

The Royal Embassy of Cambodia
to United States of America & Mexico

ព្រឹត្តិប័ត្រព័ត៌មាន

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POLITICS

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Cambodia Believes in Significance of Asia-Europe Integration and Connectivity



Prime Minister Samdech o Hun Sen expressed his optimism over Asia-Europe integration and connectivity. As a small, but open economy country, Cambodia strongly believes in the

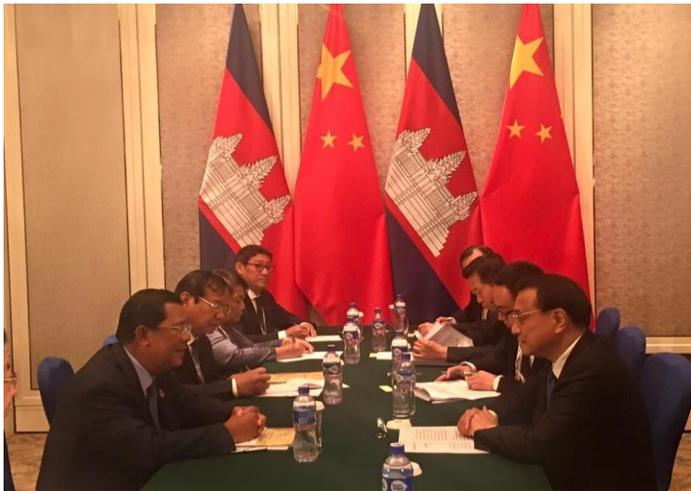
importance of Asia-Europe integration and connectivity and looks forward toward progress of cooperation and partnership for the future, he underlined.

Addressing to the Plenary Session of the 11th ASEM Summit on the topic "Soft Connectivity", Samdech Techo Hun Sen said hard and soft connectivity is a structural reform which is a key choice of policy in addition to the tax and financial policies to boost the economic growth and development.

Cambodian PM Receives U.S.-ASEAN Business Council Delegation

At the same time, the Cambodian premier called for attention to increasing the effectiveness of dialogue between the two continents, continuing to boost the free flow of trade and investment, promoting the digital and other soft connectivity, strengthening the safety mechanism to protect the people, continuing to support and promote regional and sub-regional mechanisms in favour of integration and connectivity such as Silk Road Fund, China-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation Fund, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, etc.

On July 16, 2016, Samdech Techo Hun Sen participated in the Retreat Session of 11th ASEM Summit on climate change, during which he highlighted Cambodia's strong political commitment to take part in the global efforts in dealing with climate change.



Embracing this opportunity Samdach Techo Hun Sen had a bilateral dialog with Prime Minister Li Keqiang of the People's Republic of China. In coming years, China will continues to provide assistance for Cambodia.

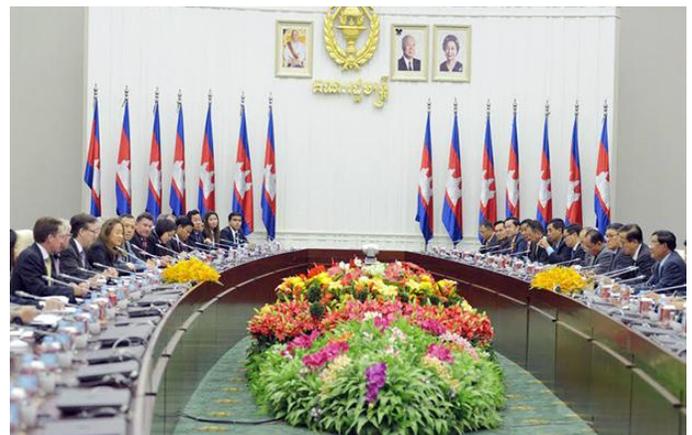
Prime Minister Hun Sen also had a bilateral talk with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan.

The delegation of U.S.-ASEAN Business Council paid courtesy visit Prime Minister Hun Sen on July 25, 2016 at the Peace Palace, Phnom Penh.

The delegates were led by Mr. William G. Lafferrandre, the President of ConocoPhillips Company. And companies including General Electric, Ford and Visa presented their progress so far, while Coca-Cola highlighted its establishment of a new plant of around US\$100 million to be inaugurated by the end of this year.

All companies appreciated the support and good investment climate in Cambodia enabled by the Royal Government of Cambodia.

The Premier was to hear the progress and appreciation by the four companies and encouraged them to help build capacity of the locals. Samdech Techo Hun Sen also shared with the U.S.-ASEAN Business Council delegation on the milestones of the government's continuing reform – average increase of customs and tax incomes are 19 percent and 18 percent respectively during the first half of this year, and readiness of farmers for the cultivating season.



Cambodian PM Condemns the Murder of Prominent Political Analyst



Samdech Techo Hun Sen has strongly condemned the assassination of late Dr. Kem Ley, a prominent political analyst who was shot dead on July 10, 2016.

