

Practices and Challenges Towards Sustainability

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Introduction

Since the collapse of Khmer Rouge in 1979, in tandem with peace reconciliation and democratization, Cambodia has worked to restore its economy, and to ensure sustainable macro-economic growth, which is believed to benefit both urban and rural communities. In so doing, since the late 1990s, the Cambodian government has delineated a number of development policies and strategic plans. Given that approximately 91 per cent of rural Cambodians are poor (ADB 2014), rural development and poverty reduction have always been the loci of government strategies and policies apart from stabilizing macro-economic growth. To implement the plans and policies, the government frequently calls upon the contributions of the private sector and civil society. Consequently, the government enjoyed its double-digit economic growth of about ten per cent annually from 2004 to 2007. Although the growth – due in part to global economic crisis – declined to about six per cent in 2008, it recovered up to seven per cent in 2012 (World Bank 2014). While these gains denote the efforts of the government in concert with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and donors, whether or not these achievements have contributed to sustainability remains an open question. This chapter simultaneously examines the current practices and the challenges towards achieving sustainability in Cambodia's rural communities.

Based on an extensive empirical literature review, field observation, and interviews with key informants around the country since 2013, the chapter argues that the current practices, especially of the government and private sectors, have fractionally contributed to rural sustainability. Driven by a neoliberalism agenda (Springer 2010), the government and the private sectors' practices have successfully sustained economic growth but at the expense of social equity and environmental safeguards. Meanwhile, a number of civil society organizations have attempted to ensure social equity and to protect the environment, though the outcomes have been far from encouraging. Due to these competing practices, balancing social, economic, and environmental aspects of sustainability is a difficult proposition with multiple challenges, including ineffective regulatory enforcement of the government, lack of corporate responsibilities, and the weak influence of civil society.

To flesh out these arguments, the remainder of the chapter is organized into four sections. It begins by defining the overarching concept of sustainability, followed by a survey of current practices of the government, the private sectors, and civil society. The chapter then discusses the factors that undermine efforts towards achieving sustainability. Finally, the chapter recaps and concludes by underlining the trends and ongoing challenges facing rural sustainability in Cambodia.

Concepts of Sustainability

Sustainability and sustainable development have become buzzwords in contemporary development studies. Though the two terms are often used interchangeable, they have slightly different roots. Sustainable development is ‘the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (WCED 1987, 40). The term accordingly integrates social, economic and environmental concerns within its formulation (Bañon Gomis et al. 2011; Elkington 1998). In essence, sustainable development is only attainable when these three aspects are balanced in such a way that serves present and future needs. For its part, sustainability is understood differently according to context. Ihlen and Roper (2011) assert that the notion of sustainability first arose within ecological studies, where it was intended to speak to the ability of a biotic community to extend its form into the future. In contrast, Ameer and Othman (2012) perceive sustainability as the impacts of current human endeavors on the societies, ecosystems, and environment of the future. In broader terms, Anupam et al (2011) and Becker (2012) argue that sustainability is an interdisciplinary approach that brings together social, economic and environmental aspects. In this regard, though scholars tend to define sustainability based on the nexus between ecological and human perspectives, it still embraces the social, economic and environmental conditions that are claimed as components of sustainable development. Sustainability and sustainable development are thus often used interchangeably, where a working definition for the purpose of this chapter would be *‘the development that meets economic, environmental and social needs of present and future generations in rural areas’*.

The Practice of Sustainability in Cambodia

Since sustainability incorporates multiple practice dimensions in contemporary Cambodia, including poverty reduction, natural resources, and human security, it is important to observe

the role of government, the private sector, and civil society by taking note of the particular practices these different actors pursue within rural settings.

