Land Distribution in Cambodia – Experiences and New Approaches for State Land Management

1. Basic Facts about Cambodia
2. Challenge of Land Distribution
3. Solutions: Partnership Approach

Basic Facts about Cambodia (1)

Kingdom of Cambodia

- BIP p.c. = 667 US$ (WB 2009)
- HDI = 124 (UNDP 2010)
- 13.4 Mio (Census 2008)
- 80.5% rural population
- of which 72.3% ag sector (Yearbook 2008)
- 85% farmers own less 1 ha
- Landless: ca. 20%
- Food insecure: ca. 30%
Modern Land Rights between Colonialism, Communism and Market Economy

- French Cadastre from 1920ies
- Khmer Rouge 1975-79
- Vietnamese 1979-1989
- Private Possession 1986
- Private Property 1989
- Land Law 1992
- End of Civil War 1997
- Land Law 2001: systematic registration, Economic Land Concessions, Social Land Concessions

Khmer Rouge Dam Project in 1976

Cambodian Land Administration, Management & Distribution Program 2002-2017

- Policy & Legal Framework
- Institution Building
- Land registration system
- Resolution of land disputes

LAND ADMINISTRATION

LAND MANAGEMENT

LAND DISTRIBUTION

- Policy & Legal Framework
- Institution Building
- Spatial planning
- Urban informal settlements
- Social Land Concessions
- Partnership with Investors
Basic Facts about Cambodia (4)

- Central and populated Cambodia: 12.1 million inhabitants, > 200 inh./km², agriculture > 55% of the territory
- Peripheral and sparse Cambodia: 1.3 million inhabitants, < 15 inh./km², agriculture < 5% of the territory

- 75% of farms < 1.0 ha
- 80% farms not connected to market

- Economic Land Concessions (ELC): 147 distributed, 1.4 million ha
  - Economic Concession size mostly 1000 ha to 10,000 ha.
- Community-based Social Land Concessions: 1614, 6277 ha
  - Social Concession size 1 ha to 3 ha.

IMPACT: Land tenure security for 147 Concessions and for 1614 landless HH

NEED: Minimum 100,000 Landless and Land Poor HH need land

Source: AFD-Cambodia, February 2011
Art. 2 Sub-decree on ELC: Economic Land Concession refers to a mechanism to reclassify public to private state land and grant a specific economic land concession contract to a concessionnaire to use for agricultural and industrial-agricultural exploitation.

Allocative efficiency = land is allocated in a way which maximizes the total national welfare

Market & Government Failure
- land concentration
- land underutilization
- lack of workers
- environmental impact

Challenge of Land Distribution (3)

Art. 2(a) Sub-decree on SLC: Social land concession is a legal mechanism to reclassify public to private state land for social purposes for those poor who lack land for residential and/or family farming purposes.

Distributive justice = land is distributed to those most in need of it

Market & Government Failure
- lack of capital (debts)
- lack of technology
- lack of good agricultural practices
- lack of market access
Competition between ELC and SLC

- National and international investors have
  - strong financial basis
  - strong political backing through government and party
  - Simple, transparent processes to follow to get the land
- Communes / small holders have
  - No financial means
  - No or weak political backing
  - Difficult, transparent processes to follow to get the land

**IMPACT:** Communes / Small Holders Lose against Investors

**TARGETED SOLUTION:** Create Win-Win Situation

Vision: “ [...] Land distribution shall ensure equity, social stability, food security and facilitate investment based on the natural characteristic, type and quality of soil for sustainable socio-economic development, prevent land concentration and promote productive and effective use of land.” (Land Policy Declaration 2009)
### Solutions: Partnership Approach (2)

#### 1. Regularization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal SH</th>
<th>Formal SLC/SH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Grandis Timber”</strong></td>
<td>ELC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2. Land Adjustment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal SH</th>
<th>Formal SLC/SH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Cambodian Investor”</strong></td>
<td>ELC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3. Nucleus/Plasma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLC/SH</th>
<th>SLC/SH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“European Investor”</strong></td>
<td>ELC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4. Community Title

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal SH</th>
<th>Formal SLC/SH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Future Model”</strong></td>
<td>ELC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Many thanks for your attention!**

Dr. Franz-Volker Müller / Poch Sophorn  
GIZ-Cambodia, Land Rights Program  
[Franz-Volker.Mueller@giz.de](mailto:Franz-Volker.Mueller@giz.de) / [Sophorn.Poch@giz.de](mailto:Sophorn.Poch@giz.de)