

## Opening Remarks

by H.E. PRAK Sokhonn,

Deputy Prime Minister,

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia

at the Book Launch:

**“13th Asia-Europe Meeting: Multilateral Cooperation for a Resilient, Sustainable, and Rules-Based Future for ASEM”**

**Venue: National Institute of Diplomacy and International Relations**

Hybrid, 11 November 2021 at 9:00AM, Cambodia Time

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- *Professor Hidetoshi Nishimura, President of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA),*
- *Ambassadors of all ASEM Partner Countries,*
- *Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen*

1. In less than two weeks from now, Cambodia will have the honor to host the 13th Asia-Europe Meeting Summit (ASEM13) to be held virtually and I am pleased to seize this opportunity to organize today the launch of this book, [please raise and waive this book] entitled the **“13th Asia-Europe Summit: Multilateral Cooperation for a Resilient, Sustainable, and Rules-Based Future for ASEM”**. It is a joint publication of the Royal Government of Cambodia and ERIA with the full blessing of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Tech Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of Cambodia.

2. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and on my own behalf, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to **Professor Hidetoshi Nishimura**, President of ERIA for his commitment and support to Cambodia for this historic event. My thanks go to Ms. Anita Prakash, ERIA Senior Policy Advisor, and to all the contributing authors for their in-depth research and write up. I wish to extend a special thank to my ministry’s ASEM13 Secretariat team for their indispensable comments and inputs to guide the process till the end. A nice word of praise to the NIDIR team for organizing this hybrid book launch.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*

3. As already mentioned by ERIA President, Professor Hidetoshi Nishimura, this book captures the ASEM's ambition to navigate the organization through the common opportunities and challenges in today's fast-changing world towards attaining an inclusive, sustainable, resilient and rule-based future for ASEM. It mainly highlights the pathway to reinvigorate multilateralism for a better and stronger Asia-Europe cooperation. The book contains well thought through articles covering from Political and Physical Connectivity, Economic and Financial Cooperation, Institutional and People Linkage, to Sustainable development. It also provides useful ideas to move ASEM to its next Summit.

4. I am confident that this publication will serve as one of ASEM13's significant achievement: a publication that can provide valuable inputs for all ASEM Partners and relevant stakeholders to effectively work together to transform ASEM into a dynamic, resilient, and sustainable community for the peoples of Asia and Europe in the next 25 years and beyond.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*

5. During the past 25 years, ASEM has made remarkable institutional transformation and has dealt with complex regional and global issues that require close cooperation between countries of the two continents. However, ASEM has never had to deal with such unprecedented social, economic and health crisis of this global magnitude. The COVID-19 pandemic proves that the theme of the ASEM13 Summit, "**Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared Growth**" is more relevant than ever before. The impacts of COVID-19 have reached every part of our societies and its recovery will surely be a long and difficult process. The future is uncertain and this book has highlighted collective actions to promote multilateralism in a more effective way in order to move towards a post-pandemic recovery.

6. The hosting of the ASEM13 Summit during this pandemic is even more a greater opportunity for Cambodia to promote this summit as a platform for all ASEM Leaders to address regional and global challenges such as public health, climate change, WTO reforms, youth employment, gender issues, to just mention a few.

7. The emphasis on the connectivity between Asia and Europe has always been there, so it is time to turn these commitments into actions. Ultimately, the two continents need to focus on a common approach to enable the Asia-Europe's connectivity to bridge our two continents, in all its aspects.

8. Once again, I would like to congratulate our Cambodian ASEM13 Secretariat team and ERIA on this successful publication. Finally, I wish today's event a great success.

9. May I now officially announce the dissemination of this book to all concerned stakeholders for their beneficial use.

**Thank you!**