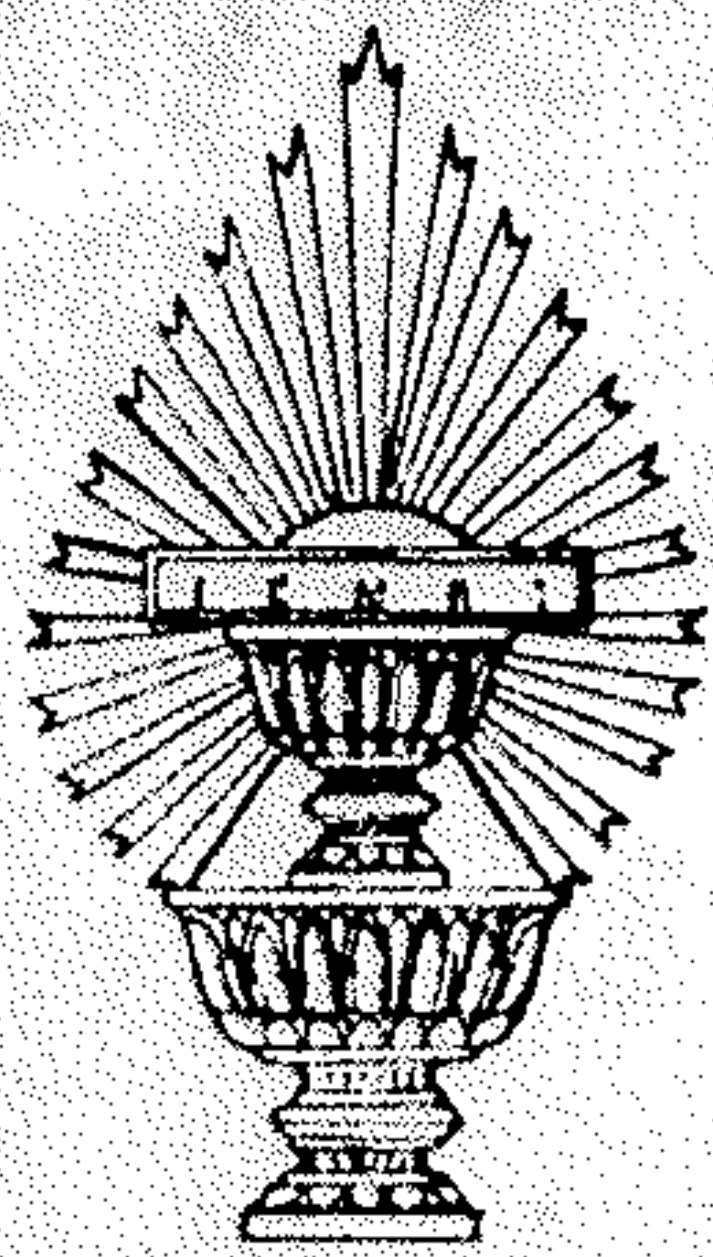


KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

Nation - Religion - King

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Phnom Penh, December 3, 1999

PERSEVERANCE AND CONSISTENCY

The notes compiled into a document attached herewith and entitled "CAMBODIA - Documents for the International Conference on the Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC) - Paris, 14-15 March 1995" were written nearly five years ago.

At that time, in trying to explain the situation in Cambodia, I had the impression of preaching in the desert. When speaking about the need for the rule of law and transparency, the danger of deforestation, ways to ensure good governance, conditionality regarding international assistance, I met only with skepticism or a kind of gentle condescension reserved for someone who may fight for a right cause but has no chance of winning his battle. I realize now that it can take time to open people's eyes. But the worst blind is the one who doesn't want to see ("Il n'y a pas de pire aveugle que celui qui ne veut pas voir"). Some people were like that in the diplomatic community in Cambodia and in the staff of institutions involved in providing assistance to Cambodia. Cowardice, laziness, leniency, complacency and a kind of subtle despise for the Cambodian people characterized their behavior. Cambodians are implicitly considered as substandard people who are not qualified to enjoy the same values and standards as those in force in the civilized world.

Five years after writing those notes and sending them to representatives of virtually all countries and institutions entertaining relationship with Cambodia, I am happy to see that the issues I raised and the solutions I proposed at that time, are now acknowledged as being more topical and relevant than ever.

Those who are now in charge of monitoring and assessing progress made in the implementation of reforms announced at the February 1999 donor meeting in Tokyo may gain something from reading or re-reading the attached document. I urge them not to use their taxpayers' money to allow Cambodia to waste another five years.

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