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Human Rights Council

13th session

Item 6: UPR: Cambodia

17 March 2010

Speaker: Ms Elin Martinez

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Mr. President,

Franciscans International¹ welcomes the presence of the Cambodian delegation today. We regret that its comments on recommendations were not distributed in advance.

We appreciate Cambodia's commitment towards persons with disabilities with its ratification of a law in 2009 relevant to this area, and we strongly endorse New Zealand's recommendation to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to ensure its full implementation in domestic law.

We welcome the call by member states for Cambodia to protect the rights of vulnerable people - which includes the right of children with disabilities to the same educational opportunities as others in society. In this light, several countries commented on the need to increase expenditure on education (Recommendations 76 & 86).

At the UPR, Cambodia recognized the importance of education as a major tool for national development of human resources and spoke of its ambition of ensuring up to year 9 basic education for all children in accordance with its "Educational Strategic Plan for 2006-2010." Children with disabilities must not be left out of these strategies.

We recommend that Cambodia gives priority to children with disabilities in its education development strategies (Recommendation 87). Children with disabilities in Cambodia are less likely to attend school than their non-disabled peers. Extra initiatives are needed to bridge this gap. One such initiative would be for the Government to develop incentives that encourage teachers to be properly trained to work with children with disabilities, especially in rural and remote areas. Another initiative would be to ensure that all schools provide the proper resources that cater for the special needs of these children in their learning.

¹ This statement is also made on behalf of the Foundation for Marist Solidarity International (FMSI)

On the importance of Human Rights Education (Recommendation 16), we recommend that an effective human rights education program, with specific attention to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, be embedded within the school curriculum as one way of making human rights more widely known and promoted. This will have the advantage of promoting the rights of children with disabilities as well. Other avenues can also be used such as media campaigns and public meetings to promote human rights within the Cambodian society.

Thank you Mr. President.