

## **GOVERNMENT-DONOR COORDINATION COMMITTEE**

### **Development Partners' Consensus Statement on Legal and Judicial Reform and Anti-Corruption**

Phnom Penh, 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2008

Ambassador Joseph Mussomeli, Embassy of the United States

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of all development partners it is an honor to deliver our consensus statement on Legal and Judicial Reform and Anti-Corruption. Progress on the joint monitoring indicators since the last GDCC has been slow. We urge the prompt passage of the remaining fundamental laws including the Criminal Code and the Anti-Corruption legislation.

We wish to congratulate the Ministry of National Assembly and Senate Relations and Inspections (MONASARI) for the drafting of an excellent Access to Information policy paper. The development partners understand that an internal review and approval process is under way. What is the expected timing of its adoption and which Ministry will be charged with drafting the ensuing Access to Information legislation?

We understand that the draft Criminal Code is now with the National Assembly. We urge swift passage of this fundamental law.

As part of the legal and judicial reform framework, the development partners place highest priority on the passage of the Anti-Corruption law. We applaud Cambodia's accession to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and we expect to see ratification by the National Assembly soon. Since early 2005 the Royal Government of Cambodia has worked with draft anti-corruption legislation and we understand that additional modifications have been made to improve the draft law. We seek assurances that the draft legislation meets international standards of asset declaration, provides budgetary independence to the anti-corruption body and provides investigative authority for its members.

In all candor, we, your development partners, are perplexed by the apparent lack of priority given to the anticorruption legislation. Anticorruption is the base of your development strategy and central to everything you hope to accomplish, yet, after ten years, the law remains in draft. We understand the political risk inherent in such a landmark piece of legislation but we are also cognizant of the enormous positive impact a good anti-corruption law can have on every Cambodian. It takes extraordinary courage and leadership to establish a law that will change the course of history in Cambodia. Cambodians will laud those who had the vision and the will to do what is right for their country. As friends, we recommend you act with urgency to pass a good Anti Corruption law that all Cambodians can be proud of!