

# Past Development and Present Issues of World Heritage Region of Preah Vihear in Cambodia

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On 7 of July 2008, the sacred Site of Preah Vihear was inscribed into the list of World Heritage. Preah Vihear province is one of the least inhabited compared to other regions, and is one of the most undeveloped regions in Cambodia. In this paper, the authors discuss the past development trend, present issues to develop, in order for the future sustainable development of the valuable heritage region. Since the area has the potential for agriculture production, the long term vision as well as the development policy should be established for the success of sustainable development for the overcome of the poverty.

**Key Words :** World Heritage Site, cultural value, sustainable development

## 1. INTRODUCTION

On 7 of July 2008 in Quebec, Canada, the sacred Site of Preah Vihear was inscribed into the list of World Heritage by decision 32COM8B.102 of the World Heritage Committee.

The Prasat Preah Vihear, known locally under this original name is considered as an ultimate achievement of arts and architecture, a master piece of Khmer Culture. Its history covers thousands years of the Khmer Empire's time and space. It was constructed on the cliff of the Dangrek Mountain range at about 625m above the sea level in the province of Preah Vihear located in the northern part of Cambodia as shown in **Fig.1**.

Different from other temples of the region during Angkor period, the concentric design was the popular concept while Preah Vihear temple was conceived to create an integration of man-made element into existing natural environment. The temple has an architectural layout based on perfect symmetry on progressive linear elevation.

The elegant Gopuras (gate way) rich in detail decoration and the feeling of space, set to adapt themselves into the special context, make Preah Vihear an "Exceptional universal value" as declared by the World Heritage Committee. Preah Vihear temple, a place of supreme divinities and worship has become as of today an invaluable wealth for the

Khmer people<sup>2)</sup>.

In fact, Preah Vihear area is one of the least inhabited and one of the most undeveloped regions. Also this region has been left in its natural and primary state for almost forty five years. The Department of Urban Heritage Development, APSARA



**Fig.1** Preah Vihear Temple World Heritage Site

(The university of Texas Library, 1997)

National Authority, having been concerned with the sustainable development plan of the Angkor Wat area has been thinking of how Angkor region could be linked to that of Preah Vihear due to their similarity in terms of cultural heritage potentials. The article is an attempt to explain the past development trends, the present issues and the approaches with a tentative strategy, of how to pave the way for a future sustainable development in the World Heritage Site Preah Vihear and its region in a global meaning of economic and social progress.

## 2. SITUATION OF PREAH VIHEAR PROVINCE

### (1) Fundamental

As shown in **Table 1**, Preah Vihear province is one of the least inhabited compared to other regions in Cambodia. The primary activity of the province relies on agriculture and forest exploitation mainly for household consumption and agricultural products limited to the demand of local market.

By its size of 13,788km<sup>2</sup>, the province ranks as the third largest province in Cambodia. And by its low density of population, there is still land of dominant nature and yet to be preserved with ap-

**Table 1** Density of Population in 5 Regions<sup>3)</sup>

Region	Density of population (inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup> )
Plain region	261
Basin Tonle Sap Lake region	64
Coastal region	47
Plateau and mountainous region	22
<b>Preah Vihear</b>	<b>8.6</b>
Average national level	75

**Table 2** Potential Irrigable Area<sup>4)</sup>

District	Area - ha	Status	Sources
Tbaeng Meanchey	500	Defective	Tbaeng mountain and rainwater.
Tbaeng Meanchey	275	Defective	Prey Preah Rokar, Dangrek range and rainwater.
Tbaeng Meanchey	628	Defective	Stung Sen River and rainwater.
Rovieng	1 500	Operational	La-ang mountain (natural spring).
Kulen	165	Operational	Bos mountain (naturalspring).
Chey Sen	4 500	Defective	Stung Sen River.
Chheb	5 000	Defective	Tonle Ropeuo River and rainwater.
Choam Ksant	400	Defective	Dangrek range and rainwater.
Choam Ksant Defect	2 200	Defective	Dangrek range and Stung Sen River.
Sangkum	550	Operational	Thmey Lagoon (Boeng Pdak)
Currently Irrigated Area - ha	2 215		
Potential Irrigable Area -ha	15 718		

propriate development policy in order to avoid gradual destruction of its environment and biodiversity equilibrium.

