



## MEDIA RELEASE

### NGO Coalition calls for justification on the promotion of the Ex-Director General of Telecom Cambodia

**Phnom Penh, 19 March 2013** – The promotion of a Government official under investigation for alleged misconduct and suspicion of embezzlement and corruption sets a very bad example for the Cambodian society.

According to media reports today and yesterday, the former Director General of state-owned Telecom Cambodia has now been promoted to an undersecretary of state position in the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications after he was accused by employees of embezzlement and poor performance. On 13 February 2013 more than 200 staff went on strike to demand the removal of Mr. Lao Saroeun from his position.

The ACU was called in to conduct a comprehensive investigation into this case. Subsequently, the Head of Anti-Corruption Unit, H.E Om Yentieng and the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, H.E So Khun have met with Telecom Cambodia employees and encouraged them to complain openly and bring evidence forward according to an article in the Phnom Penh Post published in February 2013.

Yesterday's announcement to promote Mr. Lao Saroeun from the position of Director General to an undersecretary of state position into the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications comes as a surprise to the Cambodian public. The ACU has declined to comment and there was no indication whether the investigation has been concluded and what the outcome of that investigation was.

In proper practice, people under investigation for alleged corruption or misconduct shall be suspended from their current position and cannot be employed or promoted until they are cleared of all allegations. Since there is no comment from the ACU on the completion or results of the investigation, this raises questions and doubts whether the case was handled properly or not. From an outside point of view, it appears to be inappropriate and unacceptable practice to promote an official being alleged for embezzlement and poor performance.

Transparency International Cambodia, The Coalition for Integrity and Social Accountability (CISA), Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM), and The Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC) call for the government to provide a justification for their decision to promote Mr. Lao Saroeun and to inform the public whether he has been cleared from all allegations made against him.

To uphold the principle of being an independent Anti-Corruption institution and in order to gain trust by the people and enhance its institutional reputation among the stakeholders, the ACU should disclose the results of the investigation.

While we understand that Telecom Cambodia needs to fill the position of Director General with a new person to stabilise the company, we call for the Government to suspend the suspect until all allegations have been cleared by the ACU. Being transparent in dealing with such cases will demonstrate the commitment and accountability of the Government to actively fight against corruption", says the coalition.

\*\*\*END MEDIA RELEASE\*\*\*

**Contact:**

Transparency International Cambodia, Mr Kol PREAP, Email: kolpreap@ticambodia.org, Phone (+855) 012 877 833  
CISA, Mr. Yong Kim Eng, Vice Chair Email: cisacoordinator@saatsaam.info, Phone (+855) 016 828 211  
CHRAC, Mr. Sok Sam Oeun, Chairman of CHRAC/Executive Director of CDP, Tel: (+855) 012 901 199  
CHRAC, Mr. Suon Bunsak, Executive Secretary of CHRAC, (+855) 092 344 357  
CCIM, Mr. Pa Ngounteang, Executive Director, Email: pntiang@vodhotnews.com, Phone (+855) 060 409 999