INTRODUCTION
This issue of the Cambodian Human Rights Network (HRN) Project newsletter series examines the progress regarding the implementation of the Human Rights Network Project ("the Project"), more particularly the partnering of Target Beneficiaries, linking them together and increasing their capacities through training in documentation and advocacy, land law, Pre-Trial Procedures and Complaint Writing. This issue is aimed at providing interested stakeholders with an update on the project implementation, especially activities undertaken by Human Rights Network participants advocating in land conflict and labor rights through public forums, rallying, dialogue and mediation with authorities.

Trainings
During the reporting period, the project organized three different trainings:

1. On 5 April 2012 in Banteay Meanchey province, HRN participants were successfully trained on “Documentation session 3” in Serei Sophoan city, Banteay Meanchey province.
2. On 24 May 2012, the project organized a training session on “Human Rights and Land Law” in Prey Thom village, Kampong Lpo village, Samlout district, Battambang province.
3. The project launched a new training session on “Pre-Trial Procedures and Complaint Writing” in Siem Reap province on June 11-12, 2012 and in Battambang on 13-14 June 2012 for HRN participants.

Each of these trainings had a direct and very concrete impact at the community level and were therefore considered a great success:

Indeed, two beneficiaries, in Prey Thom village, Battambang province, directly exercised their newly acquired knowledge on a case in which a 14-year-old girl became a victim of an attempted rape on 12 June 2012. Having benefited from the training on the Criminal Procedures Code, the two community’s representatives were asked by the victim to help communicate with the police. They went to the local police office on June 15th and mediated with the police, who then decided that the case would be sent before the investigating judge in accordance with legal procedure.

Another trainee in Chhak R'ka village, Battambang province, mobilized villagers within her community directly after the training, to file a complaint and lead a peaceful protest against a group of soldiers and police officers who were attempting to grab their land.

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**Public Forum**

The protest organized on April 26th described above led to the organization of a public forum on "Human Rights and Development" on May 3rd in Boeung Pi point, Krapor Seseb village, Lvea commune, Bavel district, Battambang province - by the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) in cooperation with HRN participants across the province. 450 villagers, most of them direct victims of land grabbing along the border between Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provinces, voluntarily attended the event. The main purpose of the forum was to discuss the injunction issued by Battambang Judge, Mr. Sa Oeun Kosal Mony on 29 February 2012, offering Oknya Song Thorn and two other men, Tun Bunthoeun and Khun Tehsy, the use of 638 hectares of land currently farmed by some 300 families from Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provinces.

The forum facilitated dialogue between villagers affected by land conflict and the authorities, proving fruitful. The villagers communicated their concerns to panelists, H.E Sean Suthang, Battambang Deputy Provincial Governor, H.E Ream Saro Banteay Mean Chey Deputy Provincial Governor and H.E Ham Mony Member of the Battambang Provincial Council. The villagers requested social land concessions to be granted in the area, a proposition which has since been accepted by the Battambang Deputy Provincial Governor and the provincial authorities. The authorities are now processing the social land concession. This was a great success for the villagers and illustrates the potential of these forums.

**Rally**

CCHR supported around 200 villagers and HRN participants from Skun/Tbaeng, Tapen, Sre Nouy, Tany, Sna Sang Kream and Chi Kreung land communities in Siem Reap province, to organize a rally in front of Siem Reap Provincial Court on 19 June 2012 in order to show support for four land activists - Vich Vy, In Sin, Pak Rin and Nai Kleuk - who were summoned for a hearing under the charge of being a new occupant on immovable property of a private person without title, under article 34 and 259 of the Cambodian Land Law.

The four activists were summoned for questioning under the same charge on 6 October 2011. At that time, over 300 people from seven different land communities across four districts in Siem Reap province, gathered at the provincial court to show their support for the community representatives, who were placed under judicial supervision under article 223 of the Criminal Procedure Code, but were released after questioning.

The hearing on the 19th June 2012 was to include interviews from victims of the conflict, concerning 170 hectares of land and 222 affected families in Skun/Tbaeng villages, Tbaeng commune, Banteay Srei district, Siem Reap province. The interviews would have placed blame on a group of businessmen allegedly involved in the dispute - Lun Phun, Tes Sopha, Ang Dalin.

The supporters of the four activists were prepared for a long protest as they expected the activists to be arrested. However, once such a large group of villagers arrived at the court to demonstrate, officials decided to postpone the hearing.

**Human Rights Radio Talk Show**

During the reporting period, HRN participants had a chance to talk publicly about their concerns on issues affecting their communities after being invited on two occasions to speak on a radio program covering such topics.

On 30 March 2012, a HRN participant in Siem Reap province, Keo Sophy, representative of Tapen Land Community, was invited to raise concerns on a broadcast entitled "The Face of Forced Eviction". She described the conflict affecting her community, over an area of 183 hectares of land in Tapen village, Tbaeng commune, Banteay Srei district, Siem Reap province on the Human Rights Radio Talk Show, broadcast on Beehives Radio FM 105 MHz. Sophy spoke notwithstanding the fact that she had recently been threatened by an unknown soldier about publicizing the conflict through the media. The discussion mainly focused on the stories of 70 villagers who, on 29 February 2012 in Tapen village, were told to vacate the land as it falls under the Phnom Kulen National Park territorial jurisdiction. However, Keo Sophy claimed that the villagers have been living there since 1996/97, so they have the right to occupy the land.

On May 18 2012, Morm Rithy, a HRN member in Siem Reap province and Acting President of Cambodian Tourist Service Workers’ Federation (“CTSWF”) together with Chhorn Sokha, Program Officer of Labor Rights at the Community Legal Education Center (“CLEC”), were invited to a debate entitled “Encountered problems of Labour Rights Activists in Cambodia”. Morm Rithy raised issues related to discrimination in forming unions (Angkor Village Hotel case), especially the judicial harassment that targeted him and other unionists in connection with their efforts to advocate labor rights in Siem Reap province.

During the discussion, Mrs. Chhorn Sokha raised concerns over minimum wages and working conditions, and the general low living standards of workers, concluding that labor rights in Cambodia must be reviewed in accordance with International Labour Law, the Cambodian Constitution, and especially the Cambodian Labor Law.

The radio broadcasts raise awareness about important human rights issues and encourage other people to speak out against injustice. The HRN participants have gained the confidence and knowledge to be able to use radio to raise awareness of the issues they are working on.

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CCHR is a non-aligned, independent, non-governmental organization that works to promote and protect democracy and respect for human rights throughout the Kingdom of Cambodia.