Government practices

Sustainable development is frequently used as a mainstream rhetorical device in several strategic plans and policies of the government (RGC 2009). Within this discourse, economic aspects tend to dominate the other domains, influenced by a particularly Cambodian iteration of neoliberal economics (Biddulph 2014; Springer 2011). Despite this critique, the Cambodian government has significantly reduced the poverty rate in recent years although the poverty measurement and calculation remain contested. In 1999, data shows that 35.9 per cent of the country's total population lived under poverty line¹, of which more 40.1 per cent of them lived in rural area (RGC 2000). By 2004, the poverty rate declined slightly to 34.68 per cent, of which 39.18 per cent was rural population (RGC 2013). By 2009, the poverty rate continued to reduce to 22.9 per cent, whereby poverty in rural area remained 24.6 per cent (RGC 2013). As of 2012, the rate continued to decline to 18.89 per cent, of which 19.98 per cent was rural population (MoP n.d). In spite of the reduction, the country's disparity remains large. Although the Gini coefficient² of consumption declined from 0.41 in 2007 to 0.34 in 2009, and to 0.31 in 2011, it remains wide (ADB 2014). This indicates the inequality of government's approaches to development among the population.

Aside from poverty reduction, the government has tried to protect natural resources and the environment by maintaining a high rate of forest cover and by maintaining existing protected areas. In 2010, the government claimed that of the country's total area was 57.7 per cent covered by forest. When compared to the 1960s, which is believed to be about 74 per cent of the country's area, forest cover appears to have declined by 19.3 per cent over the past half century (RGC 2012). This indicates a considerable deforestation rate, and in recent years, the Forestry Administration³ (2010) note that the annual deforestation rate was 0.5 per cent from 2002-2005/6. Despite government estimates, a local NGO claimed that, as of 2013, the forest cover in Cambodia remained at only 46.33 per cent⁴ of the country's land area (ODC 2013;

¹ The poverty line is defined as an adequate income for a person to consume a food basket that provides at least 2,100 calories of energy per day with a small allowance for non-food items such as shelter, and clothing. The overall poverty line is \$0.46 per person per day (RGC 2000).

² In Gini coefficient, 1 denotes perfect distribution or equality, and the value smaller than 1 denotes the degree of inequality.

³ It is an arm of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

⁴ Including tree crops, such as rubber, and teak.

Worrell 2013), regardless of the quality of the forest. More recently, in early 2015 the government contradictorily asserted that forest cover remains up to 51 per cent of the Cambodia's total land area (Peter 2015).

As a contribution to ensure sustainable forest management and livelihoods for rural communities, the government has maintained 11 protected and wildlife conservation areas, which, as of 1993, constituted 3.3 million hectares. Coupled with the concerns about quality, the protected areas later decreased to 3.1 million hectares by 2010 (RGC 2012). Civil societies allege that the protected areas are disappearing quickly owing to illegal encroachment, and in particular their illegal sale to domestic and foreign companies as part of economic land or forest concessions (ADHOC 2013; Worrell 2013).

From a regulatory point of view, the government passed a number of laws, and sub-decrees to ensure sustainable natural resources management and environmental conservation.⁵ However, the enforcement of these laws and sub-decrees, especially EIA, Economic Land Concessions (ELCs), remains uncertain (Oldenburg and Neef 2014; Trzcinski and Upham 2014). As a result, the protected areas and natural resources, which are the primary sources of income for most rural communities, have been unsustainably exploited by a number of large-scale agricultural/investments (ADHOC 2013; Burgos and Ear 2010), though these investments tend to render substantial economic growth (O'neill 2014).

So far, the government has succeeded in several aspects of economic sustainability, especially poverty reduction, but the current neoliberal approach to development has harmed social and environment conditions of rural communities (Springer 2010).

Private sectors practices

Informed by the United Nations's (UN) sustainable development, business scholars define sustainable development as to how a business or firm integrates economic, social, environmental concerns of stakeholders into their operations (Artiach et al. 2010). Viewing the private sector as an important means of rural development, the government has attracted a large amount of both foreign and private capital (Biedermann 2010). Capital investment in the agricultural sector increased rapidly from US\$27 million in 2005 to US\$446 million in 2009 (CDC 2010). As of late 2012, at least 2.6 million hectares of land were granted to those investors in the form of ELCs (ADHOC 2013), aiming not only at sustaining economic

⁵ Including Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Forestry Law, Law on Mineral Resource Management and Exploitation, Law on Environment Protection and Natural Resource Management.

growth, but also at creating jobs and reducing poverty in rural communities (RGC, 2005). Regardless of their substantial contribution to national economic growth and the rural economy (Hang et al 2012), a number of ELCs have been accused of deteriorating the socioeconomic and environment conditions of marginalized rural communities dependent upon natural resources (Subedi 2012; Un 2009).

