

For Sunday 23 October 2011, on the 20th anniversary of the Paris Peace Agreements

Cambodia: “Paris Peace Agreements still relevant 20 years on” – UN Special Rapporteur

GENEVA – “Twenty years ago, the Paris Peace Agreements set down a clear vision of a new Cambodia built on the bedrock of human rights, democracy and the rule of law,” recalled the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, Surya P. Subedi, on the twentieth anniversary of the pacts that started the process of bringing peace to Cambodia after two decades of conflict.

“Cambodia has undeniably progressed over the past twenty years, with peace and stability bringing enormous dividends in terms of wealth and development. Institutions have been established and laws written,” Mr. Subedi said. “However the challenge remains in the implementation of many of these laws and proper functioning of these institutions.”

The Special Rapporteur urged Cambodians, as well as those assisting the country, to reflect on how faithfully the vision of the Peace Agreements has been implemented. “The Agreements will remain relevant until their vision is a reality for all Cambodians,” he stressed.

In his view, “the independence of the judiciary needs to be anchored in fundamental laws on the judiciary, which have been awaiting adoption since 1993; and the pluralist democracy in the country needs to be deepened and strengthened, particularly as Cambodia enters two election years.”

“Also, impunity needs to be addressed, for the crimes of the Khmer Rouge period as well as for crimes committed since then,” Mr. Subedi noted, “and the right to freedom of association, expressly mentioned in the Agreements, needs to be carefully protected and nurtured if Cambodia is to remain on the right road.”

The Special Rapporteur underscored that many actors have a continuing role and responsibility in addressing these challenges and achieving the vision of the Agreements. “First and foremost is the Royal Government. The eighteen other Member State signatories to the Agreements have also undertaken to encourage respect for

human rights in Cambodia. The United Nations - so central to the framework of the Agreements – has a key role, including the OHCHR Office in Cambodia and myself, the Special Rapporteur, both of whose mandates derive from the Agreements,” he explained.

“As we mark the 20th anniversary of the Agreements, all parties should reaffirm their commitment to the full implementation of the Agreements so that their vision and legacy may become reality,” Mr. Subedi said.

ENDS

Professor Surya P. Subedi was appointed by the UN Human Rights Council as the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Cambodia in March 2009. He is currently Professor of International Law at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom.

OHCHR Country page – Cambodia:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AsiaRegion/Pages/KHIndex.aspx>

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For further information and **media enquiries**, please contact Ms. Maureen Teo (Tel: + 41 22 928 9632 / email: mteo@ohchr.org).

For **media inquiries** related to other UN independent experts:

Xabier Celaya, OHCHR Media Unit (+ 41 22 917 9383 / xcelaya@ohchr.org)

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