

Land Conflicts, Land Titles and Land Use Patterns with Indigenous Peoples' Communities in Cambodia

Franz-Volker Müller and Sophorn Poch (Cambodia)

Key words: Cadastre; Land management; Indigenous peoples; collective land titles

SUMMARY

This paper explores the reasons for land conflicts with the first Cambodian indigenous people's communities that have received collective land titles. External and internal factors are influencing land tenure security with these titled communities. The focus lies on the internal situation of these communities and on how they organize their land use under formal agreements through by-laws and internal rules. Specific land use patterns and collective efficacy of the indigenous villages seem to be closely related to land tenure security and impact on the wellbeing of these communities and their landscapes. By early 2014 the first eight indigenous communities had received collective land titles. These indigenous communities went through long lasting, legally based processes to ascertain their identity, to obtain recognition as a legal person, to sketch geo-referenced maps and to agree on internal rules on the management of their land, before finally cadastral survey and registration led to the awarding and distribution of their collective titles on state private and state public land. The research was induced by the alarming news that five out of the eight titled communities are again involved in land conflicts that have negative effects on the well-being of these people and their landscapes. The research was done in the framework of German Technical Cooperation. Commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH has been tasked to support parts of the Cambodian Land Sector Reform Program. The current support format, the human rights oriented Land Rights Program II, focuses especially on the land rights of indigenous people. The results are expected to provide essential insights on how to improve land tenure security and the well-being of indigenous communities. Recommendations will be put for discussion on how to elaborate a scalable approach that addresses both the current format for collective land titling and the collective effectiveness of the IPC. The recommendations will address governmental bodies, donors, NGOs and the IPCs.