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Land Cover's Change in Cambodia

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I visited to Cambodia from 31st March to 30th May 2011 to understand the situation of forest in Cambodia. Normally staffs of Forestry Administration (FA) have always support me when I visited. At that time, I went to several rural sites, Pailin area, Ratana Kiri province, Kampong Thom province, and Kampong Chhnang province.

At Pailin area, forest only remained at the top of the mountain and hill, on the other hands, flat area and bottom of the mountain or hills were converted from forest to agricultural land, especially cassava and corn. It was because Pailin area was border with Thailand and was former Pol Pot regime. So I heard the local government give the farmland for produce the cash crops for export to Thailand. This is one of the situations of land cover change in Cambodia.

Ratanakiri province is north east part of Cambodia. This province was one of the major places for rubber plantation during French colonial period. Recently rubber plantation is booming not only in Cambodia but also in Southeast Asian countries. So, many forests were converted to rubber plantation, but it caused economic development and infrastructure improvement.



Kampong Thom province is most visiting area for me since 2004. At the beginning of my visiting to this area it costs nearly 6 hours by a car on the unpaved road. In this area, large area was under economic land concession for rubber plantation and cassava farm land transformed from forest.

Kampong Chhnang province is close to Phnom Penh, but it is located on the driest area. Our group set the permanent sample plots in one community forestry (CF) site. Forest recovered among CF site due to management by local community forestry members and support by FA. But, recently many factories were built along the road from Phnom Penh to Kampong Chhnang. I saw many workers commute to work by loaded transportation bus.

I met several kind of development even though only in Cambodia. These visiting got me thinking about how to balance economic development and sustainable forest management. Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to project of international research experience for students and young researchers for giving an amazing opportunity.