 20 days to one month for an owner to succeed in bringing them back to the village.

However, the release of animal also seems to vary between communities in different ecological zones. Se Pun, a Tampuen from Bokeo district, said that the release of unattended cattle was a risky habit in his village. Sometimes, villagers who grow agricultural products or vegetables nearby confiscated buffaloes that destroyed their farms. Participants asked for outside assistance in vaccination and training on how to raise and nurture household animals. "If all cattle dies, there is nothing to be developed. Our minority people rely on animals," said Sal Yuch.

#### Points of Discussion:

- How will our livelihoods be affected by companies buying up community grazing land?
- Does free-ranging of cows and buffalo during the dry season allow sick animals to come in contact with healthy ones, thereby spreading disease?

## PLENARY

### EDUCATION FOR PARTICIPATORY LOCAL DECISION MAKING

Presenters: **Tu Chenda, Yu Kamsayn, Non-Formal Education and AP Team, CAREER**

As a prerequisite for development, education is a unique means to promote community participation. It can help reduce disparities and build common understanding among people from different ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

Indigenous groups are often vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation and oppression, and in extreme circumstances, physical or cultural extinction because their ethnic characteristics, cultural traditions and methods of using resources and technology distinguish them from the majority of people.

Ratanakiri in transition needs to find solutions *with* the people and not *for* them or imposed upon them; solutions that make people the agents of their own recuperation. Thus education needs to enable people to reflect on themselves, their responsibilities and their role in the new cultural climate; resulting in an increased capacity for choice.

Basic education, by promoting equitable development, is one means of attacking the root causes of people's vulnerability and, at the same time, of providing immediate knowledge and skills. People with local knowledge of food production, medicinal practices, literacy and artistic forms, and local institutions and community processes, are a rich cultural resource. To bring this knowledge to bear on contemporary problems the people who possess it must be equipped with skills that enable them to function effectively in their societies.

In Ratanakiri, the formal education system is not well adapted

to the seasonal occupations and cultural specificities of the population. Thus it is unable to respond to their immediate interests such as improving their living situation. In spite of a strong system of informal learning through observation and from peers, it is estimated that the provincial illiteracy rate is 90 percent.

#### Participatory fieldwork findings of a provincial multi-sectoral and inter-organization team:

1. The problems in education are self-perpetuating and particularly strong among: ethnic minority groups, non-Khmer speaking groups, low-income groups, girls in indigenous groups, adult women in all groups, and people living in remote and mountainous areas.
2. The people are very interested in receiving education and training, albeit in a way more adapted to the interests, needs and living conditions.

Educational needs cannot be met through the formal school system alone. Non-formal approaches, with greater flexibility and adaptive capacity, are essential. Education efforts should provide information and skills that are directly applicable to the lives of the people; taking into account constraints such as: poverty, workload, motivation problems, lack of self confidence (especially for women), infrastructure and human resource deficiencies and cultural misunderstandings.

The focus in Non-Formal Education (NFE) is on learning rather than on instruction, on understanding rather than on information, and on the learner as an active protagonist rather than a passive recipient. NFE activities do not substitute for formal education but cater to adults who have not attended

any formal education programs or who have dropped out of such programs. NFE is out-of-school learning that is planned and agreed upon by both facilitators and participants.

#### Elements of Non-Formal Education:

- Participants are active; they solve problems, work with their hands, think creatively.
- The learning is practical, flexible, and based on participants' real needs.
- Purpose is to improve the life of the individual or community rather than to teach isolated skills or knowledge.
- Emphasizes trust and respect while encouraging questioning and reflection.

#### An appropriate NFE program will:

- Help people rediscover the value of their own traditional skills and knowledge;
- Be available locally at an appropriate time;
- Help identify areas of needs in which quick success is likely;
- Be conducted in the language of the group, but will provide adequate training in the national language;
- Be specifically designed for the individual group;
- Be bicultural;
- Be developed by (with) indigenous facilitators with adequate training back up and supervision;
- Be supported by the community, with ethnic peoples encouraged to assume responsibility for their own development and self reliance.



## DISCUSSION GROUP

### EDUCATION FOR PARTICIPATORY LOCAL DECISION MAKING

Facilitator: **Didier Leidner**, *Technical Advisor Non-Formal Education, CARERE*

The emphasis of the discussion was the need for the indigenous people to learn in order to improve their ability to communicate and understand other people and to be active participants in the development process. "Development comes from education, people need to understand. Having education make development possible," said Ardhendu Chatterjee.

Instituting written language is the key factor for enhancing the communication capability of the minority people who speak different languages without having their own alphabets. In order to make their voices heard, they are encouraged to read and write Khmer language. "If many villagers can speak, read and write Khmer they will be better able to help in planning the future of this province," said Charles Keller, of the Summer Institute of Languages.

For other minority people who do not understand Khmer, they can also learn how to use Khmer letters to read and write their own languages, said Keller. He acquainted the group's participants with small booklets in the Krueng language, which he made by using Khmer alphabet.

The discussion arrived at the conclusion that education is the fundamental base for sustainable development. For the start, non-formal education is considered as the most practical approach. The participants recommended that volunteers should be selected in the community for short-term training to become a trainer. They stressed that for the effort to be seen as useful the selection of trainees should be supported by the villagers' willingness to learn as well. Libraries for teaching materials and literature are also needed in communities where training is provided.

However, it was acknowledged that the task can meet difficulties. Many children, especially girls, are not sent to school for fear that they may be influenced by outside culture or secretly meet boyfriends.

#### Presentation to Plenary:

**Sam Siphah:** *Deputy Director, Provincial Health Department*

Education is useful for all people, a source for general knowledge. Both formal and non-formal education are needed in this province. There has been a successful scholarship program, with 140 ethnic minorities trained as teachers, 73 people sent to Vietnam to study electricity, agriculture, accounting and veterinary medicine. Continuing the scholarship program will result in more trained people. There are about 20,000 people in the province who are illiterate.

#### Some ideas about non-formal education

1. Non-formal education is done outside the school, operated with an agreement between participants and teach-

ers. The participants will be active in making decisions, the study is related to practice, helping them to understand sustainable development ideas.

2. Implementation of programs: We need to help people understand about the value of education. We should choose local educators, literate people, popular people as volunteer teachers with the agreement from the local participants. The teachers are volunteering to teach and participants are volunteering to learn.

#### Ardhendu Chatterjee:

1. Learning process needs to be linked to the objectives.
2. Village people themselves need to become facilitators if they are trained.
3. Indigenous people can learn their own language mainly through the Khmer language (script).

