CCHR PRESS RELEASE – Phnom Penh 19 February 2020

CCHR’s ‘Amplifying Women Human Rights Defenders’ Voices Project’ along with the Business & Human Rights Resource Center co-release the Women Human Rights Defenders’ Calendar for 2020 showcasing twelve profiles of women human rights defenders in Cambodia

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights (“CCHR”)’s ‘Amplifying Women Human Rights Defender’s Voices Project’ and the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre are proud to announce the publication today of our ‘Women Human Rights Defenders’ Calendar’ for 2020, showcasing twelve bold and brave women human rights defenders (“WHRDs”) from labor movements in Cambodia. The calendar, is released today in hard copy and online, and is available to download now on CCHR’s website as a wall calendar or a desk calendar. Accompanying the calendar is the full profiles of each interviewee available in Khmer and English.

Women are at the forefront of current labor movements across Cambodia campaigning for labor justice and courageously fighting for an economic future built on the foundations of gender equality. They play a pivotal role in driving transformative change across the labor sector whilst also challenging power inequalities and solidified gender norms about the role of women in society. Despite proving their resistance time and time again, WHRDs are at high risk due to the patriarchy entrenched in Cambodia.

The Calendar is a celebration of the vision and activism of these 12 dynamic WHRDs in order to amplify women’s voices, promote women’s leadership and exhibit the stories and successes achieved. The activist profiles tell the personal stories of each WHRD and the struggles they have faced due to their human rights advocacy. Their ability to exercise their fundamental freedoms is often restricted with the majority of our WHRDs reporting that their activities are frequently monitored by both authorities and their employers. Judicial harassment is also a frequent occurrence for WHRDs as well as threats, death threats and physical attacks.

While this calendar focuses on the accounts of these 12 individuals, there are many other women at the frontline working for the realization of labor rights and justice in Cambodia and we release this calendar and the accompanying profiles today to highlight the challenges faced by all WHRDs. This calendar draws attention to the boldness and bravery of all WHRDs in Cambodia’s current labor movements and the empowerment they bring to society.

Mrs Ouk Chhayavy, the President of CITA asks for society to encourage women “provide them with warmth, and support them so they have the mental strength to work to defend human rights in the future”. Ms. Chheng Danou, Vice President of NIFTUC used this platform to call to all women: “We need to value women as the back bone of our nation because the growth of the industrial sector is impossible without the contributions of women. To all women, you are not incapable!”

CCHR reiterates the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women’s 2019 recommendations and call on the Royal Government of Cambodia to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in family
and society. We further call for the RGC to take concrete steps to ensure the rights of WHRDs are protected in the workplace and beyond, and to ensure gender equality is prioritised through legislative and policy reform.

CCHR and the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre encourage you to amplify and share this calendar with your networks. **CCHR’s Executive Director Chak Sopheap comments:**

“The invaluable role WHRDs are engaging in across civil society organisations and trade unions cannot be undermined in the fight to uphold civil and socio-political rights in Cambodia. In an era where WHRDs continue to face restrictions on their work, we hope you are inspired to elevate and support women’s activism and leadership.”

For further information please contact CCHR’s Executive Director Chak Sopheap via telephone at +855 11 943 213 or e-mail at chaksopheap@cchrcambodia.org, or Business & Human Rights Resource Centre’s Workers’ Empowerment Project Lead Sanyu Awori by e-mail at awori@business-humanrights.org.

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Notes to Editor:

CCHR, founded in November 2002, is a non-aligned, independent, non-governmental organization that works to promote and protect democracy and respect for human rights – primarily civil and political rights – throughout Cambodia.

CCHR is a member of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), the global network for freedom of expression. CCHR is also a member of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) SOS-Torture Network.

The Cambodian Human Rights Portal www.sithi.org is the 2011 winner of the Information Society Innovation Fund Award in the category of Rights and Freedoms and the 2013 winner of the Communication for Social Change Award awarded by the Centre for Communication and Social Change at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia.