

PRESS RELEASE

**on Cambodia's Preah Vihear Temple Listed as World Heritage Site
Québec, July 7, 2008**

Cambodia has succeeded in its application to list the Preah Vihear Temple as a World Heritage Site during the 32nd Session of the World Heritage Committee currently being held in Quebec, Canada. The listing was unanimously approved by the 21 member World Heritage Committee.

The effort to inscribe the historic temple was led by Deputy Prime Minister Sok An, who also serves as Chairman of the Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO and head of the delegation from the Royal Government of Cambodia at the World Heritage meeting. The approval was the culmination of seven years of effort to have the Preah Vihear Temple inscribed, which was initiated by an official request made by Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen in May, 2001.

Upon receiving the approval of the World Heritage Committee, Deputy Prime Minister Sok An expressed his appreciation. He said, "The inscription of the Sacred Temple of Preah Vihear on the World Heritage List is a matter very dear to the hearts of all Cambodians as it represents one of the great triumphs of Khmer civilization."

Deputy Prime Minister Sok An expressed his gratitude to all members of the World Heritage Committee, and gave a special word of thanks to the strong support given by the Delegation of the United States. Both Ambassador Louise Oliver and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Gerald Anderson were cited for their valuable support for the listing of the Temple.

Also acknowledged was the technical support given by the governments of Belgium, France, India, China, Japan and the U.S., as well as the International Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Properties, in preparing the nomination of the Temple.

The World Heritage Committee action followed two weeks of controversy surrounding the position of the Thai government concerning the proposed listing. As recently as June 18, the Thai government had announced its support of the listing. However, following a decision of a Thai court to temporarily block Thai support for the listing, the Thai government withdrew its support. Last minute efforts by the Thai delegation to delay the vote and to have joint management of the temple failed.

The famous temple had been the subject of a June 15, 1962 decision of the International Court of Justice in which the ancient Angkorian site was awarded to Cambodia over the protest of Thailand.

In summarizing the success of Cambodia in having the temple listed, Thailand's Heritage Committee Chairman Pongpol Adireksarn noted that many delegates at the Quebec meeting gave credit to Cambodia because it had "untiringly pursued the issue on a constant basis."

In his concluding remarks to the conference, Deputy Prime Minister Sok An pledged that Cambodia will continue to make every effort to ensure that management of the Preah Vihear Temple will be consistent "with international conservation standards and with a view to maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value of the property." Cambodia will continue its collaboration with Thailand, especially for the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the site.

Deputy Prime Minister Sok An noted that the successful inscription of the Sacred Temple of Preah Vihear was another great achievement of the Royal Government under the leadership of Samdech Akka Moha Senapadei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

