Maeying Huamjai Phattana (MHP)

INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND FOREST MANAGEMENT
Resilience To Climate Change
In Upland Lao PDR

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Workshop on Indigenous Women, Climate Change and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+)
Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 18-19th November, 2010
Introduction

Lao PDR has:

- 6 million people
- 49 different ethnic groups
- 30% of the population is indigenous
- 35% of the country is forested, mostly in upland areas

Indigenous peoples are more reliant on forests for their livelihoods than other peoples.

Indigenous women are responsible for household food security.
Climate change in Laos has already been observed and will only get worse. Changing rainfall patterns and temperature affect poor indigenous farmers the most.

Deforestation is increasing, which affects indigenous people.
Government solution

- Government has signed up to climate protection, but is still driven by economic growth and big investment projects.
The need to adapt

Indigenous people must adapt to a changing climate. They must:

• increase resilience
• reduce vulnerability

Six strategies for indigenous people to adapt are presented in the paper. This powerpoint presentation focuses on Adaption 2: the need to revitalise and protect local forests.
Revitalise and protect forests

Well managed forests benefit indigenous women more than men, because:

• More daily food is available, such as bamboo shoots, mushrooms and vegetables
• More traditional medicines are available in times when children and family are sick
• More NTFP’s (non-timber forest products) are available to sell on a daily basis to buy small household items (eg salt, cooking oil)
Steps to better forest management

• Revegetate or grow in gardens useful plant species that have disappeared – especially seek information from older women

• Formalise traditional community ownership rights with land titles

• Assess what volumes of forest products can be harvested sustainably, and make management rules. Have a gender equitable management committee.
MHP’s role

- develop a network of indigenous women leaders to adapt to climate change
- demarcate zones of useful NTFP forest in indigenous areas using GIS system
- seek communal title for these zones with government
- co-ordinate with organisations wishing to pay farmers for forest protection under REDD
Thankyou

Women play bamboo flutes at a traditional Khmu festival