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PROGRAM UPDATE

Climate Change Champions Strengthen Gender Integration in Cambodia



Cambodian gender champions put their leadership skills to work at a gender integration and climate change workshop

With its flagship *Asia-Pacific Leadership Initiative on Gender and Climate Change*, the United States Agency for International Development Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests (USAID LEAF) program has strengthened the leadership skills of 24 gender champions from six countries to integrate gender issues in forestry and climate change. This initiative has supported visible leaders who are now taking the lead by putting lessons learned into practice and implementing need-based solutions in gender integration.

In Cambodia, a working group comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), Forestry Administration (FA), and Fishery Administration (FiA), recently established the Gender and Climate Change Committee. It serves in an advisory role to integrate gender issues in key national strategies on climate change, including the Cambodia National REDD+ strategy. At a recent workshop in Phnom Penh, USAID LEAF-supported gender champions from MOWA and FA trained key government staff, including members of the new committee, on climate change gender analysis and gender-integrated programming using a project cycle management framework.

At the end of the workshop, participants identified gender issues in climate change and forestry in Cambodia and developed a checklist to address gender integration. This checklist will be a useful tool for the Gender and Climate Change Committee to examine gender integration in climate change programs and strategies. Through their co-facilitation of the workshop, the Cambodian USAID LEAF

gender champions demonstrated an excellent example of collaboration. As the champions from MOWA took the lead in explaining gender concepts, champions from FA explained climate change and REDD+ and together participants identified important gender issues in climate change and forestry. During the plenary evaluations, many participants stated that both subject experts helped them learn and that they would like to try a similar combination for future learning events.

H.E Sivann Botum, Secretary of State, Ministry of Women's Affairs, thinks these champions' actions are key to ensuring that gender integration is not just an empty slogan, but practices that truly take root in every institution implementing climate change solutions. She said, "I can already see many gender champions such as Chinneth Cheng, Rath Chana, Kim Sokanry and Pisith Sok within MOWA leading initiatives on greater gender integration in our work, including climate change. This workshop provides opportunities to expand the leadership initiative."

H.E Sivann Botum
Secretary of State, Ministry of Women's Affairs

The workshop was an example of how gender champions can take the lead in framing gender needs and then work with stakeholders for support. Gender champions emerging from the leadership initiative have learned valuable skills from the training, and also adapted the materials, tools and training approaches. They now have the skills to be leaders, to train others, safeguard the rights of women and men, and ensure the principles of gender mainstreaming are realized in all climate change programming. Such demand-driven initiatives led by gender champions complement climate change efforts and ensure gender inclusivity.

The United States Agency for International Development Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests program (USAID LEAF) is a five-year (2011-2016) regional project focused on achieving meaningful and sustainable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from the forest-land use sector across six target countries: Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea.

For More information:

USAID Asia: <https://www.usaid.gov/asia-regional> USAID LEAF: <http://www.leafasia.org>