## PLENARY

### COMMUNITY MANAGED DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL

**Sompong Sritatera**, *CIDSE Ratanakiri Team Leader*

I would like to bring all of you to the field level to see the capability of people in the ethnic communities; how they can work on their own with minimal facilitation from CIDSE and local authorities. In the community you will find so many resources that can be used for development, including human resources, so sometimes we do not have to bring anything but just mobilize the people and then they can follow through. So this means when we want to develop we do not have to bring all the materials or do everything for the people.

People have to participate in all stages of development, starting with identifying needs and planning projects. The people themselves identify and prioritize their needs, usually in evening sessions when most people can participate and debate. Traditional and ritual leaders should never be left out of this process. Villagers are advised to establish a group of people in the village to execute the development activities. Women are always encouraged to be part of this Village Development Committee (VDC) to assure that activities are gender-sensitive and also benefit women. Then in the implementation stage it is very important that people contribute as well, with the VDC playing a key role. Members of VDC are usually naturally and democratically identified by consensus of the people.

The main role of CIDSE and local authorities is to provide advice and facilitation. When people cannot find their own

resources for development, CIDSE can provide some materials.

For example in O Chum, people farmed wetland rice under Pol Pot but later stopped. With CIDSE's encouragement they tried again because it was a lot of work to farm *chamkar* (swidden plots). In this case CIDSE didn't provide anything free of charge; everything was provided conditionally. We bring hoes and seedlings but the people have to repay in terms of paddy after harvesting. We put the paddy back in, but with conditions such as the village organizing and contributing to a rice bank.

Or if villagers want to build a school they themselves can provide most of the construction materials and the labor. The CIDSE team provides some roofing materials and nails as well as advice in construction. The finished school may not look so beautiful but the point is that people contribute to it and make it by themselves, so it is their property to use and take care of.

With good facilitation and support and locally available resources in the community, ethnic minority people can carry out their own community development activities. Sincerity and trust between the development organization and the villagers are the main factors in sustainable success. The approach and attitude of development organization staff is critical in this process. Just to develop without respecting the local people's skills, activities and resources will lead to a difficult situation for the people in the long run, and hence unsustainability.

## DISCUSSION GROUP

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL

Facilitator: **Sompong Sritatera**

The discussion started off by identifying Community Development Needs:

- Cooperation with local authorities
- Community participation
- Community contribution of local resources
- Women's participation
- Leadership: formal; non-formal/traditional
- Traditional and culture. Can't assume people are free in the dry season; should be aware of taboos and forbidden issues, like trying to bring in a rice mill made of a kind of bamboo that is forbidden.
- Natural resources: any development should conserve and protect natural resources

Three case studies from CIDSE project villages were presented to show how people in the village plan and manage their own development activities:

1. Non-formal education / Adult Education Center in a Kreung village.
2. Small scale credit in Khmer village in Kon Mum district.
3. Repair of small scale irrigation in a Tampuen village.

Small groups discussed the strengths and weaknesses of community-managed development activities.

#### A. Strengths:

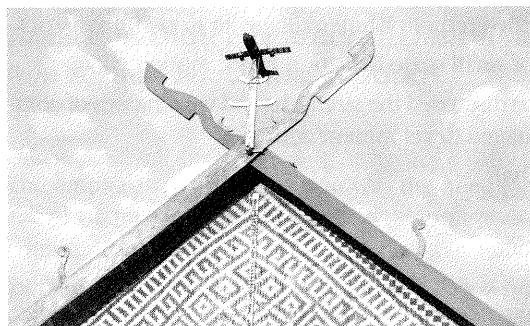
- Participatory approach allows people to take part in development.
- Education is development; dissemination of information occurs through training and increases awareness.
- Support from organizations such as materials or education through interventions and activity never happened before.

#### B. Weaknesses:

- Development should not be started too quickly because people are illiterate and need to go slowly.
- Some people believe in taboos which can't be ignored during the development process.
- Development can be used to disguise exploitation activities.
- Development needs to be continuous in order for villagers to believe in it.
- If we have only non-formal education it is not good; we need formal education also.

#### Recommendations to Plenary:

- Real development should be well-organized and reach rural areas. The people believe those who talk, but action is also needed. Things need to be discussed and done together with the people.
- Concerned organizations need to cooperate with local authorities because otherwise people won't believe them.
- People have conservative ideas. They believe in spirits — don't go to hospital, etc.
- Both NGOs and government need to work together. If we want to make ethnic groups attend school we need to find a way to support them by providing food and accommodation.
- The Ministry of Education, Health and Agriculture should be more concerned about ethnic groups.
- Socio-economic issues: land needs to be retained for ethnic groups due to expansion of the private sector. Local authorities need to be concerned or the ethnic groups will lose their traditional boundaries.
- Provincial authorities should educate and train villagers about development and assist with farm tools and draft animals so villagers can re-cultivate fields.
- In order for people to have a better quality of life they need education, happiness and health.



*"We don't have a problem with land but with education."*

- Jarai

## PLENARY

### **ANALYSIS AND PLANNING TEAM OF THE RATANAKIRI PROVINCIAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**Kam Yen, AP Team, CAREER**

In order to improve the development process, the Provincial Rural Development Committee (PRDC) has created an Analysis and Planning (AP) team to coordinate and cooperate between the provincial, district and community levels.

The main task of the AP Team is to bring information to the grassroots level — the districts and the community — and to bring [information about] the districts and villages to the provincial level. The planning approach is a bottom-up approach; the AP team acts as a facilitator to encourage villagers to formulate their own development plans.

The AP team was created on 28 June 1995 with 18 members: 5 women and 13 men. From June-August 1995 we were trained in development work and data collection techniques, with PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) as the main guideline. From September-December 1995 we conducted assessments in six districts. From January-June 1996 we will draft village and district development plans.

The villages that we select for our assessments are the poorest and most remote villages. We work with all ethnic groups, and in different ecological zones.

#### **Working procedure of AP team:**

- Hold meetings to discuss interview techniques and data collection guideline for the field visit.
- Meet with district committee and technical office staff to introduce ourselves and explain our objective and working procedures.
- Obtain feedback from the District Committee if they need clarification.
- Split into small groups and collect information from technical office staff in the district — agriculture, economy, women, agriculture, health, education, etc. — to research the living conditions, problems, needs, constraints and possible solutions.
- Submit a report to the district committee to be approved by the community itself.
- Travel to the communes and villages along with district members to meet with village chief, elders and women to introduce ourselves, explain our objectives, and set a time to meet with the villagers.
- Participate with villagers in a discussion where we explain development concepts, using the PRA approach. We ask if they understand our objectives and then split into small groups to encourage the villagers to express their own ideas.
- Compile a report in the village which is then presented to villagers so that they can change the report if it is not accurate.
- Collect information from five individual families (well off, medium, poor, very poor and a widow family) to understand how the rich family became rich, what the con-

straints are for the very poor family, etc.

