

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
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From: T. Kumar [mailto:]
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**Amnesty International USA Statement on Secretary Clinton's speech
Monday, December 14, 2009**

Larry Cox, executive director, Amnesty International USA, on Monday welcomed Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's affirmation that protecting human rights is central to helping countries worldwide achieve the goal of reducing or eliminating poverty. Calling her speech "historic," Cox said Clinton's commitment to a broad spectrum of human rights offers new hope in solving the desperation caused by poverty.

"By advancing the idea that human rights, development and participatory and accountable governance, are goals that mutually reinforce one another, Secretary Clinton has charted a course of leadership recognizing the indivisibility of human rights that has been missing in our government's mission abroad and at home," said Cox. "Her statement today is an essential foundation for relieving the suffering of billions in poverty, especially now when millions upon millions more people worldwide are experiencing economic hardship."

"We welcome Secretary Clinton's affirmation that the "basics" of well being -- food, shelter, health and education --are not only human rights in and of themselves, but are also essential for the exercise of other human rights. Only by addressing both freedom from want and freedom from fear will it be possible to achieve genuine development for all."

Cox, who attended Secretary Clinton's speech on the administration's 21st century human rights agenda at Georgetown University, said he was especially grateful to hear Secretary Clinton outline her determination to make a real and long-term difference by tackling human rights and development as mutually reinforcing goals and affirm that the "United States must lead by example in this area."

Cox also welcomed Secretary Clinton's commitment to stand with human rights defenders worldwide by shining a spotlight on their work and the legitimacy of their efforts. In her speech Secretary Clinton highlighted the work of Women of Zimbabwe Arise, whose founders were recently honored at the White House, and noted the State Department had sent high-level diplomatic missions to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar. It is important that the administration continue to champion human rights defenders around the world, especially those in powerful countries like China and Russia.

Cox also praised the Secretary for raising the question of accountability abroad and at home. "Secretary Clinton rightly identifies accountability as the centerpiece of any successful human rights agenda for the United States. But if the administration means what it says, then it needs to appoint a bipartisan commission to investigate the abuses connected to counterterrorism policies since September 11, 2001, follow through on the executive orders it already has committed to, close the prison at Guantanamo and abide by international legal commitments to end torture."

"The administration can't insist that other countries adhere to human rights protections while continuing to detain people outside the rule of law at home," Cox continued. "Discussion of human rights can't be an empty rebranding exercise. The administration should promptly bring charges against the Guantanamo detainees who can be legitimately charged with a crime, and release the rest without further delay." To date, 116 individuals have already been cleared for release but remain unjustly detained in Guantanamo.

Noting that in his Nobel Prize speech in Oslo, President Obama stated that "no nation can insist that others follow the rules of the road if we are not willing to follow those rules ourselves," Cox Stated, "Amnesty International commends the administration for its commitment to engage closely on human rights. This is welcome change, but to make measurable progress we must prioritize accountability for torture, implementation of human rights treaties, a strong Executive Order on Human Rights, and the establishment of a national human rights commission."

Amnesty International is a Nobel Peace Prize-winning grassroots activist organization with more than 2.2 million supporters, activists and volunteers in more than 150 countries campaigning for human rights worldwide. The organization investigates and exposes abuses, educates and mobilizes the public, and works to protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied.

Please visit www.amnestyusa.org for more information.