

For immediate release: 12 May 2009

## **Global Witness Welcomes Cambodia Sand Export Ban**

Campaign group Global Witness today welcomed a [decision by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen](#) to ban environmentally damaging exports of sand from Cambodia.

This move follows a [Global Witness investigation](#) that revealed a huge sand dredging business in its early stages in Koh Kong province, Cambodia. The bulk of sand was being exported to Singapore for use in land reclamation and construction.

“We are pleased that the government has responded to concerns raised by Global Witness and others about the potentially devastating impacts of sand dredging. This is a positive first move towards more sustainable management of the rapidly expanding extractive industries in Cambodia,” said Eleanor Nichol, campaigner with Global Witness.

“Sand dredging is just one example of widespread environmental malpractice, which is depriving people of their rightful benefits and undermining poverty reduction. This must be the beginning, not the end, of action to counter natural resource mismanagement and exploitation in Cambodia,” Nichol added.

Global Witness is calling an end to untransparent allocation of onshore oil and mining concessions in areas of critical environmental importance. Allocation of mining concessions in Protected Areas of forests and of onshore oil concessions in the UNESCO biosphere reserve of the Tonle Sap Lake should both be stopped.

Given the regulatory vacuum in which the extractives industries are operating, a review of all existing concessions is needed to ensure that they are socially and environmentally viable and that Cambodia is getting a fair deal.

/ Ends

For more information contact Amy Barry on +44 (0)7980 664397 or Eleanor Nichol on +44 (0)7872600870

Additional notes:

- Global Witness estimated that the sand exported had a market value of \$35 million in Singapore.
- Until 2007, Indonesia was Singapore’s main supplier of sand. However, in January 2007, the Indonesian government imposed a blanket ban on all sand exports. This ban was partly motivated by the serious damage the sand industry has wrought in its coastal areas.
- Read Global Witness’s latest report on Cambodia, *Country for Sale*, at [www.globalwitness.org](http://www.globalwitness.org)