- Return to provincial town to formulate and compile all the village reports to make a district report which is then submitted to the District Committee for approval.
- Submit report to the Provincial Rural Development Committee for approval and as a basis for formulating the development plan.

#### **AP Team's work:**

**Strengths:** Many people have participated in the assessments. The AP Team has collected data and compiled reports in six districts.

**Weak points:** The AP Team's experience and knowledge is still limited; this is a new task for us. Many villagers do not speak Khmer so it is difficult to communicate

## DISCUSSION GROUP

### **ANALYSIS AND PLANNING WITH PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION**

**Facilitator: Kong Sopha, AP Team, CAREER**

#### **Points of Discussion:**

1. Mobility of ethnic communities — living at *chamkar* (swidden plots) and in the village — calls for adapted planning and special considerations.
2. The elders are the most important decision-makers / planners in the village (usually one man and one woman) and all decision-making should go through them.
3. Sustainability is participation in all stages of planning, including maintenance and repair, communication and taking responsibility for projects/facilities.
4. Authorities should always be involved in development planning, but elders make decisions.
5. Gender: for training, both men and women need to be selected by the elders.

#### **Conclusions Re: Analysis and Planning with Peoples' Participation:**

1. Communicate with authorities at all levels.
2. Survey and assess living condition/situation of the people.
3. Analyze and prioritize problems and community needs.
4. Decide on the priority problem.
5. Meet with the two main elder people in the village and the chief to organize a plan.
6. Gather the people and inform/explain about the plan.
7. Discuss the plan with elders and villagers in order to get village agreement.
8. Meet with people to discuss contributions to fund the plan.

9. Two main elders will manage and be in charge of the contribution and set up plan.
10. Organize and appoint groups of people to take responsibility for specific tasks.
11. Everyone in the village will contribute to implementation of the plan.
12. Everyone will be responsible for maintenance and repair of the facility after official opening and in the process of using new facility.

**Unresolved Issue:** Role of government vs. international agencies vs. community: *who* participates in *who's* development planning?

#### **Quotes:**

*"In the village if you want to build a house, you have to discuss your plans with the elders who tell you where to cut the trees. Development work is the same. We need agreement from the village elders."* (Jarai)

*"In each village one person should be trained how to make a development plan to explain this process to the people in their village. Those to be trained should be the elders and the chief."* (Tampuen)

## PLENARY

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF VIETNAM**

**Ben Savill, Independent Volunteer, Hanoi,  
Vietnam**

I spent two years Gia Lai and Kontum as a teacher trainer just across the border in Vietnam. The Central Highlands of Vietnam consist of four provinces: Dac Lac and Lam Dong, Gia Lai, Kontum. There are diverse national characteristics, great productivity in both agriculture and forestry, as well as considerable tourism potential. In recent years the diverse resources of the highlands have come under intense development pressure, much of which has been unplanned and uncontrolled. Together with massive changes in population density, this has caused serious resource depletion and environmental degradation. Without human activities the central highlands would be covered in forest. But because of human exploitation the landscape has become transformed. Ancient forests are now rare and the few remaining forests are disappearing rapidly. There are many constraints on sustainable development, a lack of common vision as to what development means, and problems of genuine community participation.

#### **Constraints:**

1. Perhaps the biggest constraint is the huge population density and competition for space. Since 1975, thousands of

lowlanders have been settled into the highlands. In the past, indigenous people were the majority of the people in the area. Today they are the minority. For example in Gia Lai province which borders Ratanakiri, indigenous ethnic minorities are now only 49 percent of the population. Further south in Lam Dong, they are only 19 percent of the population. This has been an enormous shock not only for the indigenous people but also for the environment. Gia Lai is about the same size as Ratanakiri but whereas Ratanakiri has 76,000 people, Gia Lai has 876,000. Research tells us that in the past shifting cultivation was sustainable. Today because of these massive changes it is no longer sustainable in its existing form. Thirty years of intensive government efforts to stop shifting cultivation have failed so today people are starting to look at ways of making shifting cultivation more sustainable and effective so that the land retains its fertility longer, soil erosion is reduced and the forests regenerate more quickly when the land is abandoned.

2. Deforestation and Environmental Degradation (discussed above).
3. Shortage of Water. The long and severe dry season lasts from 6 to 9 months, so underground water is extremely important for production. But these waters are now seriously threatened by deforestation. In the areas where there is water there is often no irrigation system.
4. Lack of Credit for Production. Jarai and Bahnar farmers often complain that they had no access to credit so they can't buy fertilizer or pesticides. There are private money lenders who charge very high interest rates but the farm-

ers don't want to risk that. The State Bank has tended to only give loans to middle income farmers and some ethnic minority farmers who have obtained credit complain that the \$30 that they are allowed to borrow is too low.

5. Lack of information on agricultural production techniques. Ethnic minority farmers say that agricultural extension services fail to reach them, preventing them from being able to produce more. Provincial authorities have introduced more high yield plant varieties and animal breeds. But these are only being used by the *Kimh* Vietnamese farmers.

#### Positive Developments and Opportunities:

1. Unicef-sponsored multi-grade teaching project deals with the problem of lack of teachers and schools and high illiteracy.
2. More ethnic minority teachers are being trained. The government is recognizing that there have been problems with sending Vietnamese teachers into minority areas to teach.
3. A localized literacy and bilingual education programs, operated by Unicef and the Center for Research into Ethnic Minority Education, is producing literacy materials in the local indigenous languages. Education authorities are considering a return to bilingual education, whereby indigenous languages are used in primary schools for ethnic minority children.
4. Developments in the field of cultural preservation. Some independent Vietnamese film makers are hoping to produce a documentary film of the culture of the ethnic mi-

norities in the Central Highlands and on the growing threats to their cultural survival. There is growing awareness of the importance and value of ethnic minority culture. Work is being done to document the folklore and legends of the Bahnar and Jarai.

5. Protected areas. A new national park has been designated across the border from Ratanakiri in Kontum province. The World Bank is funding the buffer zone development program, and the World Wide Fund for Nature is working with Cambodian and Laotian colleagues to see if the park can be extended across the borders to form the largest protected area in the region.
6. Environmental Education: local education departments are considering "schools and trees" projects similar to a successful Oxfam project in northern Vietnam.
7. World Bank Plans: a) Small-holder Rubber Cultivation Program, aimed at creating a livelihood for local people as well as supporting reforestation; b) Rural Roads Program, which aims to promote access to remote towns and rural communities; and c) Protected Area Buffer Zone Project.
8. Agro-Forestry Extension project in Gia Lai, supported by New Zealand ODA: Aims to enhance rural food security by improving agricultural extension services.

sion group members said they didn't understand what others were talking about in terms of development.

