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SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-fourth year

Letter dated 26 November 1979 from the Permanent Representative
of Democratic Kampuchea to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, for your information, the statement of Her Excellency Mrs. Ieng Thirith, Minister for Social Affairs, head of the delegation of Democratic Kampuchea, at the Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, held at New Delhi, India, from 5 to 9 November 1979.

I should be very grateful if you would have this text circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 80, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) THIOUNN Prasith
Permanent Representative of
Democratic Kampuchea



ANNEX

STATEMENT
BY HER EXCELLENCY MRS. IENG THIRITH,
MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS, HEAD OF
THE DELEGATION OF DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

AT
THE REGIONAL PREPARATORY CONFERENCE
FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED
NATIONS DECADE FOR WOMEN

5 - 9 NOVEMBER 1979
NEW DELHI, INDIA

Madam President,

For us, women coming from a war-torn country, the occasion of this meeting is most particular as Kampuchean women along with the whole Kampuchean people are now undergoing immeasurable sufferings due to the Vietnamese aggressors who since 25 December 1978 have been putting our beloved country to fire and sword, burning all, destroying all, massacring all.

May I recall, Madam President, that in December 1978, on the eve of the Vietnamese invasion, the Government of Democratic Kampuchea has hit its primary target which was to provide the whole of our people with decent life. Everybody was reasonably fed, clad and housed. As for women, they enjoyed complete equality with men in accordance with our Constitution which stipulates in Article 13 that "men and women are equal in every field. Polygamy or polyandry is prohibited."

Even before our liberation in 1975, during the five year war of liberation, Kampuchean women had been participating equally with men in the struggle for national liberation as nurses, battle-front suppliers and even fighters at the risk of their life, and many had wholeheartedly consented to the supreme sacrifice. But especially after our liberation in 1975, Kampuchean women joined their efforts with men to reconstruct our 80% devastated country and raise our people standard of living exactly on an equal footing with men.

In political field, from governmental level down to village level, Kampuchean women were playing an important role in the conduct of our country's affairs in Committee at all levels where they were holding high responsibilities. We had then women ministers, women deputy-governors of regions, women chief of districts and women chiefs of villages.

In economical field, as the Hanoi authorities started attacking our borders just the day following our liberation and most of our men were engaged again in the defence of our borders, the overwhelming majority of our workers whether they were in rice-field, rubber-plantations or factories was composed of women. Some factories concerned with light industry such as textile factories, pharmaceutical factories, sugar factories and so on were managed and almost entirely run by women. Even in transportation, we had a few women who served as truck drivers.

Above all, in social and public health services, women formed almost the entire staff. They were working as doctors, physicians, nurses and even surgeons. Women took also the lead in the field of education and propaganda.

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So Kampuchean women were playing a leading role in the work of national reconstruction during three and a half years since our liberation in 1975 until the Vietnamese invasion at the end of 1978.

They felt rightly proud of being entrusted with such responsibilities by our people and our government and with the genuine selflessness common to all women the world over, they devoted their lives to the service of the national community. Our government helped them to fully play their role in our society by providing each village, factory, administrative service with a day-nursery which took care of their children. In addition, every pregnant woman whether peasant, worker or civil servant, enjoyed equally two months of rest before and after delivery. They got privileged medical care which in our country was free for all the people. They got privileged regime of food and work likely to favour their lactation. All these facilities enabled them to achieve their work with maximum efficiency.

Owing to a suitable men education on the one hand and on the other hand to the proper genuine qualities of our women, the later were respected by men who never questioned their leadership.

By its just woman policy, our government succeeded in getting the whole participation of our women who represent more than half of our population in the work of national reconstruction as well as national defence. For this reason, we arrived in three and a half years to change our backward agricultural country into a semi-modern agricultural country equipped with a nation-wide scale irrigation system which put 700,000 hectares of our land under cultivation in all seasons. As a result, our countryside which used to offer an arid landscape in the dry season had turn green with rice, vegetables and fruit-trees, everywhere even in the height of the dry season. In addition much economy was realized in every village, factory, administrative service due to the honest and dedicated management by women. Along with this, through a nation-wide movement for learning, we succeeded in solving fundamentally the problem of illiteracy among women as well as among the whole of our people. Armed with knowledge, general and technical, Kampuchean women had thus become the most efficient forces of the nation displaying the capacity they had never thought of before.

These results were obtained in spite of the frantic activities of sabotage carried out ceaselessly by the Hanoi authorities' fifth column agents in order to destroy our woman policy. Those secret agents infiltrated in our ranks under cover of revolutionaries were bent on harming our women most of all by trying to deprave them and even assassinate those who showed the greatest merits in their work.

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Madam President,

On 6 January 1978, our people and our revolutionary army under the leadership of the Democratic Kampuchea Government defeated the Hanoi authorities first war of aggression and in May 1978, we crushed down the Vietnamese fifth column infiltrated inside the country since 1947. After these successive failures, the Hanoi authorities signed the military treaty with Moscow on 3 November 1978 and it was with the vast military assistance from the Soviet Union that on 25 December 1978, they launched their second war of aggression against Democratic Kampuchea on a far larger scale than the preceding one.

From 120,000 troops in December 1978, the Hanoi authorities have now raised the number of their troops up to 220,000 men in their desperate and frenzied attempt to crush out the Kampuchean national resistance. But as the world knows, our people and our revolutionary army under the leadership of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea have strongly and valiantly counter-attacked by means of guerilla warfare and have succeeded for more than ten months already, in dragging the Vietnamese aggressors into a protracted war of attrition to which they now see no end.

