

29 March 2000

The Editor,
Phnom Penh Post.

Dear Sir,

I am gravely disappointed by the many inappropriate comments made by Ms. Reddy including her off hand treatment of the issue associated with "high profile cases" in "UN Human Rights Centre gets New Chief", Phnom Penh Post March 17-30, 2000. I would have expected that someone in her position would have taken the opportunity to highlight the social dynamic of cases like these in a more profound way.

Poverty is related to unequal access and control of resource, which is often divided a long gender line and classes. The feminisation of poverty which is a concern worldwide, and especially of the UN body, is manifested in Cambodia, like in other parts of the world, by the increase of the number of women taking up prostitution, high or low class, as the main form of profession to sustain their livelihood. Most of these women are victim of the unequal distribution of power and resources in society and represent "the poorest of the poor".

Ms. Reddy is quoted as saying in the PPP: "The other can find other ways of obtaining justice." This position seems to undermine the position of the UN as well as many other Cambodian groups who are working for a civil society in which the rule of law protect the rights of everyone equally regardless of their gender, ethnicity and classes.

Yours sincerely,



Boua Chanthou,
Phnom Penh