This is an act of defiance and it destroyed the royal government's image that always does its best to maintain social security and safety for the public and businessmen underlined the Cambodian premier while presiding over the inauguration ceremony of news buildings of the military police's headquarters in Phnom Penh this morning.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen appealed to the public to remain calm in order to let the competent authorities implement their duties, and to the politicians not to exploit this murder for political gains.

Dr. Kem Ley, 46, President of Social Development Organisation, a local NGO in Cambodia, was shoot dead on July 10, 2016 at 08:50 in a Caltex Star

Mart in Sangkat Tonle Bassac, Khan Chamkar Mon, Phnom Penh.

After the shooting, a 38-year-old suspect was arrested with a Glock pistol.

Cambodian Commerce Minister Attends the 14th Ministerial Meeting of Group of 77 and China



His Excellency Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, attended the 14th Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 and China in Nairobi, Kenya, from July 17 to 22, 2016.

The objective of the meeting is to prepare declaration on the outcomes of the meeting to attain benefits for the members in trade and investment development as well as transfer of appropriate technology.

Cambodia urged the developed and developing countries that have not already taken actions to address market access issue shall provide immediate, predictable, duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) on a lasting basis to all products originating from all LDCs as committed in Hong Kong Decision 2005, Bali Decision 2013 and Nairobi Decision 2015.

Cambodia Preferred to Stay Neutral

At the 49th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings in Vientiane, Lao PDR from July 23 to 26, Cambodia reaffirmed her clear stance not to side with any parties in the South China Sea issue. There were a total of 22 ministerial meetings, including 3 ASEAN foreign ministers' meetings, 14 ASEAN foreign ministers' meetings with dialogue partners, and 5 sub-regional meetings.



Those meetings reaffirmed the commitment in advancing the ASEAN Community efforts through effective implementation of the ASEAN vision 2025 and 3 community blueprints in contributing and promoting peace, security and prosperity in the region, he added.

For hot issues, especially the South China Sea dispute, Cambodia as a non-claimant state expressed her clear stance not to take sides as this is a bilateral matter between the Philippines and China, underlined the spokesperson.

Cambodia encouraged all the parties directly involved to settle the conflict by peaceful means through consultation and negotiation in accordance with the universally recognized principles of

international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982.

U.S. To Support Cambodia as a Partner

H.E. Ouch Borith, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, held talks on July 18 with visiting H.E. Tom Malinowski, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL).



Both sides lauded the bilateral relations between Cambodia and the U.S., particularly the cooperation on anti-terrorism, environment, and economy. The U.S. will support the development of Cambodia as a partner, based on democracy and human rights respect.

Regarding the U.S.' concern over democracy and human rights issues in Cambodia, H.E. Secretary of State explained that the implementation of human rights respect and democracy cannot be brought from one country to another, stressing that in Cambodia it is based on the country's tradition and custom.

In reply to H.E. Tom Malinowski's request for a better environment before the commune/Sangkat

council election in 2017 and the national election in 2018 and for the return to the culture of dialogue, H.E. Ouch Borith claimed that it is not the intention of the Royal Government of Cambodia, but it is the problem created by the opposition party itself. H.E. Ouch Borith added that the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) must show its true will to carry out what it has agreed with the ruling Cambodian People’s Party (CPP).

USAID Assists Cambodian Civil Society Organizations



A new project to strengthen the organizational and technical capacity of Cambodian civil society organisations and grassroots networks was announced recently by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), said a U.S. Embassy’s press release AKP received yesterday.

The Cambodian Civil Society Strengthening (CCSS) project, awarded to the East West Management Institute, will help civil society organisations improve their management, planning, and analytical skills while enabling them to play a more active role in Cambodia’s economic and political development, it underlined.

According to the press release, the five-year, US\$9 million CCCS project will help civil society

organisations by demonstrating how to establish proven management structures such as boards of directors, organisational lines of communication, standard operating procedures, and human resource management systems.

WB Vice President Confirms WB’s Full Cooperation in Boosting Cambodia’s Development

World Bank (WB) Vice President for East Asia and Pacific Region H.E. Ms. Victoria Kwakwa has expressed WB’s clear stance to fully cooperate with Cambodia in promoting the country’s economic growth.

While meeting with Cambodian Senior Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance H.E Aun Porn Moniroth during her visit in Phnom Penh on July 5, H.E. Ms. Victoria Kwakwa said in order to strengthen the cooperation framework, WB will conduct a study and analysis on the development needs of Cambodia in the near future with the participation of relevant institutions.

The WB vice president also lauded the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC)’s efforts in developing the country.

H.E. Aun Porn Moniroth said Cambodia expects a stronger cooperation with WB based on the principle of mutual respect and trust.

