



The PRSP and CSOs' Participation in Cambodia

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List of Acronymns

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANGOC	Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
CCC	Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
CG	Consultative Group (meeting)
CMDGs	Cambodian Millennium Development Goals
CNAC	Cambodian National Alliance for Cooperation
CSO	Civil society organisation
ESSP	Education Sector Strategy Plan
GAP	Governance Action Plan
GDCC	Government-Donor Coordinating Committee
HSSP	Health Sector Strategy Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
I-PRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (Cambodia 2000)
JMI	Joint monitoring indicator
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NGO	Non-government organisation
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2003-2005)
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP)
PFP	(Financial) Policy Framework Paper
PIP	Public Investment Programme
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan (First 1996-2000; Second 2001-2005)
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
VFI	Village Focus International

I. An overview of the PRSP process in Cambodia

Introduction

Since 1999, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have required poor countries to prepare Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) in exchange for concessional loans and, in some cases, debt relief. PRSPs are intended to be country-owned, and involve civil society organizations (CSOs) in their development. Cambodia produced its first Interim PRSP (I-PRSP) in the Year 2000. This was followed by a National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS) for the period 2003-2005 and a National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) for the period 2006-2010.

Internationally, the imposition of the PRSP process followed many years of NGO lobbying to obtain debt relief for poor countries, and NGO criticism that the policy conditions imposed on poor countries by the World Bank and IMF were hampering national decision-making and ownership of development policies. Thus, the idea of country-owned Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers has generally been welcomed by NGOs, both in Cambodia and internationally. The PRSP process has opened up new possibilities for civil society input to national planning processes.

However, in Cambodia as elsewhere, the process has fallen short of the original high expectations. The PRSP has not been a panacea for the multiple problems that hamper national planning in Cambodia.

Country context

In Cambodia, the PRSP process has been introduced into an institutional environment with many historically-based constraints. These include the impact of the Khmer Rouge reign of terror between 1975 and 1979, the civil war throughout the 1980s and the ongoing conflict in some areas of the country up until the final collapse of the Khmer Rouge in 1998. The Khmer Rouge killed many of the educated class, and many others left the country in subsequent years. These impacts have further impoverished the country, reduced the available human and social capital, and reduced the efficiency of government. The public service, like that in many other poor countries, is characterised by weak governance, low salaries, endemic corruption, and poor management.

In 1993, UN-supervised elections led to a power sharing agreement between the main Cambodian factions, the end to civil war in most parts of the country, and the re-engagement of Western and ASEAN countries with Cambodia. The end of hostilities, new trade opportunities, and large foreign aid flows since 1993 have helped to reduce the national poverty headcount from an estimated 47% of the population in 1994 to 35% in 2004.¹ During the same time, inequality and landlessness have rapidly increased.²

Cambodia is now highly aid dependent, relying on foreign donors to finance more than half its annual budget. There is also a heavy reliance on technical assistance for planning and implementing development programmes. Cambodia's planning process now resembles a kind of "alphabet soup" with many different planning instruments, each with an English-language acronym as follows.

¹ World Bank, *Cambodia – Halving Poverty by 2015: Poverty Assessment 2006*

² "In those parts of Cambodia that were surveyed in 1993/94, the Gini for real per capita consumption has risen from 0.35 to 0.40. Inequality in all of Cambodia in 2004 was 0.42, making Cambodia one of the more unequal countries in the region." p. vi in Ibid. "Landlessness is rising. The proportion of rural households lacking land for cultivation has risen from 13 percent in 1997 to 16 percent in 1999 and 20 percent in 2004." p. 9 in Ibid.

Cambodia has a Financial Policy Framework Paper (PFP), a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), a Public Investment Programme (PIP), a Governance Action Plan (GAP) and a large number of individual plans for specific ministries and sectors. At the time the PRSP was introduced, Cambodia already had a Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) that served much the same purpose as the PRSP. Cambodia also has a localised version of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Cambodia's current PRSP, now termed the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), is based on the government's "Rectangular Strategy" (RS) and the CMDGs (Cambodian MDGs).

Through the usually annual³ Consultative Group (CG) meetings, the government has agreed with donors on a wide range of reforms. Since 2004, government and donors have agreed on a set of joint monitoring indicators (JMIs) covering 18 sectors, and have set up Technical Working Groups (TWGs) to coordinate government-donor cooperation in each of these sectors. These Technical Working Groups provide reports on the JMIs to Government-Donor Coordination Committee meetings, which are held monthly.

