

# Land Tenure and Food Security: Case Study of Two Forest Communities in Pursat Province, Cambodia

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Cambodia occupies a total area of 18,103,500 hectares (consisting of 17,651,500 hectares of land, and 452,000 hectares of inland waters). The State owns and manages 14.5 million hectares, or 80 percent of the country's total area, including all forested areas, most of the marine and fresh water resources, and cultural heritage sites. Large-scale agricultural properties totaling 3.6 million hectares or a fifth of the hectareage owned by the State are with private entities (RGC, 2010). Out of 10 million Cambodians, 8.5 million live in rural areas and are dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods (McKenny and Tola, 2002). They rely directly or indirectly on income from agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. Over two million people are employed in the fisheries sector and related activities (FAO, 2005). Fishing provides a diversified livelihood base which acts as an economic buffer for families in times of distress (CDRI, 2010).

Tenure insecurity stems from having too few rights, inadequate duration of rights, lack of assurance in exercising rights, or high costs of enforcement. Thus, tenure security is closely intertwined with land access in tackling issues of poverty and marginalized farming.

There are persistent human rights concerns over land-grabs associated with the Cambodian Government's economic land concessions (ELCs). As a reaction to this, the Cambodian Government's recent land policy has pursued the issuance

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This is an edited version of the Cambodia paper of the same title.

of thousands of land titles to people in land conflict areas. A study is needed to understand how people construct and experience their security and insecurity over land, and how people perceive the effects of tenure (in)security to their livelihoods and food security. This study uses a land continuum and a food security framework as tools to examine these issues.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the study are: (a) to construct a land rights continuum to describe how forest communities in Cambodia gain recognition of their tenure rights; and, (b) to describe the relationship between land tenure and food security in forest communities in Pursat Province in Cambodia.

## **Methodology**

For this study, seven focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in two villages – three with community forest tenure in Trapeang Romdenh Village, Kbal Trach Commune, and four with agricultural land tenure in Beoung Smok Village, Svay Sor Commune, both in the Krokor District in Pursat Province. These are communities where STAR Kampuchea has been working since 2012 and 2017, respectively. The FGDs involved 110 participants. Complementing these FGDs were meetings held with local authorities, a forestry administration officer and community forestry network members who attended a consultation on community forestry and agriculture land tenure.

## **Country Overview of Land Tenure, Hunger and Poverty**

### ***Land Tenure System***

After two decades of civil war and the Vietnamese occupation, agricultural land property rights in Cambodia were restored in the central plains during and following the 1993-2000 period. However, the recourse to markets, inappropriate use of power and the absence of effective measures to protect peasants resulted in a rapid recurrence of landlessness, land concentration and land insecurity. There were no institutions able to tackle land tenure problems. The concession system was reintroduced without proper guidance and control mechanisms. Mineral exploitation led to serious environmental degradation and did not contribute much to the national treasury despite big commercial revenues generated.

Conflicts arose around access and control over land and natural resources. And in attempts to tackle those issues, the Cambodian government first established new laws and regulations. The priority was to create a strong legal basis to allow for the establishment of land tenure institutions. This is the context in which the Land Law of 2001 was promulgated.

The 2001 Land Law differentiates between five different domains of property.<sup>1</sup> The land continues to be *owned by the State* unless its ownership has been legally privatized. *State public land* refers to State land with a public interest (roads, mountains, military bases, or land where a public service is delivered such as a school, an administrative post, public hospital land or land that has a natural origin such as forest, water bodies, river beds, and so on). In contrast, *State private land* is defined simply as all State land that is not State public land, and can be legally privatized. The *private domain* includes all land that has full legal private ownership. There is also ownership of *Buddhist properties* that exist within the premises of Buddhist monasteries, and the *indigenous community land properties* where indigenous communities have established residence.

The implementation of the 2001 Land Law embraced a number of ‘new’ formalization processes of land property rights. Central to these is the formal transfer of State property (domain) to private or collective property rights, and the differentiation between *State private* land and *State public* land. This is highly contentious because large-scale concessions to private entities have remained a central element of State land management in Cambodia.