### (2) Education

As a rural province, children in the age group of 14-17 year are 30%. Due to the need for help from families, they are employed in domestic works or in rice fields. Sometimes they are used as labor forces for animal care and crops production activities. They do not have opportunity to go to school to get proper education. In this remote area, they are sent to the pagoda for traditional apprenticeship of Buddhism childhood during which they learn barely to read and to write. As a result, Preah Vihear is one of the least developed in the field of education, which ranks 21st of the 24 provinces in the nation.

### (3) Agriculture and Forest

The main resource of Preah Vihear province is common to that of whole Cambodia which is agriculture. The practice of agriculture is still in this remote region considered as traditional; meaning using the methods and tools that have been used for many decades by old generation of farmers. As a result, the productivity of this sector of activity is not efficient enough to cope with the needs of the region. According to Cambodian Statistical Yearbook 2008, Preah Vihear province disposed in 2007 is 33,100ha of agricultural land. But the potential irrigable area, as shown in **Table 2**, is only 15,718ha (47.4%), the rest depends on rainfalls. However, the area of agriculture land currently irrigated is only 2,215ha<sup>4)</sup>, which is about 14% of the potential area. Therefore the irrigation is still one of the issues that limit the possibilities of the farmer to improve their living conditions.

Most of the land in Cambodia has been devoted to agriculture which is the basic everyday activity for 80% of the total population. Preah Vihear province counts for 13,000ha of land current used in agricultural, equivalent to 1.29% of the total agricultural land in Cambodia in 2007. Its production in the same year is only 1.18% compared to the total production of the country. **Fig.2** compares the area used for paddy production of Preah Vihear province from 1980 to 2007.

The province of Preah Vihear is located in one of the North-central regions of Cambodia. Normally forests are in concessions, cancelled concessions or protected areas. Many villages mostly farmer population living within the 5km of the evergreen and semi green forests are likely to have forest-dependent livelihood. During the last few years

at the accelerating pace, there has been an over exploitation of this natural resource by illegal logging.

Net Evergreen and Semi-evergreen forest losses in Preah Vihear province from 1996/97 to 2002 is 9,674ha, the remaining forest is 44,443ha resulting in a forest change of minus 17.9%<sup>5)</sup>. There has not been a proper and well thought program for reforestation in particularly for tree of good quality with high commercial value normally used for future market demand.

Preah Vihear province relies principally on agriculture and forestry to develop its economy and to push forward its social improvement. Agriculture as explained in the above paragraph shows great potentials even compared to the other provinces in Cambodia. The local production of both resources is insufficient to meet the needs of the population. Rice and fish are both mostly imported from outside the province.

#### (4) Electricity and Industry

The lack of energy is somehow crucial to encourage any industrial activity even for manufacturing purposes to meet the local demand in terms of basic household needs.

In sector of industry, the province of Preah Vihear disposes almost no activity. Most of household products derivative from modern materials such as plastic, heavy duty fabric or aluminum and even construction materials beside wood are imported from neighboring countries in particular from Vietnam and Thailand. Light industrial products are still absent from Cambodian local market.

#### (5) Poverty

Farmers, both poor and non-poor, in Preah Vihear are generally vulnerable to at least three main shocks such as drought, contagious diseases of humans and animal epidemics. The three shocks have forced many households into poverty trap. Since the site of Preah Vihear has been inscribed in the World Heritage list, few villages along the road access to the temple have benefited from yet limited tourism activities.

