Statement of the Delegates of the
World Heritage Youth Forum, Cambodia 2013
Living Heritage: Temple, Environment and People (TEP)

To the 37th Session of the World Heritage Committee
Phnom Penh, 16 June 2013

Samdech Techo Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Royal Government of Cambodia for convening the World Heritage Youth Forum, for the incredibly warm welcome accorded to us by the organizers, the Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO, the APSARA National Authority, the Union of Youth Federations of Cambodia and the World Heritage Centre. And our heartfelt thanks go to the volunteers and facilitators who made our activities in Cambodia possible and allowed us to profit from a great and memorable experience.

We truly appreciate this opportunity to deliver this address to the participants of the 37th Session of the World Heritage Committee.

We, the participants of the 2013 World Heritage Youth Forum, would like to emphasize the importance of understanding our history and heritage. Only when we understand the path that led us to the present can we chart our future.

As youth of today, we recognize our responsibility to conserve heritage. This involves conserving not only the physical structures of heritage sites, but also their environment and traditions, the intangible dimension, which make heritage properties, “living” sites.

Therefore, we commit to help develop heritage-specific lessons to be integrated in school curricula; and educational modules for use at heritage sites by both local communities and tourists.

We also need to make heritage and history engaging for all and we welcome the potential of social media in our work to create heritage-oriented experiential or participatory learning.

We believe that young people can be leaders and role models in conserving the environments that support heritage sites. Young people can make a valuable contribution to environmental protection through collective, ground-level action to counter land, water, air and noise pollution; to reinforce reforestation; to encourage eco-tourism.
Tourism is a source of concern for us. Although tourism is essential to development, if left uncontrolled, it can prove damaging to heritage. Tourism must be managed so as to reconcile the interests of visitors, local communities and other stakeholders, as well as the sites themselves. The World Heritage Committee is presently developing a programme for sustainable tourism and we commit our pro-active involvement in supporting this programme.

We consider it as our duty to disseminate and echo the results of this Forum when we return to our countries.

We will utilize the newly-formed networks we have established through the Forum to further reach out to our peers.

However, action is becoming increasingly difficult due to the global crisis. In this context, we, on behalf of young people of the world, heirs to World Heritage, request the States Parties to take into account the following priorities during the forthcoming World Heritage Committee session:

First, we request the States Parties to pay special attention to the relationship between heritage sites, their environments and local communities. It is important to include local communities, youth and other stakeholders in the management of sites. The States Parties need to take into account in the management plan the opinions and wishes of local communities and neighborhoods to ensure the sustainable development of their sites.

All of this requires dialogue. The absence of dialogue generates threats to heritage sites, degrading their value. Notable among these threats are: conflict and violence; pollution and climate change; uncontrolled tourism; over-exploitation of natural resources; and illegal trafficking. We urge States Parties to address these issues through effective regulation and legislation.

We also recommend that States Parties strengthen UNESCO’s World Heritage Education Programme which will help young people reinforce their sense of cultural identity by promoting the ideals of the World Heritage Convention.

The States Parties may want to consider establishing a committee working group on Youth. Implementing the World Heritage Convention is the work of the States Parties. Nevertheless, young people from all over the world feel that mechanisms need to be created for them to play a part in this work.

The youth of today can bring talent, passion and creativity to the ever greater challenge of preserving the heritage of humanity for the future.

Thank you for your attention.
Delegates to the World Heritage Youth Forum, Cambodia 2013

Mr. ANN Tithvannareth - Cambodia
Ms. QUEZEL Elodie - France

Ms. CHAMROEUN Sophea - Cambodia
Ms. SCHNEIDER Katleen - Germany

Mr. HOIN Channara - Cambodia
Mr. SUDIRMAN Miftah Rahardian - Indonesia

Mr. HONG Sreysantepeheap - Cambodia
Mr. FURUYA Yuki - Japan

Ms. Keang Chanboramey - Cambodia
Ms. KIM Yuki - Korea

Mr. KOUM Somaneth - Cambodia
Mr. NHIALONG Xengxiong - Lao PDR

Ms. MENG Paricheat - Cambodia
Ms. GONZÁLEZ Areli Nájera - Mexico

Mr. OU Sotheara - Cambodia
Mr. Thein Kyaw - Myanmar

Ms. SIN Sovanrattana - Cambodia
Mr. CALDOZO Adriann J. - Philippines

Ms. SING Bunny - Cambodia
Ms. AL-HEMAIDI Noora - Qatar

Ms. SOEUR Chamreunisithy - Cambodia
Ms. ZAKIROVA Farida - Russia

Ms. SOK Puthinyka - Cambodia
Mr. WARRIER Deepak S. - Singapore

Ms. SYNN Siveling - Cambodia
Ms. GRANGET Elodie - Switzerland

Mr. TANG Monireach - Cambodia
Ms. HOSTETTLER Yara - Switzerland

Ms. TEP Sothy - Cambodia
Ms. PLINSUT Pattaramon - Thailand

Ms. TIM Thida - Cambodia
Mr. NGUYEN Khanh Nam - Vietnam

Ms. TOUCH Ratanakhyda - Cambodia

Mr. TUON Sophevirak - Cambodia

Mr. YOUK Sopheak - Cambodia

Ms. YUK Sorphorn - Cambodia