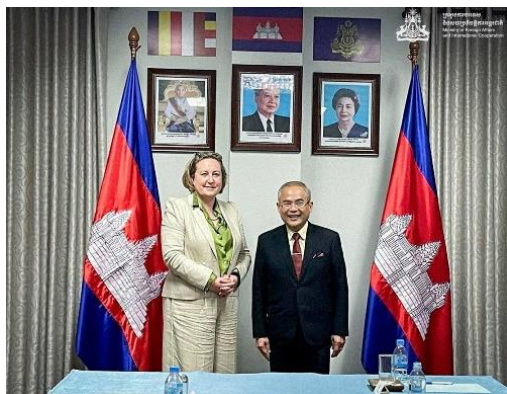


VISIONS of CAMBODIA

ISSUE 128: 01 – 15 March 2024

UK MINISTER FOR THE INDO-PACIFIC VISITS CAMBODIA TO BOOST TIES



The Rt Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Minister for Indo-Pacific of the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, has called on people to visit Cambodia following her recent “excellent” trip to the country.

Her comments were seen as positive by both nations, especially as Cambodia looks to promote the post-COVID-19 recovery of the tourism sector.

The Rt Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan paid her first official visit to Cambodia from March 2-4. During her time in the country, she met with several high-profile leaders from the economic, cultural, and foreign affairs sectors.

In a video clip posted by the UK embassy in Phnom Penh on March 5, Rt Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan shared her impression of Cambodia, as well as her appreciation for the two kingdoms’ bilateral relations.

“It was a real privilege to see the UK-Cambodia relationship moving forward on its next journey together, and we look forward to seeing more of that relationship develop. It’s been a real privilege to have the chance to spend time here.

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CAMBODIA, EU MARK NEW MILESTONE AS COMMISSIONER VISITS



His Excellency SOK Chenda Sophea, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, hosted a working lunch and bilateral meeting with Her Excellency Jutta Urpilainen, European Commissioner for International Partnerships during her two-day visit to Cambodia. Her visit marked a new milestone in Cambodia’s relations with the European Union (EU) with the signing of four agreements and the launch of a EUR 1.4 billion initiative for green growth and jobs.

During the meeting on 13 March 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister expressed Cambodia’s profound gratitude for the EU’s invaluable assistance and contribution to the rehabilitation and development of the kingdom in all areas. He commended the significant progress in Cambodia-EU relations, based on their long-standing partnership and mutual respect over the past two decades. He also congratulated the EU for successfully hosting the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting and the European Union

Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in Brussels last month.

The Deputy Prime Minister took stock of the Joint European Development Strategy 2021-2027, the EU’s Global Gateway Flagships in Cambodia and its new Team Europe Initiatives. These contribute positively to strengthening Cambodia’s capacity to effectively execute the objectives of its Pentagonal Strategy. Under the first phase of the strategy, Cambodia aims to achieve its Sustainable Development Goals and upper-middle-income status by 2030. The Deputy Prime Minister also briefed the Commissioner on Cambodia’s evaluation of graduating from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, expected in 2029.

On her first visit to Cambodia, Commissioner Urpilainen acknowledged the country’s remarkable achievements and expressed the EU’s strong support to strengthen and expand

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I even snuck an hour to go and visit the Royal Palace, with possibly the finest maintained garden I've ever seen. I am very jealous; I want to take the garden home with me. It's been an extraordinary time to be in Cambodia," she said.

"It's been a great trip! Come and visit Cambodia!" she said at the end of the video.

On 04 March 2024, His Excellency Dr. CHEM Widhya, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, has received The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP, Minister for Indo-Pacific of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, at the Ministry.

Both dignitaries noted with deep satisfaction the traditional relations of excellent friendship and fruitful cooperation between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the United Kingdom. They underlined the importance of further developing in crucial areas such as trade, investment, human capital, green growth and renewable energy.

His Excellency Dr. CHEM Widhya recalled the 70th Anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the two countries last year which saw the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of Bilateral Political Consultations between the two Ministries and expressed his profound appreciation to the UK Government for the assistance and support extended to Cambodia, in particular the granting of the Developing Countries

Trading Scheme (DCTS). He underlined the importance of the synergy between the traditional and parliamentary diplomacies.

The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP saw extensive economic opportunities during her first visit to Cambodia which she would report back to her capital. She emphasised the need to amplify the numerous achievements of the Asian Kingdom.