Despite the large efforts going into planning, there is still a strong disconnect between planning and budgeting, between budgets and actual expenditures, and between expenditures and actual results. The reasons for this are both technical and political, and include inappropriate accounting systems, inter-ministerial rivalries, limited capacities, and lack of transparency. In recent years, some progress has been made in improving budget management, but faith in the ability of the official planning process to deliver changes on the ground is still low.

Important government decisions are often made outside of the formal planning processes. An example is the government's apparent decision to turn over large sections of agricultural land and forests to companies as economic land concessions. This controversial policy, hotly contested by groups representing farmers and forest users, is reflected neither in the government's Rectangular Strategy nor the NSDP. By contrast, an official plan to provide social land concessions to landless farmers, mentioned in both the Rectangular Strategy and the NSDP, has not yet been implemented.

Despite frequent mismatches between planning and implementation, it is generally agreed that the NSDP provides a good summary of Cambodia's poverty reduction challenges, strategies and plans. It has been accepted by the World Bank and IMF as meeting their requirements for a country-owned poverty reduction strategy. It cannot, however, be viewed in isolation from the other planning documents, ministry plans or agreements with donors that also exist and on which the NSDP is based.

NGOs wishing to ensure civil society participation in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction strategies in Cambodia need to engage not just with the NSDP, but with all the related processes which together inform Cambodia's approach to poverty reduction.

Civil Society Context

Cambodia's civil society may be characterised as lively and active, but narrowly based. The term "civil society" generally refers to the social sphere located between the state and the family, and is thus seen as being capable of representing the broader interests of the society and of being a check and balance on government.⁴ In Cambodia, non-government

³ No CG meeting was held in 2003 or in 2005.

⁴ The term "civil society" normally does not include the private sector. It also normally does not include political parties, as political parties usually seek to become a part of government.

organisations (NGOs) are the dominant feature of Cambodia's civil society, and the terms "NGO" and "civil society" are often (usually erroneously) used interchangeably.

NGOs in Cambodia typically consist of a group of staff, and often but not always a governing board, whose purpose is to channel resources and technical expertise into some kind of development activity. NGOs in Cambodia are involved in delivering services such as health, education, agricultural extension, environmental protection, natural resources management, credit, community development, monitoring of human rights, and protection and promotion of women's rights. NGOs are also deeply involved in building capacity and leadership at the community level.

However, to date, Cambodia lacks mass organisations or associations that represent a broad membership, especially at national level. The exception is the growing number of labour unions, although many of these tend to be closely associated with particular political parties and therefore lacking in independence. National associations representing groups such as organic farmers and community fishers are starting to emerge, but are still weak and heavily reliant on NGO support.

Throughout the 1980s, Cambodia had a socialist system of government which disallowed the formation of local organisations separate from the state. Mass organisations were formed as part of the party apparatus, but were abandoned with the introduction of multi-party democracy in the early 1990s. International NGOs were allowed to work in Cambodia during the 1980s, but local NGOs were not allowed to form until 1992. Since 1992, there has been a rapid expansion of the local NGO sector, though this has been highly dependent on the support of international NGOs and international donors.

Government officials sometimes accuse NGOs of being a "self-appointed democracy" who have no right to advise the elected government. Nevertheless, both local and international NGOs are free to operate in Cambodia, and within government there is a growing acceptance of participatory processes. NGOs feel that their input is valid, as they have important grassroots knowledge and experiences which can inform planning and policy processes.

II. NGO Participation in the PRSP process

Introduction

This section describes the activities undertaken by NGOs to participate in the PRSP process, describes NGOs achievements in this process, and assesses the breadth and quality of civil society input to date. For a mapping of NGOs involved in the PRSP process, see Annex 1. Documents produced by the NGO Forum during the PRSP process are listed in Annexe 2, and are available on the NGO Forum website.

NGO Activities

The NGO Forum on Cambodia has been recognised by government, donors and NGOs as the key NGO contact point for NGO participation in the PRSP process. The NGO Forum is a membership organization for international and local NGOs working in Cambodia. The NGO Forum exists to promote discussion and to represent the views of NGOs on important issues affecting Cambodia's development. Facilitating and coordinating NGO input to the PRSP is one of the tasks of the NGO Forum's Development Policy Project.

The I-PRSP (Year 2000)

In the year 2000, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) prepared an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy. The World Bank did not require civil society participation for the interim

strategy, so the NGO Forum organized its own consultation process. An NGO Forum team conducted interviews and meetings in four provinces in order to obtain the input of NGOs and civil society representatives. This was followed by a national civil society workshop in Phnom Penh in which participants prioritized NGO recommendations for poverty reduction.

