

Mangrove planting in Cambodia to celebrate Ramsar Convention 40th Anniversary

Title In 1998, Cambodia officially became a contracting party to the Ramsar Convention and designated three sites as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites). Following up the celebrations of the 40th Anniversary during the World Wetlands Day 2011, on 6th and 7th August a mangrove planting event was held in the Ramsar site located in the Peam Krasom Wildlife Sanctuary of Kok Kong Province. Participants from all sectors such as local communities, students, local administrative authorities and policy makers were present. In the last ten years, mangrove logging to produce charcoal was identified as one of the main threats to the area. The illegal activities were mainly carried out by people who migrated from inland provinces of Cambodia. In addition to the mangrove planting activity, the participants took part in a round-table to discuss the history of the site, current threats and achievements to date. The students representing Pannasastra University demonstrated a genuine interest in the services provided by mangrove forests (climate change adaptation, shoreline stabilisation and storm protection) and particularly the role of local communities in managing and protecting their natural resources. Participants were pleased and proud in taking part for the first time in a wetland restoration activity. The event was organised by the Department of Wetland and Coastal Zones, Ministry of Environment, with the support of Pannasastra University and BirdLife International-Cambodia Programme. These bodies are currently leading the implementation of two wetland conservation projects that have received the financial support from the Ramsar Small Grant and RRC-EA Wetland Fund.