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Speech by Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen
at the Celebration of the 93rd International Women Day

Following is the integral text of speech delivered by Samdech HUN Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, at the Celebration of the 93rd International Women Day on 08 March 2003:

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of my wife and my own behalf, I would like to express my great pleasure to join you all to celebrate the 93rd International Women Anniversary. May I take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to her excellencies Minister, Secretary of State, His Excellency Under Secretary of State, ladies and gentlemen, officials at all levels of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Veteran, who have made their utmost efforts for the cause of enhancing the role and status of women and veteran in Cambodia, especially of the capacity building of women as well as attitude change and of gender biased views in the society. These efforts are the important key for social-economic development and poverty reduction and increased living standard of people, which are the priority goal of the Royal Government.

On the international women day of 8 March, the topic on jointly build a society without violence on women and children remains the most important topic, which we must continue to support and jointly resolve with urgency. This topic also has a potential to contribute to the acceleration of the implementation of the 2nd five year social and economic development plan (2001-2005), because all of us recognizes that one nation can develop fast unless there is collaboration from citizens of both sex. This is the most important resource of the nation. It can be labor forces as well as intellectual resource, which sociologists or economists prefer to call human resource.

As you may already know, war and internal conflict for many decades have brought about many obstacles related to discrimination on the role and status of women in the Cambodian society, whereby it originally used to be a society of motherhood in many fields of daily life. At present, the differences between male and female has been clearly shown, according to literacy rate of adulthood, that there are 61 percent female and 82 percent male. Such situation comes from the fact that young females go to school at the lowest rate. Moreover, violence, exploitation, trafficking in women and children and all types of rapes on women has become a major concern for the

government. With regard to the family violence, in the past as well as at present, the majority of our citizens consider it as internal or private problem of the family only. However, the family violence is not just a private problem for two or three people. Indeed, it has a strong affect on the whole Khmer society, because this violence, especially violence on women and children, is the most important reason which makes us lose happiness, dignity, mutual respect and create inequality in family as well as in community and society. Eventually, this factor has become a big obstacle preventing the participation of women insocio-economic development and abusing the rights and dignity of people, which is totally contrary to the spirit of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Certainly, the Royal Government recognizes the issue of gap between male and female as well as challenges related the enhancement of the situation, role and status of women in the Cambodian society. Therefore, the Royal Government has paid attention especially on women capacity building and the change of social attitude, which tend to discriminate women. We established a ministry responsible specifically for women affairs. We have set out and made our efforts to implement policies and measures, aimed at eliminating family violence and fighting against human trafficking including the effort to promote the protection of women in the legal field and the inclusion of regulations on women protection in the state laws and the implementation of various program which provide opportunity for women to equally participate in the process of national reconstruction and development.

In this spirit, we have created the Cambodian National Council for Women, in which Samdech Preah Reach Akkemohesey Monyneath is the honorable chairwoman. Moreover, the Royal Government has launched a women plan (Neary Ratanak Plan) and a program focusing on six priority areas:

First, the inclusion of gender aspect into the poverty reduction strategy and governance program to increase the braveness and promote equitable and equal participation of women in all levels of development.

Second, health which focuses mainly on ensuring rights and power of men and women to be able to access primary health care, especially reproduction health, aimed at improving the situation and equal and equitable livelihood.

Third, education which focus on ensuring that women and children can get full rights in education and skill training at all education levels, so that they will become active resource to promote equality and equity in the society.

Fourth, women protection before the law, which focus on ensuring that women and children get an equitable and equal protection including the guarantee of women's rights in formulating and reinforcing law and in education.

Fifth, encouraging braveness in economics and entrepreneurship training among women, aimed at guaranteeing equal rights of women in economic activities and providing opportunity to have equitable participation in economic development and contribution to poverty reduction.

Sixth, institutional capacity building and management strategy, which focus on ensuring the sustainability, transparency, effectiveness and capacity in institutional management, monitoring and evaluating project implementation, human resources management and finance, etc.

