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Cambodian Center for Human Rights

Press Release

Phnom Penh – 16 November 2009

**THE CCHR WELCOMES PRESIDENT CARTER AND FIRST LADY ROSALYN TO
THE KINGDOM OF WONDER**

The Cambodian Center for Human Rights wishes to extend the warmest welcome to former US President Jimmy Carter and first lady Rosalyn Carter on their arrival in Cambodia. The former President and his wife have travelled to the Kingdom of Wonder with Habitat for Humanity in order to support a housing project in Kandal province, a project the CCHR wholeheartedly supports.

The visit of the Carters will hopefully raise international awareness of ongoing eviction practices in Cambodia. Forced evictions are a growing problem here, with as many as 150,000 Cambodians currently living under threat of forced eviction. Land-grabbing and forced evictions are contributing to growing landlessness and inequality in landholdings. The rate and scale of land-grabbing and forced eviction has increased in recent years. Since 1990, approximately 133,000 residents, or approximately eleven percent of Phnom Penh's population, have been evicted. Rural landlessness rose from 13 percent in 1997 to between 20 and 25 percent in 2007. Those affected by evictions are often made homeless. In rural areas, families are deprived of farming land for livelihoods as well as shelter. In urban areas, people are either evicted without any form of compensation, or are offered inadequate cash payments and/or inadequate resettlement on the outskirts of the city. In most cases, resettlement practices have violated human rights, namely the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 25) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (article 11) as well as the Constitution of Cambodia.

The CCHR commends President Carter and first lady Rosalyn on their commitment to land issues in Cambodia. We hope that their stay in Cambodia is a pleasant one which raises awareness of the situation facing so many disenfranchised Cambodians.

For more information, please contact:

Mr. Ou Virak, President, CCHR

Tel: +855 12 404051

Email: ouvirak@cchrcambodia.org