

2 August 2019

Excellency,

It was an honour to meet Your Excellency during my recent visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia. Thank you for the meeting, the warm welcome and the useful discussions.

Let me reiterate my admiration for the exceptional economic growth witnessed by Cambodia in the last two decades, with annual growth averaging over 7.5 per cent. Growth has been accompanied by significantly reduced poverty and this is a testament to your inspired leadership and the commitment of your government to economic prosperity and poverty reduction.

I am grateful for the guidance provided by you and the national leadership over the decades with regard to the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) programme. As a former Prime Minister, I fully appreciate the importance of national ownership of all externally financed programmes. IFAD has always followed this principle and will continue supporting the vision and priorities of the government, namely supporting human skills and development, road connectivity, water access and electricity.

I acknowledge the excellent work being undertaken by the Agriculture Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension (ASPIRE) project implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in the Kandal Province. I was impressed by the collaboration between the government, the farmers and the private sector. IFAD's new investment – Sustainable Assets for Agriculture Markets, Business and Trade (SAAMBAT) – will join and complement the existing on-going IFAD projects to form a genuine country programme. In line with your priorities, SAAMBAT will contribute directly to skills development and improved rural road networks.

Looking forward, IFAD will strive to support your vision for an agriculture sector that continues to modernize and commercialize in a way that is inclusive, climate smart, and attractive to rural youth, with technologies, market linkages, and value addition for Cambodia's small farmers.

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His Excellency  
Samdech Hun Sen  
Prime Minister of the  
Kingdom of Cambodia  
Phnom Penh