

**Consultation Meeting of the World Bank Group on Cambodia's Systematic Country Diagnostic  
Kratie, 2 December 2016  
Summary of discussions with Community-Based Organizations**

Top three issues raised: (i) natural resource management; (ii) agriculture; (iii) healthcare

**Priority Areas for Action**

**Natural resource management**

- When forest cover is lost, the whole land surface is degraded and water resources decline, in both quantity and quality. Therefore, it will be critical to stop deforestation in order to improve water and fisheries management, as well as to reduce the impacts of droughts and other natural disasters. This will require support from the RGC, including an end to granting ELCs to large companies that clear forestland for large-scale agriculture operations. Also, the destruction of flooded forests, which also serve as fish spawning grounds, needs to end. Moreover, there should be a campaign to replant some trees.
- Deforestation also causes the loss of wildlife and economic revenue from sustainable forestry activities, such as resin tree tapping, traditional herbs and medicines, and tourism. Efforts should be made to help enforce the law on forestry and convict offenders.
- The construction of hydropower is a major problem for fisheries communities. Large-scale hydropower construction should be stopped
- Over-fishing and illegal fishing (e.g. during the off-season or by using illegal tools/techniques) have led to significantly lower fish stocks. Improvements in fish management and the enforcement of the law on fisheries resources are urgently needed. This should include cracking down on corruption and collusion activities.
- Pollution from pesticides and construction around the river is also a problem. In many areas, the water has become toxic, thereby impacting human health. Water is the mother of our life, and we need to maintain and manage it well.

**Agriculture**

- Land is an issue – many farmers have no land to farm and rent private land at very high prices, limiting their income-generating potential.
- The price of paddy has declined lately, but without processing and storage capacity, farmers are forced to sell even when prices are not good. Overall, low commodity prices (including also for cassava, corn and rubber), combined with the high price of renting land, represent a high risk for farmers.
- Farmers have lost a lot as a result of repeated flooding due to natural disasters and climate change.
- Farming communities also need better access to markets so they can help meet global demand for commodities.

**Healthcare**

- Due to the long distance to health facilities and the poor quality of roads, access to health services for the poor in remote areas is lacking. To improve access to affordable services, health workers should be deployed to remote areas, and the poor who are unable to afford care should be provided with free or subsidized healthcare.
- The low quality of existing health services is also an issue. Health workers need additional education on ethical and professional care.

**Education**

- Remote communities need better access to sufficient and affordable education, both primary and secondary. Even where schools are available, many students are unable to pay informal class fees.
- Low teachers' salaries are also an issue.

**Infrastructure and connectivity**

- Road and bridge conditions are problematic – bad roads and bridges make it difficult for children to go to school, for family members to access health services, and for farmers to access markets.