

# Press Release

## On

# Local Watchdog Award

The Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL) has the honor to inform the public that COMFREL organized an award-granting ceremony for four of its local watchdogs who work voluntarily for COMFREL at the grassroots level.

One of their roles is to observe the performance of commune councilors. They are also involved in establishing a relationship with commune councilors or conducting a forum to facilitate communication between commune councilors and local residents. Three of them were ranked as the top three prominent local watchdogs for implementing local activities in individual communes for the year 2008-2009.

Besides the aforementioned activities, they initiated the idea of conducting interventions to help local residents, by reporting problems and bridging gaps in information between residents and commune councilors, as well as completing other tasks serving the interest of the people in their own commune.

The evaluation process for this local watchdog award, which is being awarded for the first time, lasted one month commencing in December 2009. Three local watchdogs were chosen who received first, second and third prize, while the fourth was granted a consolation prize. The award-winning watchdogs were selected from 42 candidates from 20 provinces and the capitol who applied for the award from COMFREL. COMFREL's evaluation team paid a field visit to directly interview commune councilors and local residents, as well as monitor the communes where the candidate watchdogs reside.

Based on the results of the evaluation team who assessed the local activities of the watchdogs, COMFREL decided to offer the awards to four persons as listed below:

- The first prize was awarded to Mr. **Korn Savong**, COMFREL's local watchdog in Banteay Neang commune, Monkulborei district, Banteay Meanchey province. He was awarded for his successful intervention in bringing commune issues to the attention of commune councilors to seek a solution.
- The second prize was awarded to Mr. **Tak Leoum**, COMFREL's local watchdog in Bompong Teouk commune, Romduol district, Svay Rieng province. He was given the award for his achievement in establishing a good relationship with local authorities.
- The third prize was awarded to Mr. **Yang Thorn**, COMFREL's local watchdog in Batang commune, Lompat district, Rattanakiri province. He was awarded for his success in initiating the construction of a village hall and pushing for a resolution to land dispute issues.
- The consolation prize was given to Mr. **Meas Soken**, COMFREL's local watchdog in Tong Rong commune, Prey Chhor district, Kampong Cham province. She was merited the prize because she proposed a commune council meeting to resolve local issues.

The award-granting ceremony was held on January 27, 2010 at 2:00 pm at COMFREL's central office in Phnom Penh. COMFREL's executive committee, the evaluation team and 24 capital and provincial secretaries all participated in the award ceremony to congratulate the winners and recognize their outstanding performance.

This press release is extended to the public for information.

*Phnom Penh, January 27, 2010*