

# VISIONS of CAMBODIA

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## CAMBODIA OBSERVES INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS



Cambodia on 26 May 2022 observed the International Day of UN Peacekeepers to commemorate the sacrifice of Cambodian forces and civilians who contributed to the world peace keeping mission.

Addressing the function held at Kampong Speu province, H.E. Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Chairman of the National Coordination Committee for UN Peacekeeping Operations, stressed the event was meant to honour those who have fulfilled or are carrying the peacekeeping service under the United Nations.

They have left their home country to contribute to maintaining and restoring peace in other countries, and some of them have even lost their lives, he added.

According to H.E. Gen. Sem Sovanny, Director General of the National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces, Mines and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC), Cambodia commemorate the International Day of UN Peacekeepers (May 29) every year as the country has been playing a key role in supporting the world mission.

Themed "People, Peace, Progress: The Power of Partnerships", the international day this year implies unity to support peace, especially in the vulnerable countries, said Ms. Pauline Tamesis, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Cambodia, who also joined the event.

She also spoke highly of Cambodian peacekeepers under the UN mission.

Cambodia has deployed 8,302 forces for the UN peacekeeping mission to different countries, and 10 of them have lost their lives.

## CAMBODIAN PM SHARES INSIGHTS AT 27TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE "FUTURE OF ASIA"



Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, on 27 May 2022 shared his views and opinions on some of the tasks and priorities related to Asia's role in the divided world, at the 27th International Conference on the "Future of Asia" under the theme "Redefining Asia's Role in a Divided World".

Asian countries need to consistently call for all countries to respect each other's sovereignty and independence, in addition to the choice of governing in accordance with different conditions and characteristics of each country, he said in his virtual address.

Moreover, he added, all countries must adhere to the principle of peaceful co-existence, non-interference, and respect for one another's livelihood, tradition, customs, and history, which are the highest values in ensuring a sustainable and inclusive global development.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen urged for the adherence to the principles of "multilateralism" and "rules-based international cooperation" which are the two rules that Asia must continue to uphold. "We must not allow any country to be hindered in its development efforts by the imposition of unilateral sanctions, embargoes or other coercive economic measures that violate international law as well as the core principles and purposes, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter," he said.

According to the Prime Minister, Asian countries should work in tandem to further promote regional cooperation that is open, transparent, inclusive, complementary and mutually beneficial. For an instance, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is the best example of an open, inclusive, and rules-based trading system that reflects a true aspiration and commitment of participating countries to enhancing regional cooperation. In this regard, we need to continue and make greater efforts to promote other regional initiatives and cooperation aimed at leveraging the potential of Asia's development to its maximum.

"We must continue to maintain and strengthen Asia's unity and solidarity amongst countries in Asia, as it is the key to promoting peace, security, stability, and development in the region and the world," he underlined. "In this regard, ASEAN, as a regional grouping, can play an indispensable role in promoting those noble goals. ASEAN, through its ASEAN-led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Plus Three, East Asia Summit and ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus, has managed to bring together all the relevant superpowers, middle powers, and small states to jointly build mutual trust and confidence and to reinforce rules-based regional architecture with ASEAN at the core.

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## DPM PRAK SOKHONN BRIEFS UN SECURITY COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTS IN MYANMAR

H.E. PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in his capacity as the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar, addressed a closed-session briefing for the Council's Members via videoconference on 27 May 2022 on the implementation of the Five-point Consensus.

The briefing was made at the invitation of Her Excellency Linda Thomas-Greenfield, President of the United Nations Security Council for May 2022, said a press release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

According to the source, during the Meeting, H.E. Deputy Prime Minister shared updates on what Cambodia has done thus far, including the outcome of his first visit as the Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair to Myanmar from 21-23 March 2022, and the result of the Consultative Meeting on ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar on 06 May 2022.

On the outcomes of his first visit to Myanmar, H.E. Deputy Prime Minister apprised the Council of digests from meeting the four different prominent groups in Myanmar, namely the State Administration Council (SAC), non-SAC actors, diplomatic corps, and UN Specialised Agencies. The meetings provided the Special Envoy and his team with opportunities to listen, discuss, and extend the good offices to Myanmar on how ASEAN could help Myanmar to manifest more progress in the 5PC implementation.

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister highlighted that these actors shared the same aspirations, which are for Myanmar to return to normalcy and for humanitarian issues on the ground to be addressed, all of which are in the interest of the people of Myanmar. He shared his view that the different political actors in Myanmar have to be more open to constructive dialogue so as to build mutual understanding, trust, and confidence, conducive to an inclusive and credible peace process in Myanmar. In this regard, the Special Envoy reaffirmed Cambodia's readiness and commitment to be a keen listener and sincere facilitator for Myanmar.

