

## Key Farmer Leaders Gather for FNN Provincial Network Meeting in Kandal Province

PHNOM PENH: On June 6, 2011, FNN organized its 5<sup>th</sup> Provincial Network Meeting for Kandal province at the FNN office in Phnom Penh. In total, 12 key farmers, including five women, were in attendance representing 11 villages/associations from 7 communes of 3 districts. Dr. Yang Saing Koma, CEDAC President and FNN Advisor, was the key resource person at the meeting. Mr. Pan Sopheap, FNN Executive Director, co-facilitated the meeting with Mr. Seoung Khan.

The following activities were achieved as a result of holding the meeting:

- Mr. Pan Sopheap reviewed the objectives of the meeting and briefly talked about preparation of farmer organizations for the future sustainability and self-reliance of FNN.
- Mr. Seoung Khan, FNN Provincial Chairperson of Kandal, updated the plenary on the developments of the provincial FNN and shared data collected on each association and SoSor.
- To date, the total saving capital of the 11 associations is 57,447,900 riel (US\$14,011) with 264 saving members. This progress can be compared with the initial 154 saving members and 2,070,000 riel (US\$504). Amongst all of the Association members, only 4 families have been built and use biogas digesters today.
- 3 Saving Communities for Prosperity (SoSor) exist within the 3 districts. The total savings capital of the 3 SoSors is 2,225,600 riel (US\$543) with 242 saving members. Additionally, the institutional fund of the 3 SoSors is now 18,700 riel (US\$4.50). The savings capacity of these SoSor groups has greatly increased when considering that combined they started with 238 saving members and 340,000 riel (US\$83).
- The six standards of self-reliant farmers were reviewed; they include: (1) Member of self-help saving groups, (2) Select and purify rice seeds (also other local crop seeds), (3) Produce and use compost, (4) Developing home garden, (5) Using SRI methods, and (6) Using biogas-plants.
- Dr. Koma presented the advantages and essentials of establishing a SoSor and the use of biogas. In this regard, Dr. Koma gave a clear and motivating explanation and economic analysis about the benefits of using biogas. The majority of participants were impressed and some verbalized that they would consider building biogas units and disseminate information about them to other members in their respective communities.
- Group discussions and presentations were held by each districts about what their associations currently has and their plan leading up to 2015. In general, most representatives indicated that they want to see their savings communities reach millions of riel saved and have more members from their villages join. They also discussed the question set to them by the resource person - how to do to reach the goals they've set by 2015?
- Collectively, the group developed a plan and vision, framed particularly around the concepts of self-reliance and sustainable development. The vision is that each of the self-help saving networks will have a savings capital of tens or hundreds of millions of riel in saving and credit by 2015.



Overall, the Provincial Network Meeting in Kandal province helped participants to develop a clearer idea about the concepts of self-reliance and sustainable development. In particular, participants better understand the terms “MEANS” and “END GOAL” in relation to the establishment of the farmer organizations’ network. The next provincial FNN meeting will be organized on July 8, 2011 at which time further planing and strategies will be discussed and participants will be provided an opportunity for sharing updates and progress developments.