

Brief report on the trip to Cambodia

26/05/2001

The main purpose of this trip was to be in UPDF meeting in the afternoon. The plane arrived in the morning. Somsak, Wootipun and Jamnong were waiting at the airport and brought me to the new relocated site bought by the Municipality, about 3km. from Pochentong airport. The new site, about 8 hectares, looks alright with water, railroad, location that close to the former village and just about 3 km. From the airport. Mr. Mann Chourren was at the site together with a number of technicians managing land development. The site is planned for the relocation of about 300 families from various squatter settlements and communities affected by different kinds of development in the city. However, since there was a big fire in Basaac the night before burning more than 500 hundred houses so the land may have to be provided for those fire victims who choose to come to this site.

The budget of 150,000 US\$ to purchase this land allocated from Priminister Hun Sen who seems strongly support the housing activities for the poor.

After visiting the site, we went to visit people in Basaac. It said the fire broke at around 5 PM. From the house where husband and wife were having quarrel. Fire broke so quickly, by 3-4 hours, 517 houses were burnt down since the fire engine could not come inside. Fire victims were given temporary accommodation in the school nearby and any open spaces near to the area. The Municipality seems keen to move former residents as much as possible to the new site and not to allow the people to reconstruct their houses in the burnt area. In the morning the Municipality was making a mistake by ordering the tractor to bulldoze the burnt area but finally gave up due to the strong resistance from former residents in the area.

We met the residents who said they did not have any assistance so far although so much announcement about assistance was made. There were attempts to ask for assistance from various embassys for emergency assistance. There were not there when I visited but some said that it would come in that afternoon. The residents also feeling unsure about the idea of moving to the new site. In general, the situation seems not so well organized.

We urged SUPF in the UPDF Meeting to visit the people and to meet with these community people then propose what the residents wanted to various agencies. If they sent the result from their meeting to ACHR, we will also write a letter to the Municipality or the Priminister. SUPF leaders from various Khans agreed to visit and hold a meeting with the residents at night.

UPDF Meeting at 14.30-18.00

Lots of time were spent on the discussion about the fire in Bassac and how we should try to do. It was agreed that:

SUPF will help find solutions with residents in fire area.

If necessary, UPDF could advance some money to pay for temporary accommodations and other emergency needs, on site, since we doubt about the idea to move the people to the new site at this stage. Besides not all of them can accommodate in the new site.

SUPF will send letters to all related agencies including ACHR so that ACHR can also send a letter to the Municipality and the Priminister.

Other important decision, was on the approval of first phase improvement projects in 20 communities covering all 7 Khans with the amount of 13,440 US\$.

This is a new program intending to find ways for urban poor communities to work together and to be able to develop small community improvement activities together. In the past few months, there have been the process of identifying problems in wide range of communities and brought it to the discussion at each Khan unit (District Community network) to identify needs and priorities. Each Khan unit then, after painful selection process, choose about 2-3 highest priority projects from each Khan in

order to implement in the first phase together. Other projects were also grouped as second and third priorities. It was agreed that the ceiling of each project should be about 500 US\$ and not beyond 700 US\$.

It is intended that the long painful discussion and selection process has become the concrete learning process among the community people and to bring decision on projects to be implemented into district(Khan) transparent process to be concentrated by all communities in the same Khan as well as other Khans. Such process is quite important in establishing more trust and transparency among each in this social process.

It is also important to mention here that this is a new people process to achieve big number of projects to be implemented by people themselves in a very incredible cheap price, in quick short time, direct to their needs, with the quality to enable people to manage, to learn from each other and to understand the relationship of what they are doing and achieve with other things in society.

There are total 64 communities involved in the process up to this stage. The projects proposed are : communal toilets, drainage, walkways, bridge, stair (for those rooftops), garbage disposal, electricity, water supply, digging well, etc.,. The first phase is projects selected together from 20 communities. The budget amount to 13,440 US\$ and about 1,500 families benefited. The second phase will be projects in 24 communities with budget of 11,172 US\$ and third batch of 11 communities with budget of 7,200 US\$. More projects are also developing from more communities.

We have discussed with UNCHS and SUPF to work together on this first phase and to allow projects in this first phase to be implemented by communities right away (to be started in early June onwards). After the implementation of this first phase, which should take only a month or two, there should be evaluation and will probably bring this result for UNCHS to further develop and to take care of other phases. Therefore, the meaning of this first phase implementation is quite important to change the way UNCHS have been operated in former community-contract development with too much decision making and control from UNCHS.

After the meeting, it was agreed that process of implementation will be organized with participation from communities in each Khan and other Khans. The implementation may not be too much spread out but process to keep implementation projects under knowledge and participation and learning from others will be delicately planned for.

Other issues discussed include:

- The idea for inauguration of Toulrokakoh Community in August or September. The plan was to plan for Priminister Hun Sen to the inauguration, and perhaps, to show a new possibilities of the whole Khan improvement plan to secure land and housing for the poor instead of just relocation to new site out of the city.
- Improvement of Boraikamkorn which is the old building occupied by poor people. It was proposed to have architect and engineer from Thailand or japan to help study and propose for alternatives.

Conclusion of UPDF loans

1. Total UPDF Fund and loans given

Total amount of UPDF Fund	205,729 US\$
Total amount of Housing Loans given	191,560 US\$
Apiwat Meanchey (Toul Sveyprey)	47,988 \$
Toul Sambo	(46,014 \$)
Koklieng 1	(40,618 \$)
Koklieng 2	(17,478 S)
Toulrokakoh 101 fa.	(39,462 \$)
Total amount of Income generation loans	82,958 US\$
Russeikeo fish loans	65,034 \$
Loans to 7 Khan network	15,953 \$
Loans to groups faced Bank collapse	1,972 \$
Total loans given to water supply connection	482 \$

2. Total amount repaid 44,292 US\$

3. Total number of families benefited

Total number of families benefited from housing loans :	512
- Total number of families benefited from income gen. Loans :	1231
- Number of families benefited from water supply connection :	99
Total	1842

The fast pace of development in Phnom penh city together with very insecure tenure cause many forms of eviction in the city. The Municipality only solution now is only find land for relocation. It is very necessary now to work harder to find alternatives to such single solution. We are planning that ACHR project with City Alliance to organize collaborative planning in each Khan will demonstrate a new way of approach that planning can be done by people in each Khan with assistance from professionals. So, we may have to come up with proper alternatives of security of tenure plan for all settlements in each Khan very soon. It is expected that a close collaboration with Peter of UNCHS will be able to come up with concrete solution and to be acceptable by the concerned authorities.