For example, Chinese state owned companies, Fuchan and China Cooperative State Farm Group engaged in a joint venture with the Cambodian company, Pheapimex, to develop agricultural plantations in Mondolkiri, Kampong Chhnang, and Pursat provinces, but failed to produce an EIA as is required by law. The impact of these joint ventures on local communities is extremely severe, including population displacement, loss of access to land and resources, food insecurity and general impoverishment (Barney 2005; Global Witness 2007; Middleton 2008).

In Oddar Meanchey, before the arrival of ELCs, interviews with villagers confirmed that they could generate more than subsistent income from the cultivation and collection of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs). Once ELCs arrived, these families lost access to NTFPs and cultivation land. Some households were compensated in cash in the order of about US\$100 per hectare, but they lost forest and NTFPs. Though these ELCs had created a number of jobs for the adults, they paid very low wages (US\$2.0-3.0 per working day), which is not enough to support a family. Consequently, the majority of the affected families chose not to work for the ELCs companies but to illegally migrate to Thailand in search of better wages⁶.

Other research on ELCs in five provinces (Koh Kong, Kampong Speu, Mondulkiri, Kratie and Kampong Thom) shows both negative and positives impacts on socioeconomic and environment conditions within rural communities. Although some ELCs created jobs and improved roads for the communities, other ELCs did not, offering little benefit for locals. Due to the lack of proper public consultation and comprehensive impact studies, most of the ELCs not only caused land conflict but also harmed community livelihoods, undermined cultural sites and places of worship, and destroyed the environment (i.e., soil erosion, reduced water quality, deforestation) in the target provinces (Hang et al 2012). Hang et al's (2012) study further illuminates the impacts of ELCs on NGOs' conservation areas, and national protected areas and parks. For example, in Koh Kong and Kampong Speu, large-scale land acquisition for a sugarcane plantation encroached on conservation areas and threatened community forestry, which were supported by a number of NGOs for many years prior to the concession.

⁶ Interview with key informants, and field observation.

Likewise, ELCs in Oddar Meanchey⁶ and Kratie have been accused of damaging forest communities (Neef et al 2013). This has ruined the efforts of NGOs and donors who have long been supporting sustainable natural resource management. Other investigations have revealed that ELCs exploited six of the country's 23 protected (wildlife) areas across Cambodia (Global Witness 2009).

While there is recognition of the contribution that private investment has had on economic growth in general, the contribution to social and environmental sustainability in rural areas is far from explicit. The livelihoods of rural communities have been compromised to the interest of foreign business and a handful of local elites (UNHRC 2007), resulting in an apparent imbalance of social, economic and environmental concerns.

Non-for profit organizations practices

Since the early 1990s, Cambodia has relied primarily on foreign aid for national development (Godfrey et al. 2002). From 1992 to 2011, aid was accumulated up to US\$12.13 billion. Among several donors, the EU funded about 21.9 per cent of the total budget and is by far the largest donor to Cambodia (RGC 2011). Out of the total amount, 9.2 per cent was funded by and through (local and international) NGOs⁷. On account of NGOs, per year aid increased significantly from US\$104 million in 2005 to US\$220.4 million in 2010 (RGC 2011). Despite international donors and the government having recognized the contributions of NGOs (ADB 2011; RGC 2011), there is a lack of study evidence to concretize this. .

Once piece of research claims, however, that more than 1,350 NGOs have been working in several sectors⁸. Even though the impacts of these NGOs' activities are difficult to assess, their activities reached and benefited at least between 2.8 to 4.5 million (20-30 per cent of) Cambodians (CCC 2012). Arguably, NGOs, through a service delivery approach, have considerably contributed to rural local economy, poverty reduction, and social equity and environmental safeguards. Yet, recently, there has been a considerable shift of NGOs' approaches to (sustainable) development from the above service delivery approaches (ADB 2011; Barton 2001) to community empowerment, advocacy and rights-based approach, for they believe rights are the center of development (Parks 2008; Wells-Dang 2013). Despite

⁷ The number local NGOs increased from a few in the early 1990s to more than 3,492 in 2010 (CCC 2012).

