

## **Saving Cambodia's Forests, one stove at a time :**

GERES Cambodia's Improved Cookstove Project Reaches 1 Million Stoves



Phnom Penh, Cambodia – The numbers are staggering: 2.4 billion people around the world cook with animal dung or, if they're lucky, wood, on basic stoves which are often no more than a few rocks clustered together; 1.6 million women and children die every year from using these stoves; 10 million Cambodians use wood for cooking; and if allowed to continue, within our lifetime all of Cambodia's natural forests will go, quite literally, up in smoke. But amid all these numbers, there are some positives- in Cambodia an organization is working with local craftsmen to make stoves that burn less wood, reducing demand on local forests. And on March 18<sup>th</sup>, in a small village outside Phnom Penh, the **1,000,000<sup>th</sup>** New Lao Stove was made and sent to market.

"Let's consider it the achievement of all stove makers in the world. Proof that disseminating large numbers of improved cookstoves is not a dream anymore, but can be a reality," Iwan Baskoro, technical manager of the Group for the Environment, Renewable Energy and Solidarity (GERES), says. Indeed, the issue is a tricky one. The problem has never been how to make a new and improved stove- engineers and developers have been creating efficient designs since the late 1970s. The problem has been how to get those stoves to the people who need them most, and then getting them to use it. Results before were not very encouraging- according to a World Bank report, less than 10% of all improved stove projects are still around after 2 years. By combining a traditional, local stove design with a modern knowledge of combustion and thermal exchange, GERES was able to create a simple stove that appealed to the community, and at the same time saved 22% of their fuelwood.

The result has been positive for both consumers and natural resources. Over the last 2 years, with the rising cost of wood and charcoal in the local market, sales of the New Lao Stove have more than doubled to over 290,000 stoves per year. This means that over half of all urban households in Cambodia have at least one New Lao Stove, and many have 2 or even 3, saving them over \$9,000,000 in fuelwood costs since 2003. And because these families use less wood, over 5,000 hectares of Cambodia's natural forests have not been cut down to use for fuel. These numbers sound good, but to GERES, this is just a beginning. "There are 2 billion people around us that are waiting to use improved cookstoves for their daily cooking," says Iwan Baskoro. "They have the right to use these stoves, and we are obliged to fulfill their rights."

## THANK YOU

In celebration of the production of the **1,000,000<sup>th</sup> New Lao Stove**, GERES Cambodia wishes to thank all the producers and users for their dedication and commitment to improving their environment and quality of life.

New Lao Stoves:

- Are 22% more fuel-efficient
- Last two to three times longer than traditional stoves
- Are in nearly half of all urban Cambodian households
- Have saved consumers over \$9,000,000 since 2003
- Have saved over 500,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>
- Reduce indoor air pollution versus traditional stove