Both sides also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest and concern.

On the same day, H.E. Dr. Aun Pornmoniroth, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance, received the United Kingdom (UK) Minister for the Indo-Pacific, Rt Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan, discussing the bilateral cooperation on investment and trade, and UK backed-Green special economic zone project in Cambodia.

In the meeting, according to a press release, H.E. Dr. Aun Pornmoniroth expressed his deep gratitude for the cooperation between the two countries in the past, especially the UK's support for Cambodia's exports and the initiative of the Green SEZ project in Cambodia, contributing to the socio-economic development of Cambodia.

The Deputy Prime Minister also briefed his guest on the general situation of the Cambodian economy, the continuation of macroeconomic stability in line with the recovery of Cambodia's economic growth, the introduction

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CAMBODIA, EU MARK NEW MILESTONE...

bilateral ties in all areas. She also recognized Cambodia as an important and reliable partner – and was highly optimistic that the Global Gateway Flagships and Team Europe Initiatives would attract more EU investors to the Kingdom. The Commissioner also informed the Deputy Prime Minister about the EU's readiness to provide necessary support for Cambodia's LDC graduation.

Both sides also exchanged views on political developments in Cambodia and other important topics such as regional and international issues of common interest and concern, notably ASEAN-EU cooperation and ASEAN integration.

CAMBODIA, UK TO FOSTER MILITARY COLLABORATION

Cambodia and the United Kingdom (UK) are committed to further promoting military cooperation. The commitment was made in a meeting between H.E. Gen. Vong Pisen, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF), and Mr. Colonel Eddie Maskell-Pedersen, Defence Attaché of the UK Embassy in Cambodia, on March 14.

On the occasion, H.E. Gen. Vong Pisen expressed hope that Mr. Colonel Eddie Maskell-Pedersen's mission will further enhance good cooperation between the two countries. H.E. Gen. Vong Pisen thanked the UK for supporting Cambodia, especially through financing assistance for the conservation of natural resources and preferential tariffs. It also supports demining activities, scholarships for Cambodian students, and the fight against COVID-19.

H.E. Gen. Vong Pisen asked the UK to continue to help train officials at the RCAF and exchange visits among troops.

Mr. Colonel Eddie Maskell-Pedersen reaffirmed that the United Kingdom will continue providing assistance for Cambodia in some priority sectors, particularly mine clearance at the border.

CAMBODIA INVESTMENT ROADSHOW IN EU MULLED

While the investment volume of the European Union (EU) in Cambodia remains low, its senior delegation encourages Cambodia investment roadshows in the zone to attract more investments.

The EU delegation led by Mr. Peteris Ustubs, Director for the Middle East, Asia, and Pacific in the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), and H.E. Igor Driesmans, Ambassador of the European Union to Cambodia, floated the initiative when received by H.E. Sun Chanthol, Deputy Prime Minister and First Vice President of the Council for the Development of Cambodia, at his office on March 11.

According to H.E. Sun Chanthol, the investment cooperation between Cambodia and the EU is

around US\$540 million, or 62 qualified investment projects.

There are investments from the United States, Korea, Japan, China, ASEAN countries, and others in Cambodia, but Cambodia also urges more investments from the European Union, he added.

The Deputy Prime Minister welcomed the initiative, taking note that the EU is very keen on green and technology investments.

He also informed his guests that to further support the private sector, the Royal Government of Cambodia has invested in key infrastructure and carried out policies and reforms.



A comprehensive master plan on the “Cambodian Transit and Logistics System 2023–2033” has been launched, covering 174 projects that can be of the EU's interest.

Cambodia has also kick-started vocational and technical training programmes for 1.5 million young people from poor and vulnerable families to increase their capacity to create a pool of skilled labour force responsive to the competitive job market and new industry.

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of the first phase of the Pentagonal Strategy, as well as strategies and measures for new reforms at the beginning of the new mandate of the Royal Government for Cambodia toward the goal of a high-income country by 2050.

For her part, Rt Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan highly valued the significant progress of the Cambodia-UK cooperation and expressed the UK's commitment to further strengthen and expand existing cooperation and promote investment in Cambodia, particularly the development of the Green SEZ and the efforts to attract new British investors to Cambodia.

Both sides also shared views on reforms to attract more foreign investors to Cambodia, particularly in terms of business registration, financial support, debt management and so on.

