



**អង្គការសហប្រជាជាតិ**

**ការិយាល័យនៃឧត្តមស្នងការទូលបន្តកសិក្ខិមនុស្សប្រចាំកម្ពុជា**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**3 indigenous communities to receive communal land titles**

Three indigenous villages comprising 329 families in the northeast region of Cambodia have been granted communal land titles by the Royal Government, the first to be issued in the country.

In a joint ceremony on 14 December 2011 in Rattanakiri province, community members of Le En village in Teun commune, Koun Mom district and La L'eun Kraen village in Ou Chum commune, Ou Chum district, received their certificates of collective land title for 1,454 hectares and 920 hectares, respectively.

The third recipient-village, Andong Kraloeng in Sen Monorom commune, Ou Reang district in Mondulokiri province will be awarded communal land ownership for a total area of 1,425 hectares in January 2012.

The three communities represent different indigenous peoples— Le En village is inhabited by Kreung and Tumpoun peoples while La L'eun Kraen village is composed mainly of the Tumpoun people. Andong Kraloeng village is made up of the Phnnonng indigenous people.

The communal land titles for indigenous peoples were approved late this year by relevant government ministries after three pilot communities submitted their applications in 2009. The right to collective land ownership for indigenous peoples is enshrined in the 2001 Land Law and in subsequent policies and legislation. The Royal Government of Cambodia also expressed its commitment at the international level for indigenous peoples' land rights when it voted in favour of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007.

"The approval of communal land titles is a landmark achievement and manifests the government's respect for the rights of indigenous peoples and the recognition of the latter's important contribution to national development," said the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Cambodia. OHCHR lauds the combined efforts of key government ministries, the provincial governments, International Labour Organization and NGOs for supporting the indigenous communities throughout the application process.

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The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is the principal United Nations agency responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights. OHCHR has been operating in Cambodia since 1993.

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“This initiative will provide the impetus for other indigenous communities across the country to reaffirm their cultural integrity and take steps toward preserving their ancestral land and resources...indeed there are several other communities already on their way,” OHCHR added. “The granting of collective land title represents an important protection against the dispossession of land, as enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”\*

Throughout the year, OHCHR in Cambodia has been assisting seven Phnong communities in Bousra commune, Pichrida district in Monduliri province to register as legal entities. Application for communal land titles of these seven communities is expected to take place in 2012.

*\*Article 8 (2) (b) and Articles 10, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples lay out the specific rights indigenous peoples have to their traditional lands.*

For the full text of the UN Declaration see:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/declaration.htm>

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