To attain this strategic plan, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Veteran, which is the national mechanism responsible for direct implementation of the policy of the Royal Government, has made its best efforts to promote some important programs including the inclusion of gender issue into the work of the ministries and institutions concerned through training of the trainers. This training has been organized for important officials in each ministry/institution. In the provinces which have Seila program, members of development committee of province-city, district, sub-district and village have also included training program on gender, leadership and self-confidence for women. Furthermore, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Veteran established gender information center to collect and distribute data and information for analysis and formulate policy and working framework including other programs focusing on gender.

As a result, we had a great success in the commune council election as more than 900 women got positions in the commune council across the Kingdom of Cambodia. The presence of women in the commune council is a great contribution to violence reduction on women and children and enhancing the role of women in management and development of the country.

Nevertheless, to fully ensure the equality and equity of sex, we have to work even harder, in which we really need close cooperation from all stakeholders namely government ministries/institutions, donor community, civil society, non-government organization and individuals.

In this spirit, I would like to take opportunity of this 93rd International Women Anniversary of 8 March to appeal to all state institutions, donor community, private sector and all civil society organizations to continue to provide stronger support and cooperation to the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Veteran to enhance the role and rights of women and to successfully eliminate all violence on women and children in the Cambodian families and society.

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to this 93rd Anniversary of International Women Day of 8th March and welcome all proposals made by the women delegation in the women's day statement to be able to participate in building a society without violence on women and children. Finally, I wish you, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the five gems of Buddhist wishes.

Opening Address by Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen at the ASEAN Environmental Year 2003

Here is the integral text of the opening address delivered by Samdech HUN Sen, Prime Minister of Kingdom of Cambodia, at the ASEAN Environmental Year 2003, at Grand Angkor Temple on 05 March 2003:

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am greatly honored and pleased to address the opening of this very important conference on *ASEAN Environmental Year 2003*. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I warmly welcome all the distinguished Ministers and delegates from the ASEAN, our friends from China, Japan and the Republic Korea, representatives of the diplomatic corps, UN organizations, NGO community and private sector to our ancient and historical capital of Siem Reap, the land of wonderful Angkor temples. I hope that you will take this rare opportunity to visit many sites, especially Angkor Wat which is the remarkable architecture of human art.

Cambodia is proud and honored to host this important meeting. This event reflects the positive results of our efforts in integrating Cambodia into the regional and international community. I am certain that this meeting will enable us an excellent opportunity to review our region's accomplishments over the past three years, since our first meeting in Brunei Darussalam in

2000. Our meeting will also provide us with a forum to draw lessons and experience for our future direction "work together towards sustainable development" in the region.

We are conscious that the decisions we make today will have consequences for the whole region and the long future. Inevitably and unavoidably, environmental interests span borders as well as generations. This reality was again emphasized in recent international gatherings – at Doha, and more recently at Johannesburg. Environmental sustainability is a global challenge intimately linked with globalization and responsible multilateral trade and exchanges. All nations have responsibility for the destiny of the world and common worldwide obligations to resolve environmental issues, since "environmental security " is clearly as important as economic and political security.

At the *1st Greater Mekong Sub-region Summit* in Phnom Penh in November 2002, given the concern for our shared future, the Royal Government of Cambodia highlighted some elements that we must promote to help ensure sustainable development and poverty alleviation in the region. These include the followings:

First, implementation and expansion of afforestation and reforestation programs;

Second, the careful management of the natural resources within the region; and

Third, the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

We all stand to gain or to lose depending on whether our environmental management is appropriate or not. Like many other nations, Cambodia has committed itself to the implementation of socio-economic development plans, environmental protection measures and other reforms to alleviate poverty and to ensure sustainable development. Despite facing extreme difficulties and challenges resulted from the legacy of many years of internal conflict, we have achieved good and encouraging progress in stabilizing our society and promoting environmental protection, appropriate natural resource management and in the overall taking major steps forward in poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Indeed, in this new era of globalization we, the nations of ASEAN, must establish more comprehensive frameworks and mechanisms for fruitful cooperation in our shared environment. In this regard, cooperation, that we have to work on, must not be limited just within national framework, but it must be cooperation within regional framework at large.

