

## **GDCC “Legal and Judicial Reform”**

**GDCC February 12, 2007**

### **STATEMENT**

**By H. E. Mr Yvon ROE D’ALBERT, Ambassador of France**

Excellency Keat Chhon, Senior Minister, Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am glad to address this meeting and assess the progress of the Legal and Judicial Reform. I don’t need to recall how essential this reform, initiated several years ago, is for the consolidation of a Cambodian democracy and the reinforcement of the rule of law and good governance.

I must admit that, since my last statement on June 12, 2006, the concrete achievements have been minimal and the overall balance remains below our expectations. Therefore, on behalf of all the partners involved in this difficult task, I would like to renew our pressing encouragements to the Royal Government of Cambodia.

I do not underestimate how difficult it is to harmonize all these drafts. But, even if my insistence may tax your patience, I do urge our Cambodian friends and partners to speed up the pace in passing and implementing the awaiting fundamental laws. I mean the penal code which is being reviewed for the second time by a committee of the Ministry of Justice, the penal procedure code which is planned to be passed in the National Assembly forthcoming parliamentary session and the civil code which has already been submitted to that Assembly.

The donor community has also acknowledged the slow progress of the main texts founding the judicial system: the law on ‘Judicial Organization’, the law on the Statutes of the Magistracy and on the Supreme Council of Magistracy. We renew insistently our request to the Cambodian authorities to accelerate the judicial system completion.

Such advances conjugated with a better functioning of the instruments we set up to facilitate the communication between the donor community and the Government, would significantly boost our progress.

I would like also, to raise the attention on the urgent needs of training which will be generated by this Legal and Judicial Reform and the new laws’ enforcement. France will do its part in the framework of her cooperation with the Royal Academy for Judicial Professions. We hope the one-year delay will be sufficient to train the professionals and to secure their understanding and ownership of the new civil procedure code promulgated in 2006 by his Majesty the King. We welcome this auspicious development.

Excellency Keat Chhon, Senior Minister, Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The acceleration of the reform process must definitely be accompanied by the harmonization of the various texts, which might require arbitration within the Government. For instance, the draft Law on “Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation” which is being discussed between the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, would gain in coherence and strength by, on one hand, a better coordination between the two ministries, and on the other hand by the harmonization with the ‘Penal Code’ the adoption of which would be a great asset.

But, looking for harmonization should not be used as an excuse to delay the passing of some urgent

laws. I have in mind, among others, the anti-corruption law on which my colleague the United States Ambassador will address this committee.

We, the donor community renew our commitment to support Cambodia's efforts to build a legal and judicial system which will guarantee respect; for human rights, consolidate the citizens confidence and contribute effectively to the country development. And, we invite the Royal Government of Cambodia to increase its efforts to achieve this reform.

Thank you