2. There's enough land but problems of illiteracy, low education, poor health.
3. Ethnic Communities want to implement projects but must be given good examples before trusting those projects: action, not just words. Want to see results from international organizations before following their advice.
4. Some ethnic community members (Prou, Kreung sub-discussion group) said they don't want changes such as new irrigation systems because they lack knowledge and new technology. They said they just want to keep doing the traditional agriculture that works for them. They produce just enough rice for their village. In the dry season they have weddings and time for relaxation. In June, July, August they collect bamboo shoots, pineapples, bananas — enough to feed the village. There's no point to trying to produce more, they said, because there is no market.

Other group members (Tampuen, Jarai sub-discussion group) said they want international organizations to come and help develop their villages by providing: a) technical assistance; b) examples of agricultural practices; c) new seed varieties; d) animal husbandry assistance; and e) farm machines.

#### Unresolved Issues:

1. Who should be the leaders/trainers? Who will the indigenous people listen to? Is leadership within the village not sufficient? Will villagers listen to existing chiefs?
2. Why do some development projects fail? Because people who choose to take part are illiterate?
3. Who wants change and who doesn't want change? Who decides when and where change should take place?

#### Quotes:

"We don't have a problem with land but with education." (Jarai)

"I am a teacher but the government gives me such a low salary I want to leave my job." (Jarai)

"I don't understand what 'Agriculture' is. I don't understand the word 'Development' either." (Jarai)

"We want to learn by example, not just the spread of information. If you bring us medicine, cure us. Then we believe in it." (Jarai)

"The Jarai people are like slaves. The slave owners come from the lowlands because they have money." (Jarai)

"If we produce more, there is no market so there's no point. There's no road to the market." (Kreung)

"If we are not shown, we will not believe it." (Kreung)

"We will expect everything after this seminar." (Prou)

"Communal leaders are needed to lead people well. The leaders need to be well trained. We have a Development Committee already but need a leader. There are good and bad traditions in minority villages. Relaxing is a bad one. If they want to improve economic situation they must work hard but need someone to show them the direction." (Former Ratanakiri Agriculture Department official)

## DISCUSSION GROUP

### AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF VIETNAM

Facilitator: Ben Savill

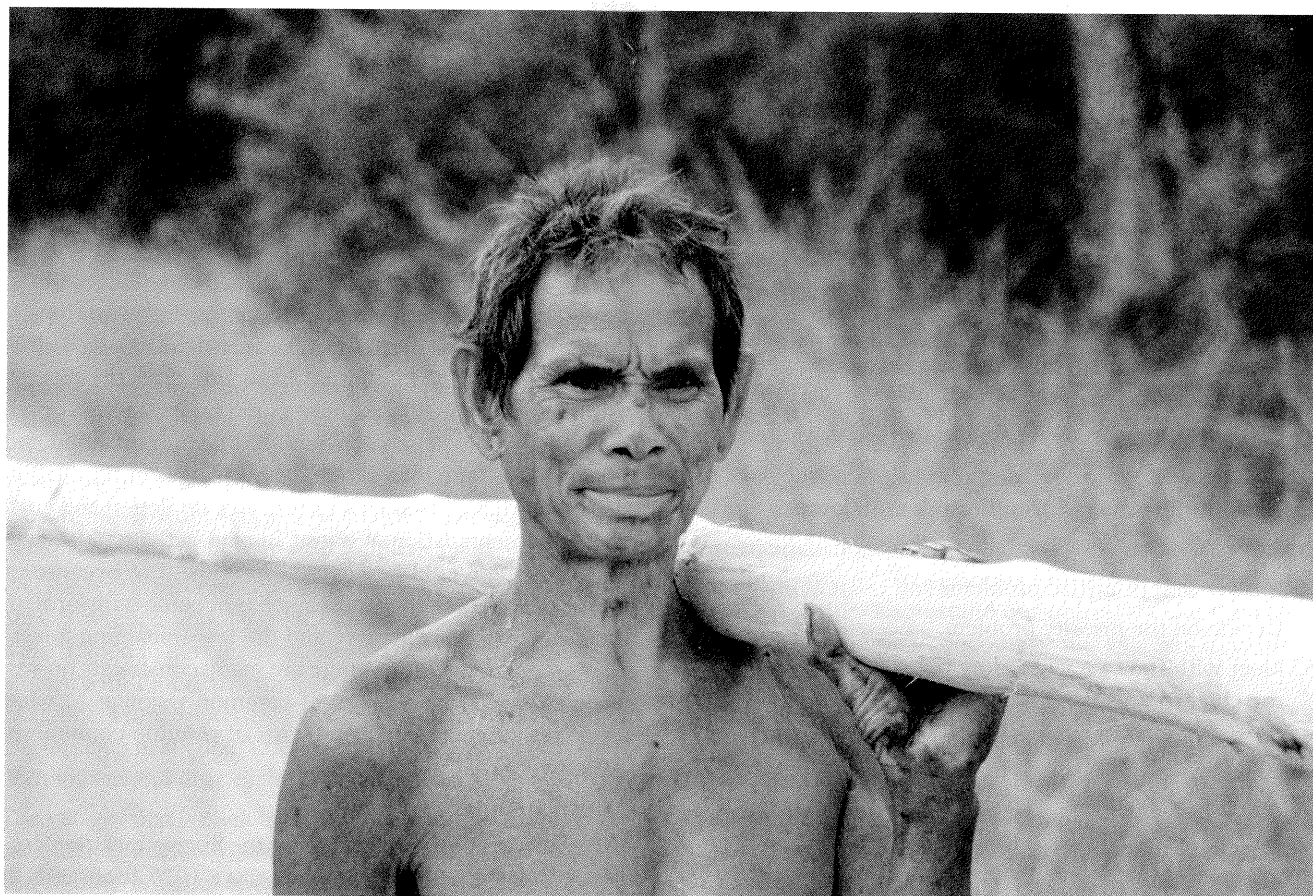
A case study was presented of a Jarai commune called "Ia Der" in the district of Chu Pah, just across the border of Vietnam. These 12 villages have been sedentarized by the government and every year suffer from food shortages.

Problems: 1) not enough land because of increasing lowlander population, 2) none of the farmwork is mechanized, 3) lack of water (no irrigation system and water level is too low due to massive deforestation), 4) lack of new seed varieties and information about new techniques; 5) lack of fertilizers/pesticides because farmers can't afford them; 6) lack of animals and animal manure; 7) lack of credit.

There are three to six months of food shortages so farmers must find work elsewhere as hired laborers for Vietnamese families and plantation owners. Children work also so they don't go to school, and the school curriculum is often inappropriate and irrelevant to children's needs because the teachers and curriculum are Vietnamese and teachers lack motivation because of low salaries.