### 3. WORLD HERRITAGE SITE OF PREAH VIHEAR AND ITS SURROUNDING AREAS

Preah Vhear Temple shown in Fig.3 is on the extreme North of Cambodia at the distance of 550km by road from Phnom Penh and at 240km from Angkor Wat the other World Heritage Site. The

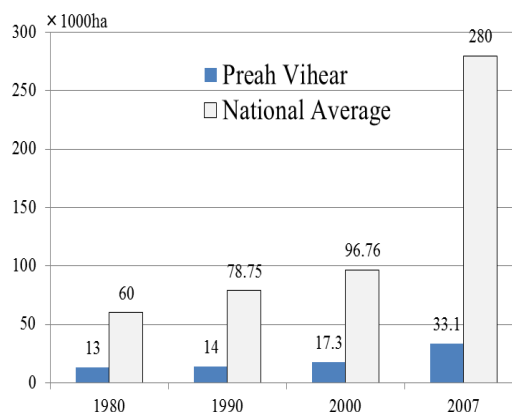


Fig.2 Area Used for Paddy Production<sup>3)</sup>

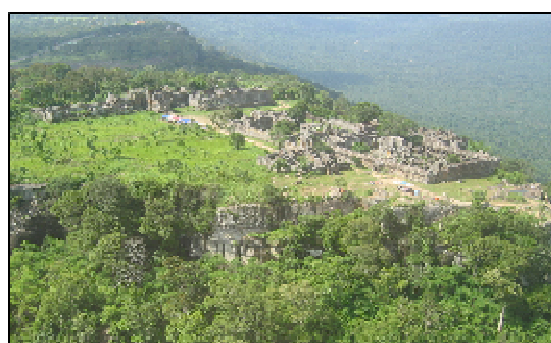


Fig.3 World Heritage Preah Vihear Temple seen from above<sup>6)</sup>

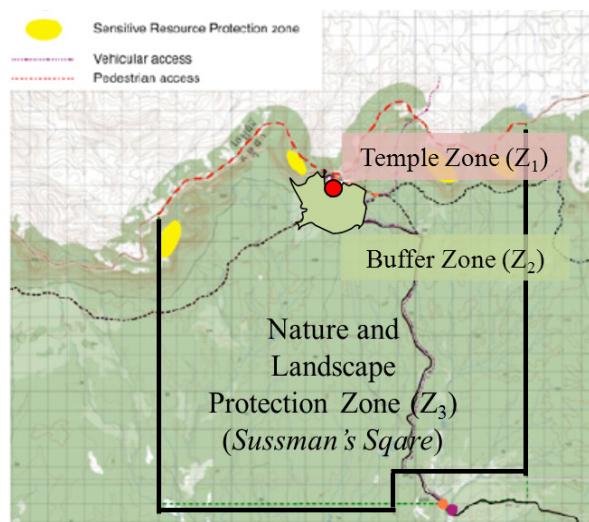


Fig.4 Word Heritage Zone and Protection Zone<sup>7)</sup>

Temple was built on the cliff of the Dangrek Mountain Range at more than 500m high. The Dangrek Mountain Range separates Cambodia from the two neighboring countries Thailand in the west

and north and Laos in the north.

As shown in **Fig.4**, World Heritage zone comprises 2 zones of the temple zone called  $Z_1$  and the buffer zone or protection zone called  $Z_2$  at the inscription of the Temple into World Heritage list.

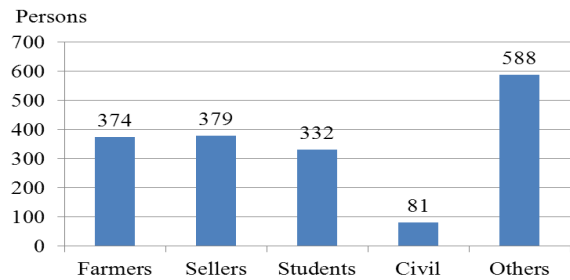
The temple zone  $Z_1$  with an area of 11ha is the core zone where is located the temple. This zone is the most important of the site and must benefit with high level of protection. The buffer zone  $Z_2$  with 644.113ha is the zone to protect archeological parks, landscape and environment.