⁸ Such as education, public health, child welfare and rights, agriculture and rural development, community development, environment and natural resources, gender and women's issues, humanitarian and disaster responses, micro-credit, disability, advocacy and policy dialogue and etc.

suffering from government suppression, a number of leading advocacy NGOs have paid more attention to sustainability. Hereunder a few good examples to cite are movements of people and NGOs against the impacts of large-scale investments (Un 2013).

Indigenous communities in the Areng valley, with strong support of Mother Nature and other NGOs, have been striving, protesting and advocating against a dam project proposed by a Chinese company. The construction would not only cause horrendous impacts on their sustainable livelihoods but also deplete the largest and last biodiversity resources in Cambodia. Even though there has been no solution offered by the government, the commencement of the plan has been adjourned so far. Another publicized conflict is the movement of large-scale sugarcane affected communities in Koh Kong, Kampong Speu and Oddar Meanchey. These large-scale investments not only caused unfavorable impacts on livelihood and environment, but also violated the rights of the communities. Since 2006, the communities, with the strong support of a number of NGOs, have launched several approaches targeting both the government and sugar companies. Even though the concerned stakeholders, the newly established ministerial working group and the EU have all taken action, they have not yielded any significant results (Sokphea 2015). Similarly, there have been protests of ELCs or land acquisition affected communities from across the country (Sokha and Channyda 2010; Titthara and Teehan 2013). As of 2014, about half of a million of affected families have been recorded (Radio Free Asia 2014). A fruitful result, which could be claimed, was the government's ELCs moratorium in 2012. Though the effectiveness of ELCs moratorium's enforcement is subject to the criticism (Sokphea 2015), licenses of some exploitative and inactive ELCs are revoked by the concerned ministries. By early 2015, Ministry of Environment, for example, announced the revocation of 23 ELCs in 12 provinces, constituting about 90,000 hectares (Titthara 2015). Last but not least, there have been a number of local and international NGOs participating in protecting Prey Lang Forest, which is believed to be the largest forest landscape in Southeast Asia. This forest has been encroaching by a number of private companies, and illegal loggers. Prey Lang Network, which is claimed to have 200,000 members from the surrounding provinces, was formed to patrol and defend the forest for sustainable use (Un 2013; Wells-Dang 2013).

Other NGOs have contributed significantly to sustainable natural resource management (Beang and Sethaphal 2004). With active support from the government, especially Forestry Administration, a number of Community Forests have been established, covering about 20 provinces. As of 2010, 430 Community Forests, constituting 380,976 hectares of forestland,

were established and supported by NGOs and the government (RGC 2012). These community forests not only contribute towards environmental and natural resource management but also provide substantial sources of income (NTFPs) to the poor communities they serve (McKenny and Tola 2002; Turton 2000).

To recap, a number of NGOs have been working towards development in general, sustainability in rural communities in particular. These NGOs' activities reached a large proportion of poor Cambodians in rural areas. Though their approach to development was more likely conventional, since the early 2000s there have been a considerable shift in their approaches, from services delivery to rights based approach, advocacy and community empowerment, for they have learnt that the current economic driven development policies of the government have been leading to inequity, injustice and inequality. These ultimately lead to sustainable development.

Challenges Towards Sustainability in Rural Cambodia

Driven by the neo-liberal economic development approach, Cambodia is facing several challenges including but not limited to ineffective regulatory enforcement, insufficient corporate responsibility of private sectors, and weak civil society. These have prevented the country from achieving sustainability in rural area.

Government's politics of ineffective regulatory enforcement

Having discussed in the practice of sustainability, the government formulated a number of laws and regulations to ensure sustainable practices of the concerned stakeholders, especially private sectors' involvement in implementation of the country's strategic development plans, and policies. The enforcement of these regulations, EIA, ELCs, Forestry Law, National Resources Management and Protection, and Land Law, is however lax. As a result, economic driven rural development has caused adverse socio-economic impacts on rural communities in most but not all places where large-scale economic development projects were endorsed by the government. A study by ADHOC (2013) shows that most large-scale land concessions face conflict over land and natural resources with local (indigenous) communities. These are due to ineffective regulatory enforcement, especially social and environmental impact studies. If the studies were conducted, little to no proper consultation with local people and the affected communities were apparently observed (Hang et al. 2012; Neef et al 2013). The studies were accepted by the concerned government agencies, Ministry of Environment, and MAFF alike,

though the quality remains poor and insufficient (Oldenburg and Neef 2014). Hence, the lack of proper social and environmental laws enforcement induced not only adverse impacts on rural livelihoods but also conflict and social injustice.

