

Roundtable: What can the right branding do for Cambodia's Rice Exports?

October 28th, 2015 at Raffles le Royal hotel Phnom Penh

Key quotes

"CRF is working on a new brand name... that it plans to announce at the Cambodia Rice Forum in November." (CRF's acting secretary-general Moul Sarith), 2015.

and

"The Ministry of Agriculture has already zeroed in on "Cambodia Jasmine Phka Rumduol" as the sole brand name for Cambodian rice...[and] would like to urge all rice exporters to use this name from now on," said Hean Vanhorn, deputy director.

Rationale

Agriculture accounts for 30.9% of national GDP (2011 estimates; CIA - World Fact Book). The main agricultural product is rice (70% of arable land), which is grown for domestic consumption and export. Commercial crops (in particular rubber, cassava and sugar cane) and rice will however be taking a more significant share in future years through the development of the Economic Land Concessions and of the Rice Policy respectively. For instance the annual growth rate of rice exports between 2006-2011 was of 101.8 (Source NIS 2014 based on FAOSTAT 2014).

Thus rice represents an important foundation for the livelihoods of the Cambodian people as well as for national economic growth.

Rice production is a key priority of the Royal Government of Cambodia. Annual production and exports are increasing fast, and the Government aims to increase both productivity and quality to produce by end 2015 a surplus of paddy of more than 4 million tons and export at least 1 million tons of milled rice per year.

The actual figure (from January to August 2015) was of 342,136 tons:

Jasmine rice	112,747
Fragrant rice	39,802
Long grain white rice	160587
Long grain parboiled rice	29000
Total (in tons)	342,136

Jan-Aug 2015: Source: Cambodia Rice Federation

There has been increasing coverage over the last few months of the challenges facing Cambodian rice as identified in the recent report of the "Cambodia Export Diversification and Expansion Program - Milled Rice" (also known as "CEDEP 1") - a World Bank/IFC funded programme. It is clear that there is an urgent need to review different strategies to better promote Cambodian rice.

Context

In October 2014, UK Trade & Investment, Lord Puttnam and HE the Minister of Commerce hosted a major branding conference in Phnom Penh called 'Stand Out'. The thrust of the conference was to discuss ways for Cambodia to change its national brand so often related to conflict, Khmer Rouge, landmines and killing fields. The call for a positive branding strategy was clear and oriented towards growth and opportunity with the upcoming AEC. It was agreed that agricultural commodities such as rice should be better promoted in order to play their crucial role in economic development.

Purpose of the roundtable

We aim to bring together and engage a diverse group of stakeholders in a more visionary discussion of the future of the rice sector in Cambodia, and create awareness and interest among stakeholders about how to foster Rice exports and develop adequate rice branding strategies. The outcomes will support the setting of priorities for development of national branding strategies.

Objectives

This unique multi-stakeholder roundtable aims to deliver the following:

1. Engage stakeholders to articulate aspirations for the rice sector in Cambodia in pursuit of better branding sustainability in rural livelihoods and the national rice sector.
2. Elicit stakeholders' aspirations and interest in a national branding strategy
3. Generate consensus on what needs to be done and by whom

Program

What can the right branding do for Cambodia's Rice Exports?

10-30 11-00 ***Arrival and Registration***

11-00 ***Opening and National Anthem***

11-00_11-15 ***Introduction and Scoping of the round table***

- HE Bill Longhurst – British Ambassador to Cambodia
- Dr. Rathana Peou – CCAFS Regional Scenarios Coordinator, University of Oxford (ECI)

11-15_11-25 ***Setting the vision***

- HE Sun Chanthol , Minister of Commerce of Cambodia

11-25_11-55 ***Opening Panel:*** Understanding the context and acknowledging achievements

- Jean-Marie Brun (IRAM), Project Management Advisor of the “Support to the Commercialization of Cambodian Rice Project”, coordinated by the Supreme National Economic Council (SNEC) and financed by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD)
- Cedric Gertgen (AD Communication) Managing Director, Project funded by IFC

11-55_12-35 ***Panel of reactions:*** How to foster a credible branding strategy for Cambodia's Rice Export? What should be done and how?

