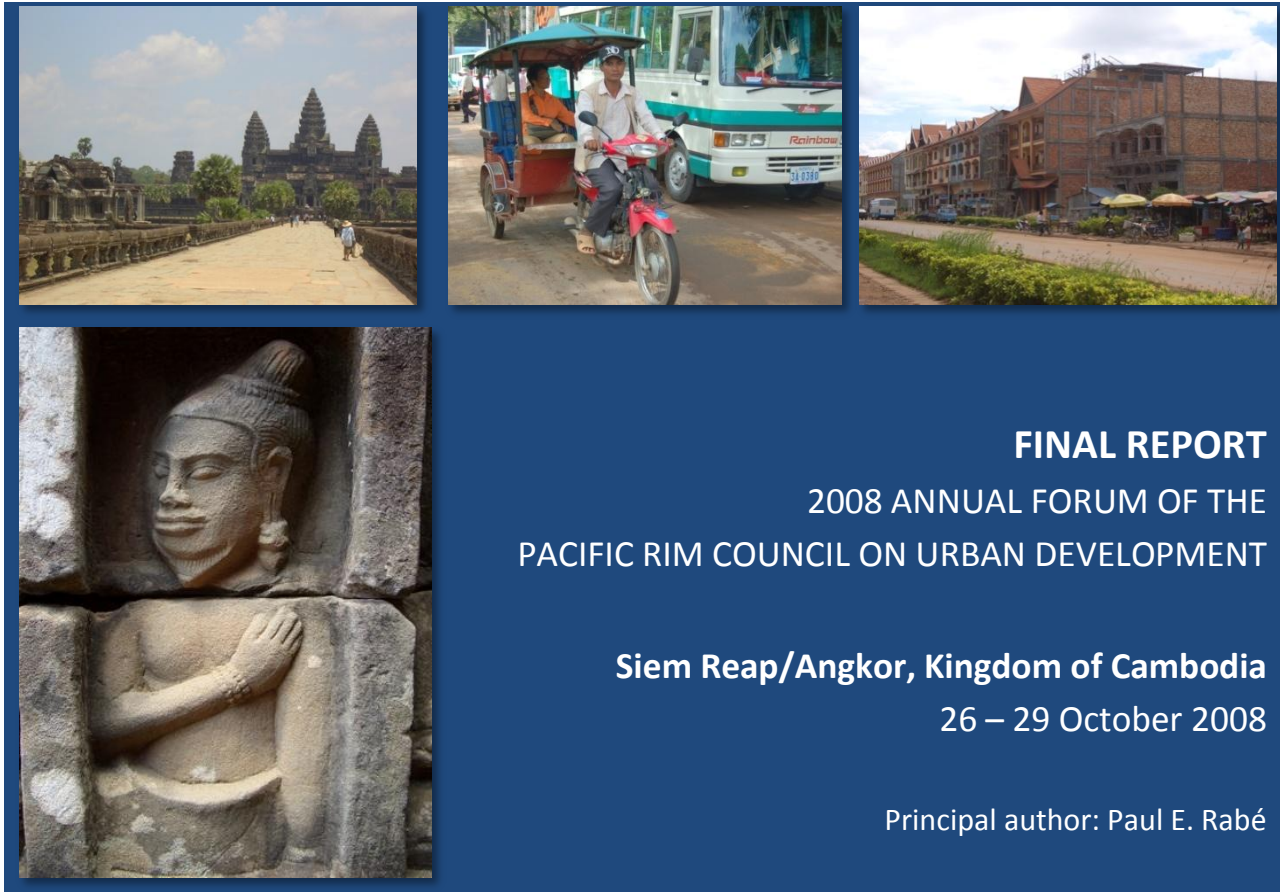


**SIEM REAP:  
URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE SHADOW OF ANGKOR**



**FINAL REPORT**  
2008 ANNUAL FORUM OF THE  
PACIFIC RIM COUNCIL ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT

**Siem Reap/Angkor, Kingdom of Cambodia**  
26 – 29 October 2008

Principal author: Paul E. Rabé



**The Getty Conservation Institute**



**Center for Khmer Studies**



**APSARA Authority**



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*Photographs on cover page and in photo collages are by Wang Chuan and Paul Rabé*

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## EXECUTIVE EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

This report of the Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development, *Siem Reap: Urban Development in the Shadow of Angkor*, is a significant milestone in several respects. First, it affirms and contributes to a well established tradition whereby PRCUD reports on the findings of its Roundtable Forums to the host governments that have invited PRCUD to organize such events. Indeed, this marks a full decade now since PRCUD, which was founded in 1989, first introduced its distinctive Roundtable Forum in Kaohsiung in 1998. Subsequent forums have been held in Long Beach (1999), Tokyo/Chiba (2000), Malacca (2001), Palembang (2002), Nanjing (2004), Jeonju (2005), Jakarta (2007) and now in Siem Reap, Cambodia. PRCUD is already preparing actively for its next Roundtable Forum, to be held in Foshan, China.

Over the course of this past decade PRCUD has refined this model steadily, but the basic tenets have held fast. PRCUD works closely with its local host, in this case the APSARA Authority, to articulate an over-arching theme and a related set of probing questions to be addressed by the forum. PRCUD also helps to identify and extend invitations to a select group of international experts who join their local counterparts in three days of dialogue focused on these identified issues. This report provides a concise summary to APSARA and others of the key points that emerged from these discussions, while also providing an overview of, and documentation for, the event itself.

The author of this report, Paul Rabé, is a PRCUD Board member who has authored several prior PRCUD reports. We are grateful to him for the diligence he has brought to bear on this task, and for thus contributing to a proud tradition. While this report is the output from the forum, it is coupled this year with an extensive Briefing

Document, prepared by doctoral students Sylvia Nam and Adèle Esposito, that served as an essential input to the discussions held at the Siem Reap Roundtable Forum (see adjacent box). Together, these two documents provide an extensive background and overview to the challenges of guiding urbanization in the Siem Reap/Angkor region. The challenge is to do so in a manner that contributes effectively to the broad developmental aims of the people who live and work here, while at the same time conserving and enhancing the monumental and universally significant cultural legacy, values and heritage of Angkor (not just the famous monuments, but also what is referred to in this report as “Greater Angkor”). As this report makes abundantly clear, the consensus emerging from this forum is that those two objectives are by no means mutually irreconcilable, but neither are they assured. The forum participants set out their collective advice to APSARA on what course of action is best suited to this challenge, and strengthening the role of civil society is key among those recommendations.

### Briefing Document

Esposito, Adèle and Sylvia Nam (2008). *Siem Reap: Urban Development in the Shadow of Angkor*. Briefing Document for the 2008 Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development Forum, 26-29 October. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust. ISBN: 9789995096908.

This brings us to yet another milestone associated with this event. While international organizations have lavished attention on the Angkor monuments themselves, and rightly so, this PRCUD event is the first international public forum to focus primarily on the local meaning and significance of Angkor. In particular, heritage conservation is framed here within the context of the developmental aspirations of Cambodians, who are once again standing upon their feet after several decades of war and deprivation. Angkor is a deep source of pride for most Cambodians, as past glory underpins their hopes for future peace and prosperity. In this light, the invitation from APSARA to hold such a forum reflects a highly significant recognition of the importance of giving voice to these aspirations. We would be remiss in not acknowledging and honoring the far-sighted vision of His Excellency Uk Someth in making this a reality. In his capacity as host, on behalf of APSARA, he steadfastly maintained a lofty vision for the forum while ensuring that it was well grounded in the realities of contemporary Cambodia. It is no exaggeration to say that this event could not have taken place at all without his active and energetic support.

There is yet another milestone to this event, and that is the unique institutional collaboration that brought it all to bear. As noted in the report, the Getty Conservation Institute, the Center for Khmer Studies and the Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development worked together very closely from the outset, and it is therefore entirely fitting and appropriate that this report to APSARA be in the name of all three organizations. Furthermore, as the three individuals who acted on behalf of our respective organizations, we wish to acknowledge and indeed celebrate the opportunity that this brought for each of us to work so closely together. From a broader perspective, this institutional collaboration was important because it resulted in the pooling of distinctive areas and networks of substantive expertise. The Getty Conservation Institute is renowned for its path-breaking research, education and field work in support of significant heritage conservation worldwide. The Center for Khmer Studies is a locally rooted but globally networked education and research center in Cambodia that has already shown itself to be a transformative institution that is a catalyst for positive change in the region. Through their partnership in this forum, they contributed a richness in expertise and perspective that has established a high-water mark that future PRCUD Forums will measure themselves against.



Finally, the organizers wish to acknowledge the most important contributors to this event, and that is the participants themselves. The discussions were capably led by five session chairs under the general purview of PRCUD President Yeong Joo Hahn: Keiko Miura, Charles Goldblum, Han Verheijden, Tom Zearley and Cor Dijkgraaf. These individuals combined professional expertise and personal skill to guide a diverse assemblage of local and foreign expert participants to probe the issues posed by the forum. These participants gave freely and generously of their time both before, during and afterwards, as they reviewed briefing materials, participated in the forum itself, and advised on aspects of the final report and related follow-up activities. The forum brought together political leaders, venerable monks, business leaders and other stakeholders from the local community to talk to each other and to the world about their collective aspirations for development in the shadow of Angkor. It was a privilege for us to be part of this memorable event.

