

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CAMBODIA

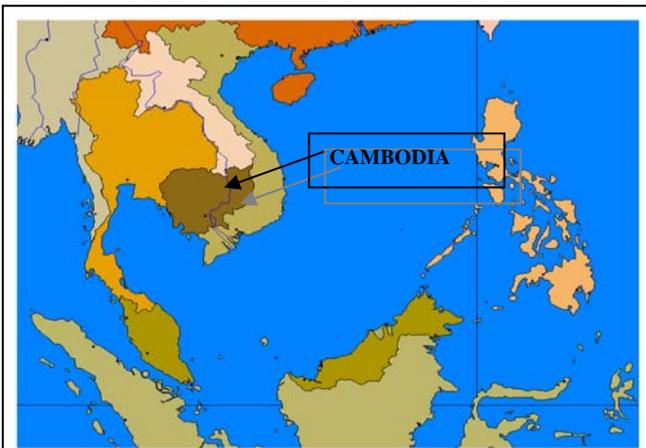
NGO Forum on Cambodia, April 2006

*“We, the indigenous peoples of Cambodia, like other citizens of Cambodia, are happy to fulfill our role as citizens of Cambodia. [...] We consider our indigenous cultures and communities an integral part of the cultural heritage and richness of Cambodian society.”<sup>1</sup>*

The Cambodian Land Law (2001) grants collective land ownership rights to indigenous communities. This offers a unique chance for indigenous peoples in Cambodia to exercise their right to self-determined development. However, the provisions of the Land Law related to indigenous communities have not been implemented and are frequently violated, favoring powerful private and state interests, attracted to exploit the economic potential of areas traditionally occupied by indigenous peoples. Alienation of land and forest from indigenous communities has become the major threat to local livelihoods and traditional knowledge. It is destroying the local community landscape. Continued support and the involvement of the international community are needed to safeguard the rights of Cambodia’s indigenous peoples, including recognition of their traditional livelihoods and the registration of their communal lands.

## 1. Introduction

Indigenous peoples in Cambodia have so far received little international attention. This is partly due to the fact that the country’s majority of ethnic Khmer accounts for approximately ninety percent of the population. Compared to its neighbours in Southeast Asia, Cambodia has the smallest ethnic minority population, both relatively and in absolute numbers<sup>2</sup>. Yet Cambodia is a multi-ethnic society. The ethnic minority groups include the Vietnamese, Chinese, Lao, Cham and indigenous peoples.