The SEDP (2001-2005) and NPRS (2003-2005)

In 2001, RGC began to develop five-year Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP). The NGO Forum brought together different NGO sectoral groups to provide comment on the draft sectoral plans. The NGO comments were compiled into a single document and forwarded to the Ministry of Planning. The NGO Forum also lobbied for more time to be given to preparation of both the SEDP and the NPRS, so that better participation and national ownership of the documents could be achieved.

The same year, with assistance from ANGO, the NGO Forum released a report entitled "Rapid Assessment of the PRSP Process in Cambodia: Two Banks, Two Processes, Two Documents." This report criticised the fact that the World Bank was supporting the NPRS while the ADB was supporting the SEDP, with both documents purporting to be the national plan for poverty reduction. Government preference for a single document had been ignored, resulting in lack of clarity and duplication of effort. The report recommended that Cambodia have a single five year plan, supported by better donor coordination.

In 2002, the Royal Government of Cambodia began work on the NPRS, recruited its own participation specialist, and organized a number of workshops to provide feedback during the drafting process. The NGO Forum encouraged NGOs to join the participatory process facilitated by the government in preference to creating any separate process. The majority of workshops were held in Phnom Penh making provincial participation difficult. The government managed to organize a number of provincial workshops, however, during the final phase of the drafting.

In early 2002, the NGOs decided that their annual NGO Statement to the Consultative Group (CG) Meeting would focus on poverty reduction and that this statement would be the main source of NGO input to the NPRS. The NGO Statement was a collaborative effort between three NGO membership organizations, namely the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), the NGO Forum on Cambodia, and the MEDICAM association of NGOs working in health, together with contributions from many different NGO sectoral networks. The final document included a main statement followed by 22 sectoral and issues papers. When the NGO sectoral groups were invited to the 28-29 May PRSP workshops, they used their sectoral papers as the main written contribution to the small group discussions. The NGO Statement was presented by NGO delegates at the Consultative Group meeting on 19-21 June 2002. The NGOs were invited to make plenary presentations and to be discussants at the NPRS workshops in May, August and November in Phnom Penh. They were also invited to send delegates to meetings of the General Secretariat of the Council for Social Development, which was tasked with compiling the NPRS.

Other activities of NGOs during the NPRS drafting included the "Poverty Reduction for Women" forums organized by the NGO *Women for Prosperity* together with NGOs like *Amara*, in Pailin, Battambang, Pursat, and Phnom Penh in June 2002 and later presented in a forum in Phnom Penh. The NGO Forum also facilitated a discussion between members of Cambodia's parliament and representatives of the poor, including representatives of a trade union, a sex worker, a family afflicted by drugs, a family afflicted by drought, and fishing community and forest community representatives.

The government approved the NPRS in late in 2002. In March 2003, the Prime Minister presided over the National Launching of the NPRS at the Chaktomuk National Theater. Later that month, the Ministry of Planning organized Provincial Launchings of the NPRS in the three provinces with the highest incidence of poverty, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap

and Prey Veng. In order to encourage active involvement, the NGO Forum organized a group of 18 facilitators from NGOs and development agencies to lead discussions during the NPRS provincial launching.

In March 2004, the NGO Forum released an “NGO Statement on the First Year of Implementation of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy.” A number of meetings were held with provincial and Phnom Penh-based NGOs to prepare this statement, and the opinions of NGOs were surveyed. The statement was widely used. The Center for Social Development used the statement in its public forums and in meetings with the National Assembly.

At the same time, the NGO Forum also compiled and published “NGO Sectoral and Issues Papers on Poverty Reduction and Development in Cambodia.” These papers were later updated and included in the NGO Statement to the 2004 Consultative Group Meeting on Cambodia. Three NGO representatives attended the Consultative Group meeting, in December 2004, to contribute to the discussion between government and donors regarding progress on poverty reduction. The 2004 Consultative Group Meeting set up specific indicators of progress in priority cross-cutting sectors, to be monitored by the re-organised government-donor Technical Working Groups (TWGs) and reported to the newly created Government-Donor Coordinating Committee (GDCC).