Jeff Cody, Ph.D.  
Senior Project Specialist  
Getty Conservation Institute

Eric J. Heikkila, Ph.D.  
Founding Executive Secretary  
Pacific Rim Council on Urban  
Development

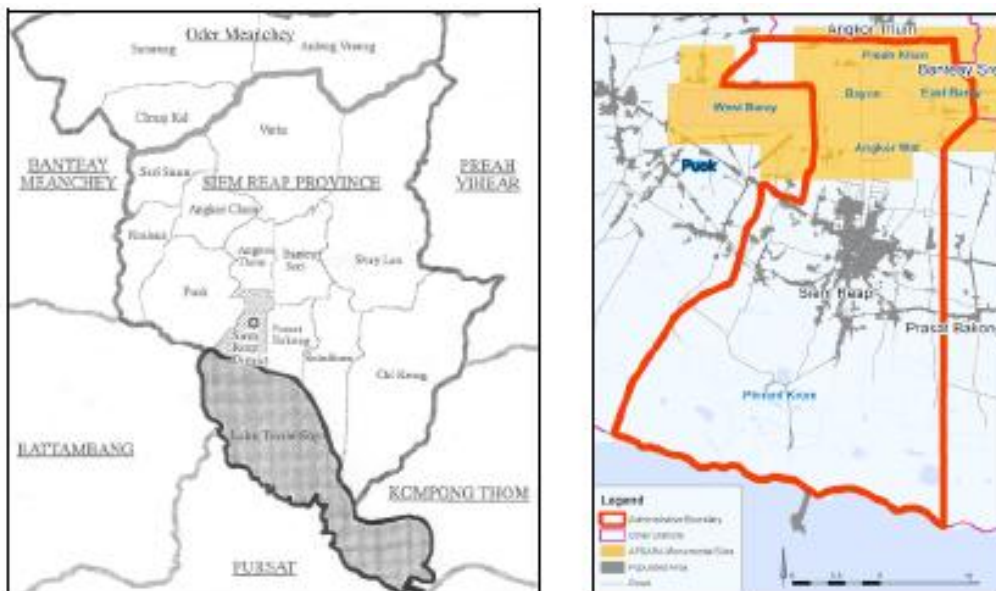
Philippe Peycam, Ph.D.  
Director  
Center for Khmer Studies

December 2008

## TERMINOLOGY

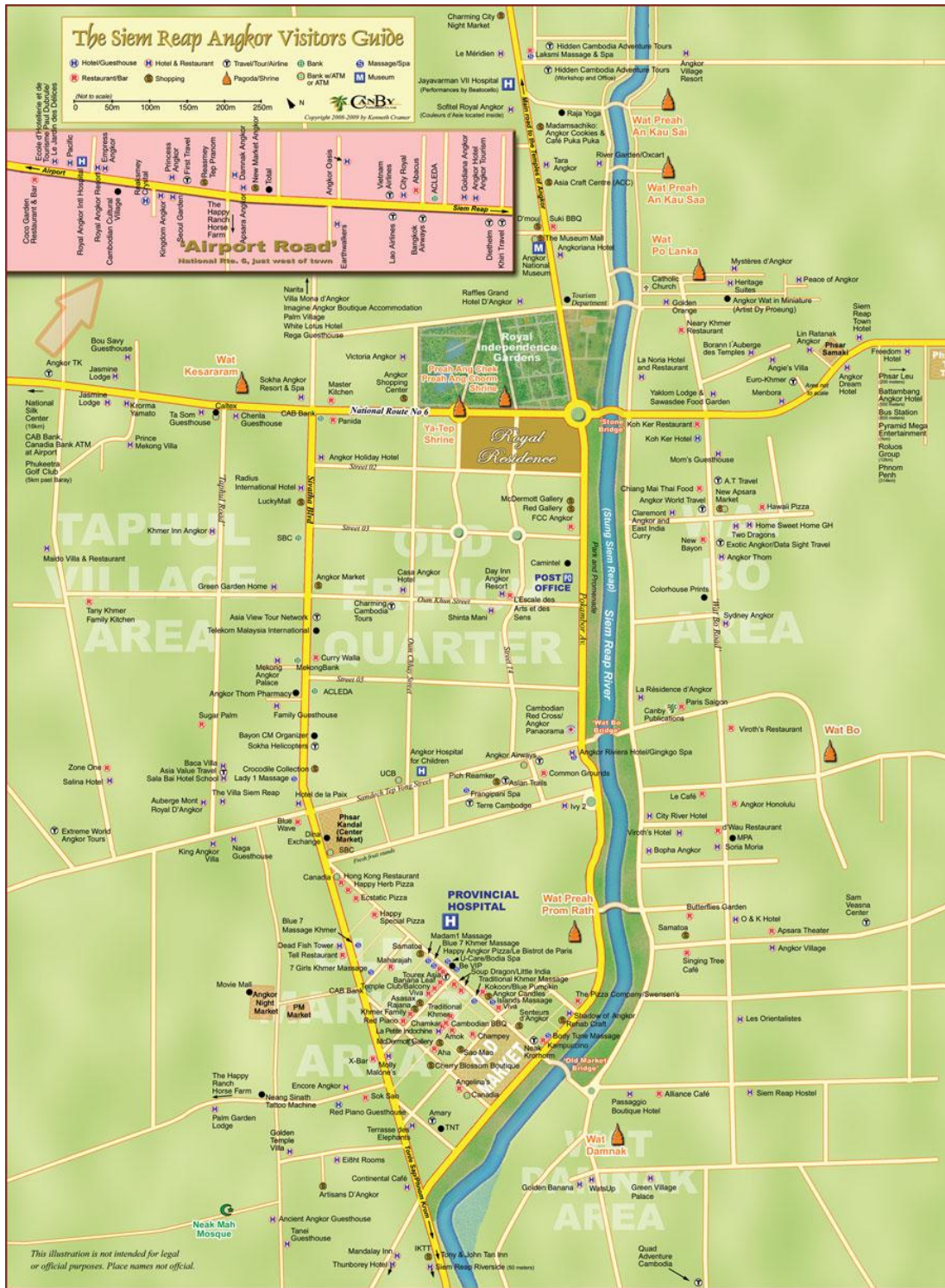
While the main focus of the PRCUD roundtable forum was the modern town of Siem Reap—a town at the gates of the Angkor World Heritage Site archaeological park and the capital of Siem Reap district and province—this report refers to an area called “*Siem Reap/Angkor*”, in recognition of the fact that, as the gateway to the modern archaeological park, the modern town has from the beginning been irrevocably connected to the physical place and idea of “Angkor”. Therefore, no discussion about the future of the town of Siem Reap is possible without the consideration of its wider physical, ecological and heritage context (the archaeological park and the Angkorian urban heritage landscape beyond the park) and the tourism and investment opportunities and challenges that this connection brings to the modern day town. Some scholars have termed this wider context “Greater Angkor”. However, in this report “Siem Reap/Angkor” will be used as a designation that suggests a broader cultural context beyond the confines of the Angkor World Heritage Site archaeological park.

## MAPS OF SIEM REAP PROVINCE, DISTRICT AND TOWN



*Map of Siem Reap Province (left) and map of Siem Reap District (right), showing the location of the archaeological park in relation to Siem Reap town (Source: JICA 2006, as reproduced in the Briefing Document for the 2008 PRCUD Roundtable Forum, p. II-14).*





Map of Siem Reap town (Source: Canby Publications; [www.canbypublications.com](http://www.canbypublications.com)), showing the location of the old French quarter, major tourist attractions and pagodas, including Wat Bo, Wat Enkosey (Wat Preah An Kau Sai) and Wat Damnak (CKS headquarters).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

Between 26-29 October 2008 an urban roundtable forum entitled “*Siem Reap: Urban Development in the Shadow of Angkor*” was held at the Angkor Village Hotel in Siem Reap.

The objective of the roundtable forum was to discuss and identify sustainable development strategies for Siem Reap, in an effort to help the town better manage its rapid urban growth and thereby safeguard the heritage landscape of Angkor and the extraordinary world heritage that this region contains.

The roundtable forum was made possible thanks to the collaboration of four organizations. As the principal organization with oversight and management of the Angkor World Heritage site, the **APSARA Authority** of the Royal Government of Cambodia hosted the roundtable forum. The **Getty Conservation Institute**, based in the United States, provided generous funding for the forum as well as expertise on the subject of conservation practice based on many years of experience from its field projects, scientific research and educational programs. The **Center for Khmer Studies**, based in Siem Reap, was involved as a “citizen institute in Siem Reap” with a mandate to promote research and education in Cambodia. In that capacity, the Center provided critical technical inputs for the preparation of the forum as well as logistical support, and introduced a number of experts on the region. The **Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development** brought to bear its roundtable format—a unique model of interaction and partnership for the past ten years—as well its network of international scholars and professionals.

In addition, the collaborating organizations benefited from the contributions and technical support of the **Observatoire Siem Reap/Angkor: Architecture, patrimoine, développement**, a French research group based in Siem Reap, associated with the Institut Parisien de Recherche: Architecture, urbanisme, société (IPRAUS), hosted by the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture de Paris-Belleville in France.

Approximately thirty foreign experts from several disciplines (planning, architecture, cultural tourism, economics, etc.) and an equivalent number of Cambodians participated in the forum, which began on October 26 with a full day of field visits throughout Siem Reap in the morning, and to a select number of places in the Angkor Archaeological Park in the afternoon. On the evening of October 26, at the Center for Khmer Studies headquarters at Wat Damnak, these visits were complemented by presentations on Angkor and its environs by three scholars: Roland Fletcher (University of Sydney), Jacques Gaucher (Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient) and Alan Kolata (University of Chicago).

Prior to arriving in Siem Reap participants benefited from an informative 100-page Briefing Document that provided participants with other background information about the challenges associated with Siem Reap/Angkor's development. This document was written by two doctoral students, Adèle Esposito (Observatoire Siem Reap/Angkor: Architecture, patrimoine, développement) and Sylvia Nam (CKS Doctoral Fellow; University of California/Berkeley, USA), with additional input from Aline Hétreau-Pottier (also of the Observatoire Siem Reap/Angkor: Architecture, patrimoine, développement).

## FORMAT OF THE ROUNDTABLE FORUM

The roundtable forum was organized around five substantive sessions. Approximately twenty Cambodian and foreign participants gathered around a U-shaped table to discuss key questions associated with the themes governing each session. A moderator for each session helped frame the discussion by posing some of those questions, and invited both participants around the table as well as those watching the discussion from beyond the table to make comments or ask other questions, in a spirit of mutual respect and with the intention of creating meaningful dialogue.

