

# **The Challenges Facing Cambodia for Sustainable Coast Zone Management (Transition to Development in Post Conflict Country)**

Khoy, Khim

Department of Potable Water Supply, Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy,  
Cambodia

Cambodia a country in South East Asia, border on the East, by Vietnam, the West, by Thailand, on the North by Laos and on the South, by the Gulf of Thailand, the country has a population in the region of 12 million people and a coastline of 440 km. Cambodia is also a unique country, emerging after 30 years of conflict (1970-1998) and having had nearly all of its professional people murdered by the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime between 1975 and 1979.

With the return of stability following the United Nation's organised elections of 1993 the country is now going through a period of rapid transition, attempting to catch up with many of the other countries in the region. The Government has recently joined the *Association of South East Asian Nations* (ASEAN) and due to the country's central location it is under consideration by many companies and businesses for investment purposes. However, some of the country's experiences with new investments have been worrying, one company illegally imported and dumped mercury-contaminated waste near the main coastal town of Sihanoukville. Others have taken advantage of the deficient legislation, regulations and the ability to enforce environmental protection measures by discharge various wastes onto land, into the Kingdom's watercourses and into its' coastal waters.

Further Cambodia's coastal zone has come under extreme pressure from development and commercial activities. Large portions of the coastal mangrove areas have been destroyed and converted to shrimp farming, which has led to increased eutrophication and significant environmental impacts. Additionally growing tourism could have significant impact on the coastal areas, unless the Royal Government introduces measures to mitigate the negative impacts of commercial tourism.

The Government has sought and obtained limited assistance to develop and replace the lost human resources to monitor and enforce new legislation and regulation. The Government is encouraging community participation by coastal zone resident to protect the coastal areas and sustainable develop them for future generation.

What options has and is the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia developing to ensure the safe and proper development of it enclosed coastal areas. What are the challenges it faces in attempting to achieve these goals.