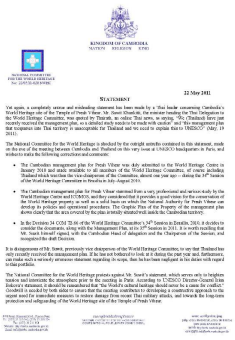
Statement of National Committee for World Heritage

Written by Administrator
Tuesday, 31 May 2011 14:55 - Last Updated Wednesday, 01 June 2011 13:54



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE WORLD HERITAGE
No: 2207/NCWH/PPRE

STATEMENT 22 May 2011

Yet again, a completely untrue and misleading statement has been made by a "Thai border concerning Cambodia's application for the inscription of the Temple of Preah Vihear on the World Heritage List. The Chairman of the National Committee for the World Heritage Committee, was quoted in Thairath, an online Thai news, as saying, "The Chairman knew just recently received the management plan, so a detailed study needs to be made with caution" and "this management plan that trespasses into Thai territory is unacceptable for Thailand and we need to explain that to UNESCO" (May. 19 2011).

The National Committee for the World Heritage is shocked by the outright untruths contained in this statement, made on the eve of the meeting between Cambodia and Thailand on this very issue at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, and wishes to make the following corrections and comments:

- The Cambodian management plan for Preah Vihear was duly submitted to the World Heritage Centre in January 2010 and made available to all members of the World Heritage Committee, of course including Thailand which was then the vice-chairperson of the Committee, almost one year ago – during the 34th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Brasilia in July-August 2010.
- The Cambodian management plan for Preah Vihear stemmed from a very professional and serious study by the Royal Government of Cambodia and UNESCO, which identified the boundaries of the Area of Influence around the World Heritage property, as well as a solid basis on which the National Authority for Preah Vihear can develop its policies and operational procedures. The Graphic Plan of the Property of the management plan shows clearly that the area covered by the plan is entirely situated well inside the Cambodian territory.
- In the Decision 34 COM 7B.66 of the World Heritage Committee's 34th Session in Brasilia, 2010, it decides to consider the documents, along with the Management Plan, at its 35th Session in 2011. It is worth recalling that Mr. Suuchi Inkwall signed, with the Cambodian Head of delegation and the Chairperson of the Session, and recognized the draft Decision.

It is disingenuous of Mr. Suwit, previously vice chairperson of the World Heritage Committee, to say that Thailand has only recently received the management plan. If he has not bothered to look at it during the past year and, furthermore, can make such a wild newly erroneous statement regarding its scope, then he has been negligent in his duties with regard to that portfolio.

The National Committee for the World Heritage protests against Mr. Suwit's statement, which serves only to heighten tensions in the region and undermine the efforts of the World Heritage Committee. The Royal Government of Cambodia endorses a statement, it should be remembered that "the World Heritage cultural heritage should serve be a cause for conflict". Goodwill is needed by both sides to ensure that the meeting contributes to developing a constructive approach to the urgent need for immediate measures to restore dialogue from recent Thai military attacks, and towards the long-term protection and safeguarding of the World Heritage site of the Temple of Preah Vihear.