- **Session 1** discussed the **values and meanings** of Siem Reap/Angkor. Principal questions were: What are the meanings and values of Siem Reap/Angkor for local residents, for other Cambodians, and for visitors to the area? And how can these intrinsic meanings and values of Siem Reap/Angkor be reflected in development and conservation efforts?
- **Session 2** focused on the **institutional structures and constraints** related to urban planning and land management in Siem Reap/Angkor. In addition, participants were asked to identify what types of regulatory and institutional structures might be consistent with the intrinsic meanings and values of Siem Reap/Angkor identified in Session 1.
- **Session 3** looked at **tourism and conservation strategies**. The session revolved around several questions: What is the tourism concept of Siem Reap/Angkor? And how can tourism revenues contribute to improving the livelihoods of the local people and sustain the conservation of the Greater Angkor heritage landscape?
- **Session 4** challenged the participants to consider **economic and social investments** required to achieve a vision for Siem Reap/Angkor as a spiritual, cultural, educational and environmentally balanced city. Questions included: What instruments are needed to achieve this vision? What are the opportunities? And what are the constraints?
- In **Session 5** participants identified several general observations that cut across all five substantive sessions. The session then challenged participants to identify the **next steps**

required to translate the thoughts raised during the four preceding sessions into concrete action points.

- In the **concluding session** on the final day, the Chairs of the five sessions presented the key points of their sessions.

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Participants of the roundtable forum identified several general observations that extend across all substantive sessions. These observations guided the conclusions and action points emanating from the sessions (see next heading).

- The heritage of “Angkor” extends far beyond what is situated in the “box” of the archeological park. Siem Reap/Angkor should be redefined as a unique landscape of living heritage, where people (both in the past as well as in the present day) live and work and incorporate heritage in their daily lives.
- Heritage preservation and economic development are mutually compatible. The heritage resource provides the catalyst for economic development, but for this to be sustainable, the resource needs to be conserved, and this will help secure an ongoing local economy. Therefore, heritage preservation and economic development are not in opposition, but rather belong together and help to reinforce each other.
- Siem Reap/Angkor is a place of magnificent world heritage that has attracted millions of international visitors. Yet the local population benefits insufficiently from the tourism boom. This is an unsustainable situation that should be rectified; if this situation remains unchecked, then the historic resources are likely to be undermined.
- Siem Reap is growing extremely rapidly and with very few development controls. The center is expanding and ribbon development is spreading rapidly across the region. Tourism is a major driver of this urban expansion. If this form of development is allowed to proceed in this fashion then—within the next five years—the heritage and environmental assets of Siem Reap/Angkor will be irreparably damaged.
- While the local communities have a long appreciation of—and engagement with—the monuments, many developers do not appear to share this sentiment, or have knowledge of Angkor’s significance, especially not in the case of “non-monumental” heritage, i.e. canals and water tanks and house mounds and roadways. The feeling of limited “ownership” of the

Angkorian heritage and its perceived limited relevance to modern life and development further contributes to the uncontrolled urban expansion taking place around Siem Reap/Angkor.

- In addition to the world heritage of Angkor, and the vast heritage landscape of its region, the town of Siem Reap has its own unique vernacular heritage that deserves to be better identified, understood and preserved.
- Besides the need for physical investments, there is a critical need for education, awareness raising and capacity development to enable Siem Reap/Angkor to better plan for its future. This educational thrust should involve all stakeholders in the city's economy and socio-cultural life.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### OBSERVATIONS REGARDING MEANINGS AND VALUES (SESSION 1)

The heritage values of Siem Reap/Angkor risk being lost, as they are not recognized or integrated into either planning or heritage management. Another problem is that some developers have little awareness of, or interest in, cultural heritage. The creation of the Angkor archaeological park as a formal entity has unwittingly contributed to the separation of heritage from the everyday lives of the people. The people need to recapture a sense of ownership of the past heritage landscape on which they live. Heritage needs to be “re-perceived”, “re-valued” and its importance re-emphasized.

- **Proposed action: Redefine Angkor to recognize its greater cultural landscape and “living” heritage values**, as opposed to a restricted and bounded frozen landscape of stones. The focus of the redefinition needs to be the whole regional heritage landscape and the opportunities it offers, and not just the main world heritage park area. This would enable “Angkor” to come alive and help to increase the meaning and relevance of heritage for ordinary citizens in present day Siem Reap/Angkor and other parts of Cambodia. Buddhist monasteries may be the most appropriate institutions to be involved in such a redefinition of Angkor, given their role in the sanctification of some Angkorian shrines.
- **Proposed action: Introduce a “cleanliness” campaign.** Another way to recapture the heritage of Angkor in a tangible way is to introduce a campaign around “cleanliness” or “purity”, linking into the concept of sacredness as purity. The cleanliness campaign could be used to cover tangible urban service improvements such as improving water supply and cleaning up the river, markets and city streets. A broad range of civil society groups could be involved in marketing and implementing the campaign, including monasteries, schools and individuals.

It is not just “Angkor” that has heritage value. The town of Siem Reap has a unique vernacular urban heritage and a traditional urban culture and identity. It is situated within an Angkorian cultural landscape that transcends the “box” of the archaeological park. These assets are not well known, however, and they are undervalued. To this day, the town of Siem Reap remains “in the shadow of Angkor”.

- **Proposed action: Inventory and preserve the heritage of Siem Reap town.** The Siem Reap/Angkor Urban Observatory (France) plans to make an inventory of the urban heritage of Siem Reap town and to raise public awareness about this heritage. The Observatory is looking for a local partner organization to help it implement this initiative. There are several possible activities that could help preserve the town's core as a resource and guide appropriate development to preserve its significance. Such tools could include simple development guidelines, addressing issues such as siting, scale, form, materials and character. Other measures might include implementing a design review, developing fresh ideas for streetscapes and public spaces, and introducing signal control, trees and other landscaping, public lighting and setbacks.

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#### OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK (SESSION 2)

Institutional arrangements in Siem Reap are complex, characterized by “administrative and bureaucratic gray zones” caused by institutional fragmentation, unclear roles and responsibilities, and weak enforcement. Planning operates in a vacuum, and it is not always clear which agencies are supposed to be providing regulatory oversight when it comes to tourism development and local economic development. This is further hampered by the fact that the Master Plan has not been implemented.

- **Proposed action: Introduce a strategic visioning process.** In the long run, only administrative reforms implemented from the national level can address the overlap and fragmentation of institutional responsibilities that characterize urban planning and development in Siem Reap/Angkor. But in the short to medium term, a strategic visioning process led by Cities Alliance (or a similar organization) might help different institutional stakeholders to agree upon a common development vision and goals, to clarify institutional roles, to improve coordination, to ensure the identification and management of Greater Angkor’s heritage values, and to help implement the urban plans that have already been prepared.

Urban management and heritage preservation are not solely the responsibilities of government. Civil society groups and private businesses can play an important role. Civil society groups are becoming more active in Siem Reap/Angkor. They include monasteries as well as many new forms of NGOs and

civic associations. Involving civil society institutions in heritage preservation and awareness-raising might help build a broader appreciation for heritage preservation in society. Private sector businesses should also play an important role in urban management and heritage management, through public-private partnerships. These already exist in Siem Reap/Angkor, on a small scale, with some hotels paying for maintenance of public spaces. These kinds of arrangements should be expanded. However, their success relies on clear plans and policies and better-defined roles for public and private sector entities.

- **Proposed action: Involve a broad range of actors in heritage preservation efforts.** In Siem Reap/Angkor there is potential to involve the private sector and civil society, such as the monasteries, schools, private citizens, and others. There is a precedent for such involvement: in the roundtable sessions, the venerable monks pointed out that monasteries are already involved in civil duties, such as the planting of trees and the building of schools and roads, and that monks are being taught about heritage.
- **Proposed action: Promote public-private partnerships for urban management and heritage management.** Partnerships between the public and private sectors might be expanded to cover road and drainage improvements in the direct vicinity of hotels and other private investments. Arrangements could also be made with private investors to deliver public goods in exchange for development rights.

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### OBSERVATIONS REGARDING TOURISM AND CONSERVATION (SESSION 3)

Tourism is the main driver of urban expansion in Siem Reap/Angkor. The tourism sector in Siem Reap/Angkor is characterized by massive inflows of private capital (particularly from Chinese or Korean investors) that are invested in joint ventures with local firms or holding companies, for returns in the medium to long term. At the same time, Chinese and Korean government funds are being invested in roads and redevelopment projects. But there is only a limited understanding in government, in academia and within the private sector about the characteristics of the modern tourism sector, and about not only how to manage large inflows of foreign capital, but also how to direct those flows to meet the needs of the expanding city and conserve its heritage resources.

- **Proposed action: Develop capacity to understand the tourism sector.** Cambodia needs to urgently develop its human resource base and in-country expertise (in government, academia and the private sector) in order to better understand the current trends in the Asian tourism market, particularly its “rhythms” and its cultural and socio-economic environment. In addition, capacity building is needed in planning and analyzing the potential impact of the tourism sector

on heritage and the environment. In order to accomplish this, government needs to provide clear guidance on what constitutes appropriate development. There is a need to understand the economics of the tourism sector at Angkor. Where is the money coming from? Where is it going? Where are the gaps? And how might the money be redirected to achieve better results?

There are currently few forums that bring together stakeholders and interest groups from within particular industries. Such a forum is needed in the tourism industry, to help stakeholders map out the interests and needs of the industry at a key moment of its expansion, and to support dialogue on these issues with the government.