The Cambodian finance minister informed H.E. Ms. Victoria Kwakwa of Cambodia’s economic situation, pointing out that the country’s economic growth is forecasted to be around 7.1 percent this year.

H.E. Aun Porn Moniroth also underlined the positive future vision of Cambodia, i.e. the Cambodian economy is expected to grow annually at 7 percent for medium term period.

The growth, the minister highlighted, made Cambodia's per capita income rose from US\$1.042 in 2013 to US\$ 1.215 in 2015 while poverty rate dropped from 53.4 percent in 2004 to 14 percent in 2014.

According to H.E. Aun Porn Monioth, Cambodia is able to maintain the average annual inflation rate at around 5 percent, i.e. around 1.9 percent this year and 3.3 percent next year.

H.E. Ms. Victoria Kwakwa has been on a visit in Cambodia to strengthen the partnership between WB and RGC and to prepare Cambodia's Country Partnership Framework.

Cambodia Needs More Than US\$5 Billion for Country's Development 2017-2019

Cambodia needs a total of US\$5,234 million to carry out the Public Investment Programme for Three-Year Rolling 2017-2019 whose draft was

approved by the cabinet meeting held here this morning under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen.

According to a press release of the Press and Quick Reaction Unit of the Office of the Council of Ministers made public this afternoon, Cambodia needs annually some US\$1,740 million to carry out 519 development projects in the three-year period.

Between 2017 and 2019, 149 projects, being implemented, need a total of US\$2,595 million, while 370 others, to be carried out, require some US\$2,639 million, it pointed out.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has pledged some US\$527.1 million while the development partners, US\$2,299.3 million, therefore Cambodia needs more US\$2,407.6 million.



U.S Provides Duty Free Access for Travel Goods Made in Cambodia

Travel goods, including luggage, backpacks, handbags, and wallets made in Cambodia will be exported to U.S' market duty free, under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), said a press release of the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh AKP received yesterday afternoon.

This announcement made by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has the potential to

open up an entirely new market for Cambodian exporters and to create thousands of jobs for Cambodians, says U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia H.E. William A. Heidt.



“We encourage Cambodian manufacturers to take advantage of this new opportunity, which would help to diversify Cambodia’s economic base, spur economic growth, and alleviate poverty,” he underlined.

USTR made the announcement on June 30, said the press release, adding that this is a major expansion of trade preferences that stands to bring significant benefits to Cambodia. Under the new changes to GSP, Cambodia and other Least Developed Beneficiary Developing Countries (LDBDCs) as well as African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) countries producing travel goods will be able to export those products to the U.S. duty free.

According to the press release, the GSP expansion will not only give Cambodia preferable access to the US\$10 billion U.S. import market in travel goods; it will also encourage further development of Cambodia’s textile industry into profitable new areas of production.

GSP is a 40-year-old trade preference program under which the U.S. provides duty-free treatment to many imports from beneficiary developing countries and additional products for LDBDCs. Under the GSP program, approximately 5,000 products from 122 beneficiary developing countries and territories, including 43 least-developed countries, are eligible for duty-free treatment when exported to the U.S. Nearly 1,500 of these products are reserved for duty-free treatment for LDBDCs only. In 2015, the total value of imports that entered the U.S. duty-free under GSP was US\$17.4 billion.

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TOURISM



Over 2 Million ASEAN Visitors Visited
Cambodia Last Year



Last year, over 2 million ASEAN tourists visited Cambodia, up 5 percent if compared to the previous year, according to a report released at the recent 2015 and First Semester of 2016 Tourism Stocktaking and 2017 Direction Setting Conference.

Of them, the Vietnamese ranked first among the ASEAN visitors to Cambodia, followed by the Lao, Thais, Malaysians, Filipinos, Singaporeans, Indonesians, Burmese and Bruneians, it pointed out.

In 2015, Cambodia welcomed about 4.8 million foreign tourists, and this year the country is expected to attract some 5 million foreign visitors.

Cambodia Lacks Tourism Vocational
Training Centres

The lack of tourism vocational training centres is a challenge to train and provide tourism skills in Cambodia.

The concern was mentioned by H.E. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism, during a recapitulative meeting of the National Committee for Tourism Professionals held at Chaktomuk Conference Hall, Phnom Penh this morning.

The minister added that, to solve the problem, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has allowed the Ministry of Tourism to build two more vocational training centres in Phnom Penh capital and Preah Sihanouk province under the financial cooperation of French Development Agency (AFD), which has capacity to train 1,300 new labor forces per year from 2019.

According to H.E. Thong Khon, under the Enhanced Integration Framework (EIF), the RGC has also received assistance through Shift 360, a Swiss Foundation, to create the Academy of Culinary Arts, which is able to train around 300 chefs a year from 2017.

Moreover, he added, the Ministry of Tourism has issued the “One Staff, One Skill” campaign and the “Good Hospitality” competitive movement to promote tourism skill development to strengthen the quality of services.