The Johannesburg Summit of 2002 highlighted some important commitments and implementation initiatives which very much address the needs and priorities of the ASEAN countries. We in ASEAN are committed to pursuing sustainable development across the region – as

clearly stipulated in the "ASEAN *Vision 2020* ", which highlights "*A concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring society*". The vision also calls for a clean and green ASEAN with fully established mechanisms for sustainable development to ensure the protection of the region's environment, the sustainability of its natural resources and the high quality of life of its people. In particular, the *Hanoi Plan of Action* calls for the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development. Indeed, these are key initiatives towards poverty reduction and sustainable development in our region.

As you may already know, the recent *Informal Meeting of the ASEAN Environment Ministers* in November 2002 in Vientiane made further progress toward implementation of specific actions to address the urgent environmental issues that our region are facing, including trans-boundary haze pollution and other regional actions to follow-up after the *World Summit on Sustainable Development*. The informal Ministerial Meeting also initiated a dialogue within the framework of ASEAN+3 on common environmental issues and future environmental cooperation. Therefore, we need to work more closely to ensure synergies, better resource mobilization, improved coordination and cooperation in order to protect our environment and at the same time enhance economic and social development for our people.

The Royal Government of Cambodia strongly believes that sustainable development along with the sustainable use of natural resources cannot be achieved if poverty issues are not seriously addressed and overcome. Success in poverty reduction requires time, effective policy, well-laid plans, and comprehensive and realistic action programs. Moreover, this task requires political will, implementation passion as well as social forces mobilization in order to achieve the set goal. In this sense, there is the need for broad and radical reforms in key natural resources management sectors such as forestry, fisheries and land, which are major assets of the nation. Our *Second Five Year Socio-Economic Plan 2001–2005* stresses that: "*A balance must be achieved between economic, cultural and environmental objectives and between economic efficiency of resource use and equity*". To achieve such a balance, we have launched important strategies including: (i) prevention of environmental and resource degradation caused by policy distortions and market failures; (ii) establishing and implementing the legal framework for natural resource management; (iii) enhancing human resources capacity for natural resource management; and (iv) design and implementation of a land management framework that makes adequate provision for the poor, including local community access to common property resources.

Thus far, we have already made considerable progress in forest protection and management, fishery and land management, with high priority given to the needs and concerns of local communities.

We also clearly understand that peace, security and stability are a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for the country's march towards democracy, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. At present, Cambodia is making its intensive reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts to eradicate poverty and improve the living standards of the people. We are undertaking these tasks in an era where the themes of “sustainable development” and “environmental security” have come into the forefront of global consciousness. Having paid high attention on these issues, we strongly support the building up of innovative partnerships among government, private sector and civil society in financing development projects, as called for in Johannesburg. We need enhanced support from the wealthier countries for our efforts in achieving sustainable development. More importantly, an enabling environment for development, open opportunities, fair trade, equitable partnerships and democratized international relations are the key factors for ensuring that developing countries get appropriate benefits from globalization and for being the ownership of self-sustaining, long-term development of their countries. All these are the voice appealed by developing countries at the 13th Non-Aligned Movement Summit held on 24-25 February 2003 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to ensure that poor nations will be able to overcome and not fall victim to the challenges of rapid globalization.

I am optimistic that this meeting will be an excellent opportunity for us to assess the status of the implementation of our joint commitments and initiatives. Your presence here today demonstrates our shared commitment to cooperate and to together, move toward sustainable development and clean environment across ASEAN.

Once again, let me wish our honorable delegates from all countries and organizations every success in this meeting. May you all have a pleasant and memorable stay in our country, especially in this wonderful city of Siem Reap of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Of course, I encourage you all to enjoy and soak in the history of our most famous heritage – the *Angkor Wat*!

Senior Minister HOR Namhong Attends 1st ICC Session

At the invitation of the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, attended the 1st session of the International Criminal Court (ICC) held on 11 March 2003 in the Hague, the Netherlands.

