

**The Sixty-Ninth Session of the Economic and Social Commission
for the Asia-Pacific**

**Cambodia: Opportunities to Build Resilience to Natural Disasters and
Major Economic Crises**

Delivered by

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Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Allow me to begin by expressing on behalf of my delegation our sincere thanks and appreciation to the ESCAP Secretariat for once again organizing this important event.

I also wish to extend our gratitude to Her Excellency, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Under Secretary General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of UNESCAP, for it is under her direction and leadership that we are able to continue to renew and improve our commitment toward the realization of our goals.

Also I am pleased to inform you that Cambodia was honoured by the official visit of Her Excellency Dr. Noeleen Heyzer as the Under Secretary General and Executive Secretary of UNESCAP in August of last year. During an audience with our Prime Minister **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, Her Excellency raised the crucial issues of sustainable development, regional integration, and the accelerated push toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

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I believe that this session is not only timely, but imperative, as we are aware of our vulnerability to climate change and the economic crises that are increasingly occurring throughout the world.

I am certain that we all realize that if we are going to weather these storms, it would be to our mutual benefit to respect and support each other's strengths, as well as understand each other's weaknesses. Building resilient societies that can withstand both natural disasters and economic crises is top of the development agenda.

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The Cambodian perspective in building resilience

Under the leadership of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister, peace is back in my country; security is back; stability is back. Cambodia is experiencing fast dramatic changes in our socio-economic development. And the Kingdom is committed to giving prioritized attention to a number of sectors which are key to reaching the MDGs and pursuing LDC graduation.

The policies we adopt and the strategies we implement under a refreshed and updated new five-year National Strategic Development Plan for 2014 – 18, will determine our success in achieving our national aspirations. These important policies are now in development.

I now invite you to consider a brief perspective from Cambodia in relation to building resilience. The success of Cambodia's next stage of development will be determined by these following factors:

1. the continuing high levels of inclusive growth based on economic diversification;
2. increased competitiveness and productivity;
3. the strengthening of our key export-oriented sectors, such as light industry, tourism and agriculture;
4. the strategic integration of our economy within the Greater Mekong Sub-region, ASEAN and the broader East Asian region;
5. significant further progress in the reduction of poverty;

6. the strengthening of our health and education systems in response to changing needs;
7. the strengthening of our democratic development, public institutions and national and sub-national governance;
8. the continued improvement in national infrastructure, and the access to affordable energy,
9. and last but not least, the responsible management of our precious natural resources – land, water, forests and fisheries to ensure inclusive and sustainable development.

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Integration and cooperation contribute to building resilience

The integration of Cambodia's economy into the Asia-Pacific region is crucial to our success. Cambodia is located strategically within the Greater Mekong Subregion in ASEAN, and is in close proximity to Eastern and Southern Asia.

With greater connectivity, Cambodia's location will be considered a major asset for private sector development and foreign investment. In this respect, major investments can be directed toward improving the physical transport infrastructure that links Cambodia with other countries in the Asian region, especially with Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and China.

This will be most welcome with the expected increase in the flow of goods and people when the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) comes into effect at the end of 2015. And I am pleased to inform you that the achievement of an ASEAN economic community by the end of 2015 is well on track.

Also Her Excellency Dr. Heyzer's involvement in the 9th ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ASEAN-BIS) held in Phnom Penh in November of last year, was also both central and most welcome, and clearly contributed to the great success of cooperation between the UN and ASEAN, and generated further optimism in regard to Cambodia's future within the region.

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LDC graduation is another aspiration to build resilience.

Cambodia introduced a draft resolution for the implementation of the Regional Road Map of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries in the Asia-Pacific Region to the Working Group on Draft Resolutions during the 68th Commission session.

She also hosted the Asia-Pacific Meeting on the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) last December in Siem Reap-Angkor where the “Siem Reap Outcome Document” was adopted.

I thank you for coming over to Siem Reap to attend the above mentioned meeting, I thank ESCAP team, particularly Countries with Special Needs Unit, and HE. Mr. Shun-ichi Murata, Deputy ES, for his leadership.

The outcome document, which reflected the discussions held and suggestions made, especially by representatives from LDCs, proposed a number of practical policy recommendations for the consideration, adoption and action by the policy makers of Asia-Pacific LDCs in order to help achieve all the prioritized tasks. These include productive capacity, trade, food security, social development, and the reduction of vulnerability, along with resource mobilization for development.

As you may be aware, Cambodia, as one of the Asia-Pacific LDCs, has made positive initial progress in the implementation of the IPoA through pursuing national level actions as identified in the Regional Road Map.

It was suggested that, while the need for the country is to further strengthen these efforts in the coming years, reaching the graduation goal of the Asia-Pacific LDCs would require the effective and timely adoption of several key actionable recommendations of the outcome document.

Excellencies
Dear Friends

Today, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), I wish to inform Madam Under Secretary-General, ES of ESCAP, Amb Acharya, Under Secretary-General and High Representative for UN-OHRLS, Development

Partners and Distinguished Delegates that Cambodia has made a firm commitment to graduate from LDC status before 2020.

Cambodia is preparing projects and programs in order to accelerate the push towards meeting the commitment towards graduation before the deadline.

To this end, we would like to seek your continued kind support and cooperation for formulating further strategies and policies for effective and efficient LDC graduation.

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In conclusion, allow me to once again express my Government's sincere appreciation and profound gratitude to the UN system and Development Partners for their continued cooperation and support for Cambodia's rapid progress and success, as well as her people's better livelihood.

I wish the 69th Session a successful outcome. I also wish you all peace and prosperity.

I thank you for your attention