Another reason for which regulatory enforcement is lax is the lack of political will. Driven by neo-liberal economic development, the government unintentionally and intentionally deregulates to attract foreign capital or private investors. The government understands that, apart from foreign aid, foreign capital is another approach to economic growth and development of Cambodia (Biedermann 2010). To attract the foreign investment and to avoid relocation of foreign investment to other counties with lower standards, the government opts not to heighten social and environmental benchmarks. In this sense, social inequity and environmental degradation are widely accepted by the government for the course of greater development goals. This is a situation replicated in other neighbouring developing countries such as Laos, where a ‘growth first and clean-up later’ development strategy is being adopted (Sokphea 2014). Therefore, Cambodia has attracted a number of solvent but irresponsible investors. They are according to Baird (2014) ‘money laundering’ by Baird (2014), and ultimately contributing adversely to the imbalance of social, economic and environmental domains of sustainability in rural areas.

Politics of private sectors’ (ir)responsibility

Private companies can contribute to sustainable development through a number of approaches, especially Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Schwartz and Carrol 2008). CSR is however a new concept and is not widely understood among enterprises, companies, and consumers in Cambodia. In 1999, the CSR, including social and labor standards, were incorporated into garment industries, but not into natural resources and agricultural investments. In particular, CSR embeddedness is not required when foreign investors registered new companies in Cambodia. Even though the concept of social funds or ethical investments have been mentioned in the related regulations, sub-decree on ELCs and EIA⁹, these have not been well practiced by most of the companies. These enable most of the companies to behave in a more unsustainable way towards rural society and environment.

Despite the obvious detrimental impacts of these investments, they have secured in Cambodia because they have partnered or joined venture with powerful Cambodia politico-commercial person, tycoon and elites, and *Oknha* (wealthy/affluent person) (UNHCHR,

⁹ Interview with a former Minister of Ministry of Environment

2007). These affluent people played very significant roles in facilitating and protecting these investments in Cambodia (Sokphea 2015). As mentioned above, in spite of their apparent adverse impacts, Chinese Fuchan and China Cooperative State Farm Group have secured their licenses. These have been made possible through joint ventures between Chinese investors and Cambodian magnates who are dominated by Sino-Khmers (Un 2009). A political reason behind this is that, these joint venture investments strengthen the financial position of Cambodian business tycoons. These tycoons have formed a symbiotic relation with the ruling party, and they have financially supported the party to ensure electoral success and legitimacy (Un 2009). In sum, natural resources and the environment are exploited for the benefit of the few elites and to secure political hegemony of the ruling party. Sustainability, by contrast, is left to suffer.

Weak civil societies and donors' influence

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) play very significant roles in development, and they are perceived as a major influence outside the government and private business (Nugroho 2011). However, the influence of CSOs, and NGOs in particular, to ensure rural sustainability in Cambodia, remains weak since they suffer from being suppressed. Generally, there are two forms of suppressive measures employed by the government and the companies to retaliate against the communities and NGOs' activists engaging with social equity, rights, and land rights, and environmental and natural resource protections. First, the government in collaboration with the companies represses communities and NGOs through the judicial system (Un 2006), and second they do so this through direct measures, such as violently dispersing community protests (UNHRC 2007). According to ADHOC (2013), in 2012, 232 people were arrested in relation to land and housing issues. As of 31 December 2012, 38 activists and victims were still imprisoned and 50 remained missing. Another serious case was the murder of NGOs activist, Chut Wutty, director of a local NGO, who attempted to monitor illegal forest logging and encroachment of ELCs in Koh Kong. There was prosecution done ~~my~~by the provincial court of Koh Kong, but NGOs and the family of Chut Wutty did not satisfy with the court's verdict.

