

# VISIONS of CAMBODIA

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## CAMBODIA, CHINA TO DEVELOP DIAMOND COOPERATION



Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, has confirmed Cambodia's firm stance to collaborate with China to solidify their Diamond Cooperation.

"Given our ironclad friendship, Cambodia stands ready to work closely with China to foster our 'Diamond Cooperation Framework' and deepen the building of Cambodia-China Community with a Shared Future for the common interests of our countries and our peoples as well as for stability, peace, and development in the region and beyond," wrote the Cambodian Prime Minister in his separate congratulatory messages to H.E. Xi Jinping on his re-election for the third term as the President of the People's Republic of China, and to H.E. Li Qiang on his appointment as the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.

"Under Your Excellency's wise leadership, China has made tremendous strides in enhancing the livelihood of the Chinese people and achieved historic multifaceted development in the last several years. I therefore have full confidence that Your Excellency will continue to propel China to accomplish more extraordinary achievements and march with confidence toward materialising the Second Centenary goals to become a great modern socialist country by 2049 while playing a more vital role on the

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## CAMBODIA TO ACHIEVE 6.6% GDP GROWTH IN 2023



The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Cambodia would grow by 6.6 per cent in 2023, a message from Samdech Techo Prime Minister Hun Sen said on 10 March.

"The economy has recovered fast," Samdech Techo Prime Minister Hun Sen said, adding, "thanks to all of the efforts proactively made by the government on its ownership through releasing measures to maintain the balance of the socio-economy."

Cambodia achieved economic growth of an average 7 per cent annually in the last decade of development in the country.

The government has also forecasted that Cambodia's economy would grow 6.6 per cent this year—the highest projected growth rates compared to the three major international bodies including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB), according to the report released by the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC).

However, H.E. Meas Soksesan, MEF's spokesman, told Khmer Times that the two

GDP Growth figures—6.6 percent (2023) and 5.6 percent (2022)—are both still projections considering various new development factors as there may be more revisions made by the government this year. "The global circumstances move very fast," H.E. Soksesan pointed out.

He said the government has set more measures this year to boost Cambodia's economic recovery and mitigate the effects or impacts of the ongoing external factors or shocks. "Government intervention and major reforms are still going on [and] risks and challenges still exist, and the government has tried to do everything to mitigate those risks," H.E. Soksesan said.

According to the government's actual forecasting, Soksesan pointed out that it is unlikely that the current ongoing external factors or shocks such as geopolitical, economic and climate crises and the Russia-Ukraine war and the crisis in Taiwan have threatened Cambodia's journey to leave the

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## CAMBODIA TO ACHIEVE 6.6% GDP GROWTH ...

Least Developed Country (LDC) category hopefully in 2027.

During his keynote address at the opening of the 14th Cambodia Outlook Conference in early October last year, Prime Minister Hun Sen raised the question of whether Cambodia can achieve its goals of becoming an upper-middle-income economy by 2030 and a high-income economy by 2050 or not, amid the economic uncertainties the country has been confronting the negative effects of the global economy.

Prime Minister Hun Sen further said Cambodia has been passing through a challenging phase mainly due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and economic sanctions imposed by the US and European Union. "So, it should be assessed beforehand to see whether or not the targets are achievable," said Prime Minister Hun Sen.

MEF's Permanent Secretary of State and Minister attached to Prime Minister Vongsey Vissoth stated in January this year during the opening session of the Macroeconomic Management and Budget Law 2023 at Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra that Samdech Techo Prime Minister Hun Sen approved the re-projection of Cambodia's GDP Growth at 5.6 percent from 6.6 percent for 2023.

"The ambition is high and difficult due to the complicated issues to come, but we have a philosophy saying difficulty does not make us afraid, but it is the base or reason why we need to work harder. This is our strength. So, we must not be afraid of difficulty, but we need to work well together... That's why the macroeconomic and budget management will respond to all concerns and challenges that our country has been facing," H.E. Vissoth said.

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international stage for global peace and prosperity," he told H.E. Xi Jinping.

"Entrusting Your Excellency with this significant and noble position is a clear reflection of the trust and confidence the government, the Communist Party and people of China have placed upon Your Excellency. I firmly believe that, with Your Excellency's wise leadership and vast experience, China will continue to achieve its

long-term development goals, advance the great rejuvenation, and play a more vital role on the international stage," Samdech Techo Hun Sen said in his message to H.E. Li Qiang.

Cambodia and China are celebrating the 65th anniversary of the establishment of long-standing traditional diplomatic relations this year.

## CAMBODIA REAFFIRMS READINESS TO BECOME UPPER-MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRY

Cambodia has reaffirmed the commitment to deliver the Doha Programme of Action for least developed countries (LDCs) 2022-2031 (DPoA) to become an upper middle-income country by 2030.

H.E. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, underlined the commitment when addressing the plenary session at the 5th United Nations Conference on LDCs at Doha, Qatar on 5 March.

Cambodia has met the criteria to graduate to become an upper middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income country by 2050, he added.

Toward achieving the objective, Cambodia will continue to foster health, education, social protection, basic infrastructure, digital revolution; and diversified, resilient, green, and sustainable economy.

## ALMOST 100,000 TONNES OF MILLED RICE EXPORTED IN FIRST TWO MONTHS



For the first two months of 2023, Cambodia exported nearly 100,000 tonnes of milled rice to international markets, generating US\$72.67 million, according to a report of Cambodia Rice Federation (CRF).

The Cambodian milled rice was shipped by 40 rice exporters to 38 international destinations, said the report, adding that China (including Hong Kong) was the largest market accounting for 50.33 percent or 49,056 tonnes worth more than US\$33 million.