There are three types of land concessions in Cambodia: (i) social land concessions (SLCs), (ii) economic land concessions (ELCs), and (iii) use, development and exploitation concessions (UDEEC). The core objective, according to the government, is two-fold: (i) to improve tenure security and access to land through a market-based land distributive system (relying on land titling, cadastral administration and land markets) and redistributive land reform through SLCs; and (ii) to stimulate investment to improve productivity and agricultural diversity under the system of ‘concessions.’

In May 2012, Prime Minister Hun Sen announced a moratorium on the granting of ELCs in a document now known as Order 01. In addition to freezing the granting of ELCs, Order 01 initiated an unprecedented land titling campaign in

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<sup>1</sup> Five different domains of property referenced by the Land Law of 2001 are: State land, ‘State private land,’ private land, monastery land and indigenous or community land property.

those areas where the land rights of people and companies overlap onto State land, a process called the ‘formalization fix’ (Dwyer, 2015). The decision by the prime minister to suspend the granting of ELCs through Order 01 was the result of a confluence of events. The violence of conflicts and confrontations between concessionaires and people reached a climax on 26 April 2012 when a prominent environmental activist was shot dead while investigating forest crimes and illegal logging. The issuance of Order 01 was seen as a political move to lessen social unrest one month before the commune elections and one year ahead of the legislative election in July 2013 (Diepart and Schoenberger, 2016).

### ***Poverty and Food Security***

Cambodia has made progress in reducing the number of people living in poverty over the past decade. Poverty rate declined from 53.2 percent in 2004 to 20.5 percent in 2011 (WB, 2014). Nonetheless, Cambodia still remains one of the poorest and least developed countries in Asia.

More than 60 percent of Cambodia’s population depend on subsistence farming for survival. In rural communities, rice is the staple food and is the main crop. Many families become extremely vulnerable during the “hunger gap” — the period between the last planting season and the next harvest, when rice stocks run out.

Despite the abundance of natural resources, Cambodia is one of the world’s poorest countries largely as a result of decades of war and internal conflict.

Cambodia has almost 4.8 million poor people, and 90 percent of them lived in rural areas in 2015. While most of them depend on agriculture for their livelihood, at least 12 percent are landless. Most of them practice subsistence farming and productivity remains low.

Seasonal food shortages hit about two-thirds of Cambodia’s 1.6 million rural households every year. Rural people are constantly looking for means to earn a living, but whatever they find is often temporary and pays poorly. Poverty is widespread among the country’s subsistence farmers, members of poor fishing communities, landless people and rural youth, as well as internally displaced persons and mine victims. The most disadvantaged are in the ranks of tribal peoples and women. Like in some countries, women are deprived access to education, paid employment and land ownership and other property rights.

## **Pursat Province: Study Area**

Agriculture is the main source of employment in Pursat province. The total number of people working in the sector continues to increase over time. Many households combine farming with non-farm rural and urban livelihoods, and wage labor and migration are increasingly central to rural people's livelihoods. Yet, control of access to land for production, access to common spaces for grazing cattle and gathering forest products, and the ability to grow some of the household's food needs remains a central part of many people's rural survival strategies. Even as the country becomes more urbanized, the surplus of youth entering the workforce and regional instability makes migration for wages an undependable option.

Due to lack of funds for agriculture, support for subsistence farming and smallholder cash crop production is limited. This leads to chronic food insecurity in many rural areas (Pursat District database, 2016).

Grinding poverty is rampant in upland areas. The poorest are in the districts close to the borders with Thailand, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Vietnam. Fast population growth fuels poverty. Lack of education and skills training renders poor people unable to get adequate employment. Their access to natural resources is limited, and poor health, lack of education, poor infrastructure and low productivity sink them deeper in poverty. Land tenure insecurity affect many families in rural Cambodia.