- **Proposed action: Create a forum for the tourism sector.** There is a need for a single forum where stakeholders in the tourism sector in Siem Reap/Angkor can regularly meet to discuss issues arising in the sector and to try and agree a common vision and a coordinated approach to opportunities and challenges. This forum could be organized under the aegis of Siem Reap province, the Chamber of Commerce, or even the International Coordinating Committee for Angkor, and it should bring together private investors, private tourism operators, government agencies, as well as concerned civil society groups.

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#### OBSERVATIONS REGARDING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INVESTMENTS (SESSION 4)

Siem Reap is transforming very rapidly from a small village to a sprawling tourist center with rapid ribbon development occurring around and through the archaeological park. This growth is taking place with very little planning, regulation or direction. If this trend continues, there is a risk that uncontrolled development might eventually threaten the “goose that lays the golden eggs”—the archaeological park and the entire regional heritage landscape.

- **Proposed action: Coordinate private investment in infrastructure.** The large sums of money being invested by the private sector (particularly foreign investors) in infrastructure need to be coordinated in one central place in the government, to ensure better oversight and to enable better long-term planning.

There is a large and dynamic private sector—both local and international—that is willing and interested to invest in Siem Reap/Angkor, particularly in the tourist industry and in related infrastructure development. However, an important prerequisite for this investment is a coherent development framework and better guidance for appropriate development.

- **Proposed action: Establish a framework for investment.** Siem Reap/Angkor needs to put in place a development framework that includes approved urban plans (prepared plans must be



approved and enforced) and a (national) infrastructure plan. Another prerequisite is that public sector institutions must be transparent and have adequate capacity.

In addition to putting in place frameworks for physical investment, it is essential that Siem Reap/Angkor invest in the education, knowledge and skills base of its population, as this will be critical to the region's long-term prosperity and ability to compete.

- **Proposed action: Invest in education and skills.** An “international education coalition” should be established, comprising local and international universities, academic research institutions such as CKS and EFEO, and civil society partners such as monasteries and NGOs. The coalition would investigate the possibility of setting up educational center(s) for Siem Reap/Angkor and the surrounding region whose aim would be to provide training, disseminate knowledge, and engage in research in a diverse range of fields relevant to the future development of Siem Reap/Angkor.

#### AFTERMATH OF THE ROUNDTABLE FORUM

The recommendations of the present document, as contained in this Executive Summary, together with the technical analysis of the Briefing Document, will be jointly presented in June 2009 to the International Coordination Committee for Angkor (ICC). The objective of the presentation to the ICC is to make Siem Reap's urban development a key agenda item in the future deliberations of the ICC, and a basis for policy measures by the Royal Government of Cambodia.

## THE COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

### PACIFIC RIM COUNCIL ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development (PRCUD) is a not-for-profit association registered in the United States, whose international membership comprises professionals with significant expertise in a broad range of urban development issues. Since 1998 PRCUD has held regular roundtable forums throughout the Pacific region at the invitation of local hosts, who work closely with PRCUD to select a suitable topic of interest and to plan the event.

The PRCUD roundtable forum format aims to bring substantial benefits to the host city as well as to domestic and foreign participants. By providing a venue for the forum, the host city benefits from intensive interaction and dialogue over several days with experts from around the world who maintain a consistent and substantive focus on key issues of interest to the host city. Domestic experts participating in the forum strengthen and expand their international network of colleagues, and learn more about how other cities address similar challenges to theirs. International participants, many of whom have participated in several PRCUD events, enjoy the opportunity to develop more in-depth knowledge of the urban development context in various settings throughout the region.

PRCUD has held roundtable forums in the following cities, around the following themes:

Year	Venue	Roundtable forum theme
2007	Jakarta, Indonesia	Historic preservation of the Kota Tua (old city) district
2005	Jeonbuk province, Korea	Saemangeum land reclamation project
2004	Nanjing, China	Cultural heritage preservation
2002	Palembang, Indonesia	Inner city revitalization
2001	Melaka, Malaysia	Riverfront redevelopment strategies
2000	Tokyo/Chiba, Japan	Economic development strategy
1999	Long Beach, California, USA	Urban redevelopment
1998	Kaohsiung, Taiwan	Economic development

## APSARA AUTHORITY

The APSARA Authority is the principal Cambodian organization with oversight and management of the Angkor World Heritage site. The Authority was created by Royal Decree in 1995, and its mandate was reinforced by a second Royal Decree in January 1999. The Council of Ministers provides technical supervision, while the Ministry of Economy and Finance provides financial supervision to the Authority. The APSARA Authority is led by a Director General, who is assisted by several Deputy Director Generals.

In collaboration with other governmental agencies, the APSARA Authority is responsible for:

- The protection and enhancement of the culture, environment, and history of the Angkor region.
- The master plan on tourist development, based on the five defined zones of protection and management of Siem Reap/Angkor.
- Supporting the poverty reduction efforts of the Royal Government.
- Cooperating with the Council for the Development of Cambodia on investments and projects related to the mission of APSARA Authority.
- Working with ministries, funders, and governmental and non-governmental organizations on all projects related to its mission.

The territorial authority of APSARA is specified in Article 5 of the Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage, promulgated in 1996. Backed by these legal tools, APSARA represents the Royal Government before all international partners concerned with cultural, urban and tourism development in the region. The Authority thus presides over the Cambodian delegation to the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor (ICC) as well as its Technical Committee.

## THE GETTY CONSERVATION INSTITUTE

The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) works internationally to advance conservation practice in the visual arts – broadly interpreted to include objects, collections, architecture, and sites. The Institute serves the conservation community through scientific research, education and training, model field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field.

In all its endeavors, the GCI focuses on the creation and delivery of knowledge that will benefit the professionals and organizations responsible for the conservation of the world's cultural heritage. Advancing conservation practice is the organizing principle for all of the Institute's work – which includes

identifying activities that improve the way conservation treatments are carried out, pursuing research that expands conservation knowledge, and increasing access to information on conservation subjects.

The Getty Conservation Institute, a part of the J. Paul Getty Trust, began operation in 1985. Since its inception, the Institute has engaged in programs of scientific research, educational activities, documentation, and the dissemination of information through publications, conferences, workshops, and public programs that include research opportunities for professionals and public lectures. In addition, the Institute has conducted international field projects in Asia, Africa, North and South America, and Europe.

## THE CENTER FOR KHMER STUDIES

The Center for Khmer Studies (CKS) promotes research, teaching and public service in the social sciences, arts and humanities as they relate to Cambodia. While promoting scholarly interest in the region, CKS also aims to connect Cambodian scholars, students and artists with their international colleagues for the purpose of fostering understanding of Cambodia and Southeast Asia. The organization's objectives are to:

- Facilitate research and international scholarly exchange through programs that increase understanding of Cambodia and its region;
- Help strengthen Cambodia's cultural and academic structures and integrate Cambodian scholars into their regional and international community;
- Promote a vigorous Cambodian civil society.

Founded in 1999, CKS is an international, non-governmental organization supported by a consortium of universities, organizations, scholars and individuals. CKS is registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cambodia and incorporated in the United States as a tax-exempt institution under article 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code. CKS is the first and only member institution of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORCs) in Southeast Asia. Programs are based in two offices in Cambodia: its headquarters at Wat Damnak in Siem Reap/Angkor and in the capital, Phnom Penh. CKS also maintains an administrative office in New York City and a support office in Paris, *Les Amis du Centre d'Etudes Khmères* where it is registered as an *Association Loi 1901*.

The Observatoire Siem Reap-Angkor, Architecture, patrimoine, développement (the “Observatory”) is a research group of the French urbanism institute IPRAUS (Institut Parisien de Recherche: Architecture, urbanisme, société), which is hosted by the School of Architecture of Paris-Belleville (Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture de Paris-Belleville), UMR A.U.S. n° 7136 C.N.R.S (National Center for Scientific Research in France).

The Observatory was established in 2005 to document the urban and architectural transformations taking place in Siem Reap. The Observatory also supports doctoral and post-doctoral research on Siem Reap. For the purposes of the roundtable forum the Center for Khmer Studies signed an agreement with IPRAUS which enabled the Observatory to provide a critical contribution to the briefing document and to actively participate in the forum.

## PROGRAM

### SUNDAY 26 OCTOBER

- 8:30am** Roundtable forum participants meet in lobby of Angkor Village Hotel
- 8:30am – 12:30pm** Guided visit of Siem Reap town (Wat Bo, Wat Enkosei, Hotel City, and urban periphery)
- 12:30pm – 2:00pm** Luncheon at Psar Loeu
- 2:00pm – 5:30pm** Guided visit of Angkor archaeological park (Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom and Sras Srang)
- 6:30pm** Evening program at Center for Khmer Studies, featuring presentations by Dr. Roland Fletcher, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Sydney; Dr. Jacques Gaucher, senior researcher, EFEO, Siem Reap; and Dr. Alan Kolata, Professor of Anthropology and Social Sciences at the University of Chicago.

