Indigenous and tribal peoples’ participation in poverty reduction efforts in Cambodia

I Background

Although there is a general lack of disaggregated data, it is broadly recognised that indigenous and tribal peoples (ITPs) live in more severe poverty situations than the general population of almost any given country. As a consequence of this, they are affected by poor health, have limited access to basic services, their communities are marked by social disintegration, conflict, massive out migration etc.

On the other hand, ITPs, representing distinct cultures, have their own perceptions and indicators of poverty and well-being as well as their own strategies for poverty reduction. Nonetheless, these diversified concepts of poverty are often not included in national poverty reduction strategies, thereby reflecting the general political marginalisation of ITPs.

In short, the challenge to development posed by ITPs is twofold: on the one hand, indigenous peoples have the same right to development, resources and services as all other peoples. On the other, it must be recognized that the nature of their aspirations for development, resources and services may be fundamentally different from those of other peoples. Development strategies must thus be designed to overcome the marginalisation and at the same time ensure the rights of indigenous peoples. This can only be achieved with the full consultation and participation of the people concerned, in accordance with the provisions of ILO Convention 169.

Recognising the challenge that ITPs pose to development efforts, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) has decided to focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at its next session in May 2005, particularly focusing on the MDGs related to poverty and education. Along the same line of analysis, the ILO’s Programme to Promote the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (Declaration) is initiating an “ethnic audit” of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in 15 countries, looking at the extent to which these PRSP-processes have included the concern for ITPS. The findings of the “audit” will be presented to the PFII.

In order to supplement but not duplicate these efforts, the ILO C169 and INDISCO projects have decided to design a short-term initiative in order to:

1. Document ITPs own perceptions of poverty and poverty reduction strategies and existing gaps, similarities and contradictions with national poverty reduction efforts,

2. Give recommendations for the consultation and participation of indigenous peoples in national poverty reduction efforts

The initiative has been designed as a short-term exercise, in order to allow for the presentation of the findings and recommendations to the next session of the PFII in May 2005. This session will focus on the Millennium Development Goals related to poverty and education. The project is, however, also meant to be the initiation of a longer-term process, focusing on the implementation of the recommendations for ensuring consultation and participation of indigenous peoples in poverty reduction efforts.
Two case studies will be prepared for this initiative: One on Cambodia and the other on Cameroon. These will be combined into one report for presentation at the PFII. To this end, the immediate objectives of the present initiatives have been built into the planning and preparation of a longer-term project in Cambodia as well as linked to ongoing projects with ITPs in Cameroon. The development objective will be pursued through longer-term project interventions to be designed during 2005.

II Objectives

Overall objectives of the exercise

- Indigenous and tribal peoples are adequately consulted in an appropriate manner, and participate fully in national processes and strategies to reduce poverty and achieve the MDGs in selected countries.

- Contribute to the discussion of appropriate national poverty reduction strategies in two selected countries by preparing case studies on ITPs notions of poverty, including recommendations on ITPs consultation and participation in poverty reduction efforts.

- Contribute to the work of the PFII in its mandate to advise the UN system on the implementation of the MDGs through contributing to the ongoing ILO initiative to conduct an “ethnic audit” of the PRSPs in selected countries.

Immediate objectives for Cambodia

- Assess the extent of indigenous participation in the formulation of the PRSP for Cambodia;

- Analyse the relevance of the Cambodian PRSP for indigenous and tribal peoples (including an analysis of indigenous peoples’ own perceptions of poverty);

- Develop recommendations on ITPs consultation and participation in poverty reduction efforts (to feed into a national workshop on indigenous issues); and

- Identify capacity-building needs in respect of indigenous participation in the PRSP (this may include capacity-building for indigenous peoples, government, NGOs or other relevant actors).

The project is designed with an understanding that the overall objectives can only be achieved through long-term project support. The achievement of the immediate objectives will serve to initiate this longer-term process of establishing regular mechanisms for consultation and participation of indigenous peoples in poverty reduction efforts in two selected countries.

