

7 November 2013



Deputy Secretary-General

DSG/SM/723

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

CAMBODIA, PARTNERS MUST ADDRESS CHRONIC FINANCIAL CRISIS AFFECTING EXTRAORDINARY

CHAMBERS, DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL TELLS PLEDGING CONFERENCE

Following are UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson's remarks at the Pledging Conference for the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), in New York on 7 November:

On behalf of the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, I thank you all for attending this Pledging Conference for the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. The Secretary-General considers this meeting very important and so do I. He asked me to convey his personal sincere wishes for its success.

I am glad to welcome the many high-level officials and experts who have travelled here from Phnom Penh, as well as colleagues from New York and elsewhere. By this, you demonstrate the joint commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the United Nations to the ECCC's financial stability so that it can complete its programme of work without obstruction.

We are aware that donors are experiencing financial constraints. In crafting the ECCC's budget, we have held wide-ranging consultations to achieve all possible savings and make it as cost-effective as possible. The budget now before the Principal Donors Group reflects our streamlined and scaled-back approach.

The General Assembly's decision 11 years ago to fund the ECCC on the basis of voluntary contributions has placed increasing pressure on the Court and its staff. Available financing has dropped below the ECCC's operating expenditures. For months the staff indeed worked without pay. In September, unpaid staff went on strike.

The budget shortfalls were bridged on an exceptional basis. Donors agreed, as you may know, that the United Nations could advance reimbursable loans to the national side of the Court for salary arrears. Staff were then able to resume work.

The impact on the work of the ECCC of such stoppages, both in the past and anticipated, is self-evident. No justice institution, let alone one adjudicating international crimes of the utmost gravity, should have to cope with such uncertainties. The detrimental effect of financially induced stoppages is particularly critical in light of ongoing judicial proceedings.

Cambodia and its partners must address this chronic and increasingly disruptive financial crisis. I am gratified that the Royal Government of Cambodia has pledged to fulfil its obligations under the Agreement with the United Nations, by contributing an additional \$1.8 million to cover the costs of the national staff through the end of 2013. I welcome this confirmation of the Government's commitment to the Court. This additional financial support should not be a one-time occurrence. It should be sustained into the next year of the Court's operation and beyond.

At the same time, donors should provide consistent and appropriate levels of support in order to sustain the international component of the ECCC. Consultations among donors — including potential new donors — must continue in order to ensure sufficient contributions now and in the future. I call on donors to honour the commitments the General Assembly has made in establishing this Court.

We all agree that there can be no impunity for crimes which tear at the very fabric of our common humanity. But we have to do more than agree — and more than speak out. We have to match our words with actions. Words do not pay the bills. If we do not pay the bills, we will fail to live up to our noble declarations. We will let down the millions of Cambodians who watched their relatives die, who survived atrocities, and who still live with a burning desire to see justice done. We will fail future generations who look to history for proof that justice can triumph over violence.

The Secretary-General and I are deeply concerned that a project of this global importance is at risk of failing for want of the necessary financial support. Such a fateful, indeed humiliating, outcome — unprecedented in international justice — would amount to abdication of some of our most fundamental principles and values.

The crimes that took place in Cambodia more than three decades ago were chilling in their breadth, scale and unspeakable brutality. They count among the worst atrocities of the twentieth century. The ECCC is our collective response to this stain on the conscience of humanity. The Legal Counsel will share details on how the ECCC has made real and significant progress.

I call on all Member States represented here, as well as the Royal Government of Cambodia, to renew their commitment and cooperation to the ECCC and the ongoing judicial proceedings. I call on each State to demonstrate its commitment by making specific pledges in support of the ECCC's work.

The ECCC's future depends on our joint assumption of responsibility. We owe future generations concrete assurances that justice is being served.

* * * * *

For information media • not an official record