

**Kingdom of Cambodia
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**National report to the third session of
the United Nations Forum on Forests**

Kingdom of Cambodia

May 2003

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II. Progress and issue related to implementation of IPF?IFF proposals for action

General

1. Cambodian forests have always been an essential feature in the patterns of life for its people and continue to be of fundamental environmental, social and economic importance in national development. The forests are valuable for the production of large and small industrial logs, for fuelwood and food for the people living in rural communities, for helping to regulate water flows in the Mekong and other rivers, for controlling erosion of soils and for the conservation of animal and plant biological diversity. Furthermore forests are a natural source of wealth and, managed wisely, can continue to provide for the next and future generations, both at the local level and in terms of Government revenues for rehabilitation and development.

In 1969 forest had covered 13.2 million hectares or 73 % of the country's total land areas. The result from the Forest Cover Assessment and Monitoring Project in 1997 showed that forest cover in Cambodia remains 58.8 % of the total country areas. This shows the forest cover declines about 14% compare to the 1969.

The Department of Forestry and Wildlife/MAFF play the major role in the management of forests in Cambodia. However, the national park and wildlife sanctuaries fall under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment.

Taking into account the value of forest resource and the concept of sustainable forest management with the framework of sustainable development of Cambodia as major national goal to be achieved, the Royal Government of Cambodia through its executing agents (DFW/MAFF) has committed making efforts on building legal framework for forestry sector. These include the accomplishment of:

- The Cambodian Code of Practices for Forest Harvesting
- Guidelines for forest concession management planning system,
- Guidelines for special area management,
- Biodiversity management guidelines for the managed forest,
- Guidelines for socio-economic survey of communities surrounding forest concession areas,
- Guidelines for environmental and social impact assessment of forest concessions
- Guidelines for the evaluation of environmental and social impact assessment for forest concessions,

The outstanding achievement was the new forestry law has been accomplished. The conservation is considered as one of the priorities in the sustainable forest management in Cambodia since millions of hectares of forests (over 25% of total country area) were allocated for protection, national park and wildlife sanctuaries.

2. Economic aspects of forests, including trade

2.1. Activities undertaken and progress made

2.1.1 Legal frame work for forest resource management

A number of guidelines had been prepared with the support from ADB. AusAid grant financial support for the printing of thousands copies for distribution to forest agencies and relevant government and non-government agencies. These guidelines constitute the basic documentation for implementation forest activities, and continuing the process of forest reform in Cambodia.

The new forestry law was adopted by the national Assembly on 30 July 2002. The senate has agreed with the form and spirit of this law on 15 August 2002. The law has come into

effect on 31 August 2002 by the Royal Declaration (Preah Reach Kram). The DFW has published 50,000 copies of this law for distribution to the relevant agencies, the provincial forestry offices, etc. For the time being the MAFF/ DFW are preparing regulations which the law refers to in order to implement the new forestry law comprehensively and effectively.

The DFW/MAFF through the Secretariat of the national committee for manage and execute forest management policy in cooperation with Cambodian German forestry project of GTZ has prepared the statement of the Royal Government on National Forest Sector Policy. The statement was adopted and published on 26 July 2002. Workshops were organized to make awareness to the forestry provincial officers, donor's, relevant government institution's and NGO's representatives

Sub-decree on Community Forestry (CF) has formulated through the support from the working group which include Cambodia German Forestry Project, Concern Worldwide, the Sustainable Management of Resources Project and the DFW. The working group was created in June 2001 for this purpose. Consultations were held in 14 provinces and 15 workshops were conducted with participation from local communities, experts, national and international organization to obtain a firm foundation on required knowledge in this regard.

A number of regulations (Sub-decree and Prakas) has been approved respectively since July 2002 in order to manage, protect and conserve the former forest concession areas which their investment contracts had been cancelled by the Royal Government of Cambodia. Those forest areas were then transferred to a permanent forest estate. The regulations complement to the implementation and strengthening of forestry law and contribute to the sustainable forest management, watershed protection and biodiversity and wildlife conservation.

2.1.2. Concession management

In the context that timber harvesting took place in a legal and controlled manner before the early 1990s, it did so under a system of collection permits and log quotas that originated in French colonial times. Since then the RGC has promoted foreign investment in the forestry sector and has introduced private industrial forest concessions as the main instrument of commercial forest management. Investors were required to enter into Investment and Timber License agreements with the RGC, which warranted capital investment in sawmills and veneer and furniture manufacturing plants. They also required agreed numbers of employees and the transfer of technology and knowledge.