#### Points of Discussion:

1. What is development? Some ethnic community discus-



### Presentation of Conclusions to Plenary:

#### Am San (Prou), Taveng District Agriculture Chief:

In other countries there is little land but many people. It is difficult to implement development because there are big plantations around the villages. Our province is plentiful with ethnic groups and with land. Ethnic groups practice cultivation differently. Lao and Khmer practice lowland cultivation, ethnic minorities practice seasonal *chamkar* (swidden plots). After cultivation we wander around to find something to supplement our food, such as fish. We marry our children off and then we gather and drink. Then we make sacrifices to the spirits. These traditions cannot be forgotten; this is the original tradition.

During this season the women come up to the *chamkar* to collect the tree branches, we go to find the water sources from the soil, and we go to the forest and search for the leaves of trees that can be eaten and natural vegetables such as yams. This has been our livelihood and tradition for a long time. But currently there has been some improvement of our tradition. The people who have never practiced lowland rice farming are now trying it. Other improvements are events like this seminar, which is helping us prepare for development. Our people are eager to see the results from this historic seminar. We want to know what kind of development will occur here.

Some people ask me, who is coming to develop our community? We want to develop our living condition and agriculture to be modern so we want development from you. Land we have, labor we have.

Our group has some proposals for the seminar, the govern-



ment and the international organizations that have come to help our province.

1. Provide technical experts to train the people how to improve our agriculture.
2. Set up demonstration projects to show us how to do it.
3. Repair our dams and canals and restore abandoned farms.
4. Provide us materials, variety of crops, draught animals, agricultural tools, cattle, and modern machines like tractors.
5. Provide agricultural credit schemes.
6. Improve infra-structure such as village storage facilities and roads from the communes to the districts and the province so that we have access to markets.
7. Help us set up a factory to create agricultural products in our own area.
8. Give us clear land title, classify land according to its suitability for various crops, and provide the appropriate seeds.

## PLENARY

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

#### Seng Teak, Ministry of the Environment

Seng Teak from the Phnom Penh Ministry of the Environment made a presentation about Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), focusing on an upcoming study on the impacts of an oil palm plantation in O Ya Dao district. In major developing countries the EIA is a requirement for conducting private or public investment in order to monitor what's going to happen and how the investment will affect society, nature, air, water and soil.

"We cannot live without development but need to minimize the damage on the environment and to do so we must make it a priority to assess the social and environmental impacts on natural resources," Seng Teak said. Staff from different ministries are currently being trained in environmental impact assessment with funding from the Asian Development Bank in cooperation with IDRC.

In February 1996 the EIA team conducted some initial research on the oil palm plantation. The study is planned to be completed in June 1996.

#### I. Goal of Palm Oil Study:

Assess environmental impacts in the area of the oil palm plantation and outside the area to minimize the effects on sustainable development. Focus on cutting of forests for the oil palm and impacts on wildlife in that habitat.



#### II. Projected Activities of the EIA Team:

- Monitor effect of chemical pesticides.
- Survey and inventory animals living in that area.
- Monitor effects on natural resources and the economy.
- Examine future impacts of a factory to extract the oil once the trees have grown up.

#### III. Preliminary findings:

**Geography:** The plantation is located along Route 19 about 8 km from the Vietnam border. 10,000 hectares total: 5,000 hectares for palm oil and 5,000 hectares for rubber. We are focusing on oil palm which will affect two communes (Saom Thom and Pok Nyai) with a total of five villages in O Ya Dao district.

**Wildlife/Forest:** Semi-dense forest. Tigers, deer, wild pig etc.

**Demographics:** 9,805 people in the district. In the development zone there are 200 families in each village, with 5 persons average per family.

#### IV. Impacts:

A. Deforestation for the oil palm plantation could cause the following impacts:

1. Erosion: When there's no trees there will be erosion when it rains.
2. Affects climate change; reduce oxygen.
3. Forest cutting reduces wildlife habitat and their feeding grounds; mechanical noise and vibration from chain saws disturbs the animals living there.
4. Burning of the forest to clear the land for oil palm affects air quality.

B. Use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides once the oil palm seedlings are planted reduces the quality of the water and soil.

C. Economic and Social impacts

1. Major impact on family economy. Villagers depend on the products from the forest and the forest itself.
2. Property and land rights; animal feeding grounds.
3. Culture and tradition: will affect nearby *chamkars* and the practice of shifting agriculture.

D. Future Impacts: In ten years there will be a need for a factory to extract the oil. The EIA will look at impacts such

as noise, smoke, reduction of wildlife, pollution of rivers.

In Sum: Palm Oil can generate income and benefits for local communities and generate national income by sustainable development if that investment complies with the technical conditions and the goals of the Royal Government.

## DISCUSSION GROUP

### EIA/PALM OIL PLANTATION

**Facilitator: Seng Teak and Yim Sambo,**  
*Ministry of Environment*

#### Phnom Penh Ministry of Rural Development Official:

There needs to be a survey on the social and economic impacts; what the benefits are. The plan needs approval from the provincial authorities. The EIA should go through the CDC and then to the Ministry of Environment and Agriculture and the province. The problem now is that the company lacks funds.

#### Shiva Kuma, CCC:

Questions for the EIA Team to examine:

- How much is the total investment?
- How many jobs will the company provide, for how long?
- Who will get the jobs — local people or outsiders?

#### Director of the Ratanakiri Department of Environment:

[Agreements] were signed when I was at the Ministry of Agriculture, Wildlife and Hunting. The problem is the company is not complying with technical regulations for development, under which old forest should be kept intact. Even the Ministry of Environment hasn't seen the process. My suggestion in the future is that if any company wants to do investment in this area, they need to come up from the community to the district to the provincial. They need to ask the local people — get approval from the chief, the province — and then submit to the government. If you do it the other way, from the government, the top, to the bottom, there will be a conflict.

#### O Ya Dao resident:

When the oil palm company started they destroyed the environment, which created a problem with the people in that area. We were threatened by the company in the beginning and commune leaders signed agreements they didn't want to sign. A few days later the company started its activities.

The company paid 90,000 riel plus MSG, rice and other supplies to cut one hectare of the forest. We local people were confused, wondering. Why had the company come here to cut down the trees. We went to ask them and they said this is *our* land, if you want the answer, go ask the higher level. Even now we still don't understand what is going on; we

will wait and see what is the result.

The oil palm plantation affects the people, the grazing fields for our animals, the forest. The company still owes money to [some of] the people who work for them. After making many complaints they [finally] paid the money. The company has its own private security who wear military uniforms and have guns and ammunition. They have shot eight of the local people's cows, which the company people ate themselves.

