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THE CENTER FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CSD Expands its Facilitation of ECCC Civil Party Applicants

In addition to *Class of Orphans*, now *Class of Widows, Class of Prisoners*,
with *Class of Child Soldiers* under consideration

PRESS RELEASE

PHNOM PENH, 15 June 2009: The Center for Social Development (CSD) is pleased to announce that it will expand its facilitation of Khmer Rouge victims who are interested in becoming a civil party in the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) to go beyond applications for the Orphans Class to include the Class of Widows, Class of Prisoners and possibly the Class of Child Soldiers.

In September 2007, Theary SENG, the executive director of CSD became the first applicant to file and be accepted by the ECCC as a civil party, joining together into the Orphans Class all those who had lost either a father or mother or both between 17 April 1975 and 6 January 1979. As a member of the class herself, Ms. Seng has worked to facilitate bringing together all those orphans who are bound together in suffering and hope to join her voice in formally charging the detained senior Khmer Rouge leaders with crimes against humanity, war crimes, etc.

Since that time, CSD has been conducting intensive seminars for interested victims on the civil party application process in conjunction with its "Justice & National Reconciliation" public forums. Thirteen seminars have been conducted in 11 provinces and Phnom Penh, with an average of 20 participants at each seminar.

CSD found that approximately half of those attending its seminars met the requirements to be included in the Orphans Class. Those victims who had different experiences from 1975-1979 were referred to ADHOC and other NGOs, hoping that further civil party classes would be formed. After two years, that has not yet happened. As a result, CSD has decided to expand its efforts in forming and facilitating other civil party classes, namely:

- Class of Orphans: KR victims who lost a mother, father or both during the KR reign;
- Class of Widows: KR victims who lost a husband or wife during KR reign; and
- Class of Prisoners: KR victims who were imprisoned in one of at least 196 detention centers during the KR reign. Also, CSD is already working with child soldiers from the KR era in our reconciliation efforts, a project led by DED consultant Stefan KIESEL, who has experience working with child soldiers in Sierre Leone. We are currently researching the legal implications and certification for these individuals who were recruited as children to fight during the KR years to become a civil party class.

CSD believes the grouping process is best when initiated by the victims and that this grouping of many civil parties into "class action" will increase the victims' power and representation before the Court. Further, this civil party class action will reduce administrative inefficiencies for everyone involved and simplify the procedure for and understanding among victims. Finally, expanding CSD's mandate to include additional classes will allow CSD to expand its commitment to grassroots organization and extend the benefits of its public forums and seminars to a wider range of people.

Unlike before, CSD is now making its seminars completely open to the public as these 4-5 hour seminars focusing on the ECCC and the civil party process do not open up space for confidential information to surface. Further, these participants unanimously expressed that they want their suffering publicly told and acknowledged. This said, we continue to be committed first and foremost to the welfare of our participants; thus, confidentiality will be protected for those who wish for it when they pursue their questions and comments at greater depth later in the process of our engagement with them.

CSD would like to thank DED and Diakonia/SIDA for the generous grants that have underwritten these efforts, the British Embassy for funding the "Time for Justice" film series, and the Canadian Embassy for seed funding to allow us to begin the collection of these civil party applications in the provinces.

CSD would like to thank and announce a new grant from The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation received for work on outreach to victims, particularly the involvement of victims in these Civil Party Classes.

For further information, please visit www.csdcambodia.org "Public Forum" ("Justice & National Reconciliation", "Civil Party of Orphans Class", "Emotional Support Section") and/or contact:

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