



## **Enrich Forum on Sustainable Development 2014**

*“Leadership and Multistakeholdership for Sustainable Development”*

Phnom Penh, August 23, 2014

**On 23 August 2014, Enrich Institute in cooperation with** Royal University of Phnom Penh, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), with the financial support from the Asia Foundation, the Voice of America (VOA), vKirirom Resort, and Virtus Green Plantations organized **Enrich Forum on Sustainable Development** under the theme **“Leadership, Multistakeholdership and Sustainable Development”** at Cambodia-Japan Cooperation Center (CJCC). The topics discussed during the forum include Development Challenges in Cambodia and the Mekong Sub-region, Mekong River Management and Human Development Implications, Leadership and Multistakeholdership for Sustainable Development. The forum was attended by honorable guest **H.R.H Prince Norodom Sirivudh, Supreme Privy Counselor to His Majesty the King of Cambodia; Founder and Chairman, Cambodia Institute for Cooperation and Peace**, and many guest speakers from various organizations, along with over 400 participants from different NGOs and universities.

After the welcoming remarks of **Ms. Oum Ravy**, Vice Rector of Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), Mr. Silas Everett, Country Representative, The Asia Foundation (TAF), and **Mr. Say Mony**, VOA Khmer TV-Video Unit Coordinator in Cambodia, each gave his speech, respectively. Afterwards, **Dr. Chheang Vannarith**, Co-chair of Enrich Forum on Sustainable Development gave his introductory remarks and a brief background of the prince and invited him to deliver the keynote address.

“Sustainable Development is today development without compromising the future” was quoted by the prince that the development itself should focus on the well-being of environment, society, culture preservation and humanity. Government with commitment, and that everyone takes actions with heart and mind together can make a big change to a country, like he put it “Good governance, technology innovation, social interaction and leadership are the foundation of sustainable development”.

After 30-minute coffee break and networking session among participants, the forum started again with a panel discussion on **Development Challenges in Cambodia and the Mekong Sub-region**, jointly illustrated by four guest speakers, with **Dr. Ngim Chanrith**, Dean, Faculty of Development Studies, RUPP, as the chair of the discussion.

Responding to the question **“How to reduce inequality?”** **Dr. Kem Ley**, Principal Investigator in the Social Development Research, Advance Research Consultant Team, raised

four main challenges for Sustainable Development. The first one was the lack of the Household Economic Development Plan to complement the Society Development Plan, and the Community Development Plan the lack of inclusive leadership and lack of good governance. “In government and communities, there was no sustainable or proactive dialogue mechanism to ensure Sustainable Development,” he said.

Subsequently, **Ms. Naomi Hatsukano**, Researcher at Bangkok Research Center (BRC-JETRO), discuss the economic development in Cambodia and the relation between Cambodia and Thailand. Afterwards, **Mr. Chiek Chansomphors**, Senior Consultant, Emerging Market Consulting (EMC), presented on “Promoting Sustainable Growth through Narrowing Income Gap in Cambodia” to address two specific questions, “How could inequality happen and who are the bottom of the pyramid?”. He said that once there is economic growth, there was an inequality. After that, **Mr. Ann Sovatha**, a Ph.D Candidate on Anthropology at University of Hawaii, explained how and why anthropology and sustainable development were connected to each other.

Afterwards, the floor was opened to the participants to ask questions. Various questions were asked to which each panelist took turn to answer one by one. These include

- Are there any methods besides tax increasing towards Sustainable Development?
- Is migration a problem or a solution
- When Cambodia becomes richer, can the salary for civil servants be increased?
- Are there any alternatives to develop without natural resources depletion?
- How can anthropology help develop sustainably?

After the lunch break, the second session started at 1:30pm with the discussion on **Mekong River Management and Human Development Implications**, with **Dr. Chheang Vannarith** as the moderator. **Dr. Han Phoumin**, Energy Expert, Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, talked about brief background and history of dam constructions along Mekong Sub-regional countries such as Lao, Thailand and Cambodia. **Mr. Tek Vannara**, Executive Director, NGO Forum, presented The Mekong Lower Mainstream Dams and Implications on Livelihood in Cambodia, which focused on Basic Development Plan to ensure justice between developers and communities, and other alternatives to hydropower dams.

Session 3, which was about Leadership and Multistakeholdership for Sustainable development was moderated by Dr. Michael R. Diregorio, AF Country Representative, Vietnam. Dr. Sothea Oum, the Economist at the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, illustrated some challenges namely, poverty reduction, labor competitiveness, social political transaction, system against natural disaster, inclusive strategies towards Sustainable Development, tax system, education and health qualities in GMS countries. Following that, Ms. Chor Chanthya, Women Empowerment Program at the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR), talked about human rights issues, land dispute, land concession, access to health care service and inequality in Cambodia. Mr. Leng Chanprathna, CEO, Prathna HR, emphasized on the value of human resource to Sustainable Development. One of his ideal ideas towards sustainable development is the transfer of knowledge in terms

of politics and foreign affair from industrialized countries to less developed countries. Mr. Mam Socheath, a Ph.D candidate at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, presented on a cooperative leadership of universities and their partners, how we can educate people to be sustainable selves, good quality life and environment, challenges on sustainability in higher education and participatory leadership for sustainability.

Ms. Alison, 21, the reporter from Khmer Times, expressed her sincere interest in the Forum. She said “Dam constructions along Mekong River are a very hot issue worth talking about and I am totally against it.” Mr. Sok Vanditha, 19, a junior at Institute of Foreign Languages, said “The forum has increased my knowledge on development issues. I now know and understand the controversial issues along Mekong Sub regions.” he suggested that the forum be organized again next year.

In an interview with Dr. Chheang Vannarith, the co-chair of the Forum said there has to be political wills, honesty and respectfulness of one another’s benefits. Concerning dam constructions along Mekong River, government had to thoroughly discuss the problems and consider the effects on environment and economy in the regions. To minimize the negative effects of dam constructions, he is concerned about small scale of the solutions, which consisted of only government and civil organizations. Therefore, Enrich Forum on Sustainable Development wanted to raise awareness of Cambodian students and the public about sustainable development to enable them to participate in developing the country sustainably.

Phnom Penh, August 27, 2014