- The Lord Puttnam CBE, UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Cambodia
- David Van, Managing Director of BGA Cambodia
- Nicholas Spencer, CEO IBIS rice

12-35_12-45 ***Questions/ comments*** from the audience , HE Bill Longhurst will moderate

12-45-12-55 ***Summary and recommendations***

- Dr Rathana Peou
- Lord Puttnam

12-55 ***Closing Remarks and Outlook***

- HE Bill Longhurst

13-00 Buffet lunch, ***Crystal Room***

KEYNOTES

HE. Sun Chantol

Sun Chantol represents a modern generation of Cambodian politicians, having been brought up and educated in the United States, where he received advanced degrees from Wharton and Harvard. He gained extensive corporate private sector experience and served as a board member and chairman of Wharton Asia. Sun Chantol was elected as a “Global Leader of Tomorrow” at the World Economic Forum in 1995.

Chantol left Cambodia as a young man in 1973 as the country was descending into an era of catastrophic civil war and devastation. With \$50 in his pocket and no English language skills, Chantol spent his early years in Maryland in the US, studying English while financing his studies by washing dishes in a restaurant by night. Realising the ‘American Dream’, Chantol secured a scholarship and subsequently joined the General Electric Financial Management Program, where over the following 16 years he worked his way up in positions in the US and France, culminating in his appointment to the position of country manager for G.E. in Thailand.

Following the genocide of the Khmer Rouge era, Cambodia in 1993 was in desperate need of experts from all areas to rebuild its economy and society. Chantol was asked by the Prime Minister to return to help rebuild the country in 1994 and to set up the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), a one-stop foreign direct investment institution, where he served as secretary general from 1994 until 1997. During this period he also served as Secretary of State for Economy and Finance.

Upon completing these tasks he returned to the private sector, attending the Advanced Management Program at Wharton, University of Pennsylvania in 1997 and earning a master’s degree in public administration from Harvard University in 1999. He returned again to Cambodia and set up his own trading and investment company in 1999.

From 1999 until 2003, Chantol was an economic and finance advisor to the president of the National Assembly, and in 2003 was elected as a member of Cambodia’s parliament. On a ministerial level, Chantol successively served as Minister of Public Works and Transport (2004-2008) and as Senior Minister and Vice-Chairman of the CDC (2008-2013).

In September 2013, Chantol was appointed as Minister of Commerce with a clear mandate: to reform the ministry, improve trade facilitation processes within the administration, support the development of the private sector via increased transparency and efficiency within the ministry, and to attract more foreign direct investment to the country. Chantol continues to serve as Vice-Chairman of the CDC.

Within his first months at the Ministry of Commerce (MoC), Chantol has been able to launch significant reforms designed to speedily improve the business environment of the Kingdom. Essential reforms to restructure the organisation of the MoC itself have been implemented, including the introduction of transparent human resources and organisational processes. Automating the Company Registration and Certificate of Origin registrations has significantly reduced the payment of informal fees too.

The MoC has also initiated a new and open dialogue with the public, reaching out to a new generation of informed citizens on social media. A Facebook page (www.facebook.com/moc.gov.kh) and a YouTube channel are constantly being updated with the latest activities at the Ministry of Commerce, offering public access to progresses made towards more transparency and inclusiveness. The Ministry of Commerce Facebook page has proven to be incredibly popular, in particular with students studying business and economics. Within a short period of time this social media platform has grown to become one of the most popular government Facebook page’s in Cambodia: It is a first step towards a modern, global communications strategy for Cambodia’s political institutions.

Recognizing the importance of better information and education to move the nation forward, Chantol has initiated a series of commerce-orientated seminars and educational events. These seminars outline policies and give informed market insights as well as provide updates on the MoC’s progresses to an audience hungry for reforms. International and local experts lecture on a variety of relevant subjects.

Background Note- *What can the Right Branding do for Cambodia’s Rice Exports?*

Lord Puttnam

David Puttnam is the chair of Atticus Education, an online education company based in Ireland. Atticus, through a unique arrangement with BT Ireland, delivers interactive seminars on film and a variety of other subjects to educational institutions around the world.

David spent thirty years as an independent producer of award-winning films including *The Mission*, *The Killing Fields*, *Local Hero*, *Chariots of Fire*, *Midnight Express*, *Bugsy Malone* and *Memphis Belle*. His films have won ten Oscars, 25 Baftas and the Palme D'Or at Cannes.