Another problem is the land dispute. Now some of the people are going to live along the road. We have to pay 2,500 riel for to get an I.D. card for a plot of land which is 50 by 100 meters.

#### **Ratanakiri Police Commissioner:**

The company came in 1994. The district and commune signed but didn't ask the people. Ly Piseth was the representative of the company. He is a two-star general, the [plantation] superintendent is military — people are frightened. From the beginning the company did things the legal way. They went to the district and commune and got approval. The problem was not talking with the people. Another mistake was they didn't submit their plans to the Ministry of Environment or Agriculture on the national or provincial level.

Some of the [local] people appreciate the plan, some not. Why some of the people oppose the plantation: it's the place where they raise their cows, and where they are accustomed to farming *chamkar* (swidden plots). Others are happy because the company has provided food, seed for rice and soybeans, and medical care.

The governor knows about the project. The company sponsored the former governor to go to Malaysia. Everything was done the legal way. The real problem is the company ran out of money. There were four people; the first person pulled out his share, another followed — there's no one left.

#### **Report to Plenary:**

Director of the Ratanakiri Department of Environment:

1. We all concerned about development in this region and the EIA plays a major role in development. On the provincial level we are receiving training in EIA; we welcome that as a process that will strengthen development and conserve natural resource.
2. The oil palm plantation will affect the forests, wildlife habitat and feeding grounds, and create social and economic impacts by affecting the property rights of the people.
3. A positive aspect is the fact that 50 x 100 meter plots of land have been distributed to the local people along Highway 19.
4. The people from two communes in the area have been employed by the Palm Oil Plantation as laborers.
5. Our suggestion is that all investment — agricultural, industrial, factory — needs involvement from the local community for approval on the investment. Ministries in the province and Phnom Penh need to be consulted as well.

## PLENARY

### **DRAFT DEVELOPMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

**Andrew McNaughton, IDRC:**

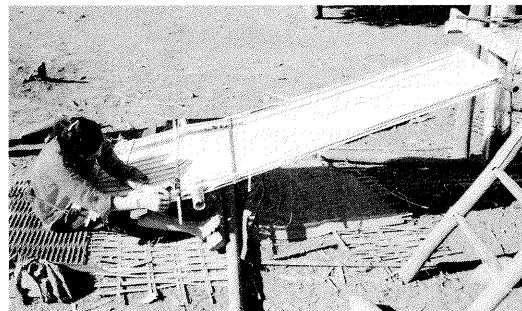
We had a mandate from the Royal Government to prepare a policy statement on development in the Northeast. Prince Ranariddh stated in his opening address that coordination and consultation is needed with all stakeholders in the northeast. The Royal Government has made a commitment that development projects not threaten the livelihood and culture of the local people. It is especially important that we hear the voices of the Khmer Loeu in this seminar, which is about consultation.

(McNaughton then read a draft policy statement which was subsequently discussed in four groups: representatives of Ethnic Communities, International Organizations/NGOs, provincial government, and national government. Spokespersons from each of the four groups met with H.E. Kep Chuktema, Governor of Ratanakiri, the following morning to finalize a second draft statement on development in the Northeast to submit to the Seminar and government representatives.)



SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS  
**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
IN NORTHEAST CAMBODIA**  
BANLUNG, FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 2, 1996

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY  
26 27 28 29 1 2  
FEBRUARY 1996 MARCH



*"The special characteristics of the minority people is that action must follow the promise, otherwise you can not work or live with them."*

- H.E. Bou Thang

### **GROUP REPORTS ON DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **A. Ethnic Community Representative**

**Pu Yung, Jarai**

After discussing this we are happy to see this draft. We agree with it and want official approval on this draft. On the other hand, our villages want to ask some questions on this draft.

1. In terms of land, we wonder if the land is sold or bought already by somebody, what will the government do?
2. If the land is taken by some people what will the government do?
3. If someone mines for gems in the soil, what will the government do?
4. In each family what is the right of occupying the land?
5. Is this statement made for ethnic people only or does it include lowland people? Can the lowland Khmer come and live in our area?
6. If the land is a cultivation area but the people haven't cultivated it yet — in other words, it's fallow — what will the government do on this issue? Can we take the fallow fields back?
7. If land has been used by our people for a long time and someone comes with the title and the plan and they claim the land is theirs, what can we do?
8. What about land along the road which has been used by ethnic people before or is currently in use, but is now claimed to belong to some company?
9. If our land has some resource such as gold or gems and

someone comes to exploit it, do we have the right to make them pay tax to us?

Aside from these points we agree with the policy statement.

#### **B. Provincial Staff Representative**

**Chheung Sokhan, Deputy Director of the Provincial Department of Agriculture**

We approve [of the draft]. As for government structure, we agree 100 percent. As for provincial structure, we agree 90 percent. The 10 percent want to add some words: "In the structure there must be included Khmer Loeu people selected from all groups to participate in this structure."

For the community structure, we agree 100 percent. About the land sale in Northeast Cambodia, instead of land decided by the PRDC we agree, but want to add: "Except the land which is occupied by individuals; this doesn't need to pass through the PRDC." For example, if one man has legal title and uses the land for the benefit of his family, if he wants to sell his land it doesn't need to pass the [PRD] committee. So we'd just like to add something on the land sale.

#### **C. Representative of Phnom Penh Government Agencies**

**Ouk Chan, Ministry of Public Works and Transportation**

1. Our proposal is that we should decide on this statement based on the government policy based on improving the livelihood of the highland people.
2. Include this structure into the government policy and implement it through the Interministerial Committee to work with international organizations.
3. The government has a project related to highland people

related to the National Committee for Rehabilitation. We want to develop in the right way according to the government policy and at the same time coordinate with NGOs, international NGOs, the government and with the province involved in order to facilitate the development. Also we want to enable this process so that it provokes favorable conditions of the Council of Ministers to work out. I would like you to submit this statement as a draft to the Council of Ministers for decision. I agree 100 percent.

#### D. NGO Representatives

##### Ardhendu Chatterjee

In general we also agree with the principles in the draft but at the same time there is a feeling about clarifying the language; reviewing it before giving it to the ministers. There are two areas: one about organizational structure and the other about immediate action. In our group we felt that some kind of indigenous people's council was a good idea — so we need to change the language so that there is a council. Secondly, some members had doubts about whether the PRDC alone could handle all the coordination; there are some doubts there so we have to discuss it further in a working group. Some felt the way it's written now, the Task Force is both a policy group and a technical advisory body, so perhaps we should divide the two; one body representative of different NGOs and so on, and the other comprising people who individually because of their expertise take part in a technical group; thus not representing organizations — maybe government, maybe non-governmental — but attending because of their technical capacity. We also felt that in a policy document it is not appropriate to have such a long list of program activities — that should be up to the working group.