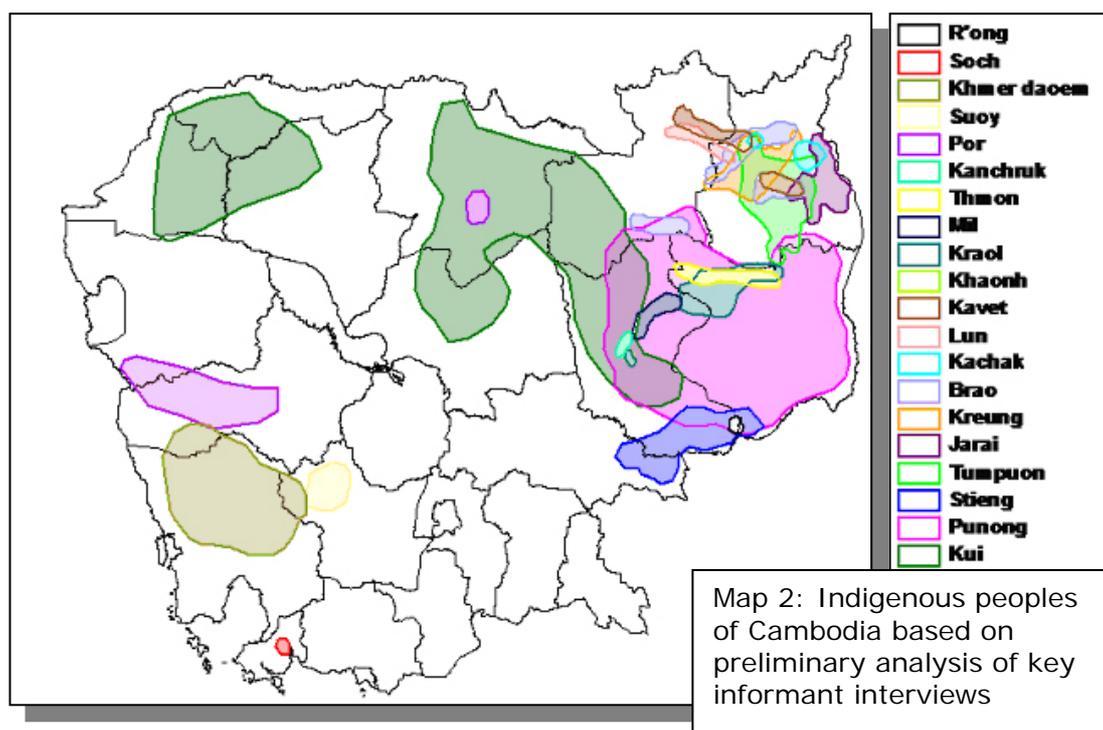


Map 1: Cambodia in Southeast Asia

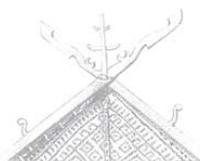
<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from the Statement by Indigenous Peoples at the first Forum of Cambodia’s Indigenous Peoples, Kampong Speu province, September 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Ovesen, J. and Trankell, I.-B. (2004): Foreigners and Honorary Khmers. Ethnic Minorities in Cambodia. In: Duncan C.R. (ed.): Civilizing the Margins. Southeast Asian Government Policies for the Development of Minorities. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 241-269.

Cambodia's recent history of genocide, war, massive migration, and forced resettlement has led to a situation where reliable demographic and ethnographic information is not available. The 1998 Cambodian Population Census identified 17 different indigenous groups. Based on spoken language, the census estimated the indigenous population at about 101,000 people or 0.9 percent of the then total population of 11.4 million. Empirical research, however, suggests that the figure is most likely underestimated and could be as high as 190,000 people or 1.4 percent of Cambodia's population<sup>3</sup>.



Indigenous peoples in Cambodia are part of a larger indigenous cultural area that extends beyond Cambodian borders<sup>4</sup>. Belonging to two distinct linguistic families, the main groups are the Austronesian speaking Jarai and the Mon-Khmer speaking Brao, Kreung, Tampuan, Punong, Stieng, Kui and Poar. Over half of the indigenous population is found in the north-eastern provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri, forming the majority of the population in both provinces. Information obtained from indigenous peoples' representatives and key informants show that indigenous peoples moreover reside in 13 other provinces (see map 2).



## 2. Legal and policy framework

<sup>3</sup> According to the Statistical Year Book, Cambodia's total population was 13.8 million in 2005.

<sup>4</sup> The same or closely related ethnic groups are found from the Boloven Plateau in southern Laos, known as 'Lao Theung', to the Central Highlands of Viet Nam where they are called 'Montagnards'.

The **Cambodian Constitution** (1993) guarantees all Cambodians<sup>5</sup> the same rights regardless of race, colour, language and religious belief (see box). In its political platform for the third legislature of the national assembly the Royal Government of Cambodia moreover acknowledged the importance of having a **multi-cultural Cambodian society**.

*The Kingdom of Cambodia shall recognize and respect human rights as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human rights, the covenants and conventions related to human rights, women's and children's rights.*

*Every Khmer citizen shall be equal before the law, enjoying the same rights, freedom and fulfilling the same obligations regardless of race, color, sex, language, religious belief, political tendency, birth origin, social status, wealth or other status.*

Cambodian Constitution 1993, Article 31

Cambodia is a signatory to a number of **international instruments** that protect the rights of indigenous peoples<sup>6</sup>. Cambodia is also a party to the **Convention on Biological Diversity** (1992) that recognizes the role of indigenous peoples in the protection of biodiversity. The Project on Rights Based Approach to Indigenous Peoples Development in Cambodia, launched by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in May 2005, is helping Cambodia to learn from international experiences reflected in the principles of **ILO Convention 169**.