From 1994 to 2004 he was Vice President and Chair of Trustees at the British Academy of Film & Television Arts (BAFTA) and was awarded a BAFTA Fellowship in 2006.

He retired from film production in 1998 to focus on his work in public policy as it relates to education, the environment, and the creative and communications industries. In 1998 he founded the National Teaching Awards, which he chaired until 2008, also serving as the first Chair of the General Teaching Council from 2000 to 2002. From July 2002 to July 2009 he was president of UNICEF UK, engaging with issues as diverse as water security and child trafficking.

In October 2013 David stepped down as Chancellor of the Open University a post he was appointed to in 2006, following ten years as Chancellor of The University of Sunderland.

He is the Republic of Ireland's Digital Champion; President of the Film Distributors' Association; Chair of the TSL Advisory Board; Chair of the Academic Board, Pearson College; a UNICEF Ambassador, and Adjunct Professor of Film Studies and Digital Humanities at University College Cork.

He was Deputy Chairman of Channel 4 Television (2006 - 2012) and The Sage Gateshead (2007- 2012), founding Chair of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) and Chair of both the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television and the National Film and Television School for ten years. He has also served as a trustee of the Tate Gallery, the Science Museum, the Thomson Foundation and a great number of other organisations.

In 2007 he was appointed Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Draft Climate Change Bill, having performed the same role on the 2002 Communications Bill.

He has been Chairman of two Hansard Society Commission Reports on the relationship between Parliament and the Public and has served as a non-executive director on a number of public companies.

David was awarded a CBE in 1982, a knighthood in 1995 and was appointed to the House of Lords in 1997. In France he was made a Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters in 1985, becoming an Officer in 1992, and a Commander in 2006. He has been the recipient of more than 40 honorary degrees from Universities in the UK and overseas.

He was most recently appointed the UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma.

CHAIRS

HE Ambassador Bill Longhurst

Bill Longhurst has been British Ambassador at the British Embassy in Phnom Penh since January 2014. He joined Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service in 1990, and has served in overseas in Seoul, Tokyo, New York, and Belgrade. His first position in London was working in the FCO's Economic Relations Department on policy issues for London G7 Summit of 1991. From 1998-2001 he worked in the Department of Trade and Industry, heading the Exports to Japan Unit. His most recent London posting, from 2011 to 2013, was as Deputy Head of ASEAN Department. Prior to joining Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service, Bill studied Business Studies and Japanese at University of Sheffield, from which he gained a Bachelor's Degree. Bill is accompanied in Cambodia by his wife, Kathryn, and two of his four children. Follow him on Twitter: @wjlonghurst

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Dr. Rathana Peou

Dr. Rathana Peou joined in 2012 the CCAFS scenarios team. First as the Scenarios Coordinator for South Asia and is now the Southeast Asia Regional Scenarios Coordinator working under the Environmental Change Institute of the University of Oxford. She currently sits in different major advisory boards of the region as the one of Food Security for Aids and International Development Forum as well as on the Asia Pacific Migration Environment Network (APMEN). She joined as well the advisory board of the Minister of Commerce of Cambodia where she is based. She is also a visiting Professor and a visiting researcher at different International Universities. She holds a PhD in Political Science majoring in Philosophy and a minor in Arabic and a Master's degree in Political Science and Philosophy. Dr. Rathana's research interests lies in the "4 inviolate principles": food security, water security, energy security and social "health" security. Dr. Rathana has been researching on climate induced migration in Bangladesh and as well the weight of remittance on local development and "maladaptation". Her current research lies on the futures of Food Security, Agriculture and Climate Change in the ASEAN countries and how multi-stakeholders socio-economic scenarios could open policy dialogue and guide Climate Smart Investment.

Prior to joining the CCAFS team she worked for 3 years in Bangladesh where she was the deputy director of the Center for Sustainable Development (CSD) and an associate professor ULAB. Before 2009, Rathana worked as an international consultant and humanitarian workers in Sudan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. She has worked with and consulted for agencies such as DFID, USAID, ECHO, DIPECHO, AFD, EU, ADB and different INGOs and NGOs developing guideline of reporting and program evaluation in humanitarian crisis countries.