## **Land Rights Continuum**

This section focuses on the process of formalization and recognition of the tenure rights of (a) users of State-owned forests and (b) tillers of State agriculture lands in the two villages. Users of State-owned forests may apply for a Community Forestry Agreement which grants usufruct rights and entitles a community to *collectively* use and manage the land for a period of 15 years. On the other hand, tillers of State-owned agricultural lands may apply for a legal *individual* title if they meet eligibility and registration requirements.

### **(1) Forest Users**

The user rights of community forestry (CF) members include: (a) Customary User Rights prescribed in Article 40 of the Forestry Law; (b) the rights to barter, process, transport and sell non-timber forest products (NTFPs) as described under Article 40(B), Item 5 of the Forestry Law of 2002; (c) CF members may continue

to practice traditional agriculture during specific periods of time as determined in the Community Forest Management Plan, as authorized under Article 37 of the Forestry Law; (d) the right to appeal decisions which impact CF members' rights; and (e) the rights granted under a Community Forest Agreement within a specific area that shall ensure the sustainable use of forest resources.

Communities under a Community Forest Agreement may harvest, process, transport and sell forest products and NTFPs in accordance with the following conditions:

- Harvest of forest products for selling or bartering shall not be allowed within the first five years of approval of the Community Forest Management Plan. If the Community Forestry Agreement has been operating with a Community Forest Management Plan prior to the passage of this Sub-Decree, then the moratorium on harvesting forest products shall be considered from the date of approval on that Community Forest Management Plan;
- Payment of any required royalties or premiums on forest products and NTFPs as prescribed in Article 55 of Forestry Law; and,
- Terms and conditions in an approved Community Forest Management Plan.

Based on the Community Forest Agreement, a CF member has the rights to plant, manage, harvest forest products and NTFPs and sell tree species as approved in a Community Forest Management Plan. Community Forest Agreements shall be in effect not more than a period of 15 years from the date of approval by the Forestry Administration Cantonment Chief.

Table 1 details the tenure types among forest users, while Figure 1 shows the same tenure types in terms of a continuum of land rights.

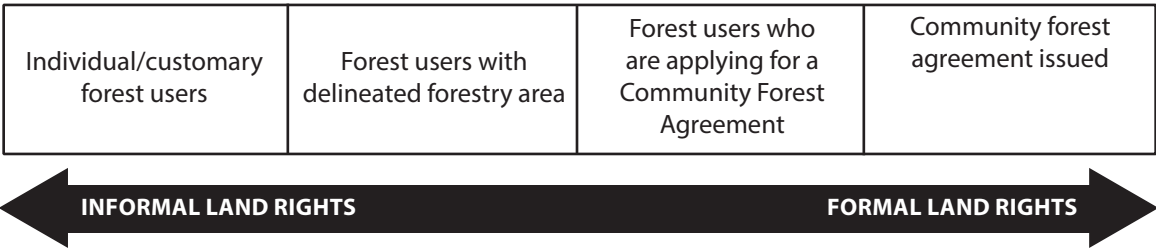
## ***(2) Tillers in State Agricultural Lands***

Claimants of State agricultural lands need to secure recognition from their villages, specifically their District/Khan Cadastral Administration, according to the registration guidelines stipulated in Sub-Decree No. 48 on Sporadic Land Registration (2002). The application for land registration sets off an adjudication process that involves an investigation of available documents, evidence and