Supported by the Highlands Peoples' Programme<sup>7</sup>, a general policy for highland peoples development was first drafted by an **Inter-ministerial Committee on Highland Peoples' Development** in 1997. The Royal Government of Cambodia has since encountered many difficulties in adopting a national policy on indigenous peoples. After countrywide community consultations, a second draft was submitted to the Council of Ministers in 2005. Drafting and conducting of consultations on the policy are the mandate

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<sup>5</sup> In the English translation the term used in the Constitution is 'Khmer citizens' and seems to exclude other ethnic groups. This is somewhat misleading. The Khmer language distinguishes between 'sanh chiet' and 'chun chiet'. 'Sanh chiet' – the term used in the Constitution – means 'nationality', whereas 'chun chiet' refers to 'ethnicity'. There is general agreement that indigenous peoples in Cambodia enjoy the same rights as other Cambodian citizens.

<sup>6</sup> This includes the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

<sup>7</sup> Within the programme of action for the first United Nations International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, the United Nations Development Programme initiated the Indo-China Sub-Regional Programme: Development of Highland Peoples through Participatory Capacity Building, also known as the Highland Peoples' Programme.

of the **Department for Ethnic Minority Development**<sup>8</sup> at the Ministry of Rural Development. Since developing a national policy towards indigenous peoples requires cooperation of different state agencies with competing interests it is unclear if the current draft will ever be adopted and implemented.

In general, there is little recognition of specific rights of indigenous peoples in Cambodian legislation. However, the promulgation of the **2001 Cambodian Land Law** marks an unprecedented period of explicit legal **recognition of collective land rights** of indigenous communities by the state.

The Interim Strategy of Land Policy Framework (2002) stipulates that government policy, as enshrined in the 2001 Land Law, is that indigenous communities shall be granted **collective ownership rights to their land**. The Land Law also **recognises the practice of shifting cultivation**, as part of the traditional land management system of indigenous communities. This is laudable in the context of widespread prejudices against shifting cultivation practices - especially in South and Southeast Asia - that have been used as a basis for denying indigenous peoples the rights to their lands. Although the 2001 Land Law does not guarantee inalienable rights to indigenous communities<sup>9</sup>, both the granting of collective ownership rights to land and the recognition of the practice of shifting cultivation is worth praising. On the other hand, until now not a single indigenous community has received ownership title to its collective property.

The **lack of implementation** of the specific rights granted to indigenous peoples under the 2001 Land Law could be partly attributed to the legislative history of these provisions.

It has been argued that the impetus for inclusion of a chapter on collective property of indigenous communities in the Land Law came at the **behest of international organizations**, including multi-lateral financial institutions and international donor groups, as well as local NGOs within the development sector<sup>10</sup>. Given the large role these organizations played in developing the special provisions for indigenous communities, it is argued that they must **continue their efforts** to ensure the actual implementation of these indigenous rights. In short, without continued involvement of the international community in safeguarding indigenous rights, the **prospects for implementation are bleak**.

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<sup>8</sup> The department was established in 1999 after the Inter-ministerial Committee had been dissolved.

<sup>9</sup> Article 26 stipulates that ownership rights related to the immovable property of an indigenous community includes all the rights and protections enjoyed by private owners including rights to dispose of the land. Article 27 also mentions the possibility to transfer land rights to individuals within the community.

<sup>10</sup> Simbolon, I. (2002): Access to Land of Highland Indigenous Minorities: The Case of Plural Property Rights in Cambodia. Working Paper No. 42. Halle: Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology.

### 3. Indigenous peoples' organizations

Only very recently indigenous peoples in Cambodia have started to develop a common identity and indigenous peoples' organisations on the national level are still in their infancies.