### MONDAY 27 OCTOBER

- 8:30am – 9:00am** Registration
- 9:00am – 10:15am** **Opening ceremony**  
Opening address by H.E. Governor Su Phirin of Siem Reap province  
Welcoming address by H.E. Uk Someth, Secretary of State and Advisor to the Office of the Council of Ministers for the Development of Siem Reap  
Address by Philippe Peycam, Director of CKS  
Address by Jeffrey Cody, Sr. Project Specialist, Getty Conservation Institute  
Address by Yeong-Joo Hahn, President of PRCUD
- 10:15am – 10:45am** Coffee break
- 10:45am – Noon** Briefing session by Adèle Esposito and Sylvia Nam (doctoral students) summarizing key points of the Briefing Document
- Noon – 1:30pm** Luncheon
- 1:30pm – 3:30pm** **Session 1: Meanings and values**
- 3:30pm – 4pm** Coffee break

- 4:00pm – 6pm**      **Session 2: Institutional framework**
- 6:00pm – 6:30pm**      Recapitulation of the day
- 7:00pm**      Evening reception hosted by the Getty Conservation Institute

TUESDAY 28 OCTOBER

- 8:30am – 10:30am**      **Session 3: Tourism and conservation**
- 10:30am – 11am**      Coffee break
- 11am – 1pm**      **Session 4: Economic and social investments**
- 1:00pm – 2:30pm**      Luncheon
- 2:30pm – 4:30pm**      **Session 5: Next steps**
- 4:30pm – 5pm**      Coffee break
- 5:00pm – 5:15pm**      Recapitulation of the day
- 5:15pm – 6:15pm**      PRCUD board meeting (by invitation)

WEDNESDAY 29 OCTOBER

- 8:30am – 10:30am**      **Concluding session**
- 10:30am – 11am**      Coffee break
- 11:00am – Noon**      **Closing ceremony**
  - Closing address by H.E. Uk Someth, Secretary of State and Advisor to the Office of the Council of Ministers for the Development of Siem Reap
  - Address by Philippe Peycam, Director of CKS
  - Address by Jeffrey Cody, Sr. Project Specialist, Getty Conservation Institute
  - Address by Yeong-Joo Hahn, President of PRCUD
  - Statement by Vice-Mayor of city of Foshan, Guangdong province, China, host of the 2009 PRCUD roundtable forum
- 12:30pm**      Farewell luncheon

## FORUM PROCEEDINGS

SUNDAY 26 OCTOBER

### VISITS OF SIEM REAP TOWN AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK



*Above: Aline Hétreau-Pottier guides participants in Siem Reap town (Photo: Wang Chuan). Below: Participants visit the “Hotel City” area outside town (Photos: Paul Rabé).*



The roundtable forum began with two site visits for the benefit of the international participants.

In the morning, the visit of **Siem Reap town** was guided by Aline Hétreau-Pottier and Adèle Esposito, both doctoral students affiliated with the Observatoire Siem Reap/Angkor: Architecture, patrimoine, développement, IPRAUS, Paris. The visit started at two pagodas that represent the origins of Siem Reap—Wat Bo and Wat Enkosei. Wat Enkosei is also an old Angkorian shrine. Both pagodas represent sacred spaces that have retained their sacred value. The tour next visited the old colonial core of Siem Reap, an area still considered to be the center of town.

The next stop was at modern shop house developments located on the urban periphery, followed by a stop at “Hotel City” along two newly planned axes outside of town. Hotel City represents a new concept in Siem Reap—the separation of tourist infrastructure from the city—although the area is not yet being utilized as planned.

The tour then proceeded to the eastern edge of town, where the countryside is rapidly being transformed into mixed village-residential developments. After a lunch break at Psar Leou (the upper market) back in town, the tour stopped at the Goldiana Hotel, a modern hotel development situated on top of the Angkorian canal that flowed from Angkor Wat to the Tonle Sap lake.

The tour of the periphery of Siem Reap town was intended to demonstrate the porousness between the countryside and the modern tourist city—a phenomenon modern Siem Reap shares



with Angkor, which also had a highly porous, interdigitated urban-rural interface.

In the afternoon, the visit to the **archaeological park** was guided by Dr. Olivier Cunin, an independent architectural historian. Stops included Angkor Wat, the Angkor Thom complex featuring the Bayon temple and the Elephant Terrace, and a small circuit tour with a stop at the basin of Sras Srang to the east of Angkor Thom.

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#### ..... EVENING PROGRAM AT CKS

The Center for Khmer Studies hosted an evening program for participants of the PRCUD roundtable forum in its headquarters at Wat Damnak, which featured presentations by three scholars:

- **Dr. Roland Fletcher**, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Sydney, gave a presentation about the Greater Angkor Project, a joint international initiative involving the APSARA Authority, the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), and the University of Sydney.
- **Dr. Jacques Gaucher**, senior researcher with the EFEO in Siem Reap, gave a presentation about the archaeological nature of Angkor Thom, as revealed by his ongoing research and excavations.
- **Dr. Alan Kolata**, Professor of Anthropology and Social Sciences at the University of Chicago, shared preliminary research findings from a large University of Chicago–Center for Khmer Studies cross-border socio-economic survey being carried out in 64 villages in Cambodia and northeast Thailand, on economic growth, social inequality and environmental change over time.

MONDAY 27 OCTOBER

#### OPENING SPEECH BY THE GOVERNOR OF SIEM REAP PROVINCE

The Governor of Siem Reap province, H.E. Su Phirin, officially opened the roundtable forum. The Governor's address is reproduced below.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

It is a great honor for me to welcome you today in Siem Reap-Angkor, a city which, as the organizers of this international roundtable have so rightly put it, proudly stands "in the shadow of Angkor".

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and of the Provincial Authority of Siem Reap, I would like to thank the APSARA Authority, the Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development, the Center for Khmer Studies, and the Getty Conservation Institute for making this unique event possible.

The theme of the present roundtable – the development of Siem Reap as a city – could not have come at a more timely moment for us. Indeed, we have witnessed a town which, just a few years back, was a big sleepy village recovering from the ravages of war, transformed into Cambodia's third largest urban concentration – and its fastest growing one.

These developments have occurred against a backdrop of massive tourism development related to the unique attraction of the World Heritage Site of Angkor. Thousands of tourists are pouring into Siem Reap every single day, as they come to discover the site and the grandeur of our ancestors' heritage. This global interest constitutes a great economic opportunity for Cambodia, and for the people of Siem Reap.

But it also represents a major challenge for us all.

Of the many challenges we are facing, the conservation of the integrity of the temples is of course of paramount importance. With the assistance of the international community, represented by UNESCO and the International Coordinating Committee, the Royal Government of Cambodia through the APSARA Authority, is striving to ensure that the incomparable site of Angkor will resist the assaults of time and of human activities.

As people living in Siem Reap, we also need to address other kinds of challenges, perhaps more familiar to our international guest experts: those pertaining to the development and management of a fast growing urban conglomeration. Problems of infrastructure, planning regulation, heritage conservation, economic diversification, waste management, water supply, social services to the population, need to be tackled all at once.

In the last few years, we have benefited substantially from the assistance of many international partners who helped us develop essential technical tools. One of them is the comprehensive Master Plan on the Sustainable Development of the Siem Reap-Angkor Region by the Japanese Government cooperation agency JICA.

Taking inspiration from this vision and these instruments, we need to explore concrete operational strategies that can bring together public authorities and private partners with the long view of developing Siem Reap-Angkor as a full-fledged city – a social, economic and cultural entity that is more than just a dormitory for tourists – a city for its inhabitants, and a city that will deserve the name of “Angkor” and embody its living spirit.

As you may know, the Sanskrit meaning of *Angkor* is “Great City”.

This roundtable forum represents a rare opportunity to address these urgent urban development issues openly and freely. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, of the Provincial Authority, and of my colleagues from the APSARA Authority, I wish to thank all those participating in this roundtable for their presence here today, and for the personal and professional time they have been willing to take to assist us in our efforts.

I and my colleagues look forward with gratitude and anticipation to receiving the recommendations that these discussions will produce.

I would like to proclaim this roundtable forum open, and I wish this meeting success.

Thank you very much.

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## SESSION 1: MEANINGS AND VALUES

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### OBJECTIVE OF THE SESSION

The Chair of Session 1 was Dr. Keiko Miura, lecturer, School of Letters, Arts and Sciences at Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan. Dr. Miura invited the participants to identify the values and meanings of Siem Reap/Angkor. Principal questions were: What are the meanings and values of Siem Reap/Angkor for local residents, for other Cambodians, and for visitors to the area? And how can these intrinsic meanings and values of Siem Reap/Angkor be reflected in development and conservation efforts?

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### THE POWER OF INTANGIBLE VALUES

#### *The need for a reconceptualization*

When “meanings” are discussed, it is important to be clear about the language used to describe the area in question. During the Angkorian era the great city now referred to as Angkor was known as “Yashodharapura”, after King Yashovarman I who reigned from 889-928 AD. Angkor (a name based on the Sanskrit word “nagara” or city) is a modern name given to the seat of the old Khmer empire after the power had already passed away. The new name of Angkor is often used to refer just to the temples and monasteries.

#### *The importance of monasteries*

Buddhist monasteries play a very important role in transmitting intangible values in Khmer society. Monasteries have a multi-functional role: beyond their obvious religious function, they are places that help keep Khmer culture alive and help develop Khmer society, by imparting morals and values. They also serve as meeting places where villagers come together and share ideas. Monks in Siem Reap/Angkor are intimately involved in the educational, cultural and social life of villagers.



*PRCUD Executive Secretary Prof. Eric Heikkila introduces the Chair of Session 1, Dr. Keiko Miura (Photo: Wang Chuan)*

### ***The loss of traditional cultural and ecological values***

There is concern in some quarters that new development around Siem Reap/Angkor is becoming ever more “occidental”, and that as a result traditional cultural values are being lost. The venerable monks participating in the Forum suggested that the current growth pattern is based principally on materialism, at the cost of other values, such as cultural, social and ecological values. Other participants echoed this sentiment, suggesting for example that Siem Reap/Angkor’s traditional link with water is being destroyed by haphazard new development. The question they pose is: is Siem Reap’s development proceeding in the right direction? Is there a disconnect between social, environmental and economic values? Have the cultural values been adequately identified, and have the conservation of those values been properly integrated into the planning of the region? Have the cultural values been adequately identified, and has the conservation of those values been properly integrated into the planning of the region?

### ***Land speculation versus cultural heritage***

While local communities have a long tradition of engagement with the Angkorian monuments, the representative from UNESCO suggested that nowadays, in the minds of many Cambodians, Siem Reap/Angkor is frequently associated with land speculation. In this context, the “meaning” of Siem Reap/Angkor encompasses tourism, money, land, speculation and business. Cultural heritage has to be made relevant to the people again, through public awareness campaigns and training. These campaigns have to emphasize directly the value of heritage to people’s daily lives and livelihoods.