**Table 1: Tenure Types among Forest Users**

No.	Forest tenure group	Description	Rights
1	Individual/ customary forest users	Individuals or households that harvest forest products or cultivate the land in State property	The 2002 Forestry Law (Article 40) recognizes customary users' rights to harvest, barter, process, transport and sell NTFPs and continue traditional agriculture.
2	Forest users with delineated forestry area	Group of forest users that collectively have their forest area delineated and recognized by the Provincial Governor	<p>Customary user rights to harvest, barter, process, transport and sell NTFPs and undertake traditional agriculture in the delineated area is restricted only to the group of forest users.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the group restricts and controls access to the delineated forest area on its own initiative.</p>
3	Forest users who are applying for a Community Forest Agreement	<p>Group of forest users that apply for a Community Forest Agreement with the Forestry Administration. The map of the delineated area is likewise submitted to the Forestry Administration.</p> <p>The group establishes a Community Forestry Committee and develops its internal structure and by-laws, and rights and responsibilities of members.</p>	<p>Group members continue to exercise their customary user rights.</p> <p>However, the group now exercises the formal right to restrict and control access to the delineated forest area, as recognized by the Forestry Administration.</p> <p>The group have an exclusive right to relate with local authorities and the Forestry Administration cantonment to support the development of community forestry agreement.</p>
4	Community Forest Agreement issued	The group has its Community Forest Agreement approved by the Forestry Administration. This agreement defines the relationship and obligations between the Community Forestry Committee and the Forest Administration Cantonment.	<p>The group of forest users through its Community Forestry Committee, has the right to manage the forest area for a period of 15 years. These rights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ right to enforce forestry laws and regulations;</li> <li>■ right to protect and conserve the area;</li> <li>■ right to control access of outsiders; and,</li> <li>■ right and obligation to develop a forest management plan.</li> </ul>

**Fig. 1. Continuum of Tenure Rights for Forest Users**



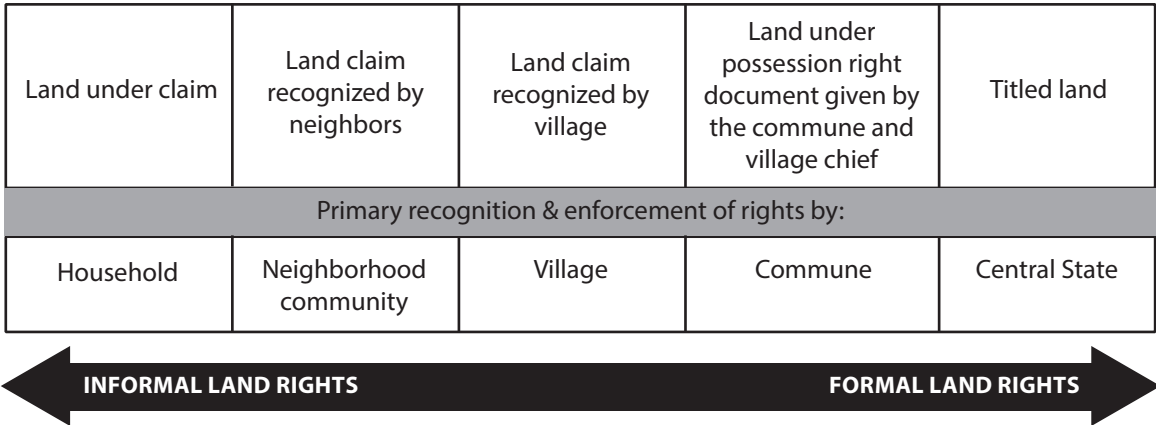
other written or oral information concerning the rights related to the parcel. Adjudication is based on the following requirements:

- land to be registered must have been occupied before 30 August 2001 or occupied for at least five years; and,
- land to be registered must have been occupied peacefully and without contestation.

Tillers in State-owned agricultural lands may be described through a continuum of land rights (Figure 2).

Table 2 details the tenure types among Tillers of State Agricultural Land.

