**H.E. Hun Manet**
Prime Minister
Royal Government of Cambodia
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

October 12, 2026

**Re: Follow-up to the Urgent Appeal to Free the Five Imprisoned Mother Nature Cambodia Activists**

Dear Prime Minister Hun Manet,

We are writing to follow up on our previous letter to you on June 4, 2026, in which 74 organizations from Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and North America urged you to release the five young leaders from the group Mother Nature Cambodia (MNC). Unfortunately, to date, we have received no reply or even acknowledgement from your office to that urgent correspondence. A copy of that June 4, 2026, letter is attached.

Those five leaders, popularly known as the Mother Nature Cambodia 5 (MNC5), are Long Kunthea, Yim Leanghy, Thun Ratha, Phuon Keoraksmey, and Ly Chandaravuth. They were unjustly convicted and imprisoned in July 2024 in a trial that violated fair trial and due process requirements, and are currently serving six to eight year prison terms. Since their imprisonment, their applications for bail have been repeatedly rejected. Their lawyer filed an appeal against their conviction in July 2024, and has repeatedly raised this appeal request, but more than two years later, the Ministry of Justice and the courts have failed to move forward with an appeals court trial.

In addition to the matters set out in our previous letter, we consider it important to draw your attention to the fact that the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) investigated the case of the MNC5 and rendered a clear determination that their detention is arbitrary and unjust on multiple grounds, and stated that "the appropriate remedy would be to release Mr. Ly, Ms. Long, Ms. Phuon, Mr. Thun and Mr. Yim immediately and accord them an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, in accordance with international law."

The WGAD found that the Cambodian authorities' actions in the criminal case and court proceedings against the MNC5 included instances of judicial bias and violated multiple civil and political rights guaranteed by international law in treaties ratified by Cambodia, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Cambodian government failed to even provide a response to the WGAD's communications requesting information about the MNC5 case.

It is very important that the WGAD found no evidence that the MNC5 defendants had engaged in or advocated violence, which calls into question the basis for their conviction on charges of "plotting" against the government. It further noted that the lèse-majesté law cannot justify a restriction on freedom of expression or be invoked as a legal basis for detention. The WGAD concluded that the MNC5 were denied a fair trial and effective appeal – and called on the Cambodian government to immediately release the five activists.

The full UN WGAD decision 67/2025, dated February 5, 2026, can be accessed online here: www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/detention-wg/opinions/sessions104/a-hrc-wgad-2025-67-cambodia-advance-edited.pdf

Since 2012, the award-winning Mother Nature Cambodia has led peaceful environmental conservation campaigns reaching millions, creatively using social media to effectively raise public awareness about issues threatening Cambodia's fragile environment. The five activists have peacefully advocated for environmental protection in Cambodia by expressing their views and exercising their rights to peaceful public assembly in line with UN human rights conventions ratified by Cambodia.

As Cambodia is preparing to host the 20th Francophonie Summit in Phnom Penh on November 15-16, 2026, the international spotlight will naturally be focused on your country's actions as the host nation. Francophonie nations and observer states around the world will have strong expectations that Cambodia should live up to its international commitments, including upholding its international human rights law obligations. Whether or not Cambodia complies with the decision of the WGAD about the MNC5 will be a prominent issue that will likely be raised with you. In this context, we urge you to recognize that civil and political rights, environmental protection, and climate action are central to the global challenges addressed at the summit, and releasing the MNC5 from their arbitrary and unjust imprisonment would be an important signal for Cambodia to send to visiting Francophonie leaders.

In this spirit, we strongly urge you to comply with the decision of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and take immediate, proactive steps to release these five young environmental leaders ahead of the Francophonie Summit, if not earlier.

We thank you for your consideration of our views and look forward to hearing from you. To convey your response, please contact Ines Gavrilut of the Bruno Manser Fonds at email: **ines.gavrilut@bmf.ch**

Sincerely,

1. Agent Green, Romania
2. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
3. Asia Human Rights and Labour Advocates (AHRLA)

4. Bruno Manser Fonds
5. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
6. Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) International
7. FERN: Making Europe Work for People & Forests
8. Human Rights Watch
9. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
10. Mother Nature Cambodia
11. Platforma Pentru Adaptare Climatică (PAC), Romania
12. Right Livelihood
13. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

Copies to:

Louise Mushikiwabo, Secretary-General of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)

Emmanuel Macron, President of France

Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada

Ignazio Cassis, Swiss Federal Councilor

Bart De Wever, Prime Minister of Belgium

Luc Frieden, Prime Minister of Luxemburg