



Joint Press Release: Cambodia and European Union
hold 11th Joint Committee Meeting

Phnom Penh, 10 March 2022

The 11th Cambodia-EU Joint Committee Meeting was held in Phnom Penh in a hybrid format on 10-11 March 2022 and was preceded by meetings of the three Subgroups namely: (1) Trade and Investment, (2) Cooperation, and (3) Institution Building, Administrative Reform, Legal and Judicial Reform, Governance, and Human Rights. The respective subgroups meeting was conducted back on 25-27 November 2020 and has been postponed since due to the disruption of Covid-19. The Joint Committee Meeting was co-chaired by **H.E. Mr. LUY David**, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and **Ms. Paola PAMPALONI**, Deputy Managing Director for Asia and Pacific of the European External Action Service.

The Meeting reviewed the progress made since the 10th Cambodia-EU Joint Committee Meeting held in Brussels in 2018 and saw the exchange of views on a wide range of bilateral and multilateral issues, including the latest political developments in both Cambodia and the EU. The Meeting also discussed the situation in Ukraine, the global economic situation, climate change, as well as Cambodia's Chairmanship of ASEAN, the situation in Myanmar, EU-ASEAN Strategic Partnership and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

The EU also commended Cambodia for the successful convening of the 13th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in 2021, which demonstrated the shared efforts and commitment in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring that multilateralism remains relevant and effective in addressing regional and global issues. The EU further expressed its full support for Cambodia's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2022 as well as for the appointment of **H.E. Mr. Prak Sokhonn**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, as the Special Envoy of ASEAN to Myanmar. The EU further underlined that the appointment of H.E. Igor Driesmans as the EU Special Envoy for Myanmar highlights the strong support of the EU to ASEAN and UN Special Envoys in the implementation of the ASEAN Five Point Consensus.

The sub-group on Institution Building, Administrative Reform, Legal and Judicial Reform, Governance and Human Rights, discussed and exchanged views on key developments on human rights (including civil and political, labour, land, and women's rights), anti-trafficking policies and ratification of international conventions, as well as Cambodia's multi-dimensional reform efforts and preparations towards the Commune Elections in 2022. The EU underlined the critical importance of upholding democratic pluralism, human rights and fundamental freedoms, labour rights and the rule of law. The EU noted the cooperation and engagement of Cambodia with the human rights mechanisms of the UN and the commitments and obligations accepted by Cambodia under international human rights law and conventions. Both sides noted the significance of the EU's support in capacity building and financial assistance in this area of cooperation as well as in the aspect of rule of law and democratic governance.

The sub-group on Trade and Investment reviewed Cambodia-EU bilateral trade and the investment climate in Cambodia. In 2020 and 2021, the bilateral trade between the two valued at at €4.3 billion,¹ and € 4.5 billions, respectively. The Meeting also discussed economic recovery measures, bilateral trade and investment relations, including the temporary partial withdrawal of the EU trade preferences under the EBA scheme, technical cooperation, market access issues, and the ongoing efforts to further improve the business environment, including the new Law of Investments, and diversify Cambodia's economy. The two sides also committed to further strengthen cooperation to ensure that Cambodia's investment climate remains open, well-facilitated, competitive, and conducive to sustainable socio-economic development. The Meeting also exchanged view on regional and global trade development including updates on economic integration in ASEAN and across the wider Asia-Pacific region, EU-ASEAN regional trade relations and the updates on WTO reforms, among others.

During the sub-group on Development Cooperation meeting, the two sides took stock of the progress made in relation to the EU's continued support to Cambodia's development. In this regard, the Meeting appreciated the adoption of the new EU's cooperation Multiannual Indicative Programme (2021-2027), valued at €155 million for the period of 2021-2024, which focuses on three priority areas, namely: "Green Growth and Decent Jobs," "Education and Skills Development," and "Good Governance.", in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with a reinforced Team Europe approach, with joint European initiatives. In addition, both parties exchanged on policy reform progress, particularly in sectors supported by the EU such as education, public financial management, social protection and fisheries. Also, the parties valued the progress in thematic and regional cooperation programmes, such as ASEAN Regional Integration Support from the EU (ARISE Plus). The EU congratulated Cambodia on the adoption of the Long Term Strategy for Carbon

¹ Eurostat Comext:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/isdb_results/factsheets/country/details_cambodia_en.pdf

Neutrality and expressed its commitment to enhance the bilateral cooperation on climate action.

The Meeting concluded under a constructive and amicable atmosphere, and it was agreed that the 12th Cambodia-EU Joint Committee and its three sub-group meetings would be held in 2023 in Brussels.