With regard to the Consultative Meeting on ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar on 06 May 2022 held in a hybrid format in Phnom Penh, the Special Envoy accentuated three key points, namely: (1) ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Delivery Arrangement Framework, (2) addressing operational challenges of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and (3) Framework for COVID-19 Vaccine Administration in Myanmar.



- On ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Delivery Arrangement Framework, the Meeting agreed that the AHA Centre, in close consultation with the Myanmar Task Force, will identify states and regions for the implementation of this Framework. These states and regions include Kayah, Kayin, Magway, Saigang, Bago, Shan and Rakhine.

- On the need to address the operational challenges, we obtained the agreement from the SAC to expedite the delivery of humanitarian assistance and facilitate administrative and legal requirements. The SAC also pledged to offer full cooperation and support to the ASEAN Monitoring Team for it to be able to fulfill its roles in accordance with the executive paper adopted at the 54th AMM.

- Concerning the Framework for COVID-19 Vaccine Administration in Myanmar, the AHA Centre and the Ministry of Health of Myanmar (MOH) agreed to implement the Joint MOH-Partners Vaccination to Hard-to-Reach Areas Framework, through which the operational teams of 50:50 distribution between the MOH and partners will be deployed to administer vaccines in the communities in need.

The Special Envoy underlined that the immediate priority would be to roll out what has been agreed upon at the recent Consultative Meeting, especially the effort to timely deliver humanitarian assistance to those most in need without any discrimination.

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister also informed the Council that he and his team are now working on the preparation for his second visit to Myanmar in order to further advance the progress in the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus. During this upcoming visit, the Special Envoy hopes to meet as many relevant stakeholders as possible in addition to those he met during the first visit.

## CAMBODIAN PM SHARES INSIGHTS...

The Prime Minister laid stress on the necessity to collectively strive to revive and promote regional economy in a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive manner, by: (1). continuing to reduce gaps in accessing the COVID-19 vaccination to put an end to this pandemic, (2). continuing to prioritise the cooperation to strengthen the healthcare and social protection system, (3). further promoting regional connectivity and diversification regarding trade and investment, (4). capturing opportunities from the digital transformation, and (5). addressing climate change and energy transition problems through the promotion of sustainable finance and the investment in green infrastructures.

## CAMBODIA STEPS FORWARD TO 55TH AMM

After joining the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 30 April 1999, Cambodia is holding the bloc chairmanship for the third time this year. As the Chair for 2022, Cambodia has hosted and is going to host many important meetings, including the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) to be held in the near future.

Dr. Kin Phea, Director-General of the International Relations Institute at the Royal Academy of Cambodia, has given his insights over the forthcoming AMM, stressing that it is an important meeting to exchange views on key regional and international issues and release statements on those issues.

The ASEAN foreign ministers will also discuss and set agenda for the ASEAN Summit in November, he pointed out.

"I think that the upcoming 55th AMM is an important task for Cambodia, as the Chair of ASEAN, to coordinate and ensure that this meeting runs smoothly. This meeting is also time to consult with other ASEAN members on key agendas to be discussed at the annual ASEAN Summit," he said.

In the AMM, different issues of the ASEAN framework cooperation will generally be raised, as well as hot issues in the region and the world, including traditional security issues, terrorism, climate change, disasters, violence, or arms race, he underlined, adding that these are the topics that the ASEAN foreign ministers and partners need to discuss.



## FIRST NINE DAYS OF ELECTION CAMPAIGN RUN SMOOTHLY



The National Election Committee (NEC) has confirmed that the first nine days of the two-week campaign for the 5th mandate Commune/Sangkat Council Election had been conducted with security, safety, good order and without neither violence nor intimidation. According to NEC, the campaign activities included procession, gathering, propaganda at party offices, leaflet distribution, and so on.

NEC attributed the smooth process of the election campaign to the good cooperation between local authorities, NEC at all levels and political parties.

The election campaign takes place from 21 May to 03 June 2022 while the election day will fall on 05 June 2022.

There are in total 86,092 candidacies, 27,813 of them are female, nominated by the 17 registered political parties to race for the 1,652 Communes/Sangkat in Cambodia.

The official voter list shows that Cambodia has in total 9,205,681 eligible voters, of them 4,904,832 are women.

The figure represents 87.94 percent of the total population aged 18 years up, who will go to vote at 23,602 designated polling stations across the country.