But because of the fascist nature and the genocidal aim of the Vietnamese aggressors who want to exterminate the whole of our people in order to swallow Kampuchea, those ten months have also been ten bloody months when the whole of Kampuchea has become the scene of plunder, devastation, mass massacres, starvation owing to the unrelenting scorched earth policy of the expansionist Hanoi authorities. Particularly against our women, they have been committing innumerable and unnamable crimes of genocide. Among the 500,000 and more of our fellow citizens who have been savagely massacred by the Vietnamese aggressors, more than a half are women, especially pregnant or just after lying-in women and old women who are too weak to escape in time their furious massacres. Cynically the Vietnamese soldiers beastly rape them until they are dead or, if they are not yet dead, they finish them off by stabbing them with bayonets. Even seventy or eighty years old women are ^{not} spared. That is their special way in which to deal with Kampuchean women. Along with our population, our women have been killed in the most fascist and barbarous methods. For example the Vietnamese aggressors pour gasoline over our compatriots and then burn them alive. They pierce their hands and their ears and string them together in rows so that they cannot escape and take them off to be shot. As for children, they are killed in a specific way. Small babies in cradles have their body quartered in two by the two legs or thrown upon bayonets. The biggest have their heads dashed against trees. The Vietnamese aggressors have

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their special method to kill our wounded too. Wherever they are found, in Phnom Penh hospitals or in the countryside where they have been evacuated, the Vietnamese hordes proceed to bind them, lay them down all upon the road and crush them with their tanks.

Besides, they use fighter planes flying low over the ground to savagely strafe our villages and our people who were working in the rice-fields as well as our truck-convoys, causing at a time hundreds losses of life and considerable damage to the property of our people.

More serious still is the fact that the Vietnamese aggressors are now using chemical weapons such as toxic chemicals and toxic gas to kill our women and people more quickly.

But the most serious of all is their "strategy of famine". They have been looting our warehouses in Phnom Penh, in Kampong Som sea-port, our regional, district, village warehouses, burning crops in rice-fields, destroying all our people's agricultural tools and now they go so far as to confine our people either in towns or in villages where they are forbidden under death penalty to go out and grow rice or vegetables or search for wild potatoes to eat. At the same time, they cut off their rice and salt supplies, cynically and deliberately condemning them to die of starvation. Now the number of our compatriots who have died of starvation has reached more than 500,000 already and with everyday that goes by, the figure is getting higher and higher.

Madam President,

The Vietnamese genocidal war of aggression, besides bringing to nought all the economic and social achievements of our women and our people, has already made more than one million victims among our fellow-citizens, 500 000 of whom have been massacred and the rest have died of starvation.

The root-cause of those monstrous genocidal crimes of the aggressors against our women and people is their ambitious expansionism which has led them to swallow Laos and aggress Kampuchea in order to swallow it too, so that they can rig up the so-called Indochinese federation which will serve them as a springboard from which to embark on aggression and expansion in the whole of South East Asia.

To reach this aim, the Hanoi authorities are resorting now at one and the same time to the military operations and the strategy of famine to swallow up our country by exterminating our whole people.

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Now the international opinion is alarmed by the overall extermination of the Kampuchean people through the current dry season offensive of the Hanoi authorities. In particular, the world is upset by the widespread famine in Kampuchea, the most cruel tragedy ever seen in the world, which our people have never experienced in their bimillenary history, even in the hardship of their post-war situation.

The United Nations Organization and other humanitarian agencies the world over are doing their utmost to collect funds and foodstuffs to rescue our people from extermination.

In the name of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea, I would like to extend to them our profound gratitude. We specially welcome the initiative of the UN Secretary-General Dr. Kurt WALDHEIM to convene a Pledging Conference on 5 November 1979 at the UN Headquarters in New York in order to work up an emergency humanitarian relief program to save our people threatened with extinction by the barbarous acts of extermination of the Hanoi authorities. For the efficiency of this humanitarian relief, the Government of Democratic Kampuchea considers that a sufficient number of United Nations forces should be appointed by this Conference and the Secretary-General of the United Nations in order to directly ensure the distribution of this relief to the victim population of Kampuchea throughout the country so as to foil the Hanoi authorities' obstruction and dilatory manoeuvres.

But whatever necessary the humanitarian aid may be, they could not suffice to ensure the survival of the Kampuchean people and nation and to prevent the extension of the war to South East Asia and the world.

It behoves the United Nations Organizations to take urgent concrete measures in order to compel the Vietnamese authorities to immediately and totally withdraw their troops of aggression and their people settlements from Kampuchea under the direct supervision and control of the United Nations forces, so as to let the Kampuchean people use their sovereign right to decide by themselves their own destiny free from any foreign interference. This is the one and only way to ensure the survival of the Kampuchean people and nation and at the same time prevent the extension of the present conflict and ensure peace, security and stability in South East Asia, in Asia and the world.

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Madam President,

My delegation feels it is its duty to draw attention of our Preparatory Conference to the fact that women of Asia and the Pacific are more concerned than anybody else with the genocidal crimes committed by the Hanoi authorities who are now slaughtering Kampuchean women by hundreds and thousands everyday at one and the same time through fire and sword and through their odious "strategy of famine". Because Asia and the Pacific and above all South-East Asia are directly threatened by the aggressive expansionism of the Hanoi authorities, our delegation is convinced that our sisters, women of Asia and the Pacific cannot stand idle and let the more than 220,000 Vietnamese hordes slaughter Kampuchean women at their will.

Therefore, we, women of Kampuchea, victims of the Vietnamese genocidal war of aggression appeal to our honourable Conference to consider the opportunity of including a new item concerning the ways and means to save Kampuchean women from the Hanoi authorities' extermination in the agenda of the forthcoming World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women to be held next July 1980 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Here and now, we are already convinced that our present appeal will meet with full support from our honourable Conference at the same time for the sake of the survival of our people and our nation and for the common good of the whole humanity.

Thank you, Madam President.