**Fig 2. Continuum of Tenure Rights among Tillers of State Agricultural Lands**





**Table 2: Tenure Types among Tillers of State Agricultural Land**

No.	Status of land tenure	Description	Rights
1	Land under claim	Person or family enters State land, and clears the forest for agriculture.	This is exercised as an informal right, deemed illegal under the law. However, the law is not fully enforced.
2	Land claim recognized by neighbors	The farmer cultivates the land, and informs neighbors that he/she plans to use the land for the long-term. This informal land right is recognized by neighbors.	An informal right, which is not recognized by law, but the <i>actual use</i> of the land is recognized and protected by the local neighborhood from adverse claims.
3	Land claim recognized by village chief	The land claim is recognized by the village chief. The boundaries of the land are identified and documented, along with the adjacent plots.	The informal right to use and to pass inheritance of the land to children is recognized and protected by the village.
4	Land under possession right document given by the commune and village chief	The land use and the land claim are legally recognized by the commune through the issuance of a "possession right" document.	The farmer gains the right to use and manage the land. The land is also protected by the commune and the village from adverse claims. Sometimes, the holders of possession rights sell their land to buyers, but this is risky in the absence of land titles. Those who have cultivated or settled on the land prior to the promulgation of the 2001 Land Law are entitled to possession rights, and may apply for a land title.
5	Titled land	The land is demarcated, and the land/map are registered in the cadaster.	The farmer exercises the full legal rights of ownership. The land can be used as collateral, and can be legally sold as property. The farmer also has to pay land taxes to the government.

## Community Contexts

### *Trapeang Romdenh Village*

Trapeang Romdenh is a village in the Kbal Trach commune, Krokor district, Pursat province. Residents have lived there since before the Khmer Rouge in 1975. The village has 367 families with a total population of 1,223 people (772 women and

451 men). Some 95 percent of the population practice Theravada Buddhism. Ninety-eight percent of the main income of the village comes from farming, livestock raising, forestry, and small enterprises. Most people have rights to manage their paddy lands and homelots as many have possession rights. In 2013, STAR Kampuchea supported local communities in establishing community forestry that covered 265 hectares of forestland. This resulted in the recognition of the tenure of select forest communities in Trapaeng Romdenh by the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fishery in 2010 and the Forestry Administration cantonment in Pursat Province in December 2016.

### **Beoung Smok Village**

Beoung Smok is a village in the Svay Sor commune, Krokor district, Pursat province. It has 269 families with a total population of 1,040 people (676 women and 364 men). Most residents practice Theravada Buddhism. Villagers make a living from farming, livestock raising, forestry, and small enterprises. Most people in the village have rights to manage their paddy lands and homelots, through their possession rights.

### **Participants**

Participants were grouped into seven FGDs in two community target sites – 46 respondents from Community Forestry Ochy Chey Moha (25 men and 21 women), and 64 from Community Forestry Boueng Smok (29 men and 35 women), representing farmers working on farmlands outside forestry.

No	FGDs based on tenure group	Number of participants	
		<i>Ochy Chey Moha Village</i>	<i>Boueng Smok Village</i>
1	Individual/customary forest users	16 (9 men and 7 women)	
2	Users with delineated forest area	15 (10 men and 5 women)	
3	Forest users who are applying for a Community Forestry Agreement	15 (6 men and 9 women)	
4	Community Forestry Agreement issued	None	
5	Land under claim		16 (6 men and 10 women)
6	Land claim recognized by neighbors		15 (5 men and 10 women)
7	Land claim recognized by village		15 (7 men and 8 women)
8	Land under possession right document given by the commune and village chief		18 (11 men and 7 women)
9	Titled land	None	
	Total respondents (110)	46 people (25 men and 21 women)	64 people ( 29 men and 35 women)

The village chiefs were important in getting villagers to participate in the FGDs. They helped to introduce the objectives of the study as well as in grouping the participants for the FGDs according to land tenure across the lands rights continuum in both villages. One guide questionnaire was used for all the seven FGDs, and its questions covered the following topics, among others: background of land tenure, ownership status of homelot, source of drinking water, primary and secondary source of income in household, status of employment, main source and purpose of credit, number of land parcels, tenure status, security of tenure over farmland, supply of staple food for the household, and major problems affecting their community. A consultation meeting was also held to gather information from key stakeholders from government officials/representatives like the Beoung Smok and Trapeang Romdenh village chiefs, Svay Sor and Kbal Trach commune council members, and Cheutom and Ansachambok Forestry Administration triage chiefs.