After the ICC Meeting, Senior Minister HOR Namhong, in his capacity as Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee, chaired the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat held on 18-20 March 2003, in Sabah, Malaysia.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ASEAN STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LOOMING WAR IN IRAQ

At the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Informal Meeting.

Karambunei, Sabah, Malaysia, 19 March 2003

After a close consultation of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at their Informal Meeting in Karambunai, Malaysia, H.E. Mr. Hor Namhong, Senior Minister; Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC), issues the following statement:

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers had extensive discussion and a useful exchange of views on the impending war in Iraq.

The Foreign Ministers discussed the repercussions of the imminent war in Iraq on the region and the world. They shared the view that the war will inevitably lead to the loss of lives of innocent people and increase tensions in the region with serious political and economic ramifications on the whole world, as well as the possible rise of international terrorism.

The Foreign Ministers believed that the United Nations still has an important role to play even after the armed conflict had started. In this regard, the Foreign Ministers expressed the hope that the U.N. should continue to actively engage in the current crisis in Iraq.

The Foreign Ministers shared the view that ASEAN should play a role in providing humanitarian assistance to Iraq, especially after the war, in order to help prevent a humanitarian disaster.

The Foreign Ministers agreed that the ASEAN Economic Ministers should discuss the negative economic implications of the war in Iraq and identify appropriate measures in addressing the economic difficulties facing ASEAN.

The Ministers further expressed the need for ASEAN to assist one another in overcoming any negative economic impact of the war, especially the energy security.

**STATEMENT
BY THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE ASEAN STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE SITUATION IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA**

*At the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Informal Meeting
Karambunei, Sabah, Malaysia, 19 March 2003*

After a close consultation of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at their Informal Meeting in Karambunai, Sabah, Malaysia, H.E. Mr. Hor Namhong, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC), issues the following statement:

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers had a constructive exchange of views on the current situation in the Korean peninsula.

The Foreign Ministers expressed their continued concern over the evolving situation in the Korean peninsula which could lead to a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the whole Asia-Pacific region.

The Foreign Ministers-while acknowledging ASEAN as a primary driving force in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)-commended the efforts made in recent months by the ASC/ARF Chairman in facilitating the dialogue with the concerned parties in order to find a lasting and durable solution to the Korean peninsula.

The Foreign Ministers urged the ASC/ARF Chairman to continue his concerted efforts to engage in the talk between the involved parties. The Foreign Ministers believed that the ARF remains an important forum for constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues, such as the Korean peninsula.

The Foreign Ministers reiterated the importance of and the necessity for a denuclearized Korean peninsula as an important contribution leading to the reunification of Korea and therefore to peace and stability in the region.

Visit to Cambodia by Timor-Leste Foreign Minister

His Excellency Dr. José Ramos-Horta, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, paid a visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia from 03-07 March 2003.

His Excellency Dr. José Ramos-Horta was received in a Royal Audience by His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah NORODOM SIHANOUK, King of Cambodia, at the Royal Palace.

While in Cambodia, His Excellency Dr. José Ramos-Horta paid courtesy call on Samdech HUN Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia.

On 05 March 2003, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, H.E. Mr. HOR Namhong, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,

had discussions with H.E. Dr. JOSE RAMOS-HORTA, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

During the meeting, Senior Minister HOR Namhong briefed Timor-Leste Foreign Minister on Cambodian situation, especially the poverty reduction and the reform process conducted by the government. With regard to Timor-Leste 's request for its ASEAN observer status and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) membership, Senior Minister HOR Namhong informed Timor-Leste Foreign Minister that Cambodia would not oppose them if there would be consensus among ASEAN members since Timor-Leste located in Southeast Asia.



Senior Minister HOR Namhong has discussions with Timor-Leste Foreign Minister

H.E. Dr. JOSE RAMOS-HORTA appreciated Cambodia for successfully hosting the recent ASEAN Summit. He informed Senior Minister HOR Namhong that Timor-Leste supported Cambodian candidacy in the International Criminal Court (ICC). He expressed his gratitude to Cambodia for backing Timor-Leste's ASEAN observer status.

