

First Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF)
on
**Indigenous Ethnic Minority Communal Land Rights:
Policy and Achievements**
(19 June 2007)

Remarks

by **H.E. Im Chhun Lim,**
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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The Royal Government of Cambodia has always given utmost attention to the wellbeing of the indigenous ethnic minority communities in Cambodia, especially, their rights to land use and access to forest by-product which have been their tradition and custom. This spirit can be easily seen in the ratification of many laws such as in the Country's Constitution (1993), Land Law (2001), and Forest Law (2002). Moreover, the Royal Government of Cambodia's Interim Paper on Strategy of Land Policy Framework in 2002 has also precisely reflected this spirit.

In order to translate this spirit into action, the Royal Government of Cambodia through the Council for Land Policy, has been preparing a policy on Registration of the Indigenous Ethnic Minority Communal Land as a collective property. At the same time, the Government through the Ministry of Rural Development has also been preparing the National Policy on the Development of Indigenous Ethnic Minority Region.

The drafting of the policy paper on land registration and the rights of the indigenous ethnic minority communities to natural resources was initiated in 2003 and facilitated by the General Secretariat of the Council for Land Policy as the coordinator with technical assistance from GTZ.

In 2004, the Council for Land Policy has established a national working group comprising members from the MLMUPC, MRD, MAFF (Forestry Administration), MOE, MOI, and MIME, with

the working groups at provincial levels, to pilot the registration of indigenous ethnic minority communal land in Rattanakiri and Mondulakiri provinces. The working group has conducted a research study based on several relevant documents, especially, those research documents of the joint cooperation made by the MLMUPC, MOI, MRD and experts from GTZ.

In 2005, the General Secretariat of the Council of Land Policy has continued to discuss with the working groups at both national and provincial levels, and to subsequently improve the draft policy in order to reflect to the context, culture, tradition and custom of the indigenous ethnic minority people.

The draft policy has been put into wide consultation with relevant stakeholders and representatives of indigenous ethnic minority communities in the provinces included:

1. Consultation with prominent indigenous ethnic minority political figures who are members of the Senate, Parliament, and the Provincial Leaders on 13th December 2006.

2. Regional Consultation Workshop: was held in Rattanakiri province on the 20th December 2006 with participations of representatives from indigenous ethnic minority communities from Rattanakiri, Preah Vihear, Mondulakiri, Kratie, and Stung Treng provinces, and from focal persons of the MOI, MOE, MRD, MAFF (Forestry Administration) as well as representatives from the civil societies with total number of 186 participants.

3. National Consultation Workshop: was held in Phnom Penh on the 29th January 2007 with participation from 14 relevant ministries and institutions, and representatives of the indigenous ethnic minority communities from Preah Vihear, Mondulakiri, Kratie, Stung Treng, Rattanakiri, Kampong Speu, and Pursat provinces. In addition, there were participations also from representatives of the National and International Organizations with the total number of 160 participants.

Based on comments and feed backs from the above national and international consultation workshops, the General Secretariat of the Council for Land Policy with cooperation with the National Working Group has revised the draft policy and submitted to the Council for Land Policy for endorsement in a meeting held on the 25th April 2007 with positive result.

The endorsed draft policy was then submitted to the Council of Ministers on the 17th May 2007 for review and adoption. It is important to notice that the draft policy is consistent with the National Policy on the Development of the Indigenous Ethnic Minority Regions.

Excellency, ladies and gentlemen

In order to temporarily protect the land use rights of the indigenous ethnic minority communities, the General Secretariat of the Council for Land Policy and the MLMUPC shall work together with the State Land Management Committee of concerned provinces, to guide the implementation of interim measures through conducting pilot projects in three areas in Leoun Kren village Ou Chum commune, Ou Chum district, and in La In village, Teun commune, Kon Mom district of Rattanakiri province, and in Andong Kralleng village, Ou Rieng commune, Ou Rieng district of Modulkiri province, in accordance with the Sub-decree No. 118 on state land management.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to request all relevant stakeholders to provide full cooperation and support the effort made by the RGC in preparing a policy on Registration of the Indigenous Ethnic Minority Communal Land, and to avoid any act that could hold back the policy preparation process.

Thank You