## WB FINANCING TO IMPROVE DISASTER AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE OF FLOOD-DAMAGED RURAL ROADS IN CAMBODIA

The World Bank on 25 May 2022 approved US\$169 million in new financing for the Cambodia Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Management Project 2 to improve the disaster and climate resilience of the rural road network and improve the capacity of the government to support road safety and climate resilience.

According to World Bank's press release, the project will support reconstruction of roads and bridges in flood-affected areas and improve the government's ability to respond to climate disasters. It will benefit approximately 5.5 million people in seven provinces, of whom 52 percent are women, and anyone who uses those roads.

The project will also train government staff, mostly at the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), in disaster risk management, climate change adaptation, and post-disaster needs assessment.

"Through the strong commitment of the Ministry of Rural Development and the Government of Cambodia, this project will help to ensure that rural infrastructure remain robust and resilient to climate change, and that vulnerable populations will be protected against disaster shocks," said World Bank Country Manager for Cambodia, Maryam Salim.

Cambodia is highly vulnerable to a range of negative climate change impacts, particularly floods and droughts, and the country's rural infrastructure is highly vulnerable to climate-disaster risks. Rural roads are critical to the day-to-day life of rural communities, and damage to key road segments can cripple the livelihood of rural households and curtail access to basic services such as markets, schools, and hospitals. Extensive flooding in 2020 underscored Cambodia's need for continued investment in disaster risk management and the vulnerability of key infrastructure.

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## CAMBODIA STEPS FORWARD...

Regarding the anticipation after hosting the AMM, Dr. Kin Phea said the successful organisation of this meeting will show Cambodia's equality with other countries in regional and international affairs.

This is the most important aspect because Cambodia, previously known as the Killing Field and an isolated state under political and economic sanctions, has become a nation playing roles in the region and the world, he explained.

Moreover, it will positively reflect Cambodia's ability in terms of both human capital and other resources, he said, continuing that the national prestige will be enhanced on the international stage as many international guests will come to Cambodia and witness her real development and new image.

In addition to the success in containing and preventing the COVID-19 spread, the current development achievements are what we need to show to the world, he said.

"This is also an opportunity for us to promote Cambodia's image to the world more widely, which will attract more investment and build more trust from foreign investors and international tourists," Dr. Kin Phea stressed.

AMM was established under the Bangkok Declaration in 1967 after ASEAN was founded that year on Aug. 8.

According to the ASEAN Secretariat, AMM is responsible for ASEAN's political-security cooperation as well as ASEAN's relations with external parties in ASEAN. The AMM meets at least four times a year and may convene special meetings as and when necessary to discuss issues that require immediate attention of ASEAN. The AMM regularly reviews and discusses ASEAN Community-building efforts, its strategic future directions, as well as the conduct of ASEAN's external relations.

The AMM Related Meetings include the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences (PMCs), ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting Interface with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting, East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting (EAS FMM), and Meeting of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Commission, and so on.

## WB FINANCING TO IMPROVE DISASTER AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE...

The project will be implemented by MRD, which has been active in improving resilient construction and maintenance standards. The project builds on the on-going Cambodia Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Management Project, which focused on improving climate-resilient rural road connectivity and strengthening MRD's financial planning for disaster resilience.

Ensuring the climate resilience of rural infrastructure is a priority of the MRD and is aligned with Cambodia's Rural Development Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023, which identifies improving the quality and resilience of rural roads as one of four priority programmes.

The new financing will strengthen MRD's capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters and support advance planning and flood risk management in the Tonle Sap region, which was hit hard by the 2020 floods. The new financing will also bolster the organisational, and technical capacity of MRD in project implementation.

The new funding is a credit from the World Bank's International Development Association, supported by a grant of US\$450,000 from the Japan-Bank Programme for Mainstreaming DRM in Developing Countries, which is financed by the Government of Japan and managed by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery. Cambodia will provide US\$2 million in counterpart financing.



## FOUR OTHER INVESTMENT PROJECTS APPROVED BY CDC



The Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) has approved four new investment projects with a total capital of US\$8.4 million.

According to a CDC's press release issued on 26 May 2022, located in special economic zones in Preah Sihanouk province and Phnom Penh capital, the four projects will cover the production of wire and cables, shoes, bags, packaging and stoves.

The newly approved projects would generate some 540 jobs for the locals, the same source added.

Such investment amid the COVID-19 outbreak demonstrates confidence of investors in Cambodia's macroeconomic, political and social stability though threatened by the pandemic.