

# Sowing the Seeds of Progress

## *CEDAC Marks 12 years in Cambodia*



*CEDAC's 12th anniversary ceremony held at the National Institute of Education*

By An Channthla  
*Economics Today*

The Cambodian Center for Study and Development in Agriculture (CEDAC) on Aug 7 celebrated 12 years in Cambodia, marking its transition from an NGO providing stop gap solutions for a country in desperate need of reconstruction to a consultant on long-term farming strategies.

Established in August 1997 as a Cambodian NGO, CEDAC's vision is of a Cambodian society where small farming households enjoy a good standard of living and strong mutual cooperation, with the right and power to determine their own destiny, and supply healthy food for the whole society.

CEDAC promotes sustainable agriculture and rural development in Cambodia, increasing both food production and incomes.

Dr. Yang Saing Koma, CEDAC

president, said that people's mentality must also be altered. "We want the poor to change their perceptions from irrational thinking to rational thinking," he said.

CEDAC began with just 7 employees working with only two villages in Kandal province. Now CEDAC has around 500 staff, in-

**"Before I worry about the goals of CEDAC but now I do not worry about anything because CEDAC's staff have enough capacity to implement their duties."**

Dr. Yang Saing Koma, CEDAC president

cluding 162 women, providing direct assistance to about 100,000 families from 3,375 villages, 565 communes and 97 districts in 20 provinces of Cambodia.

CEDAC's work focuses on building the capacity of the producer organizations and networks, linking them to markets, helping rural communities access infor-

mation, services and resources for improving family economies. Such sustainable rural development helps improve living conditions and the social status of marginalized, vulnerable and underrepresented social groups.

Liensing with other relevant organizations and government departments is crucial to CEDAC's goals. The building of networks and partnerships which promote the development of ecologically-based family agriculture is one of CEDAC's major achievements.

Dr. Yang Saing Koma said CEDAC has achieved much over the past 12 years.

Farmers from 3,200 villages have been trained by CEDAC in modern farming techniques, and there are currently 77,000 members of CEDAC's self-reliance group. Almost 2,500 of the poorest school children have a sustainable education through the supporting of CEDAC, and CEDAC has given 400 rural youth vocational training courses, published 127 issues of the Farmer magazine, devoted to agricultural knowledge. The organization has helped 87 Commune Councils to improve governance, the president said, and CEDAC supports 307 HIV positive people. They have also accepted 8,000 national and international students who wanted to study about CEDAC's development program and how best to link farmers to markets.

For the year 2009, CEDAC's core programs are the Field Program (direct support to the community), CEDAC Enterprise for Social Development Program (CESDE) and CEDAC Institute for Local Development (CILD).

Although has come up against some obstacles in implementation, CEDAC has made great progress, said Dr. Yang Saing Koma. "Before I worry about the goals of CEDAC but now I do not worry about anything because CEDAC's staff have enough capacity to implement their duties," he added. ■