



Welcoming Address

H.E. Post Dr. Cheam Yeap,

Chairman of the Organizational Committee and Chairman of Cambodian
AIPA National Group of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia

At the 7thAIPA Caucus Meeting under the theme

**“ASEAN Tourism: Promoting Nature Conservation and Developing
Sustainable Tourism”**

27th July 2015, Sokha Resort Hotel, Siem Reap City

- ***H.E. Dr. Nguon Nhel**, Second Vice-President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and High Representative of **Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei HENG SAMRIN**, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia,*
- *Honorable Heads and Members of the Delegations of AIPA Member Parliaments,*
- *H.E. Mr. P.O. Ram, Secretary-General of AIPA,*
- *Hon. Representative of ASEAN Secretariat,*
- *H.E. Representative of Ministry of Tourism, Hon. Governor of Siem Reap Province,*
- *National and International Distinguished Guests,*
- *Ladies and gentlemen,*

- 1- On behalf of the Organizing Committee of the 7th AIPA Caucus and Chairman of the Cambodian AIPA National Group, I would like to express my great pleasure and profound thanks to the high presence of **H.E. Dr. Nguon Nhel**, Second Vice-President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and High Representative of **Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei HENG SAMRIN**, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia to attend the opening of the auspicious meeting on “ASEAN Tourism: Promoting Nature Conservation and Developing Sustainable Tourism”.
- 2- I would also like to extend my warmest welcome and heartfelt thanks to all Honorable Delegates of AIPA Member Parliaments, Honorable Members of the National Assembly, Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia, AIPA Secretary General and Representative of ASEAN, and other national and international distinguished participants, attending this important meeting, in this beautiful land of Angkor.
- 3- The presence of all honorable delegates to this event reflects your wholehearted support for the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, which was honored as the host of the 7th Annual AIPA Caucus, where the theme was highly recommended by **Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei HENG SAMRIN**, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and reflects our common goal.
- 4- The meeting is indeed a great opportunity for all AIPA delegates to discuss, share experiences and best practices to identify new measures

for promoting nature conservation and developing sustainable tourism in the coming years in Cambodia and the region as whole.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

- 5- Under the wise leadership of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padey Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, with the introduction of the “Win-Win” Policy in the decade of 1990s, Cambodia can achieve not only national unity, national sovereignty, territorial integrity and full peace, but also high and sustainable economic growth rate of an average 7% per annum and its economy is projected to grow not less than 7% for this year and in the mid-term.

- 6- Cambodia is one of the ASEAN member countries where tourism is regarded as one of the key factors contributing to socio-economic development for it not only provides national revenue, employment opportunities, and effectively contributes to poverty reduction but also has improved national infrastructure development, such as roads, bridges, ports, national and international airports, the electricity supply, and clean water at the tourist sites. In addition, tourism can also serve as a vehicle for strengthening peace, security, political stability, social order and safety, since they are all factors that tourists consider before visiting a country or region.

- 7- With abundance of natural resources, enrichment in culture and countless number of impressive temples, in particular the Cambodia’s World Heritages, which are the legacies of our ancestors, include Angkor Wat Temple, Preah Vihear Temple, the Khmer Blessing Dance

(Royal Ballet) and the Sbek Thom (Khmer Shadow Theater), along with great efforts made by the Royal Government of Cambodia and active participation from all concerning stakeholders, to promote the advertising of "Cambodia: Kingdom of Wonder", this has tremendously attracted tourists from and within the region and the world to visit Cambodia.

8- Cambodia's Tourism is known as "Green Gold" and has experienced significant progress over the years, in particular, in 2014, Cambodia received more than 4 million people, an increase of 5.9% compared to 2013. This sector also directly creates about 620 000 jobs and it is estimated that in 2015, the number of inbound tourists would reach 5 million and by 2020 that figure is projected to reach about 7.5 million tourists that generates USD 5 billion in terms of revenues and creates about 800 000 jobs.

9- The development of tourism in Cambodia, especially with the integration of Cambodian tourism into ASEAN by the end of 2015 will help achieve the Cambodia's vision set out by 2020, as the entire ASEAN region received over 90 million tourists and plans to reach 107 million visitors in 2015 in line with the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (ATSP 2011-2015).

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

10- The topic of the meeting which we are about to discuss shortly is occurring at a time when the whole world, in particular our ASEAN

region has long considered tourism as a vital role, which can play in realizing the vision of establishment of the ASEAN Community by the end of this year. The ASEAN leaders have been joining forces to address Tourism-related issues, which greatly benefit from regional cooperation, such as promotion and marketing, connectivity, environmental protection, visa policies and mobility, and sector liberalization. The potential for developing the tourism sector is enormous. Our region has many assets to lure the visitor. It boasts some of the world's most spectacular landscapes and attractions, vast ecosystems with stunning wildlife, and rich culture and history. It possesses a long tradition of tourism, and is strategically located in the heart of Asia, the world's most economically dynamic region. The extraordinary diversity of ASEAN countries further enhances the attractiveness of the region, which offers complementary tourism experiences and appeals to visitors of all types.

- 11- Therefore, it is our obligation to protect and conserve cultural and natural treasures through working together to encourage governments and civil societies to ensure the preservation and the promotion of natural culture and ancient historic heritage. We should seek common ground in enacting legislation on a harmonious tourism among ASEAN member states in order to ensure and maintain tourism potentials. A priority factor is that we need to establish a parallel point of views between parliaments and governments. With a view toward achieving these common goals, we shall jointly be committed to reduce military tension in the region and other possible risks.

12- I strongly hope that the 7th AIPA Caucus will show the whole world, especially our partner, the ASEAN, the role of AIPA in contributing to the building of a prosperous ASEAN society in the future.

13- Once again, on behalf of the Organizing Committee, I wish to extend my warm welcome and profound thanks to the invaluable presence of Your Excellencies, and all distinguished participants attending this 7th AIPA Caucus meeting. I wish Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen a nice and memorable stay in this ancient city of Angkor.

Thank you for your kind attention!