



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Department of Information

Press Release

**Outcomes of the Participation of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN,
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia
at the 7th Aid-for-Trade Global Review and Related Meetings
03-05 July 2019, Geneva, Switzerland**

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, had successfully participated at the 7th Aid-for-Trade Global Review at the Headquarters of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) under the theme "Supporting Economic Diversification and Empowerment for Inclusive, Sustainable Development through Aid for Trade" and related events from 03 to 05 July 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland.

In his Keynote Address, Samdech Techo Prime Minister shared Cambodia's experiences in formulating trade policy/strategy and socio-economic achievements after Cambodia became a member of the WTO in 2004, as well as Cambodia's current and future role in supporting multilateral trading system and maintaining global trade liberalization.

He highly appreciated the WTO's support for economic diversification in developing countries and least-developed countries (LDCs) and underlined Cambodia's belief in benefiting from globalization and international cooperation based on multilateral rules and efforts to fulfill her obligations under the WTO, including strictly adhering to the principle of liberal multi-party democracy and maintaining peace, security, political stability and social order, and implementing reform programs on economy, laws, regulations and measures in full compliance and consistency with international rules, especially in line with Cambodia's commitment under the WTO's framework.

As a result of the above efforts, Cambodia has achieved an annual economic growth, in an inclusive and equitable manner, of 7.7% on average over the last two decades. The poverty rate declined from 53.2% in 2004 to less than 10% in 2018. Cambodia has also diversified not only its products for exports but also its export destinations beyond the US market to other markets, such as Europe, Japan, China, ASEAN, and other countries.



Samdech Techo Prime Minister reiterated Cambodia's vision to transform the country into an upper middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income country by 2050 and appealed to all advanced member states and development partners to further consider and extend their support in order for Cambodia to achieve this goal as well as to assist other LDCs out of poverty quickly in accordance with the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. **Samdech Techo Prime Minister** took an opportunity to announce the launching of the **Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy 2019-2023**.

At another important event, **Samdech Techo Prime Minister** delivered a remark at the **41st Session of the Human Rights Council** where he shed light on what has actually been happening in Cambodia, regarding human rights, civil society, and particularly on democratic process. He recalled the tragedy in Cambodia's recent history that had ruined the country to zero. He stressed on Cambodian people's struggles to rebuild and develop the country from ashes while facing unfair trade embargoes and economic sanctions imposed by those that always preached about humanity, human rights and democracy. He also emphasized the importance of adopting a **"Win-Win Policy"** that has brought about to Cambodia the complete end of war, and peace which was achieved by Cambodia herself, neither bloodshed nor weapons and ammunition were used, and without external order or support.

Samdech Techo Prime Minister underlined that Cambodia, was previously looked down upon and politically and economically isolated, is now a sovereign state of full independence and territorial integrity, and has actively integrated herself into regional and international architecture, as well as playing active role on equal footing on regional and international affairs. Perceived as an economically-underdeveloped country in the past, mired in poverty and serious food insecurity, Cambodia is now one of the highest and fastest growing economies in the world, and a great performer in terms of poverty reduction and improvement in social indicators.

Samdech Techo Prime Minister highlighted Cambodia's commitment in promoting human rights and democratic process in Cambodia over the past two decades, underlining that Cambodia, which went through a horrendous regime that provided no rights at all to the people, is now in a dire need for such rights. Cambodia clearly understands that respecting human rights, promoting fundamental freedom, adhering to the liberal multi-party democracy, and promoting the rule of law as well as building up these foundations in the society, will certainly continue to bring about peace, stability, harmony and social justice, and will also contribute to sustainable and inclusive development.

However, it is very strange that Cambodia was asked to strengthen her democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; yet when the authority enforced the laws, we were accused of restricting freedom of expression. Worse than this, some of those



countries and institutions have taken matters related to human rights as a hostage, when discussing assistance or economic preferential treatment extended to Cambodia. It's also deeply sad to learn that human rights have been used nowadays by some powerful countries as a political tool or as new operational norm or an excuse for them to interfere in weaker states with sovereignty, full independence and territorial integrity.

Samdech Techo Prime Minister emphasized that respecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, impartiality and non-selectivity, should be set as guiding principles for all, regardless of small or big countries, in promoting human rights, while taking into account of the political, historical and social context of each country. All human rights should be addressed within the global context, through constructive, non-confrontational, non-politicized and dialogue-based approach.

Samdech Techo Prime Minister held a series of bilateral meetings with foreign Leaders and dignitaries of important international institutions to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation, as the following:

1) With H.E. Mr. Roberto Azevêdo, Director-General of the WTO, **Samdech Techo** expressed his regret over the EU's launching of the formal procedure of "Everything But Arms - EBA" withdrawal from Cambodia, underlining that the EU has been applying many standards. However, Cambodia will continue to expand its market destination and place WTO as a good partner.

2) With Dr. Ratnakar Adhikari, Executive Director of the Executive Secretariat for the Enhanced Integrated Framework, **Samdech Techo** expressed Cambodia's appreciation to WTO's support, particularly, to the **Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy 2019-2023**, which will help Cambodia to graduate from the LDCs group in the next few years. He also requested Dr. **Ratnakar** to support the programme implementation and to facilitate with relevant countries and development partners to help Cambodia to implement this Strategy.

3) With H.E. Mr. Ville Skinnari, Minister of Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade of Finland, both sides exchanged views on how to strengthen bilateral ties between Cambodia and Finland and focused particularly on promoting Finland's investment to Cambodia and expand bilateral trade between the two countries. H.E. Mr. Ville Skinnari expressed Finland's intention to open an Honorary Consulate in Cambodia to help promoting bilateral relations between the two countries. **Samdech Techo** also expressed his hope that Finland's leaders would participate in the 13th ASEM Summit in 2020 in Cambodia.

4) With H.E. Ms. Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, both sides discussed and exchanged views on issues concerning human rights and



raised Cambodia's efforts in improving human rights in Cambodia. **Samdech Techo Prime Minister** stressed that although many have painted human rights in Cambodia, we have made our great efforts to develop the country with adherence to democracy and protection and promotion of human rights. H.E. **Ms. Michelle Bachelet** underlined that UNHCHR recognized **Samdech Techo's** leadership that has brought about significant progress in social and economic rights for Cambodian people. She expressed her appreciation to the Royal Government of Cambodia that has always accepted UNHCHR recommendations in order to improve human rights in Cambodia. **Samdech Techo** also invited Ms. High Commissioner to pay a visit to Cambodia in an appropriate schedule which she accepted with pleasure.

During his stay in Geneva, **Samdech Techo Prime Minister** also presided over Cambodia's socio-cultural program on the sideline of the "7th Aid for Trade Global Review" at the WTO headquarters. Furthermore, **Samdech Techo Prime Minister** received a courtesy call on by representatives of six Switzerland companies who are interested in investing in Cambodia in four areas, namely education, health, IT and energy. He also took the opportunity to meet with approximately 1000 Cambodian expats and students coming from different communities across Europe where his presence was most cordially and warmly welcomed. **Samdech Techo Prime Minister** also updated the participants the current political and economic situation in the country and emerging regional and global issues pertaining to Cambodia's interest.

Phnom Penh, 5 July 2019.