III Outputs

- 1 short (not exceeding 25 pages) country report – in Khmer and English - describing national efforts for poverty alleviation, presenting indigenous views on poverty and poverty reduction. The report will identify possible mechanisms for consultation and participation of indigenous communities in poverty reduction efforts at various levels.
• 1 country level discussion where ITP and government representatives, donors, UN agencies and other interested parties can discuss the findings and recommendations of the country report.

The final country report will, in a simple way outline the contrasts, similarities and gaps between existing national poverty reductions efforts and indigenous views on poverty. The report will be presented English and Khmer and translated into other national/indigenous languages as necessary.

IV Project strategy

An appropriate indigenous organisation or NGO\(^1\) in each country will be responsible for undertaking the case study. The organisation will, if necessary, contract an experienced consultant to undertake the specific task. The organisation will undertake consultations with indigenous communities and organisations at different levels. It will also undertake national-level consultations with concerned government institutions and main donors, and finally elaborate a country report. The implementing organisations will participate in a national ILO workshop to discuss, inter alia, the conclusions and recommendations of this study.

A consultant (under a separate ToR) will prepare a combined report of the 2 country case studies (Cambodia and Cameroon), summarising the main findings and conclusions that will be presented by the concerned indigenous organisations at the 4\(^{th}\) session of the PFII in May 2005. This consultant will be backstopped by the C169 project.

V Methodology

The main methodology will be to undertake participatory consultations in selected indigenous communities, to gather the views of indigenous men and women on key issues. As such, the consultant will undertake the following tasks:

• National level research on
  o Available data (existence of disaggregated data) on poverty-levels among ITPs
  o National poverty reduction strategies (PRSPs)
  o Appropriateness of national poverty indicators
  o Existing mechanisms for consultation and participation in national poverty reduction strategies

• Culturally appropriate consultations with selected indigenous communities to gather their views on:
  o Indigenous concepts and notions of poverty
  o Indigenous indicators of poverty
  o Indigenous strategies to combat poverty
  o Effect of poverty alleviation programs on indigenous communities
  o Consultations and participation in national poverty reduction efforts.
  o Use of indigenous knowledge in poverty reduction strategies.

\(^1\) In the case of a non-indigenous organization undertaking the study, it must be ensured that the NGO will work in close cooperation with the relevant indigenous organizations and contract indigenous resource persons to ensure the work undertaken is culturally appropriate.
The consultant will work with relevant NGO and indigenous resource persons to undertake the study, in particular for community consultations. The methodology for consultations with indigenous communities, and selection criteria for identifying these communities, will be developed further in consultation with these resource persons.

_The methodology and workplan for the exercise will be agreed with the ILO before the research is undertaken._

### 5.1 Consultations with indigenous communities

Participatory consultations will constitute the principal methodology for the second half of the study.

Cultural differences between various indigenous communities in Cambodia may necessitate different techniques or methodologies of consultation. In this case, the implementing institution will need to undertake separate consultations with various indigenous groups in order to facilitate the most effective inputs of these communities to the study.

The consultations with the concerned communities will:
- Take place in the indigenous communities themselves
- Be conducted in an appropriate language
- Use appropriate methodologies to ensure that the objectives of the consultations are fully understood by the communities in question
- Be undertaken with indigenous men and women who are representative of the communities in question (this may not necessarily mean consultations with “community chiefs” who have been appointed following the decentralization process, as these are not necessarily the traditional representatives of indigenous peoples).

The locations of the consultations will be agreed upon with the ILO.

### 5.2 Engagement of resource persons

If, among the personnel of the implementing institution, no staff with the relevant competencies to undertake culturally appropriate and fully participatory consultations with indigenous communities exist, the implementing institution will engage experienced consultants (including indigenous persons) to undertake specific tasks, in particular the consultations with indigenous communities.

The engagement of resource persons will be discussed and agreed with the ILO according to the following criteria:
- Knowledge of the language of the community in question
- Capacity to undertake culturally appropriate consultations with the concerned communities
- Capacity to gather the views of indigenous representatives without imposing their own perspectives on the communities in question

In addition to consultations with indigenous communities, the implementing institution will undertake consultations with relevant government departments and NGOs.
The implementing organisation will coordinate closely with the consultants working for Declaration on the ethnic audit of PRSPs.