The first concession was granted in 1994, and over the following three years, 33 concessions were established totaling almost seven million hectares. Since 1999, 15 forest concession investment contracts which cover the area of 3,001,470 hectares have been cancelled to ensure the sustainability of forests that are a significant natural resource in the Kingdom of Cambodia and also to protect for environmental and ecological purposes. The reasons why the forest concession were cancelled is explained in the under section 5 of this report.

As of today there are 14 valid forest concession investment companies occupying the area of 3,874,029 ha. Since 2000 the MAFF/DFW has requested those companies to submit their management plan consistent with international standards and re-negotiation for the new contracts.

2.1.3. Conservation and protected forests

Conservation of biodiversity and natural resources is one of the policies of the second term of the RGC. The RGC has paid high attention with in-situ and ex-situ conservation as well as the conservation within the forest concession areas. MAFF/Department of Forestry and Wildlife have been collaborated with international organization experts and development partners in conducting surveys, designated, managing and functioning huge forest areas. These aims at conserving genetic resources, seeds supply biodiversity, watershed as well as water resources, ecology and the environment. This is in addition to the 23 protected areas established since 1993.

The outstanding achievement is the Royal Government of Cambodia has declared the Central Cardamom Mountain, which covers the area of 401,313 ha to be protected. The forests in the Central Cardamom Mountain are still intact. A number of wildlife endangered species in Asia are still existed in the Central Cardamom Mountain, such as elephant, tiger, Bear, Hog Badger, Asian Golden Cat, Marbled Cat, Clouded Leopard, Gaur, Banteng, Crocodile, Hornbill, etc. A number of research on wildlife and biodiversity have been conducted in different areas in the country.

The central Cardamom protected forest (401,313.00 ha), the protected forest in Mondulhiri (429,438.00 ha) and in Preah Vihear Province (190,027.00 ha) led Cambodia to gain 4.5 million hectares of protected forests, national park and wildlife sanctuaries. This is 27 percent of the total land of Cambodia and that Cambodia may be a lead country with the highest percentage of land under the protection and conservation.

2.1.4. Reforestation

Reforestation, the Government through the Department of Forestry and Wildlife has conducted reforestation program according to the government budget which support to about 1,000 ha per year. In addition the Arbor day (tree planting ceremony) which happen once a year has contributed 1,300,000 trees to the reforestation program. A number of forestry plots have been established to grow and maintain the endangered species.

With the support from the Royal Danish Government the tree seed project has been carried out for the period of 3 years. The aim of the project is to provide seeds with appropriate genetics and quality obtained from seed sources that are collected from the best quality of the mother trees in order to meet the requirement of reforestation activities in Cambodia. The project is also aims at building capacity at the national level.

2.1.5. Capacity building

Human resource development and training is an ongoing activity of the forestry sector, carried out with both domestic funding and foreign aid. The MAFF/Department of Forestry and Wildlife has been cooperating with JICA to carry out the project on Forest Sector Capacity Building for a period of 3 years with funding support from the Japanese Government. It aims at strengthening capacity of the Department of Forestry and Wildlife, improve techniques on forest management restoration and rehabilitation and transfer the knowledge to the target groups.

The Department of Forestry and Wildlife has received scholarship for her staff to study locally and abroad. This includes first degree, second degree and short training courses seminar and workshop.

2.1.6. Monitoring and reporting on the forest crimes

The Department of Forestry and Wildlife has implemented the forest crime monitoring and reporting project in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, FAO and UNDP. The global witness was engaged as independent monitor.

In 2002, the project faced some financial problems and it was suspended by FAO. However, the MAFF/Department of Forestry and Wildlife with the supports from relevant institutions, Royal Arm Forces, National Police and local authorities as well as a number of international development partners such as Wild Aid and Conservation International the project has been continuing to eliminate illegal forest activities.

Despite there was controversial report between the executing agency and the independent monitor there has been great achievement through out project life.

The following are the results from 1999 to 2003 of the forest crime monitoring that have action been taken on illegal forest activities:

Confiscation wood and non-wood

- Round wood and squared-off log: 30,755 cubic meters
- Sawn timber: 7653 cubic meters
- Many types of other forest products.

Confiscation of equipment and facilities

- Tractor: 25 units
- Truck 71 units
- Ox cart: 66 units
- Boat: 28 units
- Chainsaw: 281 units
- Motorbike: 13 units
- Bicycle: 58 units
- Lorry: 11 units
- Supportive equipment: 530 units

Destruction and shutting down

- Illegal sawmills: 1313
- Equipment and transportation means: 51
- Forest product seller: 385.

Others

- Take back the illegal forest land from private companies: 6202 hectares
- Arrested and apprehend and sent to the court with supportive document: 173 persons (Cambodian: 85, Thai: 16 and Vietnam: 72)

During the mission 32 forestry and MP officials have been injured 5 died.

