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PRESS RELEASE

Non-government organisations in Cambodia are warning of "growing income disparity between sections of the population" and "increased landlessness." In a forty page statement, which an NGO delegation will present to the Consultative Group donors meeting in Tokyo next week, NGOs are urging donor agencies "to invest in rural areas... to address the roots of poverty."

"What is needed is not just money and resources, but vision" said Ms Chanthou Boua, a member of the NGO delegation. "Donors need to help the government formulate a vision which addresses the growing disparity between rich and poor, and builds a future based on social justice."

The NGOs stress that long-term development depends on development of human resources, alleviation of poverty and strengthening of the rule of law.

"The continued absence of the rule of law in Cambodia is the single most important obstacle to development in the country," the NGO statement says.

NGOs are also calling on the government to produce an NGO law which will "affirm the Constitutional guarantee of freedom of association and provide clear and flexible guidelines for NGO operations."

Last year, NGOs contributed US\$ 56 million to the development of Cambodia, not including donor government funds channeled through NGOs. This combined contribution exceeds the total grant contribution of any single government or multilateral agency, except for Japan.

END OF PRESS RELEASE

The NGO Statement is on the World Wide Web at www.camnet.com.kh/ngoforum/

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Note: MEDICAM has 86 member agencies, NGO Forum has 61, and CCC has 75.