

Press Release

1 October 2002, Phnom Penh

"Buddhist, Muslim, Christian and other religious Leaders Inaugurate the Cambodian Inter-religious Council as an Instrument for Reconciliation and Peacebuilding"

The Cambodian Inter-religious Council (CIC), a national chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP: the world's largest international inter-religious organization accredited with the United Nations), is the first-ever coalition of Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, and other religious communities in Cambodia committed to taking common action for peace. CIC will mobilize religious communities' moral and social assets to address issues of common concerns such as development, peace education, democracy and human rights, eradication of small arms, the prevention of HIV/AIDS, and preservation of the environment.

The inauguration ceremony will take place at 8.30 am on 10 October 2002, bringing together 200 Buddhist, 100 Muslim and 100 Christian delegates, as well as government, the United Nations and civil society representatives. His Majesty the King Norodom Sihanouk, who has already endorsed and supported the CIC, will deliver the Royal Address.

The founding members of CIC, Supreme Patriarch of Mahanikaya Buddhist Order, Supreme Patriarch of Dhammayuttikanikaya Buddhist Order, Grand Mufti of Phnom Penh, Grand Mufti of Kompong Chhnang, and senior Catholic and Protestant representatives will issue a joint statement, pledging themselves to "playing the religion's important role in reconciliation, development, and peace building in Cambodia." In the statement, religious leaders also "commit themselves, through CIC, to entering into partnership with relevant public and civil society institutions and groups including governments, United Nations, and NGOs."

Speakers will include Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General, World Conference on Religion and Peace, H.E. Ms. Stefanie Beck, Ambassador of Canada, Mr. Louis-Georges Arseneault, UNICEF Representative in Cambodia, Mr. Etienne Clement, UNESCO Representative in Cambodia, Ms. Geeta Sethi, UNAIDS Country Programme Advisor, Ms Boua Chanthou, Director of Partnership for Development in Cambodia, Mr. Thun Saray, President, Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association, Rev. Nichiko Niwano, President of Rissho Kosei-kai, Rev. Noyu Yamada, Representative of WCRP Japan.

Enclosures: Invitation
 Program

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