



Opening Speech

**H.E. Dr. Nguon Nhel, Second-Vice President of
the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia
At the 7th AIPA Caucus Meeting**

**Under the theme “ASEAN Tourism: Promoting Nature Conservation and
Developing Sustainable Tourism**

On 27th July 2015, Sokha Hotel, Siem Reap, Cambodia

- Honorable Heads and Members of the Delegations of AIPA Member Parliaments,
 - Excellencies Senators and Members of the Cambodian National Assembly,
 - Hon. Mr. P.O Ram, AIPA Secretary General,
 - Hon. Representative of the ASEAN Secretary General,
 - Distinguished National and International Guests,
 - Ladies and gentlemen,
- 1- First of all, on behalf of **Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin**, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and myself, I am delighted to warmly welcome the presence of Your Excellencies, Honorable delegations of AIPA Member Parliaments, and national and international guests for participating in this 7th AIPA Caucus Meeting in the beautiful land of Angkor, the Kingdom of Cambodia.
- 2- Today’s gathering stems from the achievements that the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) has realized over almost four decades through the strong efforts made by the legislatures of all ASEAN Member States and this meeting is another achievement for AIPA in this new era, in line with the upcoming reality of the establishment of the ASEAN Community.

- 3- It is of my understanding that the first AIPA Caucus Meeting was founded six years ago at the 29th AIPA General Assembly in Malaysia, and this year's meeting provides an excellent opportunity for the Kingdom of Cambodia, as an AIPA Member Parliament, to continue to fulfill its obligation as the host of the 7th annual AIPA Caucus Meeting, in line with the spirit of the 6th AIPA Caucus. This important and rotated meeting was agreed upon by **Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin**, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia, and recommended to be held here in this marvelous city of world heritage site, former Capital of the glorious Khmer Empire.
- 4- We have noticed that after AIPA is getting more closely with ASEAN, it has continuously developed both its necessity and scope of work, and has played a crucial role in contributing to addressing common problem so far ASEAN region and the world, in collaboration with the Executive bodies and other concerning partner organizations. In addition to adoption of numerous resolutions for almost forty years, AIPA has still continued its active work to keep up with the new political development of ASEAN. Obviously, today we have brought one of the AIPA visions for discussion: "ASEAN Tourism: Promoting Nature Conservation and Developing Sustainable Tourism", aiming to transform ASEAN into a single tourism destination, and promote the ASEAN culture and heritage as well as to maintain and promote potentials of ASEAN tourism, in line with the spirit of the recent ASEAN Tourism Ministerial Meeting. The 7th AIPA Caucus Meeting also reflects the continued cooperation among the ten member states, collecting key concepts and visions to bring about the best interest of all ASEAN nations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

- 5- In today's meeting, we will discuss the promotion of tourism development and protection of natural resources for the sustainability of a single tourism destination which is considered as one of the priority sectors that promotes

national economic growth in the region. The future of the ASEAN Community is not only a big market economy full of old and multi-cultural eco-tourism but also an attractive tourism destination for people around the world.

- 6- Tourism is one of the leading factors in social-economic development. It is also a potential “green growth” industry that offers many kinds of jobs to the society as a whole. Therefore, through the efforts of ASEAN integration, AIPA needs to contribute more, as the representative of over 600 million ASEAN people, through joint discussion in order to identify new measures and strategy for preventing any possible risks that may affect our tourism sector, and safeguarding the sustainability of our excellent culture and nature. Therefore, today’s gathering not only shows our self-restraint in implementing resolutions that we have agreed in the AIPA framework but also reflects our strong determination to enhance the effectiveness of AIPA, which is ASEAN’s indispensable partner for the realization of ASEAN integration by the end of the year 2015.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

- 7- Cambodia has a countless number of impressive temples, beautiful beaches, green and natural forests and other ASEAN regions have similar wonderful tourist sites. Tourists from across the world are attracted by our region’s lovely natural scenery and fascinating historical landmarks. Ecotourism is important for all human beings, not just only for the people of ASEAN but also for the world. Presently, the development of ecotourism sites is still limited. So, we must have a long-term vision that includes both development and preserving our natural resources and culture in order to prevent the destruction of the environment and to alleviate poverty.
- 8- In order to contribute to the promotion of nature conservation and sustainable tourism development, we all should consider revisions or amendment of our respective national legislations in accordance with the current rapid progress in this era of globalization.

9- We shall also encourage our respective governments to continue to carry out the ASEAN Declaration on the Creation of Association for the Prevention of Disasters and Protection of Climate Change.

10-Because of the growing number of international tourists every year, the Royal Government of Cambodia, under the wise leadership of Prime Minister **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, has paid great attention to human resource development. The Royal Government, the executive branch has shown its strong commitment and political will to maintain peace, political stability and security for tourism development.

11-I strongly believe that with your active participation, discussion and exchanges of idea, this forum will be able to produce good recommendations and come up concrete measures contributing to better promotion of nature conservation and sustainable tourism development. I hope that the good culture of dialogue of AIPA will continue to exist for the common interest of our societies and all peoples in the ASEAN region.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

12- In this regard, , I would like, on behalf of the Cambodian Parliament, to share some perspectives and recommendations on the natural conservation and sustainable tourism development as follows:

- 1) Continue to cooperate in the AIPA framework in order to promote, disseminate and raise awareness of ASEAN tourism potential and nature to all people.
- 2) Continue to implement and adhere to the spirit of the ad-hoc committee meeting regarding “Promoting Cultural and Eco-Tourism”, which was approved by the AIPA ad-hoc committee on 20-24 July 2005 in Siem Reap province, Kingdom of Cambodia, along with other AIPA resolutions, and to do whatever possible to include the resolutions’ contents into our respective national legislation.
- 3) AIPA member parliaments should continue to strengthen and perform their core duties to oversee and encourage the ASEAN governments to strengthen

the cooperation in the field of ASEAN tourism and to follow the resolutions adopted by AIPA.

- 4) Continue to widely disseminate AIPA's policies and activities to the people for understanding about the importance and content of the AIPA Caucus Meeting as well as the AIPA role.
- 5) Call upon ASEAN governments to continue to pay attention to AIPA's joint political will and continue to expand cooperation with AIPA in the regional and global frameworks in order to attract tourists to ASEAN member countries.
- 6) Encourage ASEAN governments to increase the number of local tourists within ASEAN member states.
- 7) Continue to implement the Declaration on the Creation of Association for Prevention of Disasters and Protection of Climate Change.
- 8) ASEAN Member States should make concerted efforts requiring governmental intervention to establish concrete rules and regulations to promote the educational aspect of tourism, and to build respect of cultural diversity, custom and cooperation among the peoples of ASEAN.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Once again, I would like to wish the meeting success, bringing together the interests of ASEAN nations as a whole through a deliberate discussion on the draft resolution on ASEAN Tourism, in order to transform ASEAN into a sustainable single tourism destination.

13-Last but not least, I would like to express my profound thanks and wish for Your Excellencies and all national and international distinguished participants to have the most pleasant and memorable stay in the historic land of Angkor and I hope that you will bring back to your countries the good memories of Cambodia: Kingdom of Wonder. Before announcing the opening of the 7th AIPA Caucus meeting, I wish to appoint **Hon. Mr. Nhem Thavy**, Member of Parliament, as the Chairperson of this meeting. I wish to declare that the 7th AIPA Caucus on ASEAN Tourism: Promoting Nature Conservation and Developing Sustainable Tourism, is now officially opened.

Thank you