At a **first ever forum of Cambodia's indigenous peoples** in September 2004, representatives from indigenous communities from 14 provinces discussed what identifies/unifies indigenous peoples in Cambodia. The discussion yielded the following characteristics:

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**We have indigenous blood  
(our parents & grandparents were indigenous)  
We live communally  
We use land and forests communally  
We respect spirits and have ceremonies  
for the village spirit every year  
We call (pray) for help and have ceremonies  
to compensate when spirits help  
We have ceremonies to call up "araks"  
(a spirit called up to find out why someone is sick)  
We practice or have a history of practicing  
rotational agriculture  
We hold sacrifices when we farm  
We have village leaders (chah srok)  
We have burial forests**

Following the first national indigenous peoples' forum in September 2004, a series of workshops were held throughout Cambodia. These workshops assisted indigenous people in coming together and learning about indigenous peoples' rights and discussing their future. At each workshop provincial representatives were selected by the participants. These representatives have formed an **interim national network** of indigenous peoples that is now working together to develop strategies to jointly advocate for the rights of Cambodia's indigenous peoples to their lands and to self-determined development.

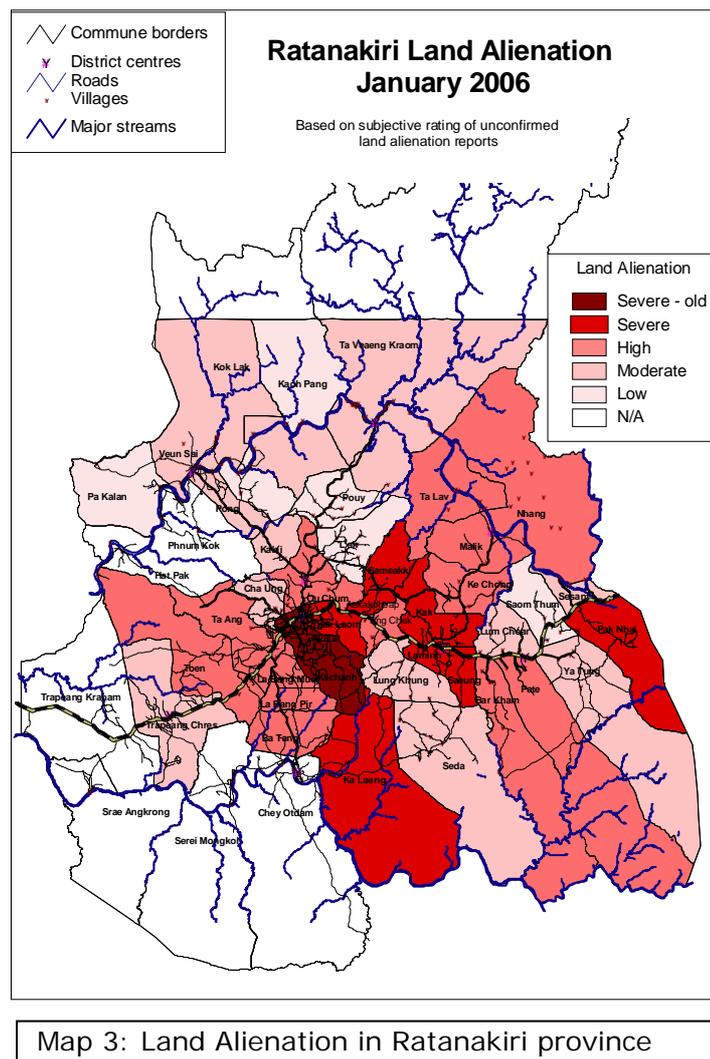
Of increasing concern is the number of indigenous (and non-indigenous) **activists being arrested**, often illegally, related to resistance to land and forest alienation attempts by rich and powerful people and companies. Cases in several provinces have shown how this has played a role in targeted intimidation against indigenous activists who have had to resort to non-violent protest in attempts to get forest and land issues addressed.

## 4. Issues

### *Land alienation*

Despite the favourable regulations for indigenous communities in the 2001 Land Law, the lack of implementation and enforcement has left indigenous peoples vulnerable to commercial and state interests, increasingly attracted to exploiting the economic potential of the forests and fertile upland areas, traditionally used and managed by indigenous communities. Alienation of indigenous land rights as a result of illegal land transactions has been plaguing many of the indigenous communities in the country, especially those in the Northeast.