### ***The need for pro-poor development***

Cambodians are very proud of their Angkorian heritage. The heritage represents a national asset and “blood sacrifice”. Local people are not sure how they should perceive tourism. Siem Reap’s new development is not benefiting most local people, as the revenues from tourism are not trickling down. The livelihood of many local people depends on natural resources and livestock, but the environment is being damaged by development. How can we achieve pro-poor development?



*Left: Detail of the Bayon temple (Photo: Wang Chuan). Right: New development and “Western values” in Siem Reap town (Photo: Paul Rabé).*

### ***Convergence of economic and social/environmental/heritage values***

There is a danger of seeing economic values, on the one hand, and social, environmental and heritage values, on the other hand, as contradictory. But these need not be competing values: economic values are critical to the challenge of lifting the population of Siem Reap and Cambodia out of poverty.

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## THE DIRECTION OF FUTURE GROWTH

### ***Which development path?***

The meanings and values informing the future development direction of Siem Reap/Angkor are not clear to all Cambodians. One participant to the Forum—a representative of a private construction company active in Siem Reap—requested the government to clearly articulate what the government’s vision is for future development, and to provide clear guidelines on appropriate development. Siem Reap is often promoted as a beautiful place to live, and private investors are more than willing to help the government achieve this goal and to make a positive contribution to the country. But investors want to know clearly what the development strategy is: in which direction does the government want to lead investors? This may be interpreted as a call for more transparency regarding the regulatory framework.

### ***Urban planning guidance***

There have been several urban planning initiatives for Siem Reap/Angkor, starting in the 1990s (see Box 1 for an overview of initiatives). However, planning still exists in a “gray zone”, since two of the most recent plans (the JICA Master Plan and the Siem Reap district land-use plan) have not yet been approved by central government, and therefore they are not being implemented. Building construction regulation

also exists in a “gray zone”, firstly because of the absence of an overall (formally approved) planning framework, secondly because the mandates and responsibilities of different government agencies remain unclear (see also discussion in next session), and thirdly, because additional guidance on practical implementation of the Master Plan is lacking.

#### **Box 1: An Overview of Urban Planning Efforts in Siem Reap/Angkor**

Urban planning initiatives for Siem Reap/Angkor commenced in the 1990s, and were funded by international agencies and projects. There have been five main initiatives, which have met with only limited success thus far:

- In the 1990s the French groups *ARTE-BCEOM*, *Détente*, *Score* and *GIE Villes Nouvelles* proposed a comprehensive strategy for city and regional management, which included a Hotel City zone. Only the Hotel City zone proposal was adopted in a sub-decree that established a land reserve devoted exclusively to tourism facilities in the northeast part of town. The Hotel City has yet to take form although APSARA Authority is in the process of consolidating land parcels for its development.
- In 1995 a Zoning Environmental Master Plan (ZEMP) was produced, following the world heritage listing of Angkor. This plan led to the promulgation of a sub-decree establishing five zones of protection, though the sub-decree zones differ from those set out in ZEMP.
- The French consulting group *Groupe 8* collaborated with APSARA Authority to create an urban regulatory framework, building on regulatory provisions first introduced in the *ARTE-BCEOM* land use plan of the 1990s. Several draft sub-decrees on urban regulation were submitted by APSARA Authority, but so far none have been approved by central government.
- Between 2004 and 2006 the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) prepared a Master Plan, which has a time horizon of 20 years. A committee has been formed to implement the Master Plan, presided over by JICA’s urban management advisor. The committee includes Siem Reap province, APSARA Authority and Siem Reap district. The Master Plan is still awaiting approval by central government.
- During the same period a land use plan was developed for Siem Reap district as part of the Asia-Urbs “Provincial Towns in Cambodia” project. The district land use plan is still awaiting approval at central government level.

*Source: Adapted from the Briefing Document for the 2008 PRCUD Forum, p. vii.*

#### ***Channels of participation***

What are the channels by which local people can make their voices heard and express their opinions about development in Siem Reap? The Chair suggested that there is no tradition of local people raising their voices. But H.E. Uk Someth, Secretary of State and Advisor to the Office of the Council of Ministers for the Development of Siem Reap, explained that channels of citizen participation are currently being established through development projects such as the European Commission-funded Asia-Urbs “Provincial Towns in Cambodia” project. This project supports the newly established district council in Siem Reap in its efforts to promote transparency to the public. As part of this effort, the project has established a “one window” information service for the public, and it has created a “Citizen’s Office”

with an ombudsman. It has also promoted peoples' participation in urban planning, particularly with regard to the district land use plan supported by Asia-Urbs.

### ***Connecting heritage with local people***

Several participants remarked that an unintended consequence of the archaeological park was to “box” heritage in and limit it for administrative purposes largely to what is (only) inside the park. The archaeological park was considered a Western notion. One concern is that if Siem Reap/Angkor’s World Heritage status removes the connection between local people and their own heritage, then this status is detrimental. In this context, the layers of heritage found in Siem Reap/Angkor might represent a “tyranny of history”. The traditional uses and activities, as contributing to the cultural significance of the site, need to be recognized so that their continuation is incorporated into conservation management policies. This will ensure better connections between people and place.

### ***Diversification of the economic and social base***

The government needs to plan ahead and diversify the economic and educational base of Siem Reap/Angkor, to avoid the “service economy trap”—a situation where the only employment opportunities are in the tourism services sector, and where the skills base remains low. The participants acknowledged that Cambodia is starting from a very low base, given the recent legacy of three decades of warfare and genocide. The kind of sophisticated planning required to diversify the economy depends first of all on sufficient capacity and vision within the national government.

### ***Valuing Siem Reap***

Siem Reap has to emerge from under the shadow of Angkor. The town of Siem Reap has an identity and a meaning and value in and of itself, quite apart from the splendor of “Angkor”. The town has its own urban, vernacular heritage, but this heritage is not well known. This heritage is fragile and vulnerable to exploitation, given the current high land prices and speculation. The heritage needs to be identified, documented and then policies for its protection and management incorporated into planning mechanisms.



*Scenes from modern Siem Reap: new shop house units constructed outside of town (left); and Psar Leou market (right) (Photos: Paul Rabé).*



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## SESSION 2: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

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### OBJECTIVE OF THE SESSION

The Chair of Session 2 was Charles Goldblum, professor of urban planning at the Institut Français d'Urbanisme, Université de Paris VIII, Champs-sur-Marne, France. In Session 2 participants discussed institutional constraints related to urban planning and land management in Siem Reap/Angkor. In addition, participants were asked to identify what types of regulatory and institutional structures might be consistent with the intrinsic meanings and values of Siem Reap/Angkor identified in Session 1.

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### INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS

#### ***Obstacles to plan implementation***

H.E. Uk Someth stated that many plans have been prepared in Cambodia, but the main problem is always implementation. At the root of the implementation problem are institutional constraints including the lack of capacity, institutional fragmentation (APSARA Authority alone has 14 internal departments) and a lack of institutional commitment or political will.

#### ***Capacity constraints***

The representative from JICA suggested that provincial government lacks capacity to implement the planning proposals made thus far. Problems include weak skills in information technology, lack of proper equipment, lack of access to maps, and low human resource capacity overall. In addition, sector departments have a shortage of manpower and funds. Participants debated the merits of training programs: some participants argued that training outside the country was very expensive and not advantageous for Cambodians, while others suggested that a combination of training abroad and internal administrative reform has proved to be very effective to overcome institutional constraints in some countries, under the right circumstances.

#### ***Lack of knowledge of the tourism sector and its potential impact***

There is a weak knowledge base in Cambodia (in the government, but also in academia and the private sector) on how to deal with the tourism sector, particularly its “rhythms” and its cultural and socio-economic environment. In addition, there is a lack of capacity to plan and analyze the potential impact of the tourism sector on heritage and the environment. Within the next few years, urban development in Siem Reap is likely to expand through massive linear development along major roadways. This urban expansion is likely to cut right through the Angkor archaeological park. Tourism is the main driver of this physical expansion. The needs of tourism currently outweigh consideration for how to manage the conservation of the historic resources.

### ***Overlapping institutional mandates***

Another institutional constraint is the problem of overlapping institutional mandates, which have created “administrative and bureaucratic gray zones”<sup>1</sup>. Siem Reap is a special case within Cambodia: as a result of the world heritage listing of Angkor, an additional planning authority was created (APSARA Authority) which has a mandate to supervise construction and development within the whole Siem Reap/Angkor region, alongside the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction. Another gray zone concerns the planning responsibilities of sub-national government during the transition phase of decentralization (see point on “decentralization and deconcentration”, in the following sub-section). National government is pushing provincial and district governments to take increasing decisions, but institutional responsibilities for planning are not always clear.

### ***A plethora of outside agencies***

The presence of a large number of international agencies and NGOs operating in Siem Reap/Angkor has added to the problem of overlapping institutional mandates and institutional fragmentation. Many NGOs and donor agencies pursue their own activities, and spend little time coordinating with others. The urban planning situation is an example (see Box 1): since the 1990s over five separate plans have been produced as part of international projects.

### ***Who is regulating and coordinating development?***

Several participants wondered whether there was any connection between investment and regulation. It is not clear which actor(s) are providing regulatory oversight when it comes to tourism development and local economic development. Enforcement is weak: development is already by-passing the recommendations of the JICA master plan. Who is playing the role of investment coordinator and quality manager?

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## **IMAGINING NEW INSTITUTIONAL FORMS**

### ***Decentralization and deconcentration***

Cambodia is still highly centralized. A process of decentralization and deconcentration is underway, supported by international donors, but this process will take time to be institutionalized. As part of the decentralization Siem Reap will get its own proper local government, but until that time the provincial government of Siem Reap functions as a local authority—a role which it is not ideally suited to do.

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<sup>1</sup> PRCUD Forum briefing document, p. vi

### *Towards a clearer institutional landscape?*

Investors seek certainty and a clear institutional landscape. Participants debated whether decentralization and deconcentration will help to clarify the institutional situation or—on the contrary—whether it will further confuse investors (and ordinary citizens) as even more government levels achieve decision making powers.

