



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORT

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**REMARKS
BY THE CAMBODIAN MINISTER OF EDUCATION
FOR THE LONDON UNVEILING
OF THE SLEUK RITH INSTITUTE DESIGN**

**ZAHA HADID ARCHITECTS GALLERY
OCTOBER 10, 2014**

Good evening Dame Hadid, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and its Ministry of Education, I express appreciation for your attendance at this important event to unveil the astonishing and inspiring design for the new Sleuk Rith Institute. Although I originally planned to join you on this momentous occasion, urgent obligations in Cambodia preclude my being able to attend.

As you are aware, Cambodia is a small developing country, still emerging from a lengthy period of colonial rule and the bitter legacy of the Khmer Rouge regime. Although our economy is improving, many Cambodians continue to live in poverty. Government revenues are not sufficient to respond to the multitude of needs waiting to be addressed in our country. One of those needs is educating our younger citizens in the history and lessons of the Khmer Rouge Regime and its dark legacy. It is important that we do so in the broader context and timeframe of Cambodia's rich cultural and artistic history. In this regard, the Ministry of Education has been fortunate to partner with the Documentation Center of Cambodia, better known as DC-Cam, in a sustained effort to deliver effective genocide education in schools throughout all of Cambodia's cities, towns and in many of its rural villages.

This important new project, the launching of the design for the new Sleuk Rith Institute, represents the second stage of our ongoing partnership with DC-Cam. I am pleased to report that the Ministry of Education has worked closely with officials at the highest levels in the Royal Government of Cambodia to designate and donate a large piece of prime real estate in downtown Phnom Penh on which the new Institute will be constructed. This spacious piece of valuable land is sufficiently large to allow us to create a beautiful natural environment to surround the structure. Together, this astonishing structure and the beautiful grounds on which it will be located will serve as

a permanent living memorial to all the innocent victims of the genocide, those still living as well as those who sacrificed their sacred lives.

The Royal Government of Cambodia is also fully committed to working with DC-Cam to ensure that the Sleuk Rith Institute achieves the international status of one of the leading global human rights and genocide education institutes of the 21st century. This will not be a simple undertaking, but the enduring memory of the victims of the Khmer Rouge regime's reign of terror demands nothing less. We welcome and are grateful for the support and the commitment of the international community in working with us to achieve that objective. We anticipate that the Sleuk Rith Institute will partner with countries in the ASEAN region to reach out and support efforts to negotiate an end to the horrendous human rights violations by radical and violent groups, both within and outside of governments. Atrocious war crimes, mass rape of women and children, and the slaughter and torture of innocents are being committed at unprecedented levels in multiple states, including Burma, Syria and Iraq, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, Ukraine, Gaza and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As the most intelligent of the species that populate this earth, human beings have no justifiable cause to engage in such self-destructive activities, which serve only to undermine and destroy our humanity and dignity.

We are hopeful that with the creation of the Sleuk Rith Institute, Cambodia will be able to serve as a beacon to our fellow human beings throughout the world by illuminating the very difficult and sobering lessons we have learned and the importance of ensuring that they are appropriately documented and disseminated in as professional and sensitive manner as possible. To achieve that goal, we respectfully request and gratefully acknowledge your collective support and good will. Thank you.



Dr. Hang Chuon Naron
Minister of Education, Youth and Sport
of the Royal Government of Cambodia
and Prof. of International Law

