

3rd National Forum on Climate Change
5-7 November 2013

WELCOMEREMARKS
BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING

DAY 2: 06 November 2013
Sofitel Phokeetra Hotel, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, National and International Guests,

1. It is a great honour for me to welcome you to the second day of the 3rd National Forum on Climate Change following the official opening of the Forum yesterday, by **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen** the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.
2. As we heard yesterday from Samdech Techo Prime Minister, and I quote *“climate change is no more something of the distant feature. Climate change is affecting us now....”* Our nation continues to face major challenges from the risks posed by climate change which unfortunately, greatly impact the poorest and most vulnerable communities especially in rural and remote areas. The Prime Minister reminded us of the recent floods in the northeast and northwest provinces. According to the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), 20 provinces were affected by the floods with nearly 2 million people directly impacted. Tragically, over 150 lives were lost, with severe damages to the agricultural sector and infrastructures such as roads, bridges and dams. This is causing great damage on people’s livelihoods, economic growth and national development.
3. Samdech Techo Prime Minister reminded us in his speech yesterday that *‘climate change response is closely associated with our economic and social development objectives’* and *“is not something that can be done on the side, as an additional activity. It must be closely integrated in the way we manage our existing development programmes and investments.”* We therefore require more integrated planning for our national development using a climate lens. Ultimately, we should strive in moving towards having climate change as one of the screening criteria for all investments and planning processes just like gender.
4. If we look at our national development objectives and strategies, taking climate change into account is a requirement to ensure success. Based on economic growth over the past decade, Cambodia is poised to achieve Lower Middle Income Status. Similarly, Cambodia is on track with key targets of the CMDG such as halving poverty, mother-related healthcare, and achieving universal education. The Royal Government of Cambodia remains firmly committed to continuous implementation of the CMDG as enshrined in the new Rectangular Strategy III. However, the gains made so far can easily be overturned by climate change and future efforts could be constrained unless climate change is considered and integrated into our planning processes.
5. Some important steps have been taken by the Royal Government of Cambodia in integrating climate change into our national development planning processes. As Samdech Techo Prime Minister said yesterday, *“Climate change was an important*

feature of our recent National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2009-2013) and is now part of the Government's Rectangular Strategy, and will be one of the official cross-cutting issues in our new National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2014-18). Addressing climate change is also a key component of our Green Growth Policy and Strategic Plan."

6. The Ministry of Planning will continue to ensure that relevant climate change indicators are included in the NSDP monitoring framework. Together with the Ministry of Environment, we are providing support to line ministries to integrate climate change into their NSDP submissions . At the sectoral level, you will discuss today the work done by ten line ministries to develop their climate change strategic plans (CCSP), and climate change action plans (CCAP) in demonstration of the particular efforts being made to integrate climate change in their regular planning processes and avoiding having climate change as a separate silo. This work is promoting a rigorous approach, based on realistic financing scenarios, to avoid producing simple "wish lists" of actions, but instead present solid, coherent and realistic programmes.
7. **Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear participants**, there is more work to be done. There is urgent need to build capacities for the integration of climate change into national development processes as well as the establishment of a national climate change adaptation M&E Framework that will help us track successes in climate change investments and also provide a learning pathway for improving our knowledge base. More work needs to be done in drawing lessons from existing pilots for the integration of climate change into sub-national planning, and developing official guidelines and support for sub-national administrations.
8. While adaptation is our immediate priority, our national development planning requires that we look into the future by transforming our society towards low carbon development and resilience to future climate impacts. As Samdech Techo Prime Minister highlighted, *"realigning our development towards a resilient society and low carbon development."* Besides adaptation, we are pursuing efforts that contribute to climate change mitigation through win-win solutions. Great emphasis is being placed on renewable energy development as we try to increase energy production and expand energy access to rural areas, a fast growing urban population, and the industrial and service sectors. We are also promoting the adoption of energy efficient practices since that is beneficial for businesses in increasing their profit margins, in addition to contributing to mitigation efforts.
9. To conclude, the recommendations from the discussion today will come at the right time to feed into the NSDP process for the next 5 years. I encourage you to seize this opportunity and urge you to make your findings as simple as possible for effective and timely communication, and in simple language comprehensible to the users. With the elaborate strategic planning process, we hope to achieve the requisite scale, speed and strategic focus of national response.
10. I wish you the four gems of Buddhist blessings and successful deliberations.