



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**  
**NATION RELIGION KING**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**Press Release**

**On the Outcomes of the Special ASEAN-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting on COVID-19**

**via Videoconference**

**23 April 2020, Phnom Penh**

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On 23 April 2020, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, participated in the **Special ASEAN-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting on COVID-19 via videoconference**. The Meeting was co-chaired by Lao People's Democratic Republic, as Country Coordinator for ASEAN-US Dialogue Relations, and the United States of America.

As part of the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership, the Meeting was an opportunity for both sides to further enhance collaboration in public health emergencies, specifically the fight against COVID-19 pandemic, and to find ways to mitigate impacts caused by this pandemic on the livelihood of the one billion population. The Meeting also touched on the future plans and cooperation for the recovery phase for post COVID-19.

The Meeting stressed on the importance of experiences sharing on best practices in clinical treatment and effective measures to prevent, detect, control, and respond to COVID-19 pandemic.

The Meeting noted the importance of whole-of-government and whole-of-societies approaches to tackle this crisis. To that end, the Meeting acknowledged the indispensable roles of private sector, regional and international organizations in maintaining supply chains and ensuring delivery of essential goods including medical supplies and food. The Meeting also stressed on the need to raise public health awareness on proper hygiene and social distancing to slow the spread of the virus and thus ease pressure on the healthcare system.

The Meeting discussed further steps to strengthen ASEAN-U.S. public health cooperation, particularly in responding to COVID-19 pandemic, through mutual support and high-level engagements. ASEAN Member States expressed high appreciation to the U.S. for her support to ASEAN's public health, including the provision of over USD 35 million assistance. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers also highlighted the efforts that have been put in place by the ASEAN



Member States to establish the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund for public health emergencies to address COVID-19 and future outbreaks.

ASEAN Foreign Ministers also welcomed U.S. - ASEAN Health Futures initiative introduced by the U.S. to enhance partnership with ASEAN focusing on research, health system capacity and development of human capital in health. The United States pledged to continue supporting people-to-people ties in healthcare sector through the exchange programs that have included the training of 2,400 ASEAN medical and health professionals to date.

During the video conference, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister discussed ways to address the COVID-19 pandemic as follows:

- While recognizing the importance of the sharing of information, experiences and best practices in clinical treatment to combatting the pandemic, we need to move to more action-oriented exchanges of technical expertise and knowledge, and pro-actively explore joint research and development in medicine.
- We need to enhance collaboration from the media outlets to stop the spread of misinformation that could cause public panic, discrimination and accusation. We should praise the efforts and the leading role of the WHO as a respectable world health entity in providing information, training, recommendations and guidance for the greater cause of mankind.
- ASEAN and the U.S. should explore ways to strategically ensure the openness of regional and global supply chains as well as the cross-border flow of vital goods, especially food and medical supplies. Cambodia has tried to minimize the negative impacts of this pandemic on our economy as well as to prepare for the recovery phase by keeping factories running and thus preventing workers from losing their jobs. To sustain that in the long run, support from the U.S., which is Cambodia's major trading partner, is of utmost importance.

The Meeting also touched upon regional issues pertaining to peace and security in the region and beyond. The Meeting also noted views expressed on the immediate need to focus on the fight against COVID-19, while promoting dialogue and cooperation to maintaining peace, security and stability.

The Meeting looked forward to more engagements between ASEAN and the U.S. to coordinate joint responses to put a stop to this global pandemic. ្ក

Phnom Penh, 23 April 2020