## Summary of Findings of the FGDs

Below are summaries of findings on housing and homelots, livelihood and income, migration, credit and inputs, tenurial status, perceptions of food security, and perceptions of community problems.

### ***Housing and Homelots***

Most families have housing units that use Khmer traditional style semi-permanent housing materials<sup>2</sup>. The average homelot size is 1,313 square meters per family with an average house size of 39.63 square meters. Most own a small farming garden.

### ***Livelihood and Income***

From the FGD's total of 110 respondents, 96 percent relied on on-farm activities as their primary source of income, 64 percent had a second source of income from off-farm activities, and 3 percent relied on non-farm activities for income.

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<sup>2</sup> Khmer traditional style houses are semi-permanent, often made of wood because they need to be transportable to other homelots.

On-farm income activities involved paddy rice, chicken, pig and corn cassava, and cashew. Off-farm income came from livelihoods like working as individual middleman or trader who buys and/or sells farm products. Those who earn from non-farm income are local government workers such as teachers, military personnel and police officers.

The employment of respondents can be classified into permanent, temporary, contractual, seasonal or occasional, and self-employed. Permanent employment refers to farming and livestock which earn them season or annual income. Temporary employment refers to irregular, contractual work. Seasonal or occasional work involved getting paid for skills such as repair of vehicles, TV and radio sets. Those who are self-employed were running a small business or shop to sell food or material for daily use in the villages.

Main commodities such as paddy rice, chicken, pig and corn in Ochi Chey Moha CF and Beoung Smok are traded from the farm gates and villages to other areas. The selling price of produce fluctuates over time, while the cost of inputs are continuously increasing. In these communities, the buying price of cassava fluctuates throughout the day, which can cause challenges for subsistence farmers. There are many middlemen/traders during the harvesting season of cassava and cashew, but buying prices among individual middleman/trader are not remarkably different.

### ***Migration***

Two respondents had moved from Ochi Chey Moha to Kbal Trach commune to open a small business or food shop. Eighteen respondents had moved to Krokor district to attend high school and cut on travel expenses. Nine respondents had changed houses in Pursat province to open small businesses. Three respondents had family members who work in Thailand's construction sector, sending home an average of US\$250 per month.

### ***Credit and Inputs***

In Beoung Smok and Ochi Chey Moha, farmers took out loans averaging US\$300 from micro-finance institutions and private banks. Most of the respondents or 95 percent borrowed money for various reasons – 64 percent to invest in farming, 9 percent for health/medicine, 18 percent for child's education, and 4 percent

to buy material. Interest rates ranged from 1.2 to 1.5 percent per month. Loan repayment period ranged from 12 months to two years depending on loan size.

Accessing credit for agricultural production is no longer difficult. Many MFIs/banks are available upon need. Land titles are commonly used as collateral to get loans. Each member who borrows can receive up to US\$500. MFIs/banks have facilitated loans with a maximum duration to fit the production cycle. Farmers only pay a monthly interest to the bank/MFI, and pay the loan principal during the harvesting season. Monthly interest rates range from 1.2 percent to 3.5 percent. In general, farmers are forced to sell their produce directly after harvest or even before harvest to meet repayment obligations during the harvest season. A failure to harvest often forces farmers to take out a second loan from another source – mainly from private moneylenders – in order to pay back the primary loan. A bag of chemical fertilizer costs 120,000 KHR (US\$30) when farmers buy it cash. However, most farmers buy it on credit within the rice production cycle at the cost of 150,000 KHR (US\$42.50) plus 30 kilograms of paddy rice. The margin of 30,000KHR (US\$7.50) and 30 kilograms of paddy rice are the interest charged by the sellers. In Beoung Smok and Ochi Chey Moha, farmers took an average loan of US\$300 from MFIs/banks.

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### ***Tenurial Status***

In Ochi Chey Moho CF, the forest communities have had their tenure recognized by the Forestry Administration (FA) cantonment as their CF agreement has been signed. Despite this, they have not been given the full right to manage the forest that they are claiming because they need to prepare their community forestry management plan.

