Actions Speak Louder Than Words:  
CCHR commends RGC’s acceptance of UPR recommendations,  
calls on RGC to take action to protect and promote freedom of  
expression and assembly

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”) welcomes the acceptance by the Royal Government of Cambodia (the “RGC”) of all 91 recommendations made by the members of the United Nations Human Rights Council following the Universal Periodic Review (the “UPR”) of Cambodia’s human rights record held in December 2009. The CCHR calls on the RGC to pursue the substantive changes required to implement each of the recommendations it has embraced.

The CCHR draws particular attention to the recommendations made in relation to freedom of expression and assembly. The CCHR and other NGOs made a joint submission to the UPR process in April 2009, which raised serious concerns about the decline of freedom of expression and assembly in Cambodia in recent years (the “Joint Submission”). The UPR Working Group’s Report reflected a number of recommendations made in the Joint Submission. Of particular note is the inclusion of recommendations pertaining to the (1) decriminalization of disinformation and defamation, (2) allowing opposition members to speak freely and (3) reform of the judiciary to make it truly independent.

It is hoped that the RGC’s acceptance of these recommendations signals a change in direction, particularly with respect to freedom of expression and assembly, culminating in changes to law and policy. For example, the CCHR hopes that the RGC heeds the UPR Working Group’s recommendations and makes the necessary amendments to the Penal Code to bring it in line with international standards and ensures that criminal law is not used as a tool to curtail freedom of expression. Similarly, the CCHR hopes that the RGC’s acceptance of the recommendation to respect the freedom of expression of members of the opposition is evidenced by an acceptance of the legitimate role of opposition parties, and an end to the practice of suspending the parliamentary immunity of opposition lawmakers.

The CCHR applauds the engagement of the RGC in the UPR process and trusts that its acceptance of the recommendations are not mere words but will be followed by concrete actions to protect and promote freedom of expression and assembly in Cambodia.

For more information, please contact: 
Mr. Ou Virak, President, CCHR  
Tel: +855 12 404051  
Email: ouvirak@cchrcambodia.org

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights is a non-political, independent, non governmental organization which works to promote democracy and respect for human rights throughout Cambodia.