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### CONTACTS:

For Cambodia: MENGEY ENG (+855-777-65676); [meng@wcs.org](mailto:meng@wcs.org)

SCOTT SMITH – (+1-718-220-3698); [ssmith@wcs.org](mailto:ssmith@wcs.org)

STEPHEN SAUTNER (+1-718-220-3682); [ssautner@wcs.org](mailto:ssautner@wcs.org)

## CAMBODIA'S KEO SEIMA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY SELLS FIRST CARBON CREDITS

*The Royal Government of Cambodia and Wildlife Conservation Society  
project to protect internationally important tropical forest*

**Phnom Penh, Cambodia (July 23, 2016)** – The Royal Government of Cambodia, through a long-running partnership with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), has sold to Disney the first carbon credits from a climate change mitigation project in Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary, which encompasses a total area of 292,690 hectares.

Reducing deforestation is crucial to cutting the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. The Keo Seima Project, under the international approach called REDD+ (Reduced Emissions from avoided Deforestation and Degradation), is projected to avoid the emission of more than 14 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents over the first 10-year period between 2010- and 2019.

"This first large carbon sale for Cambodia is an important part of our vision for sustainable financing of protected areas in Cambodia," said His Excellency Minister Say Samal of the Ministry of Environment, the agency responsible for management of the country's protected areas. "The agreement we have signed giving almost all the revenue to forest protection and community development shows our commitment to forests and people in Cambodia."

Disney will use the carbon credits to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions footprint and to help achieve its target of 50% net emissions by 2020. The Company is committed to investing in forests around the world because of the benefits they provide, from carbon sequestration to providing critical habitats for wildlife. In addition, this sale demonstrates how carbon financing can provide a sustainable funding source for the conservation of the species-rich tropical forest in eastern Cambodia, a globally-significant protected area. It also directly contributes to the livelihoods of people living in local communities around the project area.

"WCS congratulates the Royal Government of Cambodia for this innovative approach to strengthening conservation in Cambodia, as well as Disney for their use of carbon credits from this project as a step toward reaching its greenhouse gas reduction target," said John Robinson, WCS Chief Conservation Officer and Executive Vice President for Conservation and Science. "REDD+ is a key mechanism to mitigate climate change through avoided deforestation, and dramatic action by government and private sector is essential to conserving these amazing landscapes and addressing global climate change. We hope that many other companies will follow Disney's lead."

The Keo Seima project would not be possible without the support of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Supporting Forests and Biodiversity (SFB) Project, a program implemented by Winrock International; the United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD); Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial (FFEM); Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI); and the European Union (EU).

The Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary, formerly known as the Seima Protection Forest, is home to more than 60 species of animal and plants on the global Red List that are threatened with extinction, according to the criteria of IUCN, the World Conservation Union. The area is of international importance for the conservation of primates (including the world's largest known populations of black-shanked douc and southern yellow-cheeked crested gibbons), wild cats, Asian elephants, wild cattle and several species of birds. Seima is also home to many communities of the Bunong indigenous ethnic group that have depended on the forest economically, culturally, and spiritually for generations. They are integrated into the design and management of the project.

The Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary faces threats similar to all protected areas in Cambodia and the region, including illegal logging and forest clearance for agriculture, both by smallholders and for large-scale plantation crops such as rubber. The project aims to address these pressures by strengthening the management of the reserve while securing land titles for communities and ensuring sustainable access to crucial forest resources. In addition, 50 percent of the net revenues from carbon sales will benefit local communities through activities such as community-chosen development projects.

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The credits being sold are traded on the voluntary carbon market, which enables companies, organizations and individuals to pay for a range of actions that reduce carbon emissions. In Keo Seima, the number and quality of the credits is being verified against two leading audit systems – the Verified Carbon Standard and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards.

A ceremony to celebrate this significant achievement for forest conservation in Cambodia will be hosted by the Ministry of Environment at a later date.

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#### **WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society)**

MISSION: WCS saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature. To achieve our mission, WCS, based at the Bronx Zoo, harnesses the power of its Global Conservation Program in nearly 60 nations and in all the world's oceans and its five wildlife parks in New

York City, visited by 4 million people annually. WCS combines its expertise in the field, zoos, and aquarium to achieve its conservation mission. Visit: [newsroom.wcs.org](https://newsroom.wcs.org) Follow: @WCSNewsroom. For more information: 077765676.