In 2005, ANGOC also funded an NPRS village survey, carried out by partners of the local NGO networks of Star Kampuchea and the Cambodian National Alliance for Cooperation (CNAC) with technical assistance from Village Focus International (VFI). A Capacity-Building Needs Survey provided by ANGOC was used to ensure that suitable organisations would be selected to conduct the monitoring required for the project. A number of capacity building needs were identified as a result of this survey, including basic research skills, proposal planning, accounting, advocacy and vocational training. Based on their capacity and experience, eight organisations were selected to receive training and to carry out the monitoring of government NPRS programs. Five provinces and 40 villages in which these organisations operate were subsequently selected. A monitoring and advocacy framework was then developed based on existing poverty reduction government programs, the capacity needs of NGOs/CSOs and their available resources, as well as on financial constraints associated with the project. Survey results provide some measure by which to monitor government initiatives and a benchmark for future comparisons. A smaller second survey was also administered for the village chiefs, in order to determine their awareness of government poverty reduction initiatives and to assess their perceptions of priority issues.

The NSDP (2006-2010)

Despite the government’s extremely rushed process of preparation, NGO Forum made a number of submissions to the draft National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), which was completed in late 2005. Input came from NGO sectoral groups/lead agencies and a provincial workshop. Cambodian NGO awareness of the planning and monitoring process was enhanced through production of a “Development Watch” magazine, funded by ANGOC.

Throughout 2005, four GDCC meetings were held, with NGO representatives in attendance on all but the first occasion. For each of the four GDCC meetings, NGO Forum worked with NGO sectoral group representatives to prepare a detailed NGO Statement on the Monitoring of CG Indicators. NGOs were also involved in 12 of the 18 government-donor Technical Working Groups (TWGs), which met more or less regularly to monitor progress and facilitate government-donor coordination.

In 2006, NGO sectoral groups and NGO lead agencies worked together to produce the NGO Statement to the 2006 Consultative Group meeting. NGO representatives to the Consultative Group meeting were chosen at a Civil Society Forum. The NGO Forum coordinated NGO lobbying on the indicators to be included in the new monitoring framework

and produced an analysis of the final result, which was reproduced in the Cambodian Development Watch magazine and is available on the NGO Forum website.

NGOs are now discussing how they may assist monitoring of the NSDP and increase their involvement in the Technical Working Groups.

Impact of NGO participation

The impact of NGO involvement has improved with time.

NGO submissions had no impact whatsoever on the Interim PRSP. NGOs were not even given a copy of the draft I-PRSP until it was in its sixth draft. The government finalised the document in the week before the NGO input was provided.

The main impact of NGOs' contribution to content of the SEDP2 was that short sections on decentralization and on disaster management were added to the new main section of the document; these issues had not been included in the previous drafts. However, comments given on the body of the document were ignored, even where these simply sought to correct arithmetic errors in the totals column of some of the tables. It appeared that the government simply did not have the resources to deal with the comments coming from many development partners and from NGOs.

It should be acknowledged that both the SEDP2 and the NPRS were largely a reflection of existing sectoral plans. Some sectors, such as health and education, involved NGOs in the development of line ministry plans from the beginning, while other sectors had less NGO involvement.

In 2003, the NGO Forum made a "Rapid Comparison of the NGO Statement to the 2002 CG Meeting and the Second Draft of the PRSP." The report listed all the recommendations in the NGO Statement and whether or not they had been included in the second draft of the RGC's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Although difficult to quantify, an analysis of the information provided in this comparison shows that of the 268 recommendations contained in the NGO Statement, 45 recommendations had been specifically included in the draft PRSP and 68 recommendations have been partly included. The report also recognised that some recommendations may well have been included in other government planning documents, though not specifically mentioned in the PRSP.

The NGO Forum also successfully encouraged integration of the findings of the ADB-funded Participatory Poverty Assessment, carried out in 154 villages across 24 provinces, into the NPRS, thereby providing a better reflection of the voice of the poor within the document.

A "Rapid Assessment of the Incorporation of NGO Comments in the National Strategic Development Plan (2006-2010)" found that 15 out of 40 NGO comments had been incorporated into the NSDP.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of NGOs has been with regard to process. In March 2001, ADB-funded consultants were due to complete the SEDP2, with little participation from NGOs. Even government participation was lacking. At the same time, the World Bank was keen to see the PRSP completed by the end of the year in order to fit their own planning schedule. The NGO Forum, along with some donors, lobbied for an extended timeline for both the SEDP II and the NPRS in order that a more participatory process could be achieved. The timeline for preparation of the SEDP II was subsequently extended to October 2001, and that of the NPRS to later in 2002. The NPRS was finally released in March 2003 following a much more inclusive participatory process.

A key concern for NGOs was poor donor coordination resulting in two competing national plans, as explained in the NGO Forum report "Rapid Assessment of the PRSP Process in Cambodia: Two Banks, Two Processes, Two Documents." As noted in the NPRS,

government and donors came to an agreement that in the subsequent plan the SEDP and NPRS would be merged into a single document. This resulted in a single National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) for the period 2006-2010.

