



Khmer **មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលសម្លេងស្ត្រីខ្មែរ**  
Women's  
Voice **ក្រសួងស្រាវជ្រាវ ការព្រមានការ ផ្សព្វផ្សាយ ផ្តល់ឯកសារ អំពីស្ត្រី និង កុមារ**  
Centre **Programmes of Research, Advocacy, Media and**  
(KWVC) **Documentation on Women and Children**

## DECLARATION OF THE VOICE OF CAMBODIAN WOMEN AGAINST THE USE OF LANDMINES IN CAMBODIA

On the occasion of this meeting in Phnom Penh on 23 February 1995, participants of this meeting which include: 10 women representing women from provinces whose lives have been most affected by landmines, representatives of women disabled by landmines, local and international NGOs who have programs addressing womens development needs in Cambodia, local government and international organization representatives who have programs related to landmines in Cambodia, ministers and government officials; have examined and searched for causes and solutions to the enormous problems caused by the presence of millions of devastating landmines in the agricultural land, villages and forests throughout Cambodia. We have:

- Reaffirmed the beliefs and the determination of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 3, 5, 12 and 28 and the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict, as well as stated in the constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Article 32 of Chapter 3 and Articles 52 and 54 of Chapter 4.
- Reaffirmed that women and children's rights have been recognized by the world as fundamental rights which include the rights to associate freely with others in goodwill, harmony and the right to live in peace, happiness and freedom.
- Recognized that the rate and extensive presence of landmines is the greatest obstacle to social and economic development as well as a major factor in the destruction of the well-being and happiness of society, particularly for women and children, who lack equal opportunities for intellectual and material development to enable them to live in peace.
- Claimed that the use of landmines in Cambodia is a violation of basic rights of the Cambodian people and an act of contempt for the lives of Cambodian women and children, which is clearly guaranteed by the international covenants on human rights, particularly the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict and the Convention on the Rights of Women which was signed again in 1991 by Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk Varaman as chairman of the Supreme National Council (SNC).
- Strongly desired to encourage and protect the dignity of the rights of women to enable them to fully participate in the development of democratic decision-making within the family and society.
- Recognized that the use of landmines in Cambodia is caused by the violence of all of the opposing forces in Cambodia, which have been unable to control their hatred and greed throughout the past two decades and who instead prefer to use landmines to serve their own violent intentions.

- Supported the Position of the Royal Cambodian Government on landmines delivered by Information Minister Ieng Mouly at the Conference of Government Experts on "the 1980 Weapons Convention" held in Geneva 8-19 August 1994. We also wholeheartedly support the Declaration of Samdech Preah Bat Norodom Sihanouk Varaman, the King of Cambodia, on 2 October 1994 in which the King, in recognition of the level of destruction caused by the use of landmines in Cambodia, requested that "the use and placing of landmines be severely and definitively condemned and further that the users and placers of landmines and mines themselves be placed outside the law."

On the occasion of this meeting we have agreed on this declaration and are determined to work together to:

- 1) Reconstruct Cambodia so that it will be free of landmines and the people can live safely, peacefully, equally and freely, enabling women to attain peace and political, economic, social, cultural, civil and all other rights without discrimination on the base of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or status.
- 2) Appeal, using every possible means and forum, to all conflicting parties in Cambodia to stop trying to gain victory by destroying the lives of their enemies by placing landmines in agricultural land, villages and forests, so that these areas may be used to benefit all humans and animals, in happiness, as stated in the Constitution, Articles 32, 52 and 54.
- 3) Urge all supporters of the warring parties in Cambodia to cease providing landmines and encourage all parties to resolve all conflicts nonviolently, without the use of force, landmines, and other explosives. This would provide an excellent opportunity for creating a positive future for Cambodian women, so that no more will become widowed or disabled, and no more children will become orphaned by the same cause.
- 4) Appeal to every country which manufactures any type of landmine to immediately halt production of landmines. This instrument of death not only destroys the lives of the enemy, but also that of all men, women, children, animals and the environment.
- 5) Seek support from the people of all countries which produce landmines in calling for a total ban on the use, production, sale, transfer, export and stockpiling of these devastating weapons. Landmines not only destroy the nations which use them, but also harm the lives of the workers who work in factories producing them. The chemicals which workers absorb in their bodies, water and air can harm them, as may accidents.
- 6) Appeal to the United Nations Security Council to monitor the manufacture of landmines. These deadly instruments, which devastate lives and communities, should be banned and a penalty put on those who produce, sell or transfer them to warring parties of any conflict, particularly in Cambodia.
- 7) Urge to the United Nations Center for Human Rights to use every possible means to monitor the practice of respect for rights and freedoms of people throughout the world.

8) Encourage all donors in the international community to contribute more funds for de-mining activities throughout the world, particularly in Cambodia. In addition we appeal to the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank and other international organizations to impose strict criteria and sanctions against any governments which use money lent by the Bank for weapons and/or other military purchases instead of buying materials for development.

Simultaneously, we Cambodian women decided to:

- 1) Continue our appeals in every fora, using all means, and increase our efforts to educate the public about the devastating effects of landmines until Cambodia is free from mines and Cambodian women are able to benefit from the resources of Cambodia's land and waters without worries.
- 2) Urge all members of society, regardless of sex, age, political affiliation or status to participate in creating and maintaining a peaceful world, particularly in Cambodia. Peace education and conflict resolution must be considered as a foundation for preventing and solving both internal and international conflicts.
- 3) Encourage the use of all media networks and systems, to play a role in encouraging a change in social behaviour, in enhancing the understanding of humanity, tolerance, security and peace, and in promoting the recognition of the fact that Cambodian women have the right to live in happiness and peace like other women in the world.
- 4) Appeal to the Royal Cambodian Government to care for the disabled citizens, provide compensation and skills training, as well as value their contribution to society as that of all other Cambodians.
- 5) For the above mentioned reasons, the participants of this meeting agree to continue to advocate against the use of landmines, to enable Cambodian women to engage in intellectual and material development and fully participate in rebuilding our nation and the whole world. The participants of the seminar are determined to use every possible means to carry out the plan of action as defined by the above mentioned four points and agreed upon at this meeting in Phnom Penh on the 23 February 1995.

Phnom Penh  
23 February 1995