## PLENARY

### PRESENTATION OF SECOND DRAFT OF THE SEMINAR POLICY STATEMENT

Andrew McNaughton, IDRC

There was strong consensus in the meeting with the Governor this morning. The ethnic community representatives expressed very strong concerns about land and land ownership. The Governor's response was a very strong willingness to work with them on the problems of land ownership in the future. The revised draft of the document encourages the Royal Government to make that possible in several ways. The representatives of the government agreed to the document and want to have structures developed in government which will provide representation for Khmer Loeu people.

The representatives of the NGO community wanted to shorten the document. They suggested not listing all projects at this time, but using discussion in the future to plan the projects; leaving the discussion of future project for working groups to discuss afterwards. The NGO community also recommends that the Khmer Loeu people here in the seminar become a council for Khmer Loeu people in Ratanakiri, and similarly in other provinces.

The following is the second draft of the Development Policy Statement and Action Plan. (see Appendix A on page 36)

### CLOSING CEREMONY

The Seminar ended with the submission of the Draft Policy Statement on Development in the Northeast to the Royal Government. The forum was closed by co-Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers Sok An, who represented Second Premier Hun Sen. Sok An pledged to bring the development policy statement to the attention of both prime ministers of the Royal Cambodian government.

"The Royal Government will make its best to promote sustainable development in the northeastern region," Sok An said in his closing speech. "Development is unavoidable. The main issue is to coordinate it so it does not affect culture, customs and living conditions of the ethnic groups. There must not be victims because of development."

"We should strongly advise investors to include in their feasibility studies and development plans support for the Highland people's culture, tradition and custom," Sok An said, cautioning that mono-crop plantations are not necessarily better than the encouragement of multi-crop farming. "Large-scale plantations of industrial crops must necessarily take into account the impact on the Highland peoples' housing and basic services," he said.

"The logging ban is in fact the resolution of our Royal Government but we must pay close attention to deforestation that occurs to extend land for plantations which, without proper study in some cases clearly may eventually destroy our natural resources."

Speaking on behalf of the ethnic community representatives who attended the seminar, Pu Yung, a Jarai from O Ya Dao district said: "This seminar has helped us understand very well the meaning of the word 'sustainable development.' For many years now we have not had good living conditions like the lowland people. We hope the seminar has given a picture of the real life of the ethnic minorities."

Scott Leiper, Country Representative for CARERE, applauded the seminar's efforts to draft a development policy statement. "One of the most important conditions for sustainable development is consensus about policy plans and programs," Leiper said. "Consensus is not an easy task. This seminar may well prove to be historical where all levels, agencies, men and women have come together to try to build consensus and reach an agreement."

H.E. Ngy Chanphal, Under-Secretary of State for Rural Development, welcomed the draft policy statement but questioned the proposal to form a Khmer Loeu Council. "The Khmer Loeu Council could be misunderstood as the cre-

ation of a state within a state," he said. "The Constitution states that Cambodia is an indivisible state. We should change the name to an association."

H.E. Bou Thang, Member of Parliament for Ratanakiri province, praised the government's and organizers' attention on developing his homeland. He described the seminar as a "historical event" which offers hope to the indigenous people.

He gave strong support to the recommendation to have hill-tribes representatives participate actively in the development process. He urged that development must turn into deed, not just remain in word.

"The special characteristics of the minority people is that action must follow the promise, otherwise you can not work or live with them," he said.

#### Evaluation of the Seminar

Participants divided into groups to discuss their opinions regarding the strong and weak points of the organization and proceedings of the seminar. The following are the group reports:

#### Group 1: International Organizations/NGOs

##### 1. Logistics:

- More planning required.
- Papers should be made available to all participants.
- Better translation.
- Better coordination of transportation.
- Establish coordinators for each area (an information desk).

##### 2. Substance:

- Common vision?

- Putting words into people's mouths.

#### 3. Processes:

##### A. General:

- Need to look at the sequencing (process and then outputs or vice versa?).
- Some presentations were too academic.
- Need to allow more feedback from participants.

##### B. Groups:

- Ethnic minorities sometimes felt intimidated by government officials in groups; perhaps should make separate groups.
- Need to better define the role of facilitator.
- Objectives not described.

#### 4. Expectations of Ethnic Minorities:

- Fulfilled. Good confidence level.

#### 5. Level of participation:

- Room for improvement.
- Good participation by ethnic minorities, especially in group discussions
- Would like to see the actual seminar organizers participating in and listening to the debates and discussions as well.

#### 6. Plenaries and Case Studies:

- Language for some plenaries was inappropriate.
- Need a chairperson to moderate/monitor time.
- Need more organization re: guidelines and what was expected.



### 7. Field Trips:

- Need well-informed person to provide information.
- Options for what people want out of field day.
- Have participants arrive a day early to go on field trips.

### 8. Output of the Seminar (Results)

- Established networking potential.
- Sharing information.
- Need to continue dialogue between ethnic minority groups in some formal and structured way to ensure consistency.
- Concern that seminar is raising expectations of ethnic minorities too much, too soon. Should have established what their expectations were.

### 9. Recommendations for the future:

- Establishing additional cross-border information links with ethnic communities, International Organizations/NGOs government level in Laos and Vietnam.
- More representatives from different areas.

#### Overall:

- The size and complexity of conducting a seminar of this nature and scope is appreciated. In those terms it was a success.
- Attention needs to be given to dissemination of information.
- Simplify concepts for ethnic minorities.

### Group 2. Ethnic Community Representatives

#### Positive points:

- People joined together, commencing the process of sustainable development.
- Grassroots level and ethnic communities can also be active and participate in development.
- Seminar participants represented all levels, top and bottom.
- Seminar provided information and education, for example about non-formal education — can help reduce illiteracy.
- Increased knowledge of development.
- We never participated in the past.

#### Suggestions for Future Seminars:

- Accommodation was not so good. Problems with lack of mosquito nets and blankets and there was not enough money for food. There was confusion over the amount: we understood it was supposed to be \$5 dollars/day but instead received only 9,000 riels.
- In the future select literate minorities to attend so they can take notes. Request that all ethnic groups be represented. This conference was intended for ethnic minorities but they were not in the majority at this seminar.

#### Suggestions for NGOs working in the villages:

- NGOs should respect villagers. Some Khmer NGO staff look down on us or complain in Khmer about living conditions. Villagers can understand Khmer sometimes!
- If NGOs need a translator they should bring one from outside the village, instead of relying on villagers who

are often tired after working all day.

- All types of ethnic groups must be invited to the seminar in the future.

