

**CALD Statement of Support for Hon. Mu Sochua, MP  
(May 7, 2009)**

The Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) express deep concern over the possible lifting of Hon. Mu Sochua's parliamentary immunity and the continuing struggle of the opposition against political harassment. Madame Mu Sochua, a staunch supporter and steadfast advocate of women's rights, recently filed a case against Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen on grounds of defamation due to the gross disrespect and insults made by the latter. Mr. Hun Sen, in return, filed for a defamatory remark against Madame Sochua and her parliamentary immunity.

CALD agrees with the statement issued by the Cambodian Center for Human Rights that "to issue arbitrary threats on the suspension of Mu Sochua's parliamentary immunity without any evidence, she may have committed any crime is a flagrant act of intimidation against an opposition MP." CALD upholds the respect for the rule of law and urges that Mr. Hun Sen and the majority block in the parliament to refrain from lifting any Member of Parliament's immunity unless there are compelling evidences cited for the damages occurred.

The CALD Women's Caucus, an alliance of women liberal leaders in Asia, echoes Hon. Mu Sochua's call for justice and respect for the honor of Khmer women and women worldwide. The Caucus appeals to Prime Minister Hun Sen to show respect and decency towards women, including women leaders who are members of the opposition.

CALD reiterates its belief that democracy's strength lies in preserving the open spaces of freedom of expression and the respect for human rights, tolerance of legitimate dissent and the independence of the judiciary.

CALD condemns repressive governance and the silencing of the dissent. It calls on the Cambodian parliament to weigh the facts first and allow sound and impartial judgement to prevail before deciding on the fate of a parliamentarian's immunity. It urges the Cambodian court, as an independent decision-making institution, to uphold the highest respect in the rule of law upon deciding in this case.