The trading of land has also involved many indigenous persons, some of whom have not known about the laws, some of whom have been encouraged to sell and broker sales by outsiders, some of whom have lost hope in the social and legal system and have decided to follow the lead of thinking short term rather than following indigenous traditions. In some cases the problem has become so severe that the majority of indigenous villagers have been involved in selling off their community land, and in some cases, the land of neighbouring communities.



Reports<sup>11</sup> on the situation of land alienation from indigenous communities in Ratanakiri province have shown that:

- ❖ *The majority of land alienation is contrary to the intent and language of the 2001 Land Law. This has been confirmed by government officials on the national and provincial level.*
- ❖ *In spite of additional regulations in support of the 2001 Land Law and 2002 Forest Law, land and forest alienation is the result of a lack of law enforcement. NGO's and communities have expressed concern over the apparent lack of commitment to governance that appears to be the barrier to resolution of the problem.*
- ❖ *The current land alienation problems are often destroying the social fabric of indigenous communities. The problem has progressed to the stage where some communities have disintegrated. There has already been a severe loss of cultural and social resources.*
- ❖ *As the social fabric of communities is destroyed so too are the future options and possibilities for community development and poverty reduction.*
- ❖ *If not addressed as a matter of priority, the land alienation problem is likely to result in destruction of indigenous culture in much of Ratanakiri province.*

It should be noted that indigenous groups in other provinces are facing similar problems. Large-scale economic land concessions have been allocated to land areas traditionally occupied by indigenous communities. A recent study on economic concessions and local livelihoods<sup>12</sup> demonstrates that large economic land concessions offer little benefits to local communities while causing widespread environmental and social damage. The study challenges the assumption that large-scale plantations serve national interests and foster economic growth. The studies' findings are supported by the latest World Bank poverty assessment for Cambodia<sup>13</sup> that found small farms economically more efficient than large plantations.

The situation is further aggravated by the lack of consultations with local communities prior to the allocation of land concessions.

### ***Forestry Issues***

In January 2002, the Royal Government of Cambodia imposed a moratorium on cutting in forest concessions. In a letter to the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in November 2005, the World Bank's Sector Unit for East Asia Pacific recommended the termination of remaining concession contracts and using the opportunity to experiment with more equitable and

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<sup>11</sup> NGO Forum (2004): Land Alienation from Indigenous Communities in Ratanakiri, Phnom Penh and forthcoming NGO Forum: Land Alienation from Indigenous Communities in Ratanakiri – An Update.

<sup>12</sup> NGO Forum (2005): Fast-wood Plantations, Economic Concessions and Local Livelihoods in Cambodia. Field Investigations by Environment Forum Core Team. Phnom Penh.

<sup>13</sup> World Bank (2006): Cambodia: Halving poverty by 2015? Poverty Assessment 2006.

sustainable forest management options. The recommendations came after a claim was submitted to the World Bank Inspection Panel on behalf of communities residing in concession areas in the North and Northeast of Cambodia. The claim emerged in the context of World Bank endorsement of industrial exploitation of forest through design and implementation of the Forest Concession Management and Control Project. Indigenous communities have been particularly severely affected by logging concessions and were among those that submitted letters requesting an investigation. In response to the Inspection Panel claim the Bank Management admitted that it had overlooked the project requirements to establish special planning measures to protect the interests of indigenous peoples and that it failed to follow its safeguard policy related to indigenous peoples in the design of the project. The report of the Inspection Panel has been finalised but is not yet publicly available. It is hoped that it will call for the termination of the logging concession system in Cambodia, so that forest dependent people are no longer under threat of wholesale destruction of their main source of livelihood.