On 05 March 2024, The Rt Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan visited the National Museum on March 5, accompanied by Her Excellency Phoeurng Sackona, Minister of Culture and Fine Arts. The museum hosts 77 priceless looted Khmer artifacts which were returned from the UK in February last year.

The two Ministers discussed cultural relations, including a possible memorandum of understanding

(MOU) on preventing the illegal trafficking of artifacts, and touched on further cooperation through assistance from UK experts on the conservation and exhibition of gold artifacts. They discussed the possibility of sending Cambodian specialists to train in the UK, particularly at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

Before her departure, she also visited several local NGOs and the first UK university campus in Cambodia, De Montfort, which opened recently.

The bilateral trade between Cambodia and the UK amounted to US\$872 million in 2023, a year-on-year decrease of 10.7 percent, said a report of the General Department of Customs and Excise.

Of the amount, Cambodia exported US\$796 million worth of goods to the UK, a decline by 10.2 percent and her imports from the UK dropped by 15.9 percent to US\$76 million.

In 2023, some 96,000 UK citizens visited Cambodia, the ninth-highest total of the nearly 5.5 million international arrivals that year, according to the Ministry of Tourism.

CAMBODIA-SOUTH AFRICA POLITICAL CONSULTATION MECHANISM DISCUSSED

Cambodia and South Africa have discussed the possibility of establishing a political consultation mechanism between the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs to serve as a platform in exploring ways and means to foster cooperation between both nations, especially in the promotion of investment, trade and tourism.

The discussion took place here on Mar. 14 between H.E. Chum Sounry, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC), and H.E. Darkey Ephraim Africa, the new Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of South Africa to the Kingdom of Cambodia with Residence in Bangkok, according to a news release of MFAIC.

Both sides noted with satisfaction the friendly ties and good cooperation between Cambodia and South Africa since the two countries established diplomatic relations on Jan. 26, 1995. They also reaffirmed their commitment to further enhance

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the partnership and as well as extend each other mutual support in the international arenas for mutual benefits of the two countries.

H.E. Chum Sounry pledged to extend his full support to H.E. Darkey Ephraim Africa during his tenure as Ambassador to Cambodia to deepen and strengthen the ties of friendship between the two countries.

CAMBODIA'S EXPORTS UP 22 PERCENT IN FIRST TWO MONTHS

Cambodia's exports were valued at US\$3,895 million in the first two months of this year, a 22.7 percent increase compared to the same period in 2023, pointed out a report of the General Department of Customs and Excise of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

Cambodia's top two export destinations were the U.S. and Vietnam, with shipments worth US\$1,295 million, up 14.8 percent, and US\$801 million, up 63.2 percent, respectively.

Main products Cambodia exported included apparel, footwear, travel goods, bicycles, and a number of agricultural goods such as rice, rubber, cassava, bananas and mangoes.

37 INVESTMENT PROJECTS APPROVED BY CDC IN FEBRUARY

In February, the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) approved 37 new investment projects with a total capital of almost US\$1.2 billion.

The update was unveiled in a press release made public on Mar. 12 by the CDC, adding that the approved projects are expected to generate 38,000 jobs for the locals.

Most of the licenced projects are in the industrial sector, while the rest in the industrial and agriculture and agro-agriculture sectors, the source pointed out.

The outstanding projects include the construction of a hydropower dam in

Mondul Seima district of Koh Kong province and the construction of multi-purpose port and logistics centre in Kampong Leng district of Kampong Chhnang province.

The establishment of data centres in Khan Daun Penh and Khan Russey Keo of Phnom Penh capital and the manufacturing of car tyres in Svay Rieng province are among the major investments on the approved list.

Over 58 percent of the total investment is from local investors, 33.19 percent from China, 4.31 percent from Singapore and 4.09 percent from Vietnam.

Cambodia's international trade volume has grown steadily despite the war crisis, H.E. Penn Sovicheat, Secretary of State and Spokesperson of the Ministry of Commerce said during a press meeting held last week.

"Despite the war crisis and weakening of the purchasing power, the orders remained high, with the volume of orders remaining unchanged. There was a decline of orders on some items, but an increase on other items," he said.



Garment, footwear and travel goods industry is the largest foreign exchange earner for Cambodia. The sector consists of roughly 1,300 factories and branches, employing about 840,000 workers, mostly female.

At the same time, the Kingdom's imports rose by 16 percent to US\$4,135 million.