The temple discovery zone  $Z_3$  called Sussman's Square covers a large area of 50,000ha for the purpose of the protection of nature and landscape. Eco-Development activities would be allowed to take place if conformed to the objectives of the zone such as eco-tourism and related projects. All tourism development could take place, but it shall be integrated in the global concept of the protection of the site and the natural environment. The development could be a cluster of satellite zones of limited size with the traditional livelihood of ethnic group and ancient population already living in surrounding the temple areas. All development projects to be implemented in  $Z_3$  should be subject to compliancy with its development master plan and the land use plan that Preah Vihear National Authority should prepare at the earliest possible date after implementation of the "Orientation Plan for the Development of Preah Vihear and its Region" studied jointly by Preah Vihear National Authority and the University of Tokyo<sup>8)</sup>.

Rules and regulations shall be set for planning, architecture and construction in order to safeguard and to protect the quality of nature. This zone is planned for the future extension of buffer zone of the World Heritage Site area. It is expected to be integrated to the present buffer zone  $Z_2$  at the later date.

In the global perspective of the development a region of Economic Influence was defined. It has an area of approximately 160,000ha. It consists of additional physical space adjacent to the World Heritage zone and to the zone of Ecological-Development. This area should be capable of generating interaction and synergy with two other zones, so all together would have a chance to create a pool of economic activities leading the development in the close by district of Choam Khsan.

**Fig.5** shows the occupation of the population living around the temple area. Farmers and retail sellers have almost the same number while 588 people are in category 'Others', which means the employment is not stable reflecting the possibility of



**Fig.5** Occupation of People Living in and around the Temple Areas<sup>9)</sup>

people seeking work. The percentage of this category is high with 33.5%, about 1 out of 3 people has no specific job. The civil servants are mostly teachers, police force and administrators representing local government.

#### 4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT

##### (1) Lack of Survey and Research

Since 1962, when Preah Vihear has been declared being located in the Cambodian territory and belonging to Khmer nation and under its sovereignty by the International Court of Justice, nothing much has been done ever since for the development. The region had been left in its natural and primary state for almost forty five years, until recently up to the time the problem of border was created by Thailand a few weeks after Preah Vihear had been declared as a World Heritage by UNESCO. There are so many factors that explain the slow development or the un-development state of Preah Vihear.

Parallel to the historical and archeological researches, there was also a survey on natural resources of the region including that of the Preah Vihear temple site. Unfortunately, the results of these researches were apparently kept out of reach of the Cambodian administration and apparently unpublished to the public.

The present Cambodian administration continued in the last decade, has been keeping the same attitude towards that remote region sometimes left aside by other urgent preoccupation such as improvement and building of the nation capital or important provinces in the country. Surprisingly enough it has been noted that all along from the time the country got its independence up to now, still there has been neither an appropriate survey nor a comprehensive study of the

natural resources in the region. This constitutes a vacuum in basic but important knowledge of the country potentials.

## (2) Absence of a Long Term Vision

The second factor relevant to the slow development of the area is an absence of a long term vision on regional planning. The planning process was limited to a budgeted programming, and the development mechanism was restricted to short term actions translated into immediate projects ready to be implemented just to face crucial situation.

But even so, there should have been more useful by disposing a list of available resources potential in the region. It is still difficult to know exactly how many

hectares of arable land in Preah Vihear that could be devoted to agriculture, the type and quality of soil that is suitable for specific agricultural products, the soil eroded that needs to be generated for future purposes. Nevertheless there exists a map of soil productivity done by the government Forestry administration, it provides only an approximate information on soil potentials in Preah Vihear and its region which is not sufficient for a comprehensive agriculture planning.

Up to the present time, there is no systematic study of water resources in the region. There might be some vague information by farmers who have been living in the areas and who have been searching for water source for their everyday needs for living. Up to today the problem of water remain unsolved except for the raining season during which streams from high ground and mountains nearby provide not only sufficient water but most of the time create flooding conditions which bar the circulation and deteriorate the road network in particular in and around the nearest village to the temple site called Sream.