In Beoung Smok, the average size of rice farms is 0.63 of a hectare per family. The average size is smaller in Ochi Chey Moha CF at 0.56 of a hectare per family. In Beoung Smok, renting land for farming is difficult, since families only have a small piece of land. Thus, some farmers rent land in other areas or outside their

provinces. The same trend is also observed in Ochi Chey Moha CF. In these two communities, buying or renting land is still possible. However, land prices have been increasing from year to year. The average rental rates per hectare per year is US\$150 in Beoung Smok and US\$120 in Ochi Chey Moha CF.

During fieldwork in the communities identified for this study, farmers continued to demand for land as a source of livelihood, household food security and identity. Most of them said: *“We are farmers. That is what we do. Now many people are losing their land. I’m worried about what will happen to our children.”*

### ***Perceptions of Food Security***

The main crop of respondents is paddy rice and their secondary produce are corn, soybean, cassava, and other vegetables. Planting is done during the rainy season from June to December every year. They farm vegetables during the dry season in small plots in their yards.

Forty-five percent of respondents experience insufficiency in food from August to November, while awaiting their rice harvest season from November to January.

Sixty-seven percent perceived that they are food-secure as they are able to generate income from livelihoods such as animal and chicken raising, vegetable garden, industry worker, and NTFPs. Whereas, perceptions on food insecurity among the rest of the respondents were attributed to high costs of agricultural inputs and health care. They take out loans in times when they do not make money from their livelihoods.

### ***Perceptions of Community Problems***

All of the respondents were farmers planting rice or vegetable; and raising animal using traditional practices – in which they experience lack of water supply and low market price for their yields.

All of the respondents lack awareness on the legal frameworks and procedures on forestland management and tenure in Beoung Smok Village.

## **Analysis of Results**

Land insecurity affects people's livelihoods and increases physical and psychological insecurity. Poor families, less educated people, and widows are more likely to feel insecure about land. The largest cause of insecurity is poverty, followed by land grabbing, lack of good governance, lack of food, lack of land for the next generation, and inadequate access to healthcare. Forced and distress-based land sales are also a central cause of land insecurity.

Food insecurity is linked to low agricultural productivity, debt, poor health and lack of access to food adversely affected livelihood. Most people lack access to potable water; they have to boil everything before consuming them in the villages.

The main sources of security of tenure over land are: possession of a land title, schooling opportunities, affordable healthcare, strong community network and supportive local authorities, non-governmental organizations that provide long-term support; and different forms of land management (including communal management).

A land title is an important source of security for many people in the study, but it does not provide full security. Most people with a land title are still worried their land would be taken as they said they did not have trust in the judiciary nor in long-term government policy. Sometimes a title increases insecurity if those with more power are able to grab more land during titling, or land values rise and predatory land purchases increase. People whose land was left untitled during the nationwide land titling campaign or those who were waiting for titles were pressured into selling their land for low prices. In some areas, people are very satisfied with the land titling process and reported very little corruption. Factors contributing to security during the land titling process included: land claimants and authorities having a high level of knowledge about land rights and titling processes; people kept well informed during the process by authorities; strong community networks; and community representatives accompanying group discussions.

Knowledge and use of dispute resolution mechanisms are limited. Respondents most often sought help from local authorities when they had a land dispute or were fearful that someone would take their land; most people were not aware

of other mechanisms for resolution. Despite this key role of dispute resolution, many commune officials were not clear about what their role should be in solving land disputes or marital property issues. Some local officials said they wanted to help but lacked resources, information, and lines of communication with province or national-level authorities. Furthermore, some officials were involved in land disputes themselves and were not in a position to assist villagers. Rural people consistently said they wanted more communication with their local officials, including regular meetings with local and provincial-level authorities, and access to information.

Community Forestry agreements require a long process for official recognition. There is the tendency to implement the CF establishment and formalization process mechanically and due diligence (following the CF formalization steps) due to limited resources (e.g. funds, staff, time and other logistics) and targets set by projects without ensuring that the expected outcome in each of the CF steps are adequately met. The tendency is to move quickly to reach the signing of CF agreements without following up on important activities in earlier CF steps that would ensure greater local understanding and ownership.

