



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Department of Information

**Communiqué in response to the EU's announcement on
the Everything But Arms (EBA) and Cambodia**

The Royal Government of Cambodia took notice of the joint letter of Madame Federica Morgherini and Madame Cecilia Malmström dated October 4, 2018 addressed to the Cambodian Minister of Commerce. Irrespective of the subsequent clarifications made by the Delegation of the European Union in Cambodia, the Royal Government expresses its indignation vis-à-vis the EU's decision to set in motion the formal procedure for the temporary withdrawal of the Everything But Arms (EBA) preferences for Cambodia.

The Cambodian Government can only take this decision as an extreme injustice when the EU blatantly disregards the considerable progress made by the country, despite its recent tragic past, in the implementation of numerous international conventions to which the grant of the EBA preferences is linked, particularly in the areas of labor and land rights.

The Government deeply regrets in this regard that serious accusations were made against the Government on the basis of an EU mission's report made last July. The Government is disappointed by the lack of transparency on the part of the EU for its non-disclosure of the contents of the said report, the substance of which forms the basis of the EU's prejudicial decision.

Since Cambodia achieved its full peace and national reconciliation, it undertook under the most difficult conditions the painful tasks of restoring the respect of fundamental human rights and political rights, which for Europe it took several centuries worth of effort before they could achieve partially it. Fundamental rights to food, health, education, housing, and work are foremost a prerequisite for an appeased democracy. Not only the EU denies such reality, but its silent and open support of undemocratic and illegal acts of groups protected by some European elements clearly go far beyond the limit of reason. Seen in that light, the political motivation behind the EU's decision on Cambodia is very obvious.

By implementing these withdrawal measures, the European Commission takes the risk of negating twenty year's worth of development efforts which the Government had persevered to pull millions of women and men out of poverty and as a result such decision would nullify the enormous positive impact of the European policy from which Cambodia has benefited so far. Favoring drastic sanctions measures at

the detriment of a constructive dialogue may prove to be totally counterproductive.

If the European institutions refuse to recognize the indisputable facts that led to the legal measures taken by the Government, which are within the prerogatives of an independent and sovereign state, then any sanction to that effect will only harden the resolve of the Cambodian Government to defend and preserve its rightful and legitimate actions.

The Cambodian Government is determined to build a democratic State, according to its values and its traditions, in the respect for all, but within the framework of a rule of law where nobody is beyond the law, be they political activists or members of the civil society. Cambodia counts on the support of the European States, though within the respect for its sovereignty and its dignity, to help it to realize this noble goal.†

Phnom Penh, 10 October 2018