Agricultural land has been left without proper use, forest land with no program of feasible exploitation and /or preservation while land for urbanization has been used without a long term vision of how village and town would be developed in the future and how urban space should be set aside for infrastructures, utilities, services and green areas. It is not unusual to see the construction of houses and buildings block the possibility to enlarge existing streets, digging trench for drainage network or installing public lighting. Roads or streets have been constructed without proper drainage and subject to constant flooding whenever rain season arrives.

## (3) Unawareness

The third factor is unawareness of regional planning. A misjudgment of benefits and outcomes that could generate from the development of Preah Vihear and region at the national level, could not lead to an integrated global perspective of planning strategy. It would be illogical to plan the development of the nation without considering the potentials of each one of the provinces in terms of its social and economic advantages or disadvantages and furthermore without a good comprehension of the synergy between regions that could lead to development scenarios, then finally to an appropriate and feasible solution.

Lack of human resources could be a reason for this unawareness. The speed of development in the region is still slow in order to answer to the needs implied by the population growth and by the desire of the country to move forward in terms of economic growth and social improvement. In the context of regionalization and at a larger scale of globalization, the momentum to compete between nations is becoming more acute day after day and the nation which is at the end of the trail failing to keep pace with other countries would find itself in a difficult situation. Development requires resource, time, strategy and appropriate planning. These criteria must be formulated quickly so action could be undertaken without delay in order to fill the gap of development with other countries in the region, and to have a better chance to challenge the future.

## (4) Absence of Strategy

### a) Lack of Adequate Road Network

Preah Vihear province has been left without adequate infrastructures in particular road network



**Fig.6** Improved Road Network for Preah Vihear

(Ministry of Public Works and Transports)

that permits its linkage with other neighbor provinces and is most important of all the constant physical contact with the main economic and political decision centers.

Many rural roads connecting the provincial town to the districts in the province have been rehabilitated and are, now by the standard of Cambodia's rural roads, in a good condition. Most districts are accessible even those where the rural road network is not yet good, although these roads are being improved gradually since the 2009.

**Fig.6** shows the situation of the road network to link the Preah Vihear region to other important cities. These days, two important roads of Road 64 and Road 67 have been constructed. BOT (Build, Operate, and Transfer) joint project of the highway 67 which started between Thailand and Cambodian government only in 2007 has been completed. The highway permits a rather convenient transport link directly from Siem Reap town to the Anlong Veng, a small town situated at 131km, at a junction from which the highway 67 crosses the border into Thailand. The construction of the road 64 has started in early 2009, also after Thai army incursions in Khmer territory where is located Preah Vihear, according to the map used by ICJ (International Court of Justice) judgment in 15 June 1962. With the two important accesses, Preah Vihear region will be connected to an overall national infrastructure network and will stop being isolated.

**b) Unplanned Population Settlement**

The inhabitants living in Preah Vihear region are in majority in the form of isolate pattern. These populations did not have a chance to settle down with a planned policy, in terms of land distribution for ownership and real right to use or have access to the land they had occupied. The group of villages that now exists is a matter of necessity to regroupment for collective survival. For many centuries, government action in this matter has been almost absent or at least insignificant. Unfortunately, the geographical context, the political evolution and the continuous turmoil of armed conflict in the area had limited the chance if not to prevent the permanent development policy of human settlement in the region. This result is fundamentally due to the absence of population settlement strategy. Recently a tentative project of so called "Eco-Village" is now underway to settle down population who have been evacuated from around Preah Vihear Temple area due to arm conflict with Thailand.