### Group 3. Khmer and Ethnic Community Representatives

#### Strengths:

1. More understanding about sustainable development.
2. Royal Government and NGOs taking time to focus on developing the ethnic communities.
3. Understanding the impact of development on environment and culture.
4. Democratic process in the seminar: the right to speak out freely.
5. Focus on ethnic minority groups with the plan to integrate them into all levels of national institutions.

#### Weak points:

1. The seminar lacked discipline in its proceedings, especially in group sessions, where matters were discussed that were not relevant to the proposed topic.
2. Documents and statements were generally not distributed prior to the discussion process. Discussion of the draft policy statement was given as an example, which should have been handed out to all participants one day to study before it was to be debated. "Just to read and listen to without having time to examine it properly was not appropriate at all," said one participant.
3. Not enough time for group discussion; difficult to understand the different issues.
4. Sustainable development should look more closely for input from ethnic communities.
5. Need more cooperation with local authorities such as village and commune chiefs and elders in the village in planning development.



*"I don't understand what 'Agriculture' is.  
I don't understand the word 'Development' either.*

- Jarai

### POST-SEMINAR EVALUATION BY ETHNIC COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Present: Approximately 15 community representatives; Anna O'Neill (HU); Gordon Paterson (Oxfam UKI/Novib NTFP Study); Andrew McNaughton (IDRC); and Didier Leidner (CARERE).

The ethnic community representatives were unclear what they should report back to their villages in terms of concrete ideas for development since most of the seminar had focused on policy discussions. They expressed concern that their forthright requests and proposals had been included in the statement in a rather watered-down form. They asked for copies of the final statement (later provide by Anna) and reviewed their main aspirations and requests.

#### Aspirations and Requests:

1. Each participant should receive each a copy of the seminar proceedings and statements.
2. Please let the government follow our request such as:
  - Security of land tenure
  - A halt to timber exploitation by companies
  - If villagers are forced to resettle, there should be follow up development programs such as wells with pumps, schools, (with teachers) and credit programs (e.g. for pig raising).

- The government should not recognize anyone who applies to make a land title on ethnic minority land.

#### Re: Relations with NGOs

- Each village should choose a committee of 3-2 people to relate to NGOs.
- NGOs should respond to requests for them to work in any villages that are willing.
- NGOs should employ more ethnic minorities. It won't work if they use only lowlanders.

#### Re: Education

We need teachers who are willing to work voluntarily in our villages — who are not corrupt. Especially we need organizations to train people in our own village to be teachers; people 20-25 years old who know some reading and writing already.

#### Re: Land Tenure:

We would like the government to recognize two models for land security, letting each village choose which model they want to use.

1. Individual titles along the road. 5 hectares (plus access to old gardens as well.)
2. Community management of customary land. Community makes a management plan including protected forest, gardens (*chankars*), industrial agriculture, selective cutting forest and non-timber forest production collection. This to be approved by the government and perpetual leases given to the community (by contract) to manage, with some profits shared with government.

## NORTHEAST HIGHLANDS DEVELOPMENT POLICY STATEMENT AND ACTION PLAN

*Second Draft, March 1, 1996*

### Institutional Structure

The Cambodian Nation is composed of a diversity of peoples and cultures. That is one of its strengths. A wise Government will recognize this strength in diversity, and take whatever measures it reasonably can to protect it. In the highlands of the Northeastern region of Cambodia live people of many distinct cultures. Their unique ways of life, means of livelihood, and artistic heritage, come from their dependence on the natural resources around them, and their highly developed methods of managing those resources, over the centuries. These ways of living and of managing resources can be a unique contribution to the reconstruction of Cambodia, if means can be found to use them as the basis for modern and sustainable management systems.

Development of the Northeast of Cambodia is inevitable, in the interests of the economic and social well-being of the people of the region, and in the larger interest of Cambodia as a whole. It is the responsibility of the State to ensure that the process is orderly and just. If Khmer Loeu communities are to have the opportunity to control their own destiny, within the fabric of our national life and civil society, then they must have access to the mainstream decision-making institutions of Government.

The Royal Government recognizes the need for consultation, at the local and provincial levels, in all planning and promotion of development projects, in every province, and especially in Northeast Cambodia. For Northeast Cambodia, the Royal Government recognizes the vital necessity of giving an opportunity to the Khmer Loeu population, that their knowledge and aspirations may be taken into account within decision-making and planning structures. It is therefore the intention of the Royal Government to add Khmer Loeu representation to decision-making bodies at the central level, and to encourage the Northeastern provincial authorities to do likewise.

The Royal Government also recognizes the significant contribution being made by International Organizations and NGOs in supporting the process of reconstruction and development in the country. As our civil society reemerges, it is the policy of the Government that our international friends should come to coordinate more closely with our national institutions, and to work less independently than in the recent past.

### Interim Regulatory Policies

Several major resource development projects are in various

stages of planning for the Northeast of Cambodia. The Royal Government is committed to ensuring that such projects do not threaten the livelihoods and the cultures of the Highland peoples. All projects, including those already signed, are required to submit management plans for public review prior to any commencement of work. These plans must include assessment of the impacts of the project on the local environment, and on local communities. The staff of central ministries are being given training and experience in the evaluation of Environmental Impact Assessment reports, prepared by proponents of development projects. Ministry staff will assist provincial authorities to make judgments about the acceptability of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment reports, which project proponents are required to prepare and submit. No development projects may proceed until the affected community groups have had notification and an opportunity to participate in the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment process, and the relevant Provincial Authority has given its assent to the recommendations of those processes. International agencies will provide technical assistance, and undertake whatever capacity building may be required to ensure that these processes approach international standards for project scrutiny. By such means our policies will encourage sound, long-term resource management planning, based on consultation at the appropriate levels.

All development projects and formal transfers of ownership of land in the Northeastern provinces will require the assent of the relevant provincial authorities through a public process. The International Agencies will provide technical assistance to the Provincial Governments in assuring that acceptable public consultation is carried out before any such formal transfer or development project commences.

### Immediate Action And Local Capacity Building

The scenic beauty and rich natural resources of the Northeast region are attracting agro-industrial and tourism investment, and the region is opening up very quickly. In order to ensure that the process of development is orderly and just, a number of actions are needed immediately. These are of three types:

- Applied research, to ensure that there is a sufficient base of information, so that provincial authorities and their partners can plan effectively. Key initial work will include research and documentation on land tenure and demarcation of customary boundaries, and land capacity analysis.
- Experimental trials of new production and processing technologies, to determine their suitability for the highland system.
- Capacity building, to enable Cambodians to participate effectively and fully in decision making and all other aspects of the development process, including assistance with the establishment of a Khmer Loeu Council, at the provincial level, composed of a diversity of representatives (ethnic group, gender, district).

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