

Closing Speech by
His Excellency NGUON Nhel, First Vice-President of the National
Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and Chairperson of the
Organizing Committee of the 32nd ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly
(AIPA) at the Closing of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)
Seminar on "Accelerating the Achievement of Millennium Development
Goal 5 through the Role of Women Parliamentarians"

March 10-11, 2011

My respect to:

- *His Excellency Antonio CUENCO, Secretary General of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA);*
- *Her Excellency the Head of the Delegation of Women Parliamentarians of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA);*
- *Excellencies, Lok Chumteavs Members of the Senate, the National Assembly and the Royal Government;*
- *Excellencies, Lok Chumteavs, Ladies and Gentlemen Representatives of the United Nations Agencies, Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, National and International Distinguished Guests;*

Today is an auspicious and great day for me to attend and honor the closing of this important seminar at this time. In the name of *Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei HENG Samrin*, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and President of the 32nd ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), and on my own behalf, I would like to express my high appreciation and heartfelt thanks for the presence of Your Excellency Parliamentary Delegate of WAIPA, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen who have attended the seminar under the theme of "**Accelerating the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goal 5 through the Role of Women Parliamentarians**" that has been held for two consecutive days, starting from March 10-11, 2011, and has achieved satisfactory outcomes. The seminar at this stage is evidence of the attention given by the ASEAN Inter-

Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) on matters that are our joint concerns both in the region and throughout the world whereby we all have approved and acknowledged that "**investment in women is investment in society as a whole**" and that women's and children's rights are basic human rights.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my utmost appreciation to members of the WAIPA Seminar for their active contributions to keeping the in-principle culture of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentarian Assembly, friendship, mutual understanding, cooperation and mutual dialogue by expressing all knowledge, collecting all useful ideas and experience as well as sharing the challenges of each country is facing and jointly seeking solutions by issuing resolution in the form of commitment, taking measures, intervention and strengthening partnerships in order to enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of action plan towards the reduction of maternal mortality rate by three quarters (3/4) from 1990 to 2015 as we have compromised.

Honorable Head of the Parliamentary Delegation of WAIPA!

Excellencies, Lok Chumteavs, Ladies and Gentlemen National and International Distinguished Guests!

The theme of this WAIPA Seminar is particularly appropriate at the present time when all countries, especially developing countries, have been putting enormous effort into achieving the Millennium Development Goals that have been projected for 2015. Moreover, this two-day seminar with the participation of Women Parliamentarians of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, health experts, operators, the United Nations and Development Partners is truly an important meeting; however, the most important thing is that we have to transform political will, commitment, and particularly decisions mutually approved in the seminar into actual practice because we still have many other challenges related to maternal and child health that we have to achieve it. Particularly, the promotion of the role and competency of parliamentarians in collaboration with all other relevant institutions to minimizing maternal death rate. In the meantime, all of us have also acknowledged that many countries in the ASEAN community have encountered delays in achieving the Millennium Development Goal 5 towards the improvement of maternal health, as the world leaders have met at the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on Millennium Development Goals in New York in September 2010 at which the meeting focused on revising indicators and developments as well as confirming the

commitment of each government to accelerate all activities towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

I also wish to take this opportunity to reaffirm to the whole seminar that refer to the report of the United Nations, has been revealed that women in developing countries are facing life threatening while having pregnancy or during delivery 100 times greater than the same problems being faced by women in developed countries. Around the world, 536,000 mothers die during pregnancy, delivery and after delivery per annum. This is a loss of a major labor force resource, and it does not include other bereavement that causes more crises and sadness for society. In fact, the Millennium Development Goal 5 cannot be automatically achieved if we ignore and are not interested in other Millennium Development Goals such as the MDG 1 on the reduction of poverty, MDG 2 on universal education and MDG 5 on the promotion of gender equality, all of which are mutually intertwined and influential. Therefore, it is required that we redouble our commitment and efforts into practical action plans including strengthening of partnerships in the region, especially among parliamentarians of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and financial, technical and spiritual supports from the United Nations, and the international community, together toward accelerating the Achievement of Millennium Development Goal 5 by 2015.

Once again, as President of the Organizing Committee of the 32nd ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), I fully agree to the provisions of the resolution of the WAIPA Seminar on "**Accelerating the Achievement of Millennium Development Goals through the Role of Women Parliamentarians**", which shall be incorporated into the agenda and request for approval from the 32nd ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA). In addition, I hereby call on the United Nations and all development partners to increase both their technical and financial supports in order to strengthen the capacity of parliamentarians to effectively perform their roles as legislators, monitors and oversight the implementation of the government and perform the role as representativeness of the people, advocators, educative dissemination and raising awareness of people on Maternal and Child Health.

Taking this special opportunity, I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the presence of Her Excellency Doctor **Bun Rany Hun Sen**,

President of the Cambodian Red Cross, an National Champion of the Asia-Pacific Forum for HIV and AIDS, a National Champion of UN Secretary-General's Joint Plan of Actions for Women's and Children's Health, founder and member of the Medical Foundation Board of Cambodia, Honorary President of National Committee on Social Ethics, Women's Dignities, and Khmer Families who has given us the great honor to presiding over the opening ceremony and providing useful recommendations to serve as a basis for discussion in the seminar. In the meantime, may I express my thanks to the Asian Parliamentarian Forum for Population and Development (AFPPD), UNFPA, UNDP and Sabine Vaccine Institute for financial support of the seminar and I also wish to express my appreciation for the AIPA Secretariat, the Cambodian National Women's Committee for ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and all task forces who have spent their effort, their times, physical, mental and spiritual strengths to make this seminar succeed.

Last but not least, may I wish Excellencies, *Lok Chumteavs*, ladies and Honorable Parliamentary Delegations of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA, International Organizations, National and International Distinguished Guests and all members of the seminar the fourfold blessings of Buddha: longevity, unfading beauty, good health and happiness. Particularly, may I wish Excellencies, *Lok Chumteavs*, ladies and gentlemen Delegation of Women Parliamentarians of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly a safe return to their beloved and respective country.

I hereby declare the closing of the seminar!

Thank you!