### *Strategic visioning instead of master planning*

Given the perennial problem of implementation, some participants suggested that a master plan approach is less useful than a strategic planning process, as strategic plans are more flexible and less rigid than master plans. However, participants agreed that what is needed is not another *plan*, but a strategic *process* to help officials implement already existing plans. Siem Reap/Angkor might benefit more from a strategic visioning exercise that involves all the main stakeholders and tries to achieve consensus around a common vision. Cities Alliance (supported by UN-Habitat and the World Bank) has experience assisting cities in conducting such a strategic exercise.

### *The need for stakeholder forums*

Forums are needed that bring together and encourage dialogue between different stakeholders. One such forum could bring together different stakeholders in the tourism industry to map out the interests and needs of the industry, and to support dialogue on these issues with the government.

### *Emerging forms of civil society*

Modern Siem Reap is a place with many emerging civil society groups. Some of these groups are culturally familiar to Cambodians, such as monasteries. Others are new, such as a growing number of NGOs and community associations. This trend represents the “crystallization of a new model”: these groups embody the evolving “meanings and values” of Siem Reap/Angkor, as discussed in session 1, and they are seeking a place in society.



*Left: Wat Bo; Right: The CKS Library at Wat Damnak—an example of investing in education and skills (see conclusions and recommendations) (Photos: Wang Chuan).*

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## SESSION 3: TOURISM AND CONSERVATION

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### OBJECTIVE OF THE SESSION

The Chair of Session 3 was Han Verheijden, Director of ZKA Consultants & Planners, based in Breda, the Netherlands. The Chair observed that based on the first two Sessions, locals seem to have three objectives: to benefit from a property-based economy, to respect values (religious and otherwise), and to seek an identity (curiously, Siem Reap is not a ‘city’, institutionally.)

The objectives of Session 3 were to discuss how tourism and economic policy can be shaped to support sustainable development of the Angkor region and to address the three objectives outlined in yesterday’s discussion. First, the Chair asked a provocative question: suppose there were no Angkor Wat, would there still be tourism to Siem Reap? Next, the session focused on several specific questions: What is the tourism concept of Siem Reap/Angkor? How can the tourism sector and urban planning be organized to realize this concept? And how can tourism revenues contribute to improving the livelihoods of the local people?

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### SIEM REAP BEYOND ANGKOR WAT

#### ***Expand the tourism focus to all of the Angkor site***

It is important to shift the focus of the discussion of heritage beyond the monuments in the archaeological park. The park contains some magnificent temples but it is merely the central portion of the immense “Angkor urban complex” that stretches over 1000 square kilometers. This site contains ponds, canals, road embankments, shrines and house mounds—part of a whole landscape of a past living heritage that should be reconnected to a living heritage today. There is a good business opportunity for the tourism sector and developers to market the living heritage of the whole Angkor region. At the same time, this would help to provide locals and visitors alike with a more complete understanding of the living heritage of Angkor.

### ***Siem Reap's potential as an independent tourist destination***

After 1998, when the more stabilized political situation in Cambodia brought greater security, tourism began to escalate. The evolution of the tourism sector in Siem Reap/Angkor can be broken down into two phases. During the first phase, Siem Reap was little more than a place for tourists to stay and eat on their way to visiting the temples at Angkor. But during the current phase Siem Reap is coming into its own as an independent tourist destination, for example by marketing itself as a golf destination in Southeast Asia. Places like Battambang (the third largest Cambodian city) are demonstrating that tourists are starting to perceive secondary cities in Cambodia as destinations in themselves, with attractions being local lifestyles, local heritage, and monasteries.

### ***Angkor heritage as the catalyst for tourism to Siem Reap***

But other participants countered that “Angkor” is the clear catalyst for tourism to Siem Reap, and that without its Angkorian heritage Siem Reap would not even figure on most tourist maps. Rather, the challenge for Siem Reap is: once the tourists are here, how can the area encourage them to stay longer?

### ***Diversifying the destination***

A representative from APSARA summarized the debate by suggesting that the monuments in the archaeological park were still the primary attraction for tourists in Siem Reap, but that there was a need to diversify the destination in order to relieve the pressure on the temples and in order to expand the range of tourist options. Alternative attractions in the area include environmental tourism, including Tonle Sap lake and Phnom Kulen, modern monasteries and community based tourism, including homestays.

### ***The growth of down-market tourist circuits***

The danger for Siem Reap is that there are regional circuit tours that are already promoting Siem Reap/Angkor as a destination for gambling and sex. Once Siem Reap enters this kind of market there is more competition from other places in Cambodia and within the region. For example, mega casinos are now being built in Singapore. Casinos already exist on Cambodia's borders with Thailand and Vietnam. Furthermore, this kind of tourism has deleterious effects on the historic and religious values of the Angkor/Siem Reap region. Given the power of “Angkor” to attract large numbers of visitors, the participants strongly advised against developing the region as an ‘entertainment hub’. Preventing this kind of tourism would remove the inevitable conflict that arises between this type of tourism and the needs for conservation.

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## THE TOURISM CONCEPT IN SIEM REAP/ANGKOR

### *Managing tourism*

A principal question is: what is the best way to manage tourism sensitively? There are good and bad lessons in tourism management. Siem Reap/Angkor should do a careful study of the lessons to be learned, to ensure that it learns from the mistakes of other tourist destinations. There are many experiments with local economic development and tourism in China that might be useful for Cambodia to study. PRCUD could help Siem Reap/Angkor to locate relevant case studies.

### *Create tourism zones and focus on high value tourism*

One option for tourism management is to concentrate tourism in a selected number of areas only, as Hawaii has done through the use of zoning policies. Another question is: what kind of tourists does Siem Reap/Angkor want to attract? Some participants felt that backpacker tourists tend to “take” more than they give back to the community, so they felt there is a wisdom in marketing Siem Reap/Angkor as a high value destination and concentrating more on the wealthier tourist segment—a market with fewer people but the prospect of higher tourist revenues.



*Left: “Restaurant row” in the heart of Siem Reap’s tourist district; Right: Tuk-tuk with passengers (Photos: Wang Chuan).*

### *Leakage of tourism revenues*

The reason Siem Reap province remains the third poorest in the country is because 75% of the added value of tourism receipts leaves the country. Cambodia lacks a national flag carrier. Most hotels are 50% co-investments. Almost 75% of the food is imported. The only benefits that remain in the country are the earnings of *tuk-tuk* and *motodop* drivers, souvenir sellers and proceeds from entry tickets.

### *Promoting a living heritage landscape*

A new tourism concept that could help to better connect the local population to heritage tourism in Siem Reap/Angkor is to promote the idea of a “living, continuous cultural landscape”. This concept moves away from the idea of heritage as a frozen landscape devoid of people and includes local people and their lifestyles as part of the area’s heritage attraction.

#### **Box 2: The Regional Economic Development/Green Belt project**

In October 2007 the Council of Ministers, with support from the German technical cooperation agencies GTZ and DED, launched a 5.5 million euro “Regional Economic Development/Green Belt project” in order to increase the market participation of farmers and the local population in Siem Reap province in several key product segments for the tourist market, including vegetables, fruits and handicrafts. The rationale for the project is that, despite the significant and growing tourism sector in Siem Reap, the province remains among the poorest in Cambodia and the province’s population hardly benefits from tourist revenues. The project is part of the Royal Government of Cambodia’s policy thrust to transform the entire Siem Reap region into a “green belt” in order to promote strong backward linkages between tourism and agriculture.

The project has three main components:

- *Original partnership for rural development*: the project will promote better cooperation between the public sector, private businesses and civil society institutions to develop a joint vision for balanced and fair development.
- *Market participation of the poor*: the project will promote agricultural and handicraft production and productivity to ensure a bigger share of local and Cambodian products in the Siem Reap market.
- *Local governance and improved service provision*: the project will support the implementation in Cambodia of decentralization and deconcentration reform in the areas important for rural development and poverty alleviation. Activities will address the capacity of rural citizens to play an active role in local government and to improve the accessibility and quality of government services.

*Source: DED/Council for the Development of Cambodia (2008)*

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## SESSION 4: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INVESTMENTS

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### OBJECTIVE OF THE SESSION

The Chair of Session 4 was Thomas Zearley of the World Bank (retired). Session 4 challenged the participants to consider questions about financing options, implementation arrangements and other social and economic instruments. If a possible vision for Siem Reap/Angkor is as a spiritual, cultural, educational and environmentally balanced city that sees tourism as a driver for economic growth and poverty reduction, then what kind of instruments are needed to achieve this vision? What are the opportunities? And what are the constraints?

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### SOCIO-ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

#### *Investment planning - national and regional dimensions*

It is impossible to disconnect investment plans and requirements in Siem Reap/Angkor from those in the rest of Cambodia—and indeed the wider region. Infrastructure networks in Siem Reap/Angkor will increasingly be connected with those at national and regional levels. This is especially true for investments in transportation, such as roads and airports, which are already being planned and coordinated at the Southeast Asian level. For example, there are plans for major road (and in future possibly also railroad) connections linking Cambodia to its neighbors. And airlines are already operating regional tourist itineraries linking Siem Reap/Angkor with other popular tourist destinations in Thailand, Vietnam and Lao PDR.

#### *Investing tourism revenues in poverty reduction schemes*

Income from tourism represents a major opportunity for Siem Reap/Angkor. There should be substantial tax revenues flowing from the estimated 2 million tourists that visit Siem Reap/Angkor each year. These revenues should be reinvested to reduce socio-economic inequalities in Siem Reap town, the district and province. The Royal Government of Cambodia, in partnership with bilateral donor agencies such as GTZ/DED and New Zealand Aid, among others, is trying to ensure that local communities benefit more from tourism development, for example by promoting backward linkages between tourism and agriculture through the Regional Economic Development/Green Belt project (see Box 2). These kinds of initiatives should be expanded. In addition, private sector investors are being encouraged to take social responsibility and help address development needs related to education and basic services for local residents.



### ***Investing tourism revenues in infrastructure development***

In addition to poverty reduction schemes mentioned above, tourism revenues should also be reinvested to support infrastructure. Local taxes and revenues should be earmarked for specific improvements in the tourist sector.

### ***Private investment for infrastructure***

There is a large and dynamic private sector—both local and international—that is willing and interested to support infrastructure development for the tourist industry, provided that the government has a coherent development framework for this purpose, including a national infrastructure plan. Another prerequisite is that public sector institutions must be transparent and have relatively good capacity. The challenges are to facilitate dialogue between the private sector and the government, and to institutionalize requirements for the private sector to deliver public goods in exchange for obtaining development rights in Siem Reap/Angkor.



*Above: New hotel developments sit side-by-side with shacks on the Siem Reap river. Below: Motodop driving is the most common income source for men in Cambodian cities (Photos: Wang Chuan)*



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## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS**

### ***Widespread poverty***

One of the major socio-economic threats facing Siem Reap/Angkor is that the local population is not benefiting much from tourism development and economic growth, except through low skill and low paid jobs. Siem Reap province remains one of the poorest in Cambodia. According to official statistics, 47 percent of the province's population remains below the poverty level. There is a need for a pro-poor approach to tourism development and to create a strong nexus between local communities and income.

### ***The danger of uncoordinated growth***

Thus far, none of the plans drawn up for Siem Reap have been implemented (see Box 1). If this planning vacuum persists there is a risk that future development will proceed without any coordination and might even threaten the archaeological park. Development needs to take place in the context of a planning framework agreed by the public sector.

### ***Unpredictable framework for private investment***

There is a large and dynamic private sector—both local and international—that is willing and interested to support infrastructure development for the tourist industry. But there are several constraints to private sector investment, including lack of clarity on how to work with government authorities, including unpredictable delays and costs; lack of transparency in the local decision-making process; and the lack of an agreed planning framework, given that the Master Plans are not being implemented. The national government and APSARA Authority are trying to reform and adjust to the requirements of investors, but they are being challenged by the fast pace of growth.

### ***The existence of private enclaves***

In the absence of a public planning framework, there is a risk that urban growth in Siem Reap/Angkor will continue to lead to the creation of “private enclaves” that are socially and economically disconnected from the town and its people. The idea of private enclaves can also be extended to patterns of land ownership. The representative of the Department of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction noted that most land around town is in the hands of private land owners; this situation makes it difficult for the government to access land for roads. The government has no land reserved for public institutions and infrastructure rights of way.



*Investment in public infrastructure, such as the road network (left), is failing to keep pace with investment in luxury hotels (right) and other large private developments (Photos: Paul Rabé).*

### ***Sub-standard infrastructure***

Siem Reap’s infrastructure is failing to keep up with the town’s rapid growth. Urban expansion and tourism are putting increasing strain on the area’s water supply, sanitation, drainage and road transport systems. JICA proposed a range of different infrastructure projects in its master plan, but government departments at provincial level lack staff and funds to implement them. Participants mentioned several possible schemes to involve the private sector in funding infrastructure improvements. One scheme to finance road improvements could be in the form of a tourist tax collected by hotels to fund road repairs

in the direct neighborhood. Another idea (following practice in the U.S.) is to require private investors to deliver public goods in exchange for the right to develop.

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## SESSION 5: NEXT STEPS

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### OBJECTIVE OF THE SESSION

The Chair of Session 5 was Cor Dijkgraaf, Director of Urban Solutions, based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The objective of the final session was to challenge participants to identify the next steps required to translate the thoughts raised during the four preceding sessions into general observations and concrete action points. Specific questions from the Chair included: 1) How to increase the role of the monasteries? 2) How to build a greater awareness of heritage, first of all among the local population, but also among other Cambodians, visitors and outside organizations? **The general observations and proposed actions are contained in the Executive Summary at the front of this report.**

WEDNESDAY 29 OCTOBER

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### CONCLUDING SESSION

The President of PRCUD, Mr. Yeong-Joo Hahn, presided over the closing session of the PRCUD Forum. Mr. Hahn was joined in this effort by H.E. Uk Someth, Secretary of State and Advisor to the Office of the Council of Ministers for the Development of Siem Reap. The Chairs of the five sessions presented the key points of their sessions. These are summarized below under the Forum's five principal sub-topics.

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### MEANINGS AND VALUES

Buddhist monasteries (*Wats*) are a central pillar of Khmer civil society, and therefore they have a critically important place in any discussion of meanings and values in Siem Reap/Angkor. Monasteries have multi-functional roles: they have a religious and spiritual function, and they have a long-standing

educational and cultural function. Monasteries are considered to be reservoirs of values: monks typically provide (formal and informal) advice to people on moral education and values. Moreover, monasteries also have a healing function in Khmer society, particularly during times of personal or societal crisis. These multiple functions of monasteries are inculcated in every Khmer.

The heritage values of Siem Reap/Angkor risk being lost. The value of heritage is underestimated, and as a result heritage is being threatened by newer, more dominant values. One example is the old canal system of Angkor, which is being threatened in places by modern development and rising land prices. The creation of the Angkor archaeological park has unfortunately led to restrictions being imposed on how local people interact with the park's significant resources. This, in turn, has resulted in the separation of the heritage from the everyday lives of the people. The people need to recapture a sense of ownership of their ancient heritage. Heritage needs to be "re-valued" and its importance re-emphasized. For this, the role of the monasteries is critical, so that they can help identify values and help create policies and tools for their conservation.



*The Psar Chas market area in the old core of Siem Reap town (Photo: Wang Chuan).*

Development in Siem Reap/Angkor should be a process of reconnecting multiple, often seemingly competing values such as economic development, social development, environmental and religious values. Economic development has both positive and negative effects in Siem Reap/Angkor: it can contribute to income generation and poverty alleviation, but also threatens heritage and the natural environment. However, economic development and social, heritage and environmental values need not be competing values. They can become "converging values": economic values can be used to aid development and the environment. The heritage values of Siem Reap/Angkor should be tapped into and channeled for economic development. The government's direction and vision are called for to enable greater convergence.

Despite the ever-increasing numbers of foreign visitors, Siem Reap province remains the third-poorest province in Cambodia. Empowerment of the local population needs to occur through economic development as well as through education, capacity development and skills training. Local people have to be included as stakeholders in the economic development and tourism development currently taking place in and around Siem Reap.

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## INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The institutional system in Siem Reap is complex. It includes many different agencies from government, bilateral donors and NGOs, with often overlapping roles. This institutional fragmentation results in unclear roles and responsibilities and weak enforcement. Planning currently operates in a vacuum, and it is not always clear which agencies are supposed to be providing regulatory oversight when it comes to tourism development and local economic development. A strategic visioning or planning process, coordinated by Cities Alliance and involving the main stakeholders, might be able to help identify and address some of the institutional bottlenecks. In addition, international projects need to coordinate their planning initiatives. Siem Reap/Angkor requires one overall plan instead of the numerous overlapping plans that exist at the current moment.

Provincial government and sector departments in the province suffer from poor capacity and a shortage of human and financial resources and equipment. These deficiencies are not easily overcome in the short term, but capacity development and skills training should be a continued focus of donor interventions.

New institutional forms are emerging. With decentralization Siem Reap may soon have its own local government. Civil society groups are assuming a higher profile. Associations of stakeholders and interest groups are required to help tackle the lack of institutional linkages.

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## TOURISM AND CONSERVATION



*Local children at the entrance to Angkor Thom (Photo: Wang Chuan).*

An integrated approach to tourism in Siem Reap/Angkor requires sustained investment in infrastructure and physical planning; the availability of adequate and attractive facilities and public places, for locals and tourists alike; the organization of highly visible tourist activities in the area of arts and culture; and extending the region of focus to include the broader region of “Angkor”. The government needs to take the lead in this effort: government authorities—led by APSARA Authority, the Ministry of Tourism, and other tourism bodies—need to create the framework within which selected private

developers and investors are invited to operate. In order to play this central coordinating role, the government needs to develop its own in-house capacity in, and knowledge of, the tourism sector, through the recruitment of high-quality expertise.

Several participants proposed remaking and rebranding Siem Reap/Angkor as a “high-value destination”, with Angkor Wat as an anchor attraction. As part of such a rebranding initiative, the emphasis would be on promoting (higher) values as culture, spirit and heritage rather than cheap entertainment and casinos that are not compatible with the Angkorian heritage. Such a strategy would enable Siem Reap/Angkor to attract a higher class of tourists and therefore, through tourism revenues, help it to better preserve its archaeological heritage. No consensus was achieved about this proposal.

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## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INVESTMENTS

The vision of Siem Reap/Angkor as a spiritually, culturally and environmentally balanced region, where tourism development drives economic growth and poverty reduction, is facing a stiff challenge in the current development paradigm.

Poverty rates in Siem Reap province remain stubbornly high. Meanwhile, the rapid urban growth in Siem Reap/Angkor is complicating the efforts of APSARA Authority and other government agencies to successfully impose a public framework for growth and investment. Land is largely in the hands of private entities, and growing land speculation makes it difficult to implement planned roadways and access land for public facilities. Large commercial tourism developments dominate the landscape. Building regulations are poorly enforced. Siem Reap/Angkor is becoming an area of private enclaves and vanishing public spaces.

Yet Siem Reap/Angkor has many resources at its disposal to still meet its development vision. With over 2 million visitors to the region, there should be substantial tax revenues to link tourism with local economic development, poverty reduction and infrastructure. Better institutions are required to enable these links. Priorities are public service reform and sustained capacity development of public sector agencies in urban management, tourism and heritage management, and pro-poor approaches to tourism development.



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