Through their monitoring of CG indicators, and also through reports such as the “NGO Statement on the First Year of Implementation of the NPRS”, NGOs have contributed to enhancing the accountability of government for the implementation of poverty reduction strategies. NGO advocacy on land rights, human rights and livelihood issues have also contributed to increasing accountability. However, there is still a large gap between planning and implementation in Cambodia, with governance issues often at the heart of such discrepancies.

Breadth and Quality of Participation

Government officials in Cambodia are still not used to accepting civil society input into planning, and are sometimes dismissive of NGO opinion. Nevertheless, Cambodia generally provides a liberal framework for NGO existence and participation. The main obstacle to better civil society participation in government planning processes is the lack of capacity of both civil society organisations and of the government itself. This has resulted in donor domination of the development agenda. NGOs generally feel, however, that donor influence is needed to ensure that government programmes truly benefit the poor.

NGO Forum’s assessment of civil society input into the first draft of the NPRS⁵ provided a measure of both the “breadth” and “quality” of participation. Breadth of participation refers to the range of stakeholders that have been involved in the consultation process. Quality of participation refers to the degree to which issues of contention have been properly debated among stakeholders and agreed feedback has been incorporated into the final document. The assessment found that in most sectors participation was narrowly confined to government officials and a few knowledgeable NGOs, and that there was insufficient debate on issues of contention.

The process for preparing the NSDP was more rushed, due to the government’s own deadlines, and the breadth and quality of participation was again limited. Both the NPRS and the NSDP suffered from a lack of prioritisation.

Participation in some sectors has been more substantial than others. With the assistance of the NGO Education Partnership (NEP), NGOs were substantially involved in the preparation of the Education Sector Strategy Plan (ESSP), on which the relevant sections of the NSDP are based. Similarly, MEDiCAM, have helped NGOs provide input to the Health Sector Strategy Plan (HSSP). In general, government has been more receptive to NGO input in the sectors where NGOs are most active.

The ANGOC-funded NPRS Monitoring Field Surveys, carried out by provincial partners of Star Kampuchea and CNAC, was an attempt to better involve provincially-based NGOs in NPRS monitoring.

Outside of NGO participation, civil society participation has been minimal. A few trade union representatives were invited to some of the NPRS workshops, and one gave a speech. The participatory poverty assessments, conducted by the World Bank, ADB and Cambodian Development Resource Institute, and the focus group discussions with women, conducted by Women For Prosperity, provided an avenue for voices of the poor to be heard through the NPRS and NSDP. However, there is little evidence that their contribution had any impact on

⁵ “Cambodia’s draft Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper - Has NGO Input Been Included?”, NGO Forum on Cambodia, 2002. See Annex 3 for a description of the framework for assessing participation.

the strategy. In the case of the NPRS, the chapter describing the strategy was written prior to the chapter describing the results of the participatory poverty assessment.

Nevertheless, the input provided by NGOs to the NPRS and NSDP processes was generally of high quality, building on the knowledge of NGOs who know their subject areas well. The NGO Forum provided a means by which the contributions of these NGOs could be collated and presented to government, thereby allowing NGOs to speak with one voice.

III. Strategies to promote and strengthen CSOs' participation

Long Term Strategies

The above account shows that a number of long term and short term interventions are needed to strengthen civil society participation in poverty reduction strategies.

Over the medium to long term, NGOs need to build up the foundations of a healthy and vibrant civil society, focussing particularly on the development of civil society associations and structures which can represent the poor. These civil society groups need to understand their rights, understand how to advocate those rights, and how to work effectively with government agencies in achieving those rights. Considering the history of conflict in Cambodia, success will require that trust is built and that constructive ways of working together are found.

NGOs also need to participate in the building of democratic forms of governance, in which government officials and politicians are truly responsive to the voice of the people. For such a system to work, both the government and the governed need to understand their responsibilities to the wider society.

There are already many good examples of NGO efforts to build civil society and to contribute to the building of democracy. These processes take time and need to continue.