Despite available resources and economic activities that have made the region prosperous if not the richest in the country at early Angkor period, the

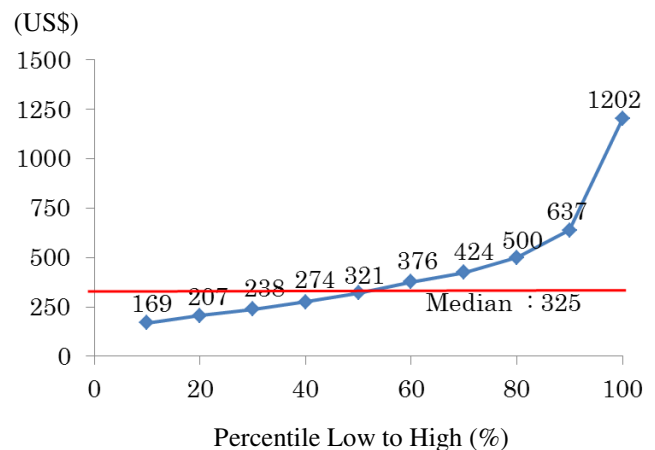
inhabitants in the area and particularly the minor ethnic group were forced to move to a safer place and better environment where they could benefit better living conditions. Since the end of golden period of the Khmer empire up to recently, population have been on the run, searching a new settlement away from Dangrek Foot Hills region which was once the cradle and the pride of Khmer civilization. They have been in other terms left aside for themselves during many centuries.

**c) Un-improved Social and Economic Needs**

Since the collapse of the Khmer empire around the 15th century, there was constant movement of population leaving the Dangrek Mountain. After the wars, the insecurity followed by destruction and/or dismantling of economic structure, the region became after time deserted, except a few areas where population had enough courage to stay on. This situation of instability reigned for many decades and contributed undoubtedly to the difficulty of designing a sound development plan for the region.

The most striking aspect is, during the Khmer Rouge period in which the population was severely under pressure politically, economically and socially due to the hardship of the regime imposed on the life of the population. Until recently, the security seems to come back, except for the recent border problem with Thailand, that migration has stopped and lately there is a beginning of movement of new immigrants from other provinces coming into the region. But still compared to the rest of the country, the region is one of the least inhabited.

Social and economic development in Preah Vihear temple area was almost inexistent. School, medical center, basic facilities such as drinking water, electricity has been totally absent and did not figure out in the project priority list not until 2008.



**Fig.7** Annual Income Distribution in Preah Vihear<sup>4)</sup>

As showed in **Fig.7** the distribution of annual income of households living in this region proves there exists a serious gap of poverty between population of Preah Vihear and most of other provinces in the country. Somehow the population was disconnected from the social world and lived within the conditions at the threshold of poverty. In that condition Preah Vihear region despite its potentials was left outside the road map of a global country strategy planning.

An assessment of present situation proves that Cambodia has paid dearly for its fundamental error in many aspects; political, economic and social. During the last few years and since the dispute with Thailand on Preah Vihear issue, new efforts from the government seems to compensate the many decades of negligence of the region. But according to the CRDI, growth of rural-based economy and the agricultural sector, which is the main income source for the poor, has been sluggish. This due part of the political stand-off with Thailand because of the Preah Vihear temple , and also the need of adequate investment could give a push to kick off the mechanism of development in the area. Unless the current situation is being improved rapidly and steadily, Preah Vihear and its region will continue to have slow growth, and therefore the increase of rate of poverty reduction is always problematic.

### **(5) Destruction of Environment**

Ever since the independence and in particular during the recent years, there has never been a sound effort to consider the natural environment as an important aspect in the development process. The lack of understanding that nature can play a significant role in everyday life and in supporting factor to the future of human needs is evident. Neither study nor research in the matter has been undertaken seriously in Preah Vihear region.