SPEAKERS

Jean-Marie Brun

Jean-Marie Brun is an Agriculture Development practitioner who has been working in Cambodia and South East Asia for nearly 20 years. He has worked as a facilitator in support to various agricultural value chain projects, notably as the coordinator of the Geographical Indications project of the Ministry of Commerce in 2007-2010 (leading to the registration of Kampot Pepper and Kampong Speu Palm Sugar as the first protected Geographical Indications in Cambodia), and as a facilitator of the elaboration of Lao Coffee Sector Development Strategy in 2012. Since 2013, with IRAM, Jean-Marie Brun is working as the Project Management Advisor of the Support to the Commercialization of Cambodian Rice Project (SCCRP), coordinated by the Supreme National Economic Council (SNEC) and financed by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD). SCCR project is supporting the Cambodian Rice Federation in the process of branding Cambodian Premium Jasmine Rice.

Cédric Gertgen **Managing Director**

Managing leader, with Art, Web, Design and Architecture industry background in France, Australia, Bali Indonesia and successful entrepreneur in Cambodia. After 9 years developing and expanding the AD Communication agency, working with different key industries, AD is today one of the leading creative agency in the Kingdom employing 17 local and international talents. The path is clear, the ambition stated, to become the first agency of the Kingdom in the coming years and extend notoriety in the region.

VAN David (Vichet)

David Van is one of Cambodia's most experienced and savvy business and policy advisors. Well reputed among the international financial institutions and development community for many years, David is also a leader in the fast developing Cambodian private sector. Equipped with three decades of experience with Trans National Corporations and the Development Community in Asia, David is well endeavoured to help especially Cambodian corporations grow to the next step.

Background Note- *What can the Right Branding do for Cambodia's Rice Exports?*

David plays an active role in Cambodian communities and civil society through a series of pro-bono services. He was Deputy Secretary General of ARPEC (Alliance of Rice Producers & Exporters of Cambodia), a Member of the Board for the Society of Human Resources Management and Productivity, a member of CAMPRONET – the Cambodian Professionals Network and the co-founder of Synergy Capital Cambodia, a local consulting firm providing corporate advisory services to local and foreign investors. He currently represents also the BGA (Bower Group Asia) in Cambodia. BGA is specialized in providing consultancy for US Fortune 500 Firms in Public Affairs and primarily in ASEAN countries including China, Taiwan, India, Bangladesh and Nepal as well as Australia/New Zealand.

David was involved in working with the Royal Government of Cambodia in the conceptualization of the Rice Policy Paper launched by the Prime Minister in August 2010 and facilitated a series of Public Private Consultation in 2011 for the Progress Report of the Rice Policy one year on that came up with recommendations endorsed by the Prime Minister in November 2012 resulting in the creation of a new Technical Working Group no 9 on Rice.

David also conceptualized entirely the first Cambodia Rice Forum 2011 held in October 2011 pulling in a series of reputable speakers from the rice sector. He also initiated the clustering concept by helping to set up the recent ARPEC (Alliance of Rice Producers & Exporters of Cambodia) in May 2012. ARPEC gained rapid recognition as the most professional Rice Institution of Cambodia promoting Cambodian rice with major professional rice websites since the start.

Upon the new Minister of Commerce taking over in September 2013, David worked closely with him to conceptualize and write the charter for a new national rice institution bringing under one umbrella all previous rice associations to address the fragmentation of the rice industry. Cambodia Rice Federation (CRF) was born on May 19 with its first Board elected. CRF has requested David to step in as Acting Secretary pending recruitment of a permanent Secretary General and Staff for the CRF Executive Office and left his pro bono work for CRF since end June 2015.

Nicholas Spencer

Nicholas's background is in start-up, social enterprise and green business in the UK. Most notably, London's only fully electric, zero-emission delivery company www.gnewtcargo.com. He has been working with Ibis Rice since January to build on its success by realizing the potential of its unique consumer proposition (premium Cambodian Jasmine rice that improves livelihoods whilst empowering community based conservation). Branding, product diversification and organic certification is the current focus of the Ibis Rice project. Nick believes is that Ibis Rice is well placed to be a brand that can both contribute to and benefit from the wider market understanding of Cambodian rice as the most premium, sustainable, gourmet option for the enlightened consumer.