

Workshop on National Dialogue on Cambodia's Development in 2009-2010

May 25, 2010

Mr. Keam Makarady, Director of Health and Environment Program of CEDAC attended a workshop entitled National Dialogue on Cambodia's Development in 2009-2010 at Phnom Penh Hotel, Phnom Penh. Representatives from the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) including Ministry of Land Management, Urbanization and Construction, Health, Education, Economy and Finance, Environment and Forestry department, Representatives from Development Partners, NGOs, Communities and students attended this workshop. The objectives of the workshop were to officially launch the NGO Position Paper on Cambodia's Development in 2009-2010 and to present and discuss the content of the Position Paper. The workshop was divided into five important sessions including Rural Economy, Governance, Human Development, and Land Management and Infrastructure Development whilst the Rural Economy session which focused on Agriculture and Water was presented by Mr. Keam Makarady.

During the session, Mr. Makarady presented about the brief overview of agriculture and water sector progress and some key issues of the sector as well as recommendations. He said that agriculture plays a very important role in terms of Cambodia's livelihoods, food security and economy. However, the widespread use of chemical pesticides and lack of management is still the obstacle to Cambodia's long term agriculture sustainability and its ability to export products, he added.

Finally, Mr. Makarady presented some key priority recommendations which were included in the position paper as follows:

- *The RCG should continue to support and strengthen agricultural enterprises and CBOs on local inputs supply, credit service, rice mills, and rice storage in order to reduce unauthorized rice export, secure food security for the country, and increase rice exports to over 3 million tons in order to maintain local resources and protect local seeds.*
- *The targeted beneficiary farmers of each activity should also be defined, with an emphasis given to small-scale farmers and farmers promoting mixed crops and organic farming, rather than large-scale monoculture production which relies heavily on chemical pesticides and fertilizers or hybrid seed.*
- *We would like to suggest priority is given towards the development of small and medium-scale irrigation systems with international funding for development for rural areas. A master plan with a clear study of water sources and effective distribution of water should be conducted, along with the identification of poor communities who are in greatest need for improved irrigation in order to improve their livelihoods and reduce poverty. The quality of irrigation structures should also be strengthened.*
- There should be an increase in funding for agricultural technology research, compilation of good experience, the encouragement of experienced people in rural areas, and encouragement of research by experts and skilled farmers in local areas.

