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Press Release
International Day of the Girl Child
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The Global Campaign for Education and UNESCO launch the Cambodian Premiere of Internationally Acclaimed Documentary *Girl Rising*

Phnom Penh, 11 October 2013 - The United Nations General Assembly on 19 December 2011 voted to designate 11 October as the 'International Day of the Girl Child'. The day promotes girls' human rights, highlights gender inequalities that remain between girls and boys and addresses the various forms of discrimination and abuse suffered by girls around the globe. This year's *International Day of the Girl Child* will be celebrated in Phnom Penh with the Cambodian Premiere of the Hollywood documentary *Girl Rising*.

The film premiere will be held on Friday night at Phnom Penh's Platinum Cineplex in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Women's Affairs, various international and national partners and Cambodian celebrities. The film will also be screened at the Meta House on Friday which will be open to the public from 6pm.

The Global Campaign for Education and its members—UNESCO, Plan International, NGO Education Partnership, VSO and Aide et Action—hope to stimulate the debate of the importance of education for girls. Across the world, girls face barriers when it comes to accessing quality education. Educating girls is crucial to a country's development in terms of economic growth, reduction of domestic violence and improvement of health. The World Bank estimates that with one additional year of schooling, girls can earn up to 20% more in the future and are less likely to marry early.

Forbes chose *Girl Rising* as the 'Most Innovative Partnership for Good 2012'. The event gives the opportunity to remind us all that even though primary enrolment figures for girls have improved in Cambodia over the last years, many girls drop out when it comes to secondary education, which perpetuates an uneven development for men and women of the Cambodian society.

Girl Rising was filmed with UNESCO's support, and directed in 2011 by Academy Award nominee Richard Robins. It tells nine different stories of nine girls in nine different countries. One girl featured in the film is Sokha from Cambodia. Sokha was a Cambodian child of the dump: Orphaned and forced to pick through garbage to survive. But, through a series of miracles, Sokha finds her way to school – and, like a phoenix, she has risen to become a star student on the brink

of a brilliant and once unimaginable future. The stories are narrated by famous actresses, such as Cate Blanchet, Meryl Streep, Selma Hayek and Cambodian writer Loung Un.

“To us the whole idea was that we wanted our audience to hear a story from the girl’s point of view...because we wanted to make the audience feel for the girls. I want them to care enough that they want to try and to do something. Because they can help. It’s that simple,” explained film director Richard Robbins.

Anne Lemaistre, UNESCO Representative in Cambodia said, “New UNESCO data shows there is proof that investing in education, especially for girls, alleviates extreme poverty through securing substantial benefits for health and productivity, as well as democratic participation and women’s empowerment. This new evidence should give us renewed energy to complete what we set out to accomplish.”

Sokha is currently finishing her high school degree and will be present at the Press Conference before the movie at 16:30 pm in the hall of Platinum Cineplex. She will also address the audience prior to the screening. Chen Sokha said, “Learning is a treasure...Don’t ever give up your studies. Help yourself first then you will be able to help others. My wish, my hope for all young women and girls who live in difficult and unbearable circumstances is that they will find courage through my story and to never lose hope for their future.”

The movie is in English with Khmer subtitles.

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