

KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

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Asia Regional Conference on Climate Change,
and for the Signature of the Joint Declaration
30-31 May 2010, Dhaka, Bangladesh

STATEMENT BY H.E. THUK KROEUN VUTHA, SECRETARY OF STATE, MINISTRY OF
ENVIRONMENT, ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF CAMBODIA

Mr. Arturo Perez Martinez Dr. Mihir Kanti Mazumder

- H.E. ~~Dr. Hun Manet~~, H.E. ~~[Name]~~, Ms. Conate Hedegaard; Delegates from Bangladesh and EU, and Climate Action Commissioners
- Distinguished Delegates from ASEAN countries, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is my great pleasure and honor today to represent the Kingdom of Cambodia in this important Asia Regional Conference on Climate Change and for the Signature of the Joint Declaration. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Bangladesh and the European Union for hosting this important event.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to inform you that Cambodia, as a Least develop Country with over 80% of people living in rural areas, is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The occurrence of droughts, floods, and windstorms is getting more common in Cambodia that has resulted in fatalities, and considerable economic losses. The recent Typhoon Ketsana in late 2009 caused over 40 dead and many casualties, damaged significant agricultural crops, road infrastructure and households. Severe floods that occurred during the period 2000-2002 resulted in 438 casualties and caused damage amounting to US \$ 205 millions. The risk of droughts, floods and windstorms in Cambodia may will probably increase as a result of global warming. Therefore, the Royal Government of Cambodia has considered Climate Change Adaptation as its priorities. So far, the country has done a considerable amount of works toward Climate Change Adaptation such as NAPA, PPCR and CCCA etc.,

The Cambodian NAPA has prioritized 39 adaptation projects in four key sectors namely agriculture, water resources, coastal zone and human health. These are primarily "no-regret" adaptation options focusing on capacity building, awareness raising and infrastructure development. However, Cambodia currently has a limited internal capacity to fund climate adaptation activities. As of to date, only two projects developed based on NAPA, have received funding from donors: (i) "Building capacities to integrate water resources planning in agricultural development in Cambodia", and (ii) "Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Measures for Climate Change in the Coastal Zone of Cambodia". This again illustrates the need for an urgent and immediate action of Annex-1 parties to honor their commitments toward adaptation in vulnerable countries.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Climate change is one of the most complex and challenging environmental problems the world is facing. As a least developed country, Cambodia is very much concerned about the impacts of climate change on its socio-economic development and we desperately need to adapt to its impacts. In this spirit, the Ministry of Environment (MoE) has been making great efforts to mainstream climate change into the National Strategic Development Plan, which is currently being updated, in cooperating with concerned ministries and agencies. MoE has been coordinating and cooperating with concerned ministries-agencies as well as representatives of development partners and NGOs, to mainstream climate change into policies and plans to ensure the effectiveness of climate change responses in key sector such as agriculture, water resources, infrastructure, human health, coastal

zone management, etc. The acceptance of Prime Minister Hun Sen to be the Honorary Chair of the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) has sent a clear message of the importance and priority that the Royal Government of Cambodia is placing on climate change.

With this regards, I would like to express my gratitude to the EU for selecting Cambodia as a pilot country for the GCCA and I am pleased to see that the support was concretized with an EU grant in support of the establishment of a "Cambodia Climate Change Alliance"(CCCA) in close collaboration with Danida, Sida and UNDP. The CCCA is an innovative multi-donor initiative designed to enhance capacity of the government's institutions, authorities at the local level, and civil society groups to manage threat and opportunities posed by climate change for the country's development. The initiative is supported by the Climate Change Trust Fund which has so far secured approximately US\$8.9 million in contribution for a period of three years, to which the EU has committed US\$3.2 million.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

The European Union has been playing an active and leading role in supporting Cambodia as well as many of us to address climate change. This is a testimony that as Annex 1 parties to the UNFCCC, the European Union started to honor their commitments in supporting developing countries, especially to LDCs countries, to address climate change in accordance with the UNFCCC principles as well as the commitments they made in CoP-15 in Copenhagen recently. In response to this, I am pleased to inform you that, Cambodia was among the first countries in the region to associate itself to the Copenhagen Accord. The fact, however, that the future of climate change adaptation activities and financing remains at the next international negotiations which will be held by the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Mexico in Nov/December 2010 (CoP 16).

Cambodia as a LDC country would like to appeal to all relevant actors to ensure that NAPA implementation is given the priority that it deserves, and that delays are reduced significantly. Immediate implementation of NAPAs is very important for building capacity of the LDCs to prepare National Adaptation Action Plan as next phase of addressing long adaptation. Furthermore, the human resources in Climate Change Adaptation sector has limited dialogue and synergy in their approaches. So from now on, I will expect that Asian GCCA to undertake sort of longterm project that can support people at risk from the impact of climate change.

I believe that your presence here is an evidence of your support to the efforts to address climate change in order to form a group of Allies. We have come together because we recognize that climate change is real and that the impacts of climate change will affect Cambodia and all of us here. But we also recognize that new opportunities for funding and technology are emerging and Cambodia must be prepared to access these. With this regard, there is an urgent need to improve financing for climate change adaptation activities.

Finally, I would like to thank the Government of Bangladesh and European Union for excellence logistics arrangement in bringing us getting together here. I am looking forward to working with the GCCA partner for building a stronger, more resilient and climate-aware society, and to sign the Asian GCCA Joint Declaration between the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Government of Bangladesh and the Government of Maldives, who are currently benefiting from the GCCA. I would like also to appeal and welcome for other governments of Asian Least Development Countries and Small Island Developing States who wish to participate in this Asia GCCA.

Thank you!