Despite the moratorium on logging, uncontrolled logging continues under the umbrella of the land concession system. Economic land concessions for large agro-industry projects frequently involve unsustainable timber harvesting. The Royal Government of Cambodia has moreover allocated four forest coupes for annual harvesting rights. One annual coupe was granted to produce timber for a new National Assembly building. Logging was approved without adequate consultation with indigenous communities residing in and around the allocated forest area and communities and NGOs have been denied access to the forest management plan.

On the other hand, the 2002 Forestry Law contains provision for community forestry to be officially recognised. The legal procedures and guidelines required for this are near completion. This offers indigenous and non-indigenous communities an opportunity to obtain user and management rights to forest in 15 year renewable intervals. According to the provisions of the 2001 Land Law, however, certain forest areas are included in the collective immovable property of indigenous communities, thus the state grants stronger rights to indigenous communities. In practice, this meets severe resistance from government authorities who are attempting to minimise the amount of forest that could be claimed within indigenous collective titles.

### ***Tourism and Mines***

Other indigenous lands which have been recently conceded by the Royal Government of Cambodia to the private sector include mining and tourism concessions. As is the case with other types of concessions, indigenous communities residing in these areas have had little voice - and no control - over the granting process of the concessions. The environmental pollution and damage associated with mineral mining operations and the large swaths of land required for hotels, golf courses and other tourist activities, are

expected to have adverse effects on indigenous communities living in and around the concessions.

As lands and waterways are exploited or 'developed' by concessionaires, indigenous communities are denied access to their land, or wholly displaced. As evidenced by mineral and tourism concessions in several provinces, the cost of development through private investment in the concession system is too often borne by the indigenous peoples in Cambodia.

### ***Hydro-electric dams***

Extreme problems have been reported since mid 1996, as a result of hydropower dams located on the Sesan River in Vietnam, which flows through Ratanakiri and Stung Treng provinces in the north-east of Cambodia. The dams have resulted in deaths from floodings, erratic river levels, worsened water quality, increased health problems, a severe decline in fisheries and riverine biodiversity, and continues to threaten the livelihoods and lives of the people who depend on the river.

While these problems continue, they are likely to be exacerbated by more dams that have already been commenced or are being planned in Vietnam and Lao PDR, on the Sesan River Srepok River, Sekong River and Mekong River. These dams are being planned or built without adequate assessment of past impacts, any rectification of the problems or first conducting serious future environmental and social impact assessments. International donor agencies and multi-lateral banks continue to support and validate their construction by supporting associated projects such as power line construction and funding feasibility studies. In this way, large international institutions such as the Swedish International Development Agency, the World Bank, the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation and the Vietnamese and Lao governments, along with funding from the Russian and Ukrainian governments, effectively undermine the lives of indigenous peoples in north-east Cambodia. In addition, it has been announced during the past year that the Cambodian and Vietnamese governments have signed agreements for the construction of two hydropower dam projects, which will be built on the Sesan and Srepok Rivers inside Cambodia. There are very strong local concerns that industrial power generation and the model of industrial development that it supports have profound and long-term negative impacts on the lives of indigenous people.

All of these dams are being built despite the demands of the communities who live along these rivers. The demands of the villagers include:

- Restoration of the natural flow
- Compensation for past harm
- No more dams until agreement is made with the villagers
- Improvement of the notification system
- Benefit sharing and economic development

- Insurance if the dam breaks
- Greater participation in environmental governance

In addition to dams affecting the northeast, a survey by the Cambodian Ministry of Industry, Mines, and Energy has proposed hydro-power dam projects in numerous areas throughout Cambodia. If constructed, these dams will affect indigenous people in at least eight provinces.

### **Education**

The overall educational situation in Cambodia is slowly improving as a result of the ongoing Education Sector Program (ESP), which is annually reviewed and adjusted. The abolition of school fees has especially increased the enrolment figures. The Priority Action Planning has improved the quality of school environment and teacher training. Having said that, progress is only slow and the drop out rate is still high in the first three grades of primary education. The gender disparity becomes higher in secondary education where fewer girls participate.

