



REMARKS TO THE 11th MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF THE ECCC

**BY HIS EXCELLENCY SEAN VISOTH
Director of the Office of Administration**

18 April 2008

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting is an important one in the life of the ECCC and, as I am sure you are all aware, it comes in the week that marks a number of significant moments in the history of Cambodia. The middle of April is a bittersweet time for all our people as we celebrate the promise of the New Year and the coming rains, which we count on to replenish the earth and bring our next harvest, and yet this is also the week in which we recall the pain of the commencement of the darkest period in our history – thirty-three years ago in 1975.

To underline the importance of this meeting, Mr Warren Sach, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Controller, has come to be with us today, especially to bring the perspective and insights from New York, to see first hand recent developments in the ECCC and to follow up on the fruitful discussions begun last month in New York, when the ECCC delegation met the Group of Interested States.

Given the fact that I was able to brief you all on the work of the ECCC at our last meeting in February, I will not take our precious time today to recap the five areas in which we have made significant achievements in the past year.

As to the judicial area, let me just say that next week the Pre-Trial Chamber moves into its third hearing on appeals against provisional detention, and that the fourth appeal is scheduled for May. I would like to highlight the fact that at all stages – the preliminary investigation, the judicial investigation and the decisions of the Pre-Trial Chamber, unanimity and a good cooperative working atmosphere has been achieved between national and international judicial officers, also reflected in the Plenary Session and its two working committees, the Judicial Administration Committee and the Rules and Procedure Committee.

In the administrative area recent developments include:

- the full functioning of the Victims Unit. To facilitate its work and that of the Public Affairs Section, the national component of the ECCC has recently rented premises in the centre of Phnom Penh. This office, to be known as the ECCC Information Centre, will become operational on Monday in the presence of the Controller.

- alterations to the main courtroom have been completed and it is now ready for all future public hearings. We understand that the full audiovisual system (financed from the UN budget) will be installed before the trials start.
- the construction of a clearly separated public entrance for the ECCC is now under way and will be completed before the first trial commences.

You will no doubt wish to be apprised of the latest situation in the ECCC regarding human resources management. The full series of measures taken (including the two human resources management audits, revision of the personnel handbook, introduction and revision of the Code of Conduct, review and confirmation of the existing salary scale and job matching for national staff) is listed in the document “Summary of Audit and Management Assessments for the ECCC”, already distributed to you. The report of the ECCC Special Human Resources Management Review states: “In conclusion the review was able to show that a robust Human Resource system has been developed to effectively support the judicial process and to minimize the risk of questionable practices occurring in the future. Promoting zero tolerance for non-compliance with the Code of Conduct will further improve the performance and strengthen the positive reputation of the ECCC.”

As Director of Administration let me say I have never resisted or rejected any of the proposals from the donors to address identified shortcomings and you have my commitment that I will continue to work to ensure that we operate at the highest standards.

I can report to you on the clean audit opinion on the ECCC financial statement for 2006. Further, five spot checks covering the transactions up to December 2007 have been conducted by the external auditors, and no major issues or irregularities were noted, i.e. the auditor duly certified the ECCC financial transactions. The annual financial audit for 2007 was conducted in March 2008, and we will release the report as soon as it is available. As always, we will be posting these audit results on our web site.

Regarding the main topic of our meeting today, namely the need for funds for the continuing operations of the ECCC, I would like to express our most heartfelt appreciation for the recent and most timely contribution of A\$500,000 from the Government of Australia, which has supported the process of establishing the ECCC in many different ways since 1999.

I will leave it to my UN colleagues to go into the details of recent developments regarding the budget proposal under review and discussion since it was presented to the Group of Interested States on 31 January this year. Suffice it for me to say that the view of the Royal Government of Cambodia has always been that we wish to continue to be the lowest-budget tribunal working at the most efficient and speedy pace. Given the advanced age and frail health of the Charged Persons, and the long wait for justice of the Cambodian people, this process needs to be concluded without undue delay.

Thank you for your attention.