



Check Against Delivery

**REMARKS AT THE RECEPTION FOLLOWING THE SWEARING IN OF NATIONAL
AND INTERNATIONAL JUDICIAL OFFICERS FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY
CHAMBERS IN THE COURTS OF CAMBODIA**

**BY HIS EXCELLENCY SOK AN
Deputy Prime Minister and
Chairman of the Royal Government Task Force**

**3 July 2006
Raffles Hotel Le Royal, Phnom Penh**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen and most especially the newly sworn in judges and prosecutors of the ECCC.

We are gathered here this evening to celebrate today's historic ceremony in which both national and international judicial officers of the ECCC were sworn in before the statue of the Late King His Majesty Preah Karuna Preahbat Samdech Preah Norodom (Preah Sovannkodh) in the Royal Palace, presided over by the Minister of the Royal Palace and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Nicholas Michel, Under Secretary-General and Legal Counsel, whom I welcome on his first (official?) visit to Cambodia.

Following today's ceremony we are able finally to launch the judicial process to bring to trial perpetrators of crimes that should be beyond human imagination, but unfortunately took place here in the same country that created the beauty of the Royal Palace and the cultural and religious ceremonies you witnessed today.

May I welcome the 27 judicial officers from ten different countries and pledge the full support of the Royal Government of Cambodia for the momentous task you are undertaking. I understand that tomorrow you will meet together for an intensive four-day judicial strategic planning and development workshop to begin to forge the team that will work together in the coming years. I believe that you plan to discuss mechanisms of cooperation and working arrangements, and will begin the process of examining if, when and how Cambodian criminal procedure will need supplementation, as provided in the Law and the Agreement. I wish you well in these preliminary days, knowing that a sound foundation is necessary for the construction of a significant enterprise.

The start-up team of the Office of Administration, which began its work on 6 February is now going into the concluding weeks of its life. I would like to congratulate the Director and Deputy Director of the Office of Administration and their staff, both national and international, for the achievements they have made in preparation for commencement of the judicial work. As projected, Year One of the ECCC operations will commence when the Co-Prosecutors commence their work – now planned for 10 July 2006 – a week from today.

I think it is appropriate tonight to pause and take brief stock of the objectives in establishing the ECCC. Our foremost objective is to provide justice for the victims, and for the entire Cambodian people. In striving to achieve this long-awaited justice we must not jeopardise our country's newly-won national peace and stability.

We hope that the work of the ECCC will be followed by all our citizens, and that through it the younger generation can understand what their parents went through and commit themselves to ensuring that such crimes never again recur here or in any other part of the world. Just as Cambodians now sharing their knowledge and expertise to help the people of the Sudan to eliminate the scourge of land mines, so we hope that the work of Cambodian and their fellow international judicial officers will also help to end the scourge of genocide and other crimes against humanity.

We earnestly hope and expect that the ECCC will be a model court for Cambodia, and we also think that if we succeed in the tasks ahead of us that this Cambodian model may well serve as an inspiration for those considering the structure of other hybrid courts.

For all involved, today's ceremony represents the culmination of many years of hopes and dreams -- achieved as the result of hard work and determination. I would like to pay tribute to all those who have held the faith that justice can be done for so many years, many of whom are here with us tonight.

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