Furthermore, 21 countries in Europe purchased 38,456 tonnes worth over US\$27 million, while Malaysia and Singapore 4,409 tonnes worth some US\$3 million, and other destinations including Africa, Australia, the Middle East, Türkiye, Russia, and the U.S., etc. 5,546 tonnes worth US\$8.14 million, it continued.

Of the total exported rice, 49,381 tonnes were premium aromatic rice "Malis Angkor", 36,495 tonnes were fragrant rice "SKO", 6,461 tonnes were white rice, 2,890 tonnes were parboiled rice, and 2,284 tonnes were organic rice, the same source pointed out.

At the same time, Cambodia exported 871,319 tonnes of paddy rice, valued at approximately US\$218 million, to neighbouring countries.

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## CAMBODIA'S PUBLIC DEBT REMAINS "SUSTAINABLE"

Cambodia's public debt remains sustainable and under control with low risk of debt distress even though the country's economy has been impacted due to the COVID-19 crisis and other external factors.

As of the end 2022, including the old debt, the Cambodian government has a total public debt of US\$9.99 billion, in which US\$9.97 billion is public external debt from bilateral developing partners and multilateral developing partners and US\$17,51 million others was domestic debt, according to the Cambodia Public Debt Statistical Bulletin released on 13 March.

All the loans are highly concessional with an average grant element, it said.

The purpose of the loans is to finance public investment projects in the priority sectors

that support long-term sustainable economic growth and increase productivity.

"Despite being impacted by the widespread of COVID-19 and other external factors, Cambodia's public debt situation continues to remain 'sustainable' and 'low risk' of debt distress," read the bulletin.

"All the key debt indicators in 2022 are well below the thresholds, of which the main debt indicator, the Present Value of Public and Publicly Guaranteed External Debt to GDP, is at 24.9 percent compared to the 40 percent threshold," it added.

In 2022, the government has paid debt services to development partners to the tune of US\$464 million, pointed out the bulletin.

## CAMBODIA TO DIRECTLY SHIP GOODS TO US, EU BY 2030

By 2030, Sihanoukville Autonomous Port (PAS) will be able to ship goods directly without any transit to the US and European Union (EU) markets, said H.E. Sun Chanthol, Minister of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) on 13 March.

The PAS, which is fast developing in three phases with financing support from Japan, will gear itself to receive larger vessels that would take goods to the US and EU markets without transits.

The target of goods waterway shipment was revealed 13 March by H.E. Chanthol while delivering a presentation on infrastructure projects to about 350 students at the Techo Sen Institute of Public Works and Transport in the MPWT complex in Russey Keo district, Phnom Penh.

H.E. Chanthol said goods that are currently shipped from Cambodia through PAS to the

US and EU markets are lifted onto small vessels at the port and then they are lifted out of those vessels and shifted onto larger ones when they arrived in Singapore or Hong Kong that ship to the US or EU, which costs shipments twice—both financially and in terms of time consumption.

H.E. Chanthol pointed out that PAS has been recruiting a contractor to build a new container port that would be 14.5 metres deep—expected to be completed in 2026 on the first phase, which would enable 93 percent of a total number of large vessels in the Asia Pacific region to enter PAS.

There are about 6,000 foreign vessels entering and leaving sea and river ports annually in Cambodia, according to the figures of MPWT.

## CAMBODIA REAFFIRMS READINESS TO ...

The minister spoke highly of the importance of DPoA in contributing to the country's smooth LDC graduation process and realisation of SDGs and the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2024-2028.

It was also necessary for Cambodia to further expand trade partners, embark on new cooperation, advance financial instruments, and strengthen green financing mechanisms.

H.E. Pan Sorasak also took the opportunity to appreciate donors and development partners, as well as international communities for their support to accelerate the progress of Cambodia's graduation from LDC status.

## TWO GARMENT FACTORY PROJECTS APPROVED BY CDC



The Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) has just approved two new garment factory projects worth in total US\$10.2 million, said the council in a news release on 10 March 2023.

The first project to be invested by Dun Tai Garment (Cambodia) Co., Ltd. will be located in Boseth district of Kampong Speu province, the same source pointed out.

The second project, situated in Sangkat Kantok, Khan Kambol, Phnom Penh capital, belongs to Preco (Cambodia) Co., Ltd. it added.

The two newly approved projects are expected to generate a total of nearly 3,000 jobs for the locals.

## SUNRISE VIEW AT ANGKOR WAT BECOMING A TOP ATTRACTION

Sunrise view at the world-known Angkor Wat Temple of Cambodia has noticeably becoming a most attracted travel checklist for both national and international tourists.

The notice was highlighted in a news release issued on Mar. 6 by the APSARA National Authority.

It described remarkable number of tourists coming to see the sunrise view at Angkor Wat very early in morning of everyday.

Some tourists waited on the embankment of Angkor Wat's moat, some sat at the libraries, and some waited near the northern and southern ponds in front of the temple to take pictures and enjoy the view, according to the release.

Ms. Yean Dany, 29 years old, a resident of Phnom Penh, was very surprised when she arrived in front of Angkor Wat because she saw a lot of national and international tourists coming to see the sunrise.

She said that although she had visited Angkor Wat many times, this was the first time that she and her friends had come to see the sunrise view, for which she had to get up as early as 5 o'clock in the morning.

Witnessing the beauty of the sunrise at the top of Angkor Wat, reflecting the golden light from the pond at the temple, Ms. Dany said that she was not disappointed that she took the time to see the sunrise at Angkor Wat.

For Ms. Garency Fraken, an American, said it was her dream to see the view and it was her and her family's first and foremost priority during her visit in Siem Reap.

