Joint Statement

Unconditionally, reinstates the union president, Ms. Chhim Sithar

We, the undersigned, representing trade union federations, associations and civil society organisations working for the promotion of human rights and labour rights in the Kingdom of Cambodia are currently carefully monitoring the case of the Khmer Employees’ Labour Rights Support Union of NagaWorld. We condemn the decision of management to suspend the employment of union president, Ms. Chhim Sithar, without just cause after she exercised her fundamental rights and professional independence as a representative of approximately four thousand workers to demand better working conditions and reasonable wage increases for staff working at NagaWorld. Ms. Chhim Sithar is a union activist and local union leader who has actively worked for the promotion and respect for labour rights and human rights with trade union federations, associations and civil society organisations in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Based on previous experience, NagaWorld has a history of union discrimination in which complaints were filed with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for violations of core conventions, and the ILO later issued recommendations to the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Termination of the union leader’s contract at that time caused hundreds of workers to protest and demand the reinstatement of their leader, but the company refused to do so.

Following a careful investigation and legal study of this case, we observe that the indefinite suspension of this active union leader without clear basis or an investigation since 20 September 2019 is not in accordance with Article 71 of the Cambodian Labour Law and the internal regulations of the company, and violates the fundamental rights and freedoms of workers’ associations and professional organisations which are guaranteed by the Constitution and Labour Law of the Kingdom of Cambodia, as well as core conventions of the ILO which Cambodia has ratified.

We, as representatives of trade union federations, associations and civil society organisations would like to appeal particularly to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training to take measures to mediate this labour dispute effectively and acceptably for both parties, and strongly urge that the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training to do its utmost to find a resolution in order for the company to reinstate this union leader and consider the requests of the union for reasonable wage increases for employees.

We will continue to carefully monitor this case and continue to support employees in the continuation of non-violent activities and the exercise of their fundamental rights guaranteed by the law of the Kingdom of Cambodia in order to ensure that NagaWorld reinstates the union president, Ms. Chhim Sithar; negotiates in good faith; guarantees the cessation of all acts of union discrimination; and promotes better professional relations between employees and the company to avoid any further protests.

Done in Phnom Penh, 06 October 2019
Joint statement supported by:

Coalition of Cambodian Apparel Workers Democratic Unions (C.CADWU)
The Cambodian Food and Service Workers Federation (CFSWF)
Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU)
Independent Democratic of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
Cambodia Youth Network (CYN)
Coalition of Cambodian Farmers Community Association (CCFC)
Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)
Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO)
Klahann Organization
Cambodia Tourism Workers Union Federation (CTWUF)
National Independent Federation of Textile Union of Cambodia (NIFTUC)
Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR)
Cambodia Human Rights and Development Association (ADHO)
Building and Wood Workers Trade Union Federation of Cambodia (BWTUC)
Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL)
Independent Trade Union Federation (INTUFE)
Union Alliance of Labor (UCL)
Free Trade Union of Workers of Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWK)
Tourism Workers Union at Department of Tourism Development of Apsara Authority (TWUDTDA)
Cambodia Culture Village Company Tourism Employees Unions
Raffles Grand Hotel D’Angkor Tourism Employees Union
Asian Tourism Employee Union of Raffles Royal Hotel
Tourism Workers Union of Le Meridien Angkor Hotel (T.W.U.L.M.A)
Independent of Solidarity Worker’s Power of Sixplus Industrial Co.,ltd