#### **a) Deforestation**

Many villages are located less than 5km from any forest on which they depend for everyday living. Trees have been cut to use for construction, or fuel-wood for cooking, bushes have been savagely cleared for cultivation land and expected claiming ownership once the land is converted. High levels of commercial and illegal logging are shown in **Fig.8**. This illegal logging creating conditions such as road access, pressure from rice field needs to increase rice production, degraded forest, contributes to the encroachment and to the conversion of forest. Indicators of such activities in Cambodia include the non-transparency allocation of forest concession and logging rights are inevitably a major cause in contributing to the forest decline. To conclude forestry is



**Fig.8** Illegal Logging in the Region

becoming a very serious problem for Cambodia due to the fact that deforestation, despite all efforts and measures put in place by government and recommended by international stakeholders, has gone out of control in particular in the areas declared as national parks or nature protection zones.

Despite knowing that forest is also a critically important watershed that regulates rainfall and water flow and prevent sedimentation in the water network and reservoir, illegal logging has been going on ever since and has been accelerating even more at the present time. The results of this negligence have already started having direct catastrophic impact in the region such as decreasing of rain fall, draught, and extinction of wild life and some of the flora species.

The consequence to be expected in the long term will be far beyond estimation, because the whole eco-system would be jeopardized and natural equilibrium that co-exists between human and nature is being threatening as many poor Cambodian farmers depend on forest for their livelihoods. This type of living is part of the Cambodian traditional way of life, in other words this part of Khmer culture would be lost in the years to come.

#### **b) Destruction of Wildlife**

Another problem that reveals its importance in the near future is that the mismanagement of forest would lead to the vulnerability of the population living in and around the forest areas. Farmers make their livelihoods by tapping resin, wildlife hunting in addition to other forest product collection such as fuel-wood, timber, rattan, bamboo, thatch, grains, mushrooms, wild fruit and medicinal plants. Most of these products are collected by women and children for household use rather than for trade. In total, these products account for about 15 -20 percent of household income in Preah Vihear and region. According to village elders in Preah Vihear, wildlife hunting and trapping has been common for as long as they can remember. During the Khmer Rouge period

skilled hunters were assigned to hunt 2-3 times per month, to have bush-meat distributed for consumption in the co-operative. During the 1980s and early 1990s, hunting and trapping for local consumption in village still continued. Later in the 1990s with the arrival of wildlife traders and the increasing demands in market integration, hunters and trappers began to sell bush-meat. This trade, in combination of scarcity of wildlife, has meant a serious destruction of wildlife in the region.

**c) Necessity of Immediate Assessment**

In view of this situation, an immediate assessment of the existing environment degradation should be carried out as soon as possible in order to appraise the ecosystem and the conditions of biodiversity in the Preah Vihear region then to find proper solutions for the future, otherwise natural environment would leave space to a vast desolated region that would definitively compromise the sustainability of human settlement.

Preah Vihear could have been a motor that would enhance and help the region to start off with possible action plan which at least help the population to have reasonable standard of living. Many projects could have started to give way to the development initiative at the local level with the population in place. This negligence from many successive governments in power has put Preah Vihear totally in the forgotten shelf.

**Table 3** shows the natural risks of population living in Preah Vihear region<sup>5)</sup>. Unfortunate to observe since 1962 up to the present time, limited or no research neither survey nor study has been undertaken to have a good knowledge on the region. The people now still living in the area are still struggling for survival and have very limited hope for their future and for their children because of the unawareness of the potentials of Preah Vihear and its region from the part of the governing power.

**5. CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PLANNING POLICY OF THE COUNTRY**

**(1) Unbalanced Development**

The most striking aspect of the area is that the region of the province of Preah Vhear has been by far disconnected from regions in which economic activities of Cambodia are most concentrated and most dynamic. Only a few provinces in Cambodia are considered as economic centers.

Though there has been development in Cambodia since its independence, statistics and really observation shows through GDP per capita and through HDI

**Table 3** Natural risks of population living in Preah Vihear region<sup>5)</sup>

Nature of risks	% of households
Droughts and floods	73
Rice/crops destroyed by wild pigs	22
Resin tree logging	36
Lack of cattle/buffaloes	37
Human disease	20
Security problem	16
Restriction to access forests	17
Animal disease	9

(human development indicator) that most of the nation resources have been devoted to the development of the central plain of the country, mainly the region in and around the Phnom Penh capital city.

