



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**  
**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**

N° 3, Samdech Hun Sen Street, Sangkat Tonle Bassac,  
Khan Chamkarmon, Phnom Penh, Cambodia



**Remarks by**

**His Excellency Ouch Borith**

Minister attached to the Prime Minister, Standing Secretary of State  
of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the  
Kingdom of Cambodia

**5<sup>th</sup> Indian Ocean Conference**

Abu Dhabi, UAE

04-05 December 2021

*Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,*

1. It is my great honour to participate in this Fifth Indian Ocean Conference. Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to the government of the United Arab Emirates and the India Foundation for their warm hospitality extended to our delegation and for their excellent arrangements made for the Conference. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the United Arab Emirates on its National Day and the commemoration of 50 years of statehood.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

2. The theme of the forum “Indian Ocean: Ecology, Economy, Epidemic” is timely and relevant at this time in history when the planet is struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic fallouts. Allow me to raise some ideas to this august gathering for consideration:
3. Like many other countries in the world, Cambodia has been severely affected by the current Covid-19 pandemic, socially and economically. Even so, our government have fought consistently and hard to protect the lives and livelihoods of people in achieving high vaccination coverage, with 88.55% of 16 million population fully vaccinated as of 04 December 2021. As we now distribute boosting doses of the vaccine to our population, we have stepped-up the capabilities of our health system for preparedness and response and have improved our health service delivery as well as developed innovative solutions to enhance surveillance and adequate response. We have also introduced significant measures and support services to women were particularly vulnerable during periods of lockdown. Mechanisms for protection from situation of gender-based violence and for increasing livelihoods for women have all been part of our national plan.
4. This pandemic has evidently shown how vulnerabilities in health systems can have severe implications for the delivery of essential health services. The transition from the current pandemic to endemic in the future is possible, but would require a long and collective effort, nationally, regionally, and globally, to ensure that the world will be safe again. In this regard, a global health diplomacy can be applied and practiced for strengthening global health security and global solidarity. For instance, as of November 28, Cambodia has received a total of about 40 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines of

which 11,736,060 doses were donated graciously by China, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States and COVAX Facility. On the other hand, in the spirit of solidarity and contribution to global recovery and development, both of which are necessary to address inequities and inequalities, Cambodia has shared vaccines, medical equipment, and supplies to its neighbour – Viet Nam, Myanmar, Laos, Timor-Leste, and Nepal.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

5. We live in a world that is becoming one world by virtue of its interdependencies, both economic and ecological. As much as our ecology is crucial for our human well-being and prosperity, the growing world population is placing our ecosystems under tremendous pressure. The relentless pursuit of economic growth continues to force nature to make way for large-scale agriculture, mining, infrastructure, and growing cities. There is no doubt that we urgently need to find sustainable solutions to contain the challenges we face collectively.
6. Promoting green development is one of the foundational pillars to support a long-term socio-economic development that will enhance economic efficiency and strengthen climate resiliency. In this regard, we must strengthen and expand our regional and global cooperation to promote green development, in particular encouraging the private sector to increase green investments, improving investment efficiency in all relevant sectors and promoting green industry development and green technology adoption.
7. We should further focus on advancing the blue economy through sustainable management and utilization of ocean resources. Thus, there is a need for an enhanced global/regional cooperation to harness these resources in a more sustainable manner. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) should ensure sustainable use of marine resources by aligning its actions with the UN core instruments like: the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030); the post 2020 Biodiversity Framework; the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration; and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

8. The Indian Ocean is the strategic home to major sea routes connecting the Middle East, Africa and East Asia with Europe and the Americas. These vital sea routes facilitate

maritime trade in the Indian Ocean region, carry more than half of the world's seaborne oil, and host 23 of the world's top 100 container ports. As the Covid-19 crisis is expected to subside in the near future, promoting the normalization of trade, business and investment flows in line with global change is an important and urgent task in order to restore and promote the socio-economic development of the Indian Ocean Region.

9. International trade is a key locomotive for promoting economic growth and job creation. With the new trend of changes in trade and global supply chains, I am of the view that the Indian Ocean Region needs to pay more attention to supporting multilateral trading system, especially in further enhancing trade liberalisation.
10. Furthermore, the adaptation to the new normal will further advance the adoption of digital technologies for industrial development and economic industrialisation. Therefore, we must work together to leverage the 4th Industrial Revolution to the maximum so as to create a new growth pillar with resiliency.
11. To conclude, may I reiterate Cambodia's strong commitment to the promotion of the mutual affinities between Indian Ocean Countries and ASEAN, especially as Cambodia undertakes the important role of Chair of ASEAN commencing January 2022, so that together we can build harmony, peace, sustainability, and prosperity for the whole region.

Thank you for your kind attention.

End

-----