The NGO Forum has made various suggestions to donors and government on how civil society participation could be improved. The "NGO Statement on the First Year of Implementation of the NPRS", made the following suggestions on how wider civil society participation could, over time, be enhanced:

- The parliament has an important role to play in representing the people. For this to happen, the parliament needs not only to have a role in formulating and approving plans, they also need to spend more time listening to their constituents in order that they can represent them properly. Currently, only a few donors are helping to build the capacity of the parliament, and the parliament is largely bypassed in the NPRS process.
- Public forums, such as those organized by the NGO "Center for Social Development", can provide an opportunity for people to engage with decision-makers. Many NGOs would like to see a return to the National Congresses, where all people could come and ask questions to government leaders at the national level. This used to occur in the 1960s and is mandated in the most recent Constitution, but has not happened in recent times.
- More connections could be made between national planning processes and the decentralized local decision-making process to ensure bottom-up flow of information. The local planning process in Cambodia currently allows commune plans to feed into provincial plans, but there is not yet any connection with national planning processes.
- In some countries, NGOs have created "report card" surveys, which gather systematic feedback from the public on the quality and effectiveness of government services. In Cambodia, some NGOs are introducing a similar process to monitor the effectiveness of decentralization reforms.

- In Cambodia, quite a bit a research has been done, and continues to be done, to collect information from target groups, especially Participatory Poverty Assessments. Information from these assessments needs to feed into decision-making in a more systematic manner.
- NGOs could help facilitate engagement with other types of civil society organizations, including trade unions, ethnic associations, farmers associations, etc. NGOs can also help arrange meetings between officials and rural communities in ways that are conducive to a real sharing of issues.

In all these processes, the most critical factor is the participation of *poor* and *vulnerable* groups; that is, those people whom the poverty reduction strategy is intended to serve.

Short Term Strategies

In the short term, NGOs need to build their awareness of national planning processes and to actively engage with them, providing quality input in a coordinated manner.

The NGO Statement to the 2006 Consultative Group Meeting suggested that:

NGOs would like to continue to contribute to RGC's efforts to improve the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable groups in society. In addition to their day-to-day projects in the villages, there are several ways in which the NGO community could consider complementing the RGC in its efforts:

- NGOs need to discuss how they can make NGOs' involvement in the Government-Donor Technical Working Groups more effective.
- NGO research needs to be more widely shared. To ensure that this research is known and understood by government policy-makers, face-to-face meetings with government officials may be the most effective and appreciated method of getting ideas across.
- NGOs need to start a dialogue with the Ministry of Planning and the Council for Social Development on how NGOs may best contribute to the monitoring of the new National Strategic Development Plan.

The NGO Forum on Cambodia will continue to raise awareness of the national plans for poverty reduction in its regular forums and meetings. Provincial workshops will be held to raise awareness of the CMDGs and national poverty reduction plans. Prior to the 2008 elections, the NGO Forum will invite political parties to participate in a debate on their poverty reduction policies. The NGO community will continue to make their annual NGO Statement to the Consultative Group meeting their main reference document providing NGO recommendations for poverty reduction. Each year, this NGO Statement will be discussed and released in a Civil Society Forum.

In addition, the NGO Forum has the following plans for monitoring of poverty reduction plans over the period 2006-2008:

- Cooperate with CCC, Medicam, NEP, Sectoral NGOs and some key provincial networks to produce the parallel report on NSDP implementation. This report may be similar in content to the CG Statement, but is envisaged in response to a new situation, and will follow the structure of the NSDP document. With aid agencies basing their lending or grant-giving on a National Strategic Development Plan, there is a need for NGO/civil society monitoring of this strategy and how it unfolds. The NGOs' report will be used both to contribute to the government's annual report and to provide an alternative (or complimentary) point of view.
- Cooperate with Sectoral NGOs to produce reports on the implementation of CG Indicators, as agreed with the Government during the annual CG meeting. The reports will be produced quarterly based on inputs contributed by NGOs, including those involved in the government-donor Technical Working Groups (TWGs). These reports will be distributed to donors, government offices, NGOs, media and the public.
- Each year, conduct local consultations on the priority development issues in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) in four regions of Cambodia. The purpose of these consultations is to raise awareness and to monitor the government's progress in implementing the NSDP. The consultations may provide important input to the parallel report on NSDP implementation mentioned above. Each consultation may last one day, and will be

organised in cooperation with sectoral and provincial networks. Each consultation will involve 50 to 60 participants from local NGOs, community leaders and commune councils.

- Contribute articles on important national development policy issues to the *Cambodian Development Watch* Bulletin. The Development Policy Project Officer will coordinate this work, but NGO members and network members will be encouraged to contribute. In addition to contributing original articles, quality articles available in English will be translated to Khmer for inclusion in the magazine. Each bulletin will feature the monitoring of CG indicators. The bulletin will be published quarterly.
- Continue and widen the NPRS/NSDP Field Surveys, in association with local NGO networks. This may include a repeat survey in villages covered by the 2005 survey every two years, as well as surveys in new villages every alternate year. Changes in villagers' perceptions of their food security and village development will be documented over time.
- NGO Forum's network on Trade and Economic Development will discuss and devise plans for monitoring of key economic, trade and budget management issues, and promote discussion and better understanding of these issues within the NGO community.