Upon the planning strategy elaborated and put in place by governments, number of provinces are still in need for help in order to progress; for example Bantey Meanchey, Odor Meanchey, and Preah Vihear just to enumerate a few which are in the remote regions, located on the border with neighboring countries. So still today Cambodia is far from a well-balanced developing nation in terms of economic and social policy planning.

**(2) Lack of Policy and Limited Human Resources**

In the case of Cambodia, the lack of resources seems not being the only crucial problem. The misunderstanding of the development issues in the long term and proper vision of how the nation can mobilize natural resources as well as human resources in order to plan the future growth looks like the main handicap all along the last decades. The absence of a fundamental administrative and technical structure added by a sound approach mechanism to visualize the trends of development in the future is therefore the weakness of the successive government policy.

By geographical isolation and by limited man power in terms of basic human resource, they could have not benefit from adequate social development such as elementary education for children and basic health care. The lack of an appropriate planning policy at least at the regional level, is already a serious error. In order to expect the best output in investing resources, but absence of planning itself



would be an unforgivable mistake in the process of development. Adding to the absence of a real policy on a well-balanced planning, there has been limited attention given to spatial management.

### (3) Limited Progress

Based on the national statistics the population in Preah Vihear province is far behind other provinces in terms of economic and social development. The human development indicators show there is a wide gap of disparity in Preah Vihear region compared to the rest of the country. Under Khmer Rouge Regime, Preah Vihear was plunged into the military theatres that destroyed all the possibility of development action. People were suffering by forced intensive labor and had no hope to have access to normal livelihood except striving for survival. After Khmer Rouge, Preah Vihear is still a long way from being on the road map for the development. **Table 3** shows that the population of Preah Vihear is facing threats to their livelihoods in the future and by judging it, it is estimated that only limited economic and social progress has been accomplished from the Khmer Rouge's period up to the present time.

Only recent years starting from 2007 that Preah Vihear attracted attention from government. This abrupt change of policy is perhaps due to the conflict situation with neighboring Thailand that the government has started to visualize the crucial situation both in terms of military and economic and social context. Within four years, roads were constructed, and intensive efforts were devoted to enhance development around Preah Vihear Site and region. The side way effect of the above action has led to increasing number of population migrated from other poor areas of the country hoping to have a better living conditions and better future.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Reviewing rapidly the past development trends, the present issues, the current situation and the tendency of what will happen in the future, Preah Vihear and its region will endure the hardship for many more years to come. It needs all the combined factors to enhance a really mechanism of development. The resources of all kinds natural, human, produced should be assembled and articulated with a good planning policy and an optimum management in order to prepare appropriate approach which could lead to sound and progressive development. In addition, requirement for a consistent strategy is definitely indispensable in order to set pace for the future

sustainable development. The wealth gifted by nature and the invaluable cultural heritage left by Khmer civilization during the apogee of its empire is a considerable asset to induce the required development so the poor and the marginal population would be able to have decent living conditions. The conclusions of this article can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Agriculture shows a great potential even compared to other provinces. The lack of energy is crucial to encourage industrial activity.
- 2) There has been neither an appropriate survey nor a comprehensive study of the natural resources in the region.
- 3) The planning process was limited to a budgeted programming, and development mechanism was restricted to short term actions. There is no systematic study of resources in the region due to the absence of a long term vision.
- 4) Populations in the region did not have a chance to settle down with a planned policy.
- 5) Social and economic development in the area was almost inexistent.
- 6) The lack of understanding that nature can play a significant role in everyday life and in supporting factor to the future of human needs is evident.
- 7) By geographical isolation and by limited man power, the people have no benefit from adequate social development.

In this global vision it is believed that awareness of the potentials of Preah Vihear as well as the will for sound and concrete development policy based on a good designed strategy can lead undoubtedly Preah Vihear and its region to better future.

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