In rural areas the situation is worse. There is a lack of qualified teachers who are willing to be posted in remote places. This is particularly the case in areas with indigenous populations, where the education system is extremely poor. In many of the state schools the attendance of the students is poor, teachers are often absent and textbooks not always available.



Picture: Bi-lingual education, CARE Cambodia

In the majority of indigenous villages, schools are not available above grades 2 or 3. In many cases the schools exist but there are inadequate efforts to make them functional. At higher levels of school, indigenous students report the need to pay large sums of money in order to be able to pass years 9 and 12.

However, since the mid nineties linguists developed orthographies for five indigenous languages and several NGOs have developed adult literacy courses and non-formal education in the national language Khmer, and in local languages. Since 2002, CARE has developed a bilingual education program for primary education using a community school model. This is done in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in Cambodia and groups of indigenous elders. Both the bilingual non-formal education and formal education programs are strongly supported by the ministry who have just approved and expansion of bi-lingual education up to grade 3 into state schools in five north eastern provinces of Cambodia.

### ***Health***

The indigenous people in Cambodia have a significantly poorer health status than other Cambodians. Increasing degradation natural resources is impacting negatively on the already precarious health and nutritional status of the local people. Indigenous communities in particular suffer from high child mortality rates, something that was clearly illustrated in a study conducted in Ratanakiri province<sup>14</sup>. Two-thirds of the women interviewed for the study had lost at least one child.

Malaria, tuberculosis and diarrhoeal diseases are endemic, and vaccine preventable diseases and acute respiratory infections continue to be major causes of morbidity and mortality. Studies<sup>15</sup> have shown that a majority of children and most women are anaemic, and rates of vitamin A deficiency (2% of children and 6.8% of pregnant women have night blindness) are also high. 70% of children are stunted which is an indication of chronic malnutrition. Intestinal parasite infections are universal and hygiene and sanitation in the villages is very poor increasing the risks of diarrhoea and malnutrition. The risk of cholera epidemics is high, the last one being in 1999.

The majority of the population does not have proper or sufficient access to government health services. The ongoing national health sector reforms have yet to significantly benefit the indigenous population as improvement in fields of health management, financial resources, or human resources at health facilities in the province remain seriously limited. Indigenous persons still report that they are in many instances forced to pay high informal medical fees in order to get medical services and face discrimination and lack of qualified staff who speak indigenous languages.

Higher investments in physical infrastructure and in human resources are required in order to overcome transport and language barriers to achieve the same health outcomes as for the non-indigenous population.

The potential for HIV/AIDS becoming endemic in indigenous communities is high. If this occurs, it will have disastrous effects on the cohesion and viability

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<sup>14</sup> Hardy, F (2001): Health Situation Analysis, Banlung, Cambodia. Health Unlimited Ratanakiri Province

<sup>15</sup> Health Unlimited (2002): Health Unlimited Nutrition Survey, Banlung, Cambodia, Health Unlimited Ratanakiri

of the indigenous communities as well as on the food security of their households (as most of them are food producers plus people tend to sell land in order to pay for medical costs).

### **Local government and decentralization**

In February 2002 Cambodians elected, for the first time in decades, their local government representatives as the new commune councils, replacing the state-appointed commune chiefs of the past. The establishment of locally elected commune councils in Cambodia has a strong potential to contribute to the self-management of indigenous peoples. The laws governing decentralization provide for strong, autonomous bodies of self-governance and devolve substantial powers and functions to these bodies. However, in total absence of provisions to recognize and accommodate indigenous languages and institutions, the current design of decentralization in most areas does not realize this potential. Rather, it contributes to the marginalization of indigenous peoples through a number of mechanisms:

- ❖ Candidates for the commune council are by law required to be “able to read and write Khmer script”. This requirement sidelines traditional authorities and favours young, Khmer-literate candidates who in many instances have the least interest in sustaining indigenous societies. It has also contributed to a situation in which indigenous people are underrepresented on most commune councils.
- ❖ Commune-jurisdictions do not correspond to traditional territories of indigenous communities. Rather than empowering indigenous communities, the drawing of commune boundaries in many instances divides previously self-governing indigenous societies into minorities in different constituencies. Where this is the case, majority decisions become a mechanism that prevents indigenous priorities and needs from being met. In-migration by lowlanders, encouraged by the government, creates a situation in which indigenous people are outnumbered and outvoted in an increasing number of communes, even in their traditional territories.
- ❖ Decentralization contributes to in-migration, by establishing institutions of local governance that operate in Khmer language and are tailored towards the needs of the Khmer majority, allowing settlers to easily participate and advance their interests on the expense of traditional inhabitants. Moreover, infrastructure projects carried out by and funded through commune councils ease settlers access to indigenous areas that were regarded ‘wilderness’ before.
- ❖ The Royal Government's recent decision to let commune councils appoint village chiefs compounds the tendency of local governments to control indigenous communities, rather than the other way around.

## 5. Conclusions

In the last decade, Cambodia has made significant progress towards the first of the Millennium Development Goals. Poverty in Cambodia has been reduced by 12 percent<sup>16</sup>. The country has consolidated peace and its economy has grown at an annual pace of about 7 percent. However, poverty reduction and economic growth has not benefited people equally. The standard of living of the extreme poor grew at the slowest rate and the difference between urban and rural areas has widened. In short, while overall poverty has been reduced, **inequality has risen.**

Indigenous peoples in Cambodia have not benefited from the mainstream of national economic growth and poverty reduction. On the contrary, they often bear the **costs of social inequities and environmental destruction**, results of a macro-economic situation which is promoting economic development before resource tenure security is in place. As economic opportunities are developed indigenous communities are at risk of losing access to land and forest to more powerful players, this being facilitated by a poor governance system. **Land and forest tenure security** is required if indigenous communities are to have any chance of maintaining their livelihood base.

A recent study<sup>17</sup> on the likelihood of two indigenous communities Ratanakiri province meeting the Millennium Development Goals concludes that achieving the goals will require more resources than presently available.

Specific programs are required to **address health and education issues.** There has been progress with regard to bi-lingual education program and similar culturally appropriate strategies are needed within the health service to improve the well-being of the indigenous peoples, including the reduction of infant mortality rates.

**Many indigenous communities and groups are at a critical juncture with regard to land and natural resource management issues. Cambodia has policies and regulations that provide for recognition and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples to their lands. There is a unique opportunity to prevent and reverse the process of land alienation and impoverishment of indigenous communities. It is imperative that the challenges are taken up to avoid the worst possible consequences.**

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<sup>16</sup> World Bank (2006): Cambodia: Halving poverty by 2015? Poverty Assessment 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Ironside, J. (forthcoming): A lot of Flowers but no Fruit. A study on achieving the Millennium Development Goals in two Indigenous Communities in Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia. International Labour Organization, Geneva.

## **6. Recommendations**

In the light of the abovementioned issues, the following are urgent recommendations to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues:

1. Engaging in a constructive dialogue with the Cambodian Government and its development partners, including UN agencies, in order to speed up the adoption and implementation of necessary secondary legislation for the registration of the collective immovable property of indigenous communities in Cambodia.
2. Careful monitoring of the process of allocation of large-scale agro-industrial, mine and eco-tourism concessions in indigenous areas, in order to ensure the free, prior and informed consent of affected indigenous communities and compliance with international and national laws and standards.
3. Follow-up on the report of the World Bank Inspection Panel on the Cambodian Forest Concession Management and Control Project to ensure that the destructive methods of commercial forest exploitation will be replaced by more equitable and sustainable forest management options, including community based management systems. The experiences from Cambodia should also be used to inform and strengthen the resistance of indigenous and forest-dependent peoples in other parts of the world to World Bank funded wholesale destruction of their livelihoods.
4. Supporting the demands of Cambodia's indigenous communities affected by hydropower dam projects implemented in neighbouring countries by reminding the Swedish International Development Agency, the World Bank and the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation of international standards and their own safeguard policies, as well as take up the issue of hydropower dams as crucial trans-border issue affecting indigenous peoples across the borders of nation states.