The Role of External Assistance

Cambodians best know the local situation and are the best placed to work out strategies for Cambodia. However, they are also eager to learn from the lessons and experiences of other countries in the region, and to use all opportunities available for increasing their own knowledge and capacity. Regional groups such as ANGO have an important role in facilitating dialogue between Cambodian NGOs and other NGOs the region, and in suggesting possibilities for regional cooperation. Regional initiatives may also have greater impact on the World Bank or other international institutions if they help NGOs within the region share their perspectives and concerns with an international audience. How to maximise the impact of external assistance may be further discussed among Cambodian NGO networks and at the PRSP Roundtable Discussion with civil society representatives from neighbouring countries facilitated by ANGO in May 2006..

Annexes

Annex 1 – Mapping of NGOs involved in the PRSP process in Cambodia

Sectoral Groups

When compiling NGO input to the PRSP process, on the joint monitoring indicators, or the NGO Statement to the CG Meeting, the NGO Forum has relied on a number of NGO sectoral groups or lead agencies who gather input from their sector. The following is a list of the sectoral groups or lead agencies which contributed to the past three NGO Statements to the CG Meeting. Not all those listed contributed to all three documents:

Sector	Lead Agency
Agriculture and Rural Development.....	Centre d'Etude et de Developpement Agricole Cambodgien (CEDAC)
Child Rights	NGO Committee on the Rights of the Child (NGOCRC)
Decentralization & De-concentration	Commune Council Support Project (CCSP)
Disability and Rehabilitation.....	Disability Action Council (DAC)
Disarmament and Demobilization.....	Working Group on Weapons Reduction (WGWR)
Disaster Management.....	Humanitarian Accountability Network in Cambodia
Education.....	The NGO Education Partnership (NEP) & EDUCAM
Election Reform	Election Sectoral Group / COMFREL
Fisheries	Fisheries Action Coalition Team (FACT)
Forestry and Plantation Development	The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) – Forestry and Plantations Network
Gender in Poverty Reduction.....	The Gender and Development Network, Gender Forum of the NGO Forum
Governance and Transparency	The Center for Social Development (CSD)
Health	MeDiCAM
HIV/AIDS.....	HIV/AIDS Coordination Committee (HACC)
Humanitarian Mines Action.....	Cambodia Campaign to Ban Land Mines (CAMBAN)
Hydropower	NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) – 3S Working Group

Indigenous Minority Affairs	The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) – Indigenous Rights Network
Industrial Zones	Star Kampuchea
Land Reform.....	The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) – Land Law Implementation Network
Landmines /UXOs.....	Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCBL)
Mental Health.....	Mental Health Working Group
Microfinance.....	Credit Sector Working Group
Resettlement.....	The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) – Resettlement Action Network
Rights and Care of Older People.....	Help Age International
Rule of Law.....	Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC)
Small Arms Reduction and Management	Working Group on Weapons Reduction (WGWR)
Tourism.....	World Vision
Trade and Economic Development	The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF), Oxfam GB, Womyn’s Agenda for Change

NPRS Monitoring Field Survey Team

The following NGOs were involved in the NPRS village surveys in 2005. They were chosen by the local NGO networking organisations, Star Kampuchea and CNAC, from their own provincial networks:

1. CCPCR- Cambodian Center for the Protection Children's Rights
2. CDRCP- Cambodian Development and Relief Center for the Poor
3. CREDO- Cambodian Rural Economic Development Organization
4. CWARO- Organisation for Assistance of Children and Rural Women
5. PKFDA- Poor Khmer Families for Development Association
6. SEDOC- Socio-Economic Development Organization of Cambodia
7. SIT- Save Incapacity Teenagers
8. WOSO- Women's Service Organization

Monitoring of CG Indicators

The lead agencies in the NGO Committee for the Monitoring of CG Indicators are:

1. ADHOC – Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association
2. CCC – Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
3. COMFREL – Committee for Free and Fair Elections
4. CHRAC – Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee
5. CSD – Center for Social Development
6. GAD/C – Gender and Development for Cambodia

7. MEDiCAM – association of NGOs in the health sector
8. NEP – NGO Education Partnership
9. NGO Forum – The NGO Forum on Cambodia
10. Pact Cambodia
11. Star Kampuchea

Individual Initiatives

The following NGOs were involved in individual initiatives related to the PRSP:

1. Women for Prosperity – “Poverty Reduction for Women” forums, 2002.
2. CEDAC (Centre d'Etude et de Développement Agricole Cambodgien) and ActionAid – MDG survey 2005.
3. CCSP (Commune Council Support Project) – Citizens Rating Reports at commune level, 2004-2005.
4. Projects supported by the World Bank, including:
 - CDRI (Cambodian Development Resource Center), to implement research on “Moving out of Poverty”.
 - EIC (Economic Institute of Cambodia), to make the case studies in 4 districts on “Local Experiences on Growth and Poverty Reduction”.
 - WMC (Women’s Media Center), for the Social Accountability and Youth program.
 - COMFREL (Committee for Free and Fair Elections), for printing a booklet on participation in local governance.
 - More than 10 Youth NGOs working on Youth Engagement for Good Governance.

Annex 2 – NGO Forum documents on the PRSP in Cambodia

The following documents are all available on the Development Policy Project documents page of the NGO Forum's website (<http://www.ngoforum.org.kh/Development/Docs/doc.htm>):

2006

- Rapid Assessment of the Incorporation of NGO Comments in the National Strategic Development Plan (2006-2010)
- NGO Statement to the 2006 Consultative Group Meeting on Cambodia
- Cambodian Development Watch Magazine, Year 2, No. 1, March 2006

2005

- NPRS Monitoring Field Survey Results
- NGO Statement on the Monitoring of CG Indicators, 12 December 2005
- NGO Statement on the Monitoring of CG Indicators, September 2005
- Cambodian Development Watch Magazine, Year I, No. 1, June 2005
- NGO Statement on the Monitoring of CG Indicators, June 2005
- NGO Statement on the Monitoring of CG Benchmarks, March 2005

2004

- NGO Statement to the 2004 Consultative Group Meeting on Cambodia
- NGO Statement on the First Year of Implementation of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS)
- NGO Sectoral and Issues Papers on Poverty Reduction and Development in Cambodia 2003

2003

- Cambodia's National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Suggestions for NGO Follow-up, Monitoring and Advocacy
- The NGO Forum on Cambodia and the National Poverty Reduction Strategy
- A Rapid Comparison of the NGO Statement to the 2002 CG Meeting and the Final Draft of Cambodia's National Poverty Reduction Strategy

2002

- A Compilation of NGO and Civil Society Comments on the Second Draft of Cambodia's National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
- Cambodia's draft Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper - Has NGO Input Been Included?
- NGO Statement to the 2002 Consultative Group Meeting

- NGO Recommendations on the Governance Action Plan

2001

- Result of NGO Discussions on the Draft Socio-Economic Development Plan
- NGOs Comment on the Draft Socio-Economic Development Plan
- NGO Statement to 2001 Consultative Group Meeting
- Mapping of NGO-World Bank Relations in Cambodia : A Need for Standards and Indicators
- Rapid Assessment of the PRSP Process in Cambodia : Two Banks, Two Processes, Two Documents

2000

- NGO Statement, 2000 Consultative Group Meeting On Cambodia
- Results of Initial Discussion among NGOs/CSOs on the National Poverty Reduction Strategy of Cambodia

Annex 3 – Framework for Assessing Participation

The following is an extract from “Cambodia’s draft Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper - Has NGO Input Been Included?” published by the NGO Forum in 2002:

There is often an implicit assumption that if workshops have been held and various stakeholders invited, then participation has occurred. However, achieving a satisfactory breadth and quality of participation is much more difficult. Constraints of time, money, government capacity, and civil society capacity can all limit participation.

Breadth of participation refers to the range of stakeholders that have been involved in the consultation process. **Quality of participation** refers to the degree to which issues of contention have been properly debated among stakeholders and agreed feedback incorporated into the final document.

For each section of the PRSP document, the **breadth of participation** could be:

- Only government participation;
- Participation concentrated in only one type of organization / stakeholder (e.g. a few NGOs);
- Participation of most stakeholders involved in the sector, excluding recipients/beneficiaries;
- Participation of most stakeholders involved in the sector, including recipients/beneficiaries (that is, the poor themselves).

For each section of the PRSP document, the **quality of participation** could be such that:

- No feedback has been requested;
- Feedback has been requested but not received;
- Feedback has been requested and feedback has been given, but there has been insufficient debate on issues of contention;
- Feedback has been requested and given, issues of contention have been debated, but inclusion of agreed feedback in the final (or next draft of the) document is lacking or partial.
- Feedback has been requested, given, and debated, and agreed feedback has been incorporated into the final (or next draft of the) document.