

7th General Assembly of the Farmer and Nature Net

December 22, 2009

With funding support from Agriterra and the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation for Liberty (FNF), the Farmer and Nature Net (FNN) organized its 7th General Assembly at Trapeung Chuk village, Po Angkrang commune, Borset district in Kampong Speu Province. There were 136 people who attended this assembly, including key farmers from 11 provinces throughout Cambodia; the Chief of the Department of Agriculture Extension of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF); Provincial Department of Agriculture officers; the District Governor; commune councilors; journalists; and FNN and CEDAC staff members. The objectives of this assembly were to present and reflect on the progress and activities of FNN and to reveal the three-year strategic plan (2010-2012) of FNN.

During the Assembly, Mr. Uon Sophal, FNN's President, said that in 1998 farmers started forming farmer groups/associations by themselves and that those farmer associations play a crucial role in the household development and village development movements by implementing initiatives on ecological agriculture techniques, and other activities including Saving for Self Reliance, local infrastructure development, linking farmer producer groups to markets and community business, etc. "As of December 2009, FNN has 1,120 farmer associations as its members with 34,360 members including 20,036 women and the total capital is 2.8 million USD," Mr. Uon Sophal added.

Mr. Mak Seurn, Chief of the Department of Agriculture Extension of MAFF, agreed that the farmer associations and FNN are playing an important role in boosting agricultural production and extension so that farmers can receive the maximum benefits available. "The ministry is now encouraging farmers to form farmer associations and ready to help them register with the Ministry," Mr. Mak Seurn said. He added that the Ministry is now selecting the best farmers from the provincial and national level. It is hopeful that farmers from these farmer associations will be selected.

Finally, Dr. Yang Saing Koma, CEDAC's President, said that, besides the saving group movement, farmers are now actively working on the common paddy selling that has brought a lot of benefits to their communities as well as to the buyers. Dr. Koma asked the farmers to continue this cooperative practice and to continue to register their associations with the Ministry so that the farmers can easily access microcredit services.

As a result, the farmers gained greater understanding about the progress and strategic plan of FNN. The journalists filed many reports for their broadcasting about the event and the farmer plans.