According to NGO Forum on Cambodia (2011), several cases of land disputes have occurred between powerful or rich people, in which the local or provincial authorities intervened in the dispute by intimidating, and violently dispersing the crowd of protesters. In Kratie, for example, a conflict over 9,780 hectares of land between the villagers and an *Okhna*

erupted in January 2012, when the company cleared farmland in Veal Bei village of Pir Thnu commune. As the villagers protested, the company security guards deliberately opened fire with AK-47 rifles. Four people were injured, including two seriously (ADHOC, 2013). In Koh Kong, a protest of the affected communities, which demanding the sugar company as well as a notorious *Okhna* and senator to return their farmland and to ensure sustainable investment, was violently dispersed by shooting, assaulting and injuring protestors (Sokphea 2015).

Although international donors' aid plays an important role in Cambodia, the extent to which they influence the government, especially in land and large-scale land disputes, remains controversial and ambiguous (Oldenburg and Neef 2014). For example, the EU, on the one hand supports the government's development policies and plans, and on the other it invests resources in local and international NGOs to advocate against the adverse impacts of government's policies, ELCs in particular. The blood sugar campaign is a casing example in Koh Kong, Kampong Speu, and Oddar Meanchey where the EU have funded local NGOs to work with affected communities to resist the large-scale land acquisition. This reflects the ambiguous role and position of international donors and development agencies in sustainable development in Cambodia. Though roles and influence of civil societies as well as international donors remain weak, they have to some extent shaped the behavior of both the government and the private sector in a particular issue to address a particular aspect of sustainable development.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the performance of the government, the private sector, and civil society with respect to the practice of sustainability in rural communities. From the government's limited neoliberal perspective there has been considerable progress towards economic sustainability, particularly in terms of poverty reduction and growth in the rural economy. However, this progress is made possible only at the expense of social and environmental conditions, where the pilfering of natural resources in particular has compromised livelihoods within rural communities. Though the government has endeavored to manage natural resources, evidence shows that they are being widely exploited, primarily for economic purposes, leaving heightened marginalization, environmental degradation and social inequality in the wake of these initiatives. Likewise, the contribution of the private sector to sustainable rural communities remains doubtful in spite of government discourse that claims success. While contributions to macro-economic development may be noticeable,

several studies have indicated that these investments cause unfavorable and even ruinous impacts on rural livelihoods and the environment. Protests have emerged among affected communities demanding sustainable solutions. Unlike the practices of government and the private sector, local and international NGOs contribute to rural socio-economic development in terms of poverty reduction, education, health, and agriculture by attempting to protect natural resources and by working to ensure social equity. Though a number of NGOs are still working in a business-as-usual social service delivery model, there has been gradual but vital changes in their approaches, where we have seen shifts towards a more rights based approach that targets securing livelihoods, advocacy, and community empowerment. This has occurred as NGOs have begun to realize that their previous approaches tend to render an inadequate contribution to sustainability in rural communities.

The current practices of the government, the private sector, and the civil society have only minimally contributed to sustainability in rural communities owing to several challenging factors. First, the government's ineffective regulatory enforcement induces unsustainable development in rural areas, where deregulation has played a significant role in undermining the capacity to procure a more sustainable version of development. Such an approach is tied to a problematic outward orientation that attempts to attract foreign capital for the country's economic development. Second, although private investments are proven to make a significant contribution towards economic growth, the spinoff effects for the wider economy are minimal, as capital remains concentrated among particular actors. This has produced a situation where accountability remains questionable and businesses tend to act in a more irresponsible way towards rural communities, extract resources without considering the social impacts of their actions. While this is due in part to the lax and ineffective regulatory enforcement, we must also consider the general lack of corporate social and environmental responsibility as a key dimension to the problem. Even though regulatory violations of the companies are repeatedly reported, the concerned government institutions refuse to engage an effective response. Among the several reasons behind this is the strong connection between investors and political elites (Springer 2015). In essence, these investments generate benefit for a few elites with strong ties to the current ruling party, at the expense of local communities. Civil society is also at least partially to blame as they remain weak in the face of government push back, despite being branded as crucial watchdogs in the country's development. Efforts towards achieving greater sustainability by NGO advocacy among affected communities are being actively suppressed by government interference. In spite of this difficult context, Cambodian civil

society has played an essential role in empowering local communities by monitoring the government and private sector, compelling them to act in more sustainable ways through the spread of information that calls their practices into question. Achieving sustainability in rural communities in contemporary Cambodia remains a very challenging proposition that will require not only the collective efforts of local communities and the support of NGOs, but also a government that finds the political will to place sustainability at the center of its agenda.

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