

Phnom Penh, Date: March 19, 2019

**Joint Statement on the EU's decision to start the process of suspending Cambodia's access to its preferential Everything But Arms (EBA) agreement.**

We, the undersigned Non-Governmental Organisations, Associations, Trade Unions, Members of the Cambodian Civil Society, and citizens are deeply concerned about the launch of the European Union (EU) Commission's procedure to temporarily suspend Cambodia's access to its Everything But Arms (EBA) trade agreement.

The EU has indeed expressed its concerns over the crackdown on democracy and human rights including the repression of the political opposition, media and civic space in light of the general elections of July 2018. The EU has repeatedly reminded Cambodia that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including labour rights was a crucial part of the granting of EU trade preferences. In July 2018, the European Union assessed the human rights and labour rights situation in Cambodia in response to serious concerns about the undermining of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law in Cambodia and requested the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to fulfil some conditions in addition to bringing back democracy and the respect of human rights in the country. On 11 February 2019, in view of the RGC's failure in fulfilling its obligations under the EBA agreement and the continuing deterioration of the human rights situation in Cambodia, the EU Commission officially announced the beginning of the tariff preferences removal process.

As defenders of fundamental rights and labour rights, we fully understand the European Union' position and decision. However, we are deeply worried that the EBA suspension will directly and negatively impact Cambodian people's welfare and livelihood.

We believe that this situation can be avoided if the RGC takes appropriate steps to fulfil its obligations towards its citizens and effectively implement the Cambodian Constitution, especially Article 31 stating that *"The Kingdom of Cambodia recognizes and respects human rights as enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human rights, and all the treaties and conventions related to human rights, women's rights and children's rights [...] "*, Articles 41 and 42 which guarantee the fundamental freedoms of association, expression and assembly, as well as Article 52 stating that *" [...] The State shall give priority to the improvement of the living conditions and welfare of citizens"*.

Therefore, we, the undersigned Cambodian Civil Society Organisations, Associations, Trade Unions, Members of the Cambodian Civil Society and citizens call on to the RGC to take concrete measures to restore civic space in Cambodia, and guarantee the protection and

fulfilment of human rights and labour rights to ensure Cambodian people's welfare and livelihood.

**Supported by:**

1. The Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC)
2. Mr. Sok Sam Oeun, Acting President of Executive Committee Members of (COMFREL)
3. Dr. Meas Nee, Independent Commentator
4. Dr. Loa Monghay, Independent Commentator
5. The People Center for Development and Peace (PDP-CENTER)
6. Coalition of Cambodian Farmers Community Association (CCFC)
7. Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP) Cambodia
8. Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM)
9. Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (COMFREL)
10. The Cambodian Food and Service Workers Federation (CFSWF)
11. The Cambodian Human Rights Action Coalition (CHRAC)
12. Cambodian Indigenous People Organization (CIPO)
13. Cambodian Indigenous Youth Association (CIYA)
14. People and Knowledge of Highlanders (PKH)
15. The Khmer Leather Association (HA)
16. Centre of Alliance for Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL)
17. Minority Rights Organization (MIRO)
18. Cambodia's Independent Civil Servant Association (CICA)
19. Cambodian Youth Network (CYN)
20. Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA)
21. Community Development for Peace and Sustainability (CDPS)
22. Neutral and Impartial Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia (NICFEC)
23. Kemley Foundation
24. Cambodia Alliance of Trade Union (CATU)
25. Union Alliance of Labor (UCL)
26. Building and Wood Workers Trade Union Federation of Cambodia (BWTUC)
27. Independent Democratic of Informal Economy Association (IDEA)
28. Fee Trade Union of Workers of Kingdom of Cambodia (FTUWKC)
29. Cambodia Tourism Workers Union Federation (CTUWF)
30. Independent Trade Union Federation (INTUFE)
31. Cambodia Transportation Worker's Federation (CTWF)
32. Cambodia Domestic Workers Network (CDWN)
33. Coalition Free Trade Union of Women Textile (CFTUWT)
34. National Independent Federation of Textile Union of Cambodia (NIFTUC)
35. Cambodia Independent Teacher Association (CITA)
36. Labor Rights Supported Union of Khmer Employee of Nagaworld (L.R.S.U)
37. Kasikor Samaki Chek Meas Community of Svay Rieng Province
38. Samaki C.E.5 Community of Sihanouk Province
39. Dei Tali O Kampuchea Community of Sihanouk Province
40. Prek Tabek Tamor Thom Community of Sihanouk Province

41. Dei Tali O Damrei Community of Sihanouk Province
42. Samaki Romeas Hek Community of Svay Rieng Province
43. Kasikor Tomloun Srok Memot Community of Tboung Khmom Province
44. O'da Kampuchea Srok Prey noup Community of Sihanouk Province
45. Community-Based Human Rights and Land Development in Kandal Steung District, Kandal Province
46. Kasikor Samroung Meanchey Community in Svay Chroum District of Svay Rieng Province
47. Kasikor Sré Brang Community in Dambé District of Tboung Khmom Province
48. Dei Tali Kbalhong Tik Community in Pry Noup district of Sihanouk Province
49. Dei Tali O-Kasach Community in Steung Hav District of Sihanouk Province
50. Prek Treng in Strung Hav Community district of Sihanouk Province.
51. O' Trachak Chet Community in Prey Noup district of Sihanouk Province
52. Dei Tali Bat Ka Tas Community in Prey Noup district of Sihanouk Province
53. Andoung Tamor Community in Prey Noup district of Sihanouk Province
54. Dei Tali Spean Ches Community in Sihanouk district of Sihanouk Province
55. Dei Tali Omlang Community in Tapong district of Kampong Speu Province
56. Traping Chour Community in Oral district of Kampong Speu Province
57. Rasmey Samaki Community in Oral District of Kampong Speu Province
58. Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)
59. National Fisheries Solidarity Movement, Sri Lanka. National Convener
60. Struggle to Economize Future Environment (SEFE), Cameroon
61. The People Coalition Food for Sovereignty
62. Asia Peasant Coalition (Philippine)
63. Youth for Food Sovereignty (Philippine)
64. Peasant Coalition Mekong River (Thailand)
65. All Nepal Youth Peasants' Federation
66. National Alliance of People's Movements
67. ANDHRA PRADESH VYVASAYA VRUTHIDARULA UNION
68. Roots for Equity/PKMT
69. ASEAN Service Employees Trade Union Council (ASETUC)
70. Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI)
71. UNI Global Union (UNI)