



Donors urged to contribute to UN-backed genocide court in Cambodia **May 25, 2010**

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) in Phnom Penh Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today appealed to donors to provide urgent funding to the United Nations-backed court tasked with bringing justice to the people of Cambodia for the heinous crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge regime in the late 1970s.

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), composed of both national and international judges and staff, were set up in 2003 under an agreement between the UN and the Royal Government.

The court is facing a shortfall of more than \$21 million for 2010, including \$14.6 million for the international component and at least \$6.5 million for the national component. Neither of these figures includes future commitments for staff salaries and entitlements.

For 2011, the total budget of \$46.8 million is unfunded, except for \$1.1 million pledged by the Cambodian Government for the national component.

“Both components urgently need further funds,” Mr. Ban said in his remarks to the pledging conference held at UN Headquarters for the court, which is entirely dependent on voluntary contributions.

He emphasized that the court was established to bring justice to the people of Cambodia, and to prevent impunity for the most heinous of crimes. “They are vital part of efforts to secure Cambodia’s long-term well-being, and a crucial element in the world’s quest to strengthen international criminal justice,” he stated.

At least 1.7 million people are believed to have died during the period of Democratic Kampuchea, which lasted from April 1975 to January 1979. The ECCC is tasked with trying senior Khmer Rouge figures and others responsible for the worst atrocities committed during that period.

Mr. Ban noted that since it began its work in 2006, the court has made “impressive progress.”

Hearings in “case one,” against Kaing Guek Eav, alias “Duch,” the secretary of the notorious S-21 security centre, concluded last November and the trial chamber will issue its verdict in July.

“The hearings in this case demonstrated that the Extraordinary Chambers can conduct complex international criminal trials to international standards,” said the Secretary-General.

“Most importantly, they also demonstrated the deep interest of the people of Cambodia in the proceedings,” he stated, noting that more than 31,000 people visited the chambers to witness the hearings, most of them Cambodians who journeyed in from outside the capital.

In “case two,” the co-investigating judges may issue a closing order, or indictment, against four leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime – Nuon Chea, Ieng Sary, Ieng Thirith and Khieu Samphan – later this year.

As in the ongoing trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor in the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), one person charged in case two, Khieu Samphan, is a former head of State, showing that no one is above the law.

“This is a fundamental principle in the world’s fight against impunity, and it is encouraging indeed to see it in action today in Cambodia,” remarked Mr. Ban. The Secretary-General expressed his gratitude to Member States for their generous contributions to date, and appealed to them to maintain and increase their support, even in the midst of the current economic environment.

“Without such support, the chambers cannot function,” he stressed. “It is as simple and stark as that.”

UN Legal Counsel Patricia O’Brien and Cambodia’s Deputy Prime Minister, Sok An, made a similar appeal to the international community for urgent funding for the court in a joint statement issued after their meeting in the capital, Phnom Penh, last month.