2.2. Constraints encountered

The constraints which may be considered at the forestry sector in Cambodia are:

- Poor institutional linkages, which impede data sharing
- A lack of information technology with which to manage data
- A lack of institutional capacity
- Difficulties with law enforcement
- In appropriate forestry administrative structure

- Low effectiveness
- The predominance of short term planning
- Shortage of funds and materials support to the forestry sector
- Limited technical and financial assistance from international communities
- Shortage of fund and human resource in the forestry sector

2.3. Initiatives planned

The Department of Forestry and Wildlife/MAFF has been implementing the following planned activities:

- administrative structure reform for the forestry sector
- Publicize, distribute and make awareness of the new forestry law to municipal provincial forest administrations, local authorities, other institutions and local communities.
- Develop regulations, which the new forestry law refers to for enforcement.
- Continue re-negotiation on new investment agreements with the valid concessionaires
- Genuine cooperation with neighboring countries to prevent cross border illegal trade on forest products
- Encourage local people to participate in the protection, management of forest resource for sustainable use.
- Cooperation with local and international organization in for the formulation and implementation of the forestry projects.
- Continue forest crime monitoring and reporting project despite limited financial support from the government.

2.4. Role of enhance cooperation and policy and program coordination

2.4.1. Valuation of forest goods and services

Forests are traditionally considered as sources of timber and NTFPs. Additionally, as forms of monoculture are becoming more and more prevalent on cultivated land, forests are the major natural repositories of large components of the remaining gene pool of plants.

Timber is considered to be the most valuable forest products, especially in terms of provision of foreign currency to the government. Within the country, large quantities of timbers are used for construction of wooden houses and also for manufacture of furniture, bridges, wagons, and sleepers and in the construction of concrete building.

Since 1997, RGC ceased to export round logs and crudely sawn timber, however, the export of processed forest products and some non-wood forest products, such as rattan, charcoal and bamboo has remained.

Currently, most governmental and international agency representatives agree that the sustainable timber utilization is of great important to the economic development of Cambodia. Reductions in log productions are also important for biodiversity conservation and wildlife protection. Cambodia's support of this policy is shown by the falling log production between 1996-2001.

2.4.3. Market for Cambodian forest products

Markets for Cambodian forest products do not show great stability. They may vary according to free market trends or political decision of the RGC based on investment policy. In 1999, Hong Kong was the largest importer of forest products with a total figure of approximately 39,100 cubic meters or 42 percent of all process forest products exported. In 2000 and 2001 the largest importer was China followed by Taiwan. The

exportation of forest products from 1993-2003 is shown in the **Annex 1**. The forest product exports by product type and recipient country from 1999 – 2001 is presented in **Annex 2**.

2.4.4. Progress toward sustainable forest management

The RGC is endeavoring to implement a coordinated set of laws, programs, action plans, and institutional arrangements regarding forest resources which are directed toward enabling the achievement of national goals of environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction, socio-economic development and good governance.

The RGC commits itself to the conservation and management of the country's unique forest resources in a sustainable manner now and for future generations. The results and the follow up processes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 are taken into account to consider the concept of sustainable development of Cambodia. The Royal Government of Cambodia acknowledges the multiple perceptions, interests and objectives of the numerous forest interest groups of the country's society, in the region of the Mekong Basin and at the global level regarding the conservation and sustainable management of forest resources.

The Forest Concession Management and Control Pilot Project has been launched in 2001 under the financial support from the World Bank to build up capacity of the Department of Forestry and Wildlife on the management, monitoring and evaluation of forest concessions. This contributes to the forest law enforcement and the sustainable forest management in Cambodia.

3. The Department of Forestry and Wildlife/MAFF have received a considerable support and scholarship from sponsors and donors for capacity building of their staff either abroad or domestic. These include long term and short term training such as Master and Bachelor Degree and specific courses according to the requirement in the management of forest activities. Moreover, technology transfer has also been made through the projects. However, to cope with international organizations and countries in the region the human capacity will never be enough and is more training is indeed required. Therefore, the Department of Forestry and Wildlife/MAFF has planned to send their officials to be trained in English language, marketing of forest products, timber production management, wood chemistry and anatomy, forest based industry development, etc. if financial support are available from either government or outsiders.