Knowledge of the legal framework and the documentation formalization process is limited. Both community forestry in Beoung Smok and Ochi Chey Moho did not understand the legal framework to support their communities to have their land tenure recognized. Now their CF are under dispute despite it having reached step 11 as per the MAFF guideline.

## **Assessment and Recommendations**

Cambodian farmers should have security of tenure over land, water for irrigation, capital for investment, technical inputs for improving the agricultural productivities and market governance structure for commercialization of their production.

Raising the awareness on Community Forestry legal framework among the local community people is very important to support CF development including CF legalization and community forestry management plan and particularly their forest land will have land tenure recognized. A government official from Forestry Administration (FA) cantonment-Pursat said that it is critical that the Royal Government of Cambodia provide funding to support the community and for



local government staff in the FA to participate fully in providing the technical support and to help to revise community forestry documents for approval of tenure rights and management plans for the community people.

Land tenure security in a farmland in a forest area is generally good, while land security in upland area or forest area has been largely improved since the implementation of the government's Order 01. However, land tenure security for community people in formerly forested areas is still an issue. Farmers have the right to use the land and transfer lands by buying and selling it, but so far their lands are not officially recognized as private property yet.

Since the second mandate of the government, most investments have been for irrigation, mostly medium and large-scale irrigation schemes. However, irrigation facilities are mainly equipped for rice farming or for non-rice farming in the rice farming ecosystem. Due to the changing context, farmers have adopted crops other than rice and livestock farming. The demands for water access in non-rice farming ecosystem have noticeably increased. In order to develop a sustainable food production system at the household level and to achieve food security in the rural area, micro-scale irrigation schemes are needed. Therefore, the study recommends to the Royal Government of Cambodia to consider investing in micro-scale irrigation in the drought-prone areas.

During the last three mandates of the government, financing systems have largely improved and their reach expanded across the country. Many rural families have acknowledged having access to loans from MFIs or banks. Therefore, the study recommends that the Royal Government of Cambodia consider providing financial support or subsidy to the established district savings associations so that they could speed up community development.

There are technical innovations being made at the national level and provincial level. Through the development projects implemented by government institutions and NGOs, farmers at the local level have been able to adopt these new technical practices as well as new varieties of crops. Aside from the technical services provided by these projects, private enterprises have played a role in delivering technical knowledge. However, it is often still the case that farmers fail to harvest due to the technical errors, or in some cases the yield is just too low. It is also important to note that now farmers are aware of the importance of adopting new techniques or varieties in order to take advantage

of market demand, but may lack some of the necessary tools. The Department of Agriculture will be equipped with two technical staff to service farmers. Speeding up this initiative would only aid their desired outcomes. In addition, the government should invest more in technical agricultural research targeted at benefiting the agricultural productivity of small landholder farmers.

Land insecurity affects people's livelihoods and increased physical and psychological insecurity. Poor families, less educated people, and widows are more likely to feel insecure about land. The largest cause of insecurity was poverty, followed by land grabbing, lack of good governance, lack of food, lack of land for the next generation, and inadequate access to healthcare. Forced and distress-based land sales are also a central cause of land insecurity. ■

## Acronyms

ANGOC	Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
CARDI	Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute
CDRI	Cambodia Development Research Institute
CF	community forestry
CFMC	Community Forestry Management Committee
CPP	Cambodia People's Party
CSO	civil society organization
ELC	economic land concession
FA	Forestry Administration
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDG	focus group discussion
GDP	gross domestic product
GLTN	Global Land Tool Network
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
KHR	Cambodian Riel (currency)
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fishery
MFI	micro-finance institution
MLMUPC	Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Constructio
NGO	non-government organization
NTFP	non-timber forest product
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SLC	social land concession
SNC	Supreme National Council
UDEC	use, development and exploitation concession

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