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CAMBODIAN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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PRESS RELEASE

US Assistant Secretary of State Barry F. Lowencron called for strict enforcement of Cambodian Land Law on Public Forum by CCHR

Phnom Penh, October 18, 2006

The US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy Human Rights and Labor, Barry F. Lowencron, called for a strict enforcement of the Cambodian Land Law of 2001 and pointed at the close connection between land issues and corruption in Cambodia. The remarks were done at a Public Forum organized by the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR) at Vihear Bet Meas Pagoda, Prek Sleng Village, Prek Sleng Commune, Kandal Steung District, Kandal Province, on Monday 16, 2006.

Lowencron said: "Fighting corruption is also vital to Cambodia's democratic development. Corruption destroys the trust between citizens and their government. In Cambodia, corruption and land issues are closely connected. Strict enforcement of the Land Law of 2001 and greater transparency in the adjudication process would be important steps Cambodia could take towards restoring public trust in the court system and National Land Dispute Authority. The passage of a strong anti-corruption law meeting international standards also would be a critical step for future prosperity of Cambodia."

Lowencron also referred to the fact that legal complaints – about disinformation, incitement or defamation – are still "used to silence freedom of speech and political dissent" in Cambodia.

The full text of the speech made by the Assistant Secretary of State in English and Khmer can be found on the website of CCHR, www.cchr-cambodia.org