3.1. Efforts to reduce illegal trade

The forest sector in Cambodia is currently undergoing a period of comprehensive reforms. In order to coordinate this reform process in particular when it comes to the development of an overall forest policy framework the RGC has implemented by sub-decree (dated July 3rd 1996) a high level inter-ministerial National Committee for the development and Implementation of Forest Policy. The Prime Minister chairs the committee. The Head of the Department of Forestry and Wildlife acts as the executive secretary of the Committee. The committee has the following duties:

- To coordinate consultations between RGC and international agencies providing assistance on forest policy
- To select and manage technical assistance
- To coordinate consultation among all parties in the forest sector
- To review investment programs in the forestry sector
- To make proposals and plans on forest policy for the country

The Department of Forestry and Wildlife/MAFF cooperated with World Bank, FAO and UNDP under financial support from the Government of Holland has organized the regional conference on collaboration to re-enforce of the implementation of forestry law in the Lower Mekong Basin in Phnom Penh. The participants include delegation from the riparian countries in the Lower Mekong basin, representative from forest concessionaire, GOs and NGOs, national and international observers. The conference aims at enhance cooperation amongst neighboring countries to reduce illegal trade on forestry. Outputs from the conference are: the 4 countries have to consider and implement the main 3 strategies which resulted from the discussion and agreed upon in the conference. The 3 main strategies are titled as follow:

1. National efforts
2. Regional efforts
3. Bilateral cooperation

The Department of Forestry and Wildlife/MAFF have participated in the Forest Law Enforcement and Good Governance initiated by the Government of Indonesia and the World Bank. The FLEG meeting has been organized several times in Bali and Jakarta, Indonesia. Moreover, the Asia Forest Partnership has been met for its first meeting in Tokyo, Japan in late last year, of which Cambodia Representative has attended the meeting.

4. This section is not applicable for Cambodia.

Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs

5. From 1999 to present, in order to ensure the sustainability of forests that are important natural resources of Cambodia, the RGC has made use of the Cambodian Code of Practices for Forest Harvesting, a number of Guidelines which describe early in the General section. These technical elements have been used to complement with the forest policies and regulations. A forest concession management planning and implementation cycle has also proposed comprising a structure that relates the principal elements of long-term forest concession management planning and operational systems. Taking into account of those technical guidelines, policies and regulations and applying them in the monitoring and evaluation of forest concession activities 15 forest concession investment contracts have been cancelled, respectively.

Furthermore the remaining forest concessionaires were requested to submit forest management strategic plans (FMSP) and environmental and social impact assessments (ESIA) to the Department of Forestry and Wildlife/MAFF. The FMSP and ESIA were then disclosed for public, particularly consulted with local communities living in and nearby concession area before the end of September 2002. The concessionaires will be allowed to continue their activities if the FMSP and ESIA are passed the evaluation committee and approved by the MAFF. These activities have also been consisted with the procedures for reviewing and evaluating SFMP and ESIA that was developed by national and international experts under the Forest Concession Management and Control Pilot Project (the chart is attached in [Annex 3](#)).

6. To the set of national goals directed to the development framework for the conservation and sustainability of the natural forest, the RGC acknowledges international issues, processes and commitments occurring as a result of the UNCED in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and its follow-up processes relevant to the country's forest resources. The RGC envision that a long term National Forest Program will be implemented consistent with the framework of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests

promoted by the International Arrangement on Forest with the UNFF and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

In 1994 the RGC has joint the Mekong River Commission (MRC), so call Mekong Secretariat to cooperate in the management of natural resources in the region. Forestry is amongst those resources. A number of projects were implemented in Cambodia with the support from the RGC and the MRC for the purpose of sustainability of the resource in the Mekong Basin.

The RGC has admitted to the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) as a member of producer country since 1997. This admission is to cope with the international organizations as well as producer and consumer countries on policies, guidelines, which can be recognized and applied to the member countries to reach the ITTO objective 2000.

In addition the Department of Forestry and Wildlife has cooperated with quite a number of the UN Organizations, GOs and NGOs who have the mandates in the management of natural resources. These organizations include UNDP, FAO, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Wild Aid, CI, FFI, WCS, etc.

Other information and emerging issues

7. In accordance with the national economic program of the RGC and in cooperation with the ITTO objective 2000 the Government has paid much attention on the eliminating illegal forest activities. This effort has been successfully with the support and participation from all level of authorities concerned. In the mean time the government has appealed for support from the donors and also engaged the local communities to participate in the management of forest resource. This will include the restoration of secondary forest, rehabilitation of degraded forestland, plantation with native and exotic species. The forest law enforcement is the major activities that need to be taken along with the forestry sector reform.

III. Preparation of the Report

8. The report has been prepared under the following process:

- Identify the source of data to be required
- Data collection
- Discussion the quantity and quality of the data
- Compile the data and information
- Preparing the draft
- Distribution for comment
- Finalizing the report