Senior Minister HOR Namhong Meets UN Human Rights Special Envoy

On 03 March 2003, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, H.E Mr. HOR Namhong, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, had a meeting with Mr. Peter Leuprecht, United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy in charge of Human Rights in Cambodia.



Senior Minister HOR Namhong Meets UN Human Rights Special Envoy

During the meeting, Senior Minister HOR Namhong and Mr. Peter Leuprecht had discussion and an exchange of views on the report on human rights situation in Cambodia, which had been drafted by UN Human Rights Bureau to Cambodia and the strengthening of the future cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the UN Human Rights Bureau.

H.E Mr. HOR Namhong briefed Mr. Leuprecht on the concerted effort of the Royal Government in strengthening democracy, protecting and improving the human rights environment, reforming the justice and law system, fighting against women and children trafficking and sex exploitation, resolving the Vietnamese Montagnard issue, as well as alleviating the poverty through rural development.

H.E Mr. HOR Namhong drew the Envoy's attention to the implementation of the MOU signed by both sides, especially the cooperation in providing technical assistances and training

expert staffs to foster the human rights in Cambodia. He also stressed that the report on human rights situation in Cambodia had to be cooperative and the Royal Government's efforts in resolving and enhancing the human rights situation had to be mentioned in the report.

Senior Minister HOR Namhong Signs Financing Agreement with EU Ambassador

On 28 March 2003, at 16:00, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, signed with His Excellency Mr. Klauspeter Schmallenbach, Ambassador-Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to the Kingdom of Cambodia, a Financing Agreement between the Royal Government of Cambodia and the European Union.



Senior Minister HOR Namhong Signs Financing Agreement with EU Ambassador

The estimated cost of the project "Targeted EC Support to Pro-poor Basic Education Reforms in Cambodia" is 20 million euro.

Foreign Affairs Secretary of State Meets British Minister of State

On 06 March 2003, H.E. Mr. CHHOEUNG Chamroeun, Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, met with H.E. Ms. Sally Keeble, Minister of State for British Department for International Development (DFID), who was visiting Cambodia from 4-6 March 2003 to view the development context within which DFID was operating in Cambodia.

Both sides exchanged their views on socio-economic development and social welfare in Cambodian rural areas and the UK's development assistance programme in Cambodia.



Secretary of State CHHOEUNG Chamroeun Meets British Minister of State

On behalf of Royal Government of Cambodia, H.E. Mr. CHHOEUNG Chamroeun expressed deep thanks to British Government for its development assistance, which had contributed in the implementation of the poverty reduction policy of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

Arrangement on Consultations Between Cambodian and Algerian Foreign Ministries

On 11 March 2003, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, an Arrangement on Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia was signed by His Excellency Dr. CHEM Vidhya, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia and His Excellency Mr. Abdelhamid BEREKSI, Director General of Asia Oceania of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the people's Democratic Republic of Algeria.



*Permanent Secretary CHEM Vidhya Signs Arrangement
on Consultations with Algerian Director General*

Both sides would, when necessary, hold consultations to examine bilateral relations, and regional and international issues of common interest within their capacity, provided the Arrangement.

ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting

From 10 to 11 March 2003, at the Inter-Continental Hotel, H.E Dr. Chem Vidhya, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, chaired the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting that was held with the participation of all ASEAN member countries as well as the ASEAN Secretariat.



Permanent Secretary Chem Vidhya Chairs SOM at Inter-Continental Hotel

The meeting focused mainly on terrorism, Iraq, on seeking ways to defuse the tension on the Korean Peninsula and on following up of the resolutions adopted during the 8th ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, especially the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), the study on ASEAN' s concurrences, and the implementation of ASEAN Tourism Agreement. The meeting also discussed on finding common ways to cope with the regional confrontation.

The purpose of this meeting was to prepare for the upcoming ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Informal Meeting to be held from 18 to 20 March 2003 in Malaysia and the 36th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, ASEAN +3 Foreign Ministers' Meeting (China, Japan, and South Korea), 10th ASEAN Regional Forum, and Post Ministerial Conferences which would be held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, as well as the 9th ASEAN Summit in Bali, Indonesia.
