

**3rd National Forum on Climate Change
Phnom Penh, 5-7 November 2013**

OPENING REMARKS FOR TECHNICAL SESSION
By H.E. Khieu Muth, Secretary of State, Ministry of Environment
Sofitel Phokeetra Hotel, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 05 November 2013



Excellencies, Lok Chumteav, Neak Oknha, Ladies, Gentlemen, Distinguished National and International Guests!

First of all, on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and the host of the Third National Forum on Climate Change, I have the great honor and pleasure to deliver my opening remarks in the first plenary session of the Third National Forum on Climate Change. In this auspicious occasion, I would like to warmly welcome the presence of your Excellencies, Lok Chumteav, ladies and gentlemen, national and international distinguished guests and all the participants for taking your precious time to participate in this important event.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Climate change is no longer a myth, it is a reality we have to deal with. All countries throughout the world are feeling the severe impacts of climate change through floods, droughts, windstorms, and heat waves, which inflict heavy losses of lives and property. It is now generally recognized that climate change is a striking challenge the world is facing. The recent findings of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reaffirm with higher confidence that the increasing of greenhouse emission from human activities are the major cause of the climate change. Countries in the Mekong are vulnerable to climate change due to changes in the Mekong hydrology, decline in agricultural and fisheries production, sea water intrusion, increasing population, limited financial and technical resources, inappropriate physical infrastructure and low adaptive capacity. Cambodia has in the last several years experienced more frequent extreme floods, droughts, and windstorms, which have seriously affected food security, people livelihoods, infrastructures and overall national socio-economic development. The recent destructive flood has affected most provinces in our country, caused the loss of more than one hundred lives and severe damages to properties, crops, physical infrastructures, and community livelihoods. This is further evidence signifying the seriousness of climate change and the urgency for its immediate responses.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

The Cambodia Second National Communication to the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has concluded that in the second half of 20th century, temperature and rainfall in Cambodia have already changed. The projection for the next eighty years has indicated that if no measure is taken to drastically reduce GHG emission, the future temperature in Cambodia will continue to rise, while the wet season will become wetter and shorter and the dry season will become longer and drier. Mitigation efforts by international community to reduce greenhouse gas emission will have direct consequences on future Cambodia climate. This year on May 09th, the world watched atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration reaching 400 parts per million for the first time since the start of systematic record using modern equipment. In crossing this historic threshold, we are entering a new dangerous zone of beyond 2°C temperature increase. Such an increase of temperature will

have huge implications on many sectors of our society and aggravate the severity of impacts caused by floods, droughts and windstorms. For this reason, there is an overwhelming call for immediate actions to mitigate the risks and to reduce the severity of the impacts especially on the livelihoods of a great majority of our rural population who are highly vulnerable.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Cambodia has been actively participating in addressing climate change at the national and international level. At the national level, institutional measures include the establishment of the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) charged with the mandate of coordinating national climate change responses. Mainstreaming climate change at national and sub-national levels and the development of climate change strategic and action plans are the priorities of the government agenda. The development of the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP), which was launched this morning by Samdech Techo Prime Minister of Cambodia, is an important step towards embedding climate change planning in the next National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) 2014-2018, the post-2015 Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDG) and its integration in sector development plans of the line ministries. The 10 year CCCSP, 2014-2023, sets up a very clear long term vision “*Cambodia develops towards a greener, low-carbon, climate-resilient, equitable, sustainable and knowledge-based society*”. The CCCSP will provide a strategic policy framework to guide and assist national entities, non-government organizations, and development partners in devising concrete and appropriate measures and actions related to climate change adaptation, GHG mitigation and green growth or low-carbon development that are supportive to the achievement of the Rectangular Strategy and the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

This morning, in the opening ceremony at the Peace Palace, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, outlined 3 key guiding principles for our climate change responses over the next five years of the 5th mandate of the Royal Government of Cambodia and beyond including:

- The need for an interdisciplinary approach and working across-national and sub-national institutions in implementation of the CCCSP and action plans.
- The importance of systematic consideration of climate change paradigm by ministries and development partners when designing new development interventions, to ensure that our social and economic development objectives will be met in the context of climate change.
- The requirement for all stakeholders to work closely in scientific Research and Development (R&D) and knowledge exchange on climate change to build human capital and support informed decision making.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

I have a great pleasure to see all the national and international experts who will make presentations and participate in the discussions of broad themes such as the climate change sciences, GHGs mitigation, climate change policy, strategic and action plans, climate change financing, and other cross-cutting themes. It is also my pleasure to see the active participation of the private sector and NGOs in displaying their climate friendly products. This is a positive sign indicating that private sector in the country is becoming more aware of market opportunities and its indispensable roles in addressing climate change and that a public-private partnership is fundamental to ensure effective and efficient responses to climate change.

I strongly believe that for the next two and a half days all participants will have the chance to get more practical knowledge, skills, information and lessons learnt, and be able to actively participate in the discussions over key themes to contribute enhanced responses to climate change in Cambodia. Your active participation here reflects your strong commitment in addressing the challenges posed by climate change through the implementation of the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan and the Climate Change Action Plans. Let us join hands to develop Cambodia towards a greener, low-carbon, climate-resilient, equitable, sustainable and knowledge-based society.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Forum organizer, I would like to wish your Excellencies, Lok Chumteav, Neak Oknha, ladies and gentlemen the four gems of Buddha's blessing: Ayuk, Vannak, Sokhak, Polak and I wish a fruitful and constructive Forum.

Thank you!