

**Kingdom of Cambodia  
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**Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
And International Cooperation**

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**Press Release  
Outcomes of the Preparations for 32<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Summit  
Singapore, 27 April 2018**

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In preparations for the 32<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Summit, H.E. Senior Minister Prak Sokhonn, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, attended on 27 April 2018 the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the 17<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Political-Security Community Council Meeting and the 21<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Coordinating Council Meeting.

**The ASEAN Foreign Minister Meeting (AMM)**

During the AMM, the Foreign Ministers discussed ASEAN Community Building and ASEAN's external relations and exchanged views on regional and international developments. The Meeting issued ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Statement on Developments in the Korean Peninsula.

In his intervention on ASEAN Community Building, H.E. Prak Sokhonn touched on the global uncertainties and rising trends of protectionism around the world and the growing prospects of an escalating trade war. He then suggested that "ASEAN have to be pro-active in terms of taking swift and credible policy responses to minimize these effects on our Community building efforts," and contributed several thoughts, among them: ASEAN needed to sustain the region's economic vibrancy and prosperity; ASEAN had to step up efforts to enhance regional connectivity through infrastructure development; ASEAN Community Building needed to embrace the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution; ASEAN needed to continue tacking development gap between the older and newer members of ASEAN though the gap was closing gradually as the CLMV had experienced steady high rates of growth.

On ASEAN's external relations, H.E. Prak Sokhonn stated that the "strained relations between the rival powers would make it very difficult for ASEAN countries to pick and choose friends". The Senior Minister stated that the positive momentum in China-Japan bilateral relations, which was conducive for more cooperation under ASEAN+3 and the successful ASEAN Summits with India and Australia were positive commonalities for cooperation with external partners.

On Korean Peninsula, the Senior Minister stressed that "the recent developments are fascinating, very encouraging and unprecedented in the recent history of the peninsula," and that it was "due to the persistent efforts of President Moon Jae-in in the pursuit of his "Berlin Initiative". The Senior Minister was of the view that the China-DPRK Summit in Beijing marked a major breakthrough in the deadlock. The Senior Minister also stated that "as country coordinator for ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations, Cambodia places great importance to the political settlement of the Korean Peninsula and in the maintenance of peace, stability and security of the region.

On South China Sea, H.E. Prak Sokhonn underlined that "over the past two years our perseverance in building trust and confidence have brought us a milestone achievement: the conclusion of the "Framework for the Code of Conduct on the South China Sea" and the official commencement of formal consultations on its substantive text. The overall atmosphere has been quite conducive for the formal negotiations on the COC. The COC process may be long and arduous but at least it is moving forward. The Senior Minister encouraged the adherence to the "Bali-Siem Reap Spirit",

and suggested “ASEAN should continue along that principle, if we are to find convergence on delicate issues like the mechanisms for disputes settlement”.

The Senior Minister also touched on the emerging “Indo-Pacific Initiatives” that seem to point to the increasing geo-strategic significance and acceptance of the Indo-Pacific concept, and was of the view that if not properly managed, this development could potentially undermine the unity and centrality of ASEAN. He stressed on the need to maintain ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN leadership in the regional architecture against the backdrop of these rivalries.

### **The 17<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Council Meeting**

The Foreign Ministers were briefed by the ASEAN Secretary-General on the recent developments in the sectoral bodies under APSC and on the progress of the implementation and review of the APSC Blueprint 2025. The Meeting adopted the APSC Report to the 32<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Summit.

H.E. Prak Sokhonn announced that Cambodia was willing to be a lead shepherd for Action Line “Promote ASEAN Member States’ active participation in peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts in accordance with the capacity of respective AMS”. He also informed the meeting that Cambodia would organize an AIPR (ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation) Research Study and Symposium on “Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Cambodia’s Experiences and its Win-Win Policy towards National Reconciliation” in October 2018 in Siem Reap.

### **The 21<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Coordinating Council Meeting**

The Foreign Ministers were briefed by the Chair on the preparations for the 32<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Summit and by the ASEAN Secretary General on the follow-up to the 31<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Summit. The Foreign Ministers considered a number of reports and endorsed the outcome documents for the 32<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Summit.

H.E. Prak Sokhonn sought active financial and technical assistance to boost ARMAC’s mandates and operations. “For the 2017-2018 Annual Operational Budget, Cambodia has already contributed in full”, he said, appealing to other ASEAN Member States for contribution.

On IAI, the Senior Minister commented that “I am quite pleased to see that the rate of implementation of the IAI Work Plan III (2016-2020) for the first two years is on track with a passing grade of 53.8% of the actions in the five strategic areas. As Cambodia takes the Chair of the IAI Task Force this year, we will endeavor to maintain this positive momentum.” He then proposed “the ASEAN Development Fund (ADF) be also open to IAI projects or activities, particularly for project formulation proposals.

The Senior Minister proposed the nomination of H.E. Kung Phoak, Under-Secretary of State at the Office of the Council of Ministers of Cambodia, to be the next Deputy Secretary-General for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community for the term of October 2018-October 2021. He thanked all Foreign Ministers for their endorsement of the nomination.

Singapore, 28 April 2018