

Welcome Speech

His Excellency Post Dr. Cheam Yeap,

Member of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Chairman of the Cambodian National Group of AIPA and Permanent Vice-chairman of the Organizing Committee of the 32nd General Assembly of AIPA

On the occasion of Opening Ceremony of the "8th AIPA Fact Finding Committee Meeting to Combat the Drug Menace (8th AIFOCOM)"

May 25-29, 2011 Phnom Penh, Capital of the Kingdom of Cambodia

My high respects to:

- *Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei HENG SAMRIN, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and President of the 32nd General Assembly of AIPA*
- *Honorable Heads of delegations of AIPA members, and Observer country,*
- *Excellencies, members of the National Assembly and the Senate,*
- *Excellencies, members of the Royal Government of Cambodia*
- *National and international distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen!*

First of all, on behalf of the National Assembly and the Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia and on my own behalf, we would like to express our warmest welcome to Your Excellencies, delegates of AIPA members, observer country, national and international distinguished guests, our colleagues, and ladies and gentlemen for attending “the Eighth AIPA Fact Finding Committee Meeting/AIFOCOM). This is the second time that the National Assembly of Cambodia has organized this meeting, and I am sure that many of you attended the previous one as well.

Today, the Cambodian Parliament, which has been entrusted with the mandate of the AIPA-Presidency for the 32nd General Assembly, is honored to host the Eighth AIFOCOM), presided over by ***Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei HENG SAM RIN***, President of the National Assembly and President of the 32nd General Assembly of AIPA. It is the third event in a row that the Cambodian Parliament, as the host of the 32nd General Assembly of AIPA, has organized. This includes the first WAIPA seminar in March focusing on the Roles of Women Parliamentarians to Accelerate the Achievement of MDG-5 and the second one in April focusing on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights for Migrant Workers in ASEAN.

Taking this marvelous opportunity, I would like to express my profound gratitude and deepest thanks to ***Samdech***, the President of the National Assembly, for his presence and I also wish to extend my sincere thanks to your Excellencies, national and international distinguished guests, and ladies and gentlemen for taking part in this important meeting.

Today’s meeting further reflects the strong joint efforts, as well as the commitment of AIPA member countries, in addressing the drug issue, which is one of most challenging and threatening issues affecting the lives of individuals, local communities, and society as a whole, both at home and in the region, as well as around the globe. More importantly, it is further evidence of the considerable momentum that AIPA member countries have achieved in their process of building up regional and international cooperation in preventing and combating the drug menace,

and to find ways and means to harmonize various pieces of legislation aimed at preventing and combating the drug menace, which will help achieve the goal of making ASEAN Drug Free by 2015.

These include the harmonization of laws relating to:

- the Confiscation of properties/facilities which are used either to engage in, or support drug trafficking
- the Management of Addictive Substances
- Interventions related to drug use by individuals and to reduce their need for drugs

Samdech President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

So far, the AIFCOM has been convened eight times. The first AIFCOM was held in Hanoi, Viet Nam in 2002, in Phnom Penh Cambodia in 2004, and last year, the seventh AIFOCOM was held in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. I believe that many of you must have attended them. Since the first AIFOCOM, much has been done, including creating dialogue among member countries, creating proactive relationships between AIPA and ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD)¹ and in strengthening legal cooperation within our region and around the world. One of the most remarkable outcomes from the last meeting in Viet Nam was the adoption of a resolution that provides active contributions to the development of a drug-free ASEAN community in 2015 through the improvement² of legal frameworks and the creation of an enabling environment for ASEAN to successfully implement national and regional action plans to address the drug issue. It also recommends the submission of reports by each member country, as well as the first AIPA Caucus report on the harmonization of legislations on the drug menace to be reviewed and discussed in this meeting.

Today, the world faces many daunting challenges, such as economic crises, terrorism, transnational crime, communicable diseases, climate change, and other natural disasters. And in particular, drug crime has

continuously threatened our society, our region, and every part of the world. Though drug controls³ have matured and policies has been more responsive to the needs of most seriously affected, those along the whole of chain of the drug industry-from poor farmers who cultivate it, to desperate addicts who consume it, continue to be caught in the cross-fire of the traffickers.

Furthermore, the increase of illicit drug production such as Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS), crystals, tablets, Ketamine, Mephedrone and Spice, and the spread of these drugs to all countries in the Asia-Pacific Region are worrisome. These kinds of drugs are also more complex, and the markets of those drugs are harder to track because of short trafficking routes and also because many of the raw materials are legal and readily available.

Samdech President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Since the opening of the borders in the 1990s, Cambodia has become one the countries seriously affected by drugs as she has been used as a transit point for heroin, ATS, and cocaine by transnational criminal organizations, particularly from South America and West Africa. Additionally, Cambodia⁴ is also facing new challenges of mountainous saffron oil extraction, production and improvement of methamphetamine, processing and packing of cocaine and heroin for export, the extraction of the pseudo-ephedrine from treatment-medicines, and in particular, criminals using Cambodia as a base for illicit drug production.

Under the wise leadership of Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Charkrei **HENG SAMRIN**, the Cambodian National Assembly has demonstrated its strong and continuous commitment and international cooperation in an effort to combat the drug menace. Like many countries in the region and the world, Cambodia has ratified international legal instruments such as *the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.*

Moreover, Cambodia has also joined with regional and international drug control mechanisms and has signed bilateral Memoranda of Understanding on drug control cooperation with a number of countries such as Thailand, Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Korea, Japan, Russia and UNODC, in addition to the accession of Cambodia into the ASEAN Cooperation with China, aiming for a Drug Free ASEAN by 2015 (ACCORD Plan)⁵.

Additionally, the Cambodian National Assembly has adopted key legislation on preventing and combating illegal drug trafficking and the drug menace, such as the law on controlling illicit drugs (1996) and the amended law on controlling illicit drugs (2005). Moreover, the National Assembly of Cambodia has actively strengthened its oversight role in making sure that the laws have been effectively enforced.

In addition to that, the Royal Government of Cambodia led by *Samdech Akka Moha Senapadei Techo HUN SEN*, Prime Minister, has demonstrated strong and on-going commitment to eliminate and significantly reduce the supply and demand of illicit drugs by 2019 by clearly setting out in the “Rectangular Strategy Phase II of the Royal Government” a “5-Year National Plan on Controlling of Drugs”. Additionally, with the support of Lok Chum-teav **Dr. BUN RANY HUN SEN**, President of Cambodian Red Cross, the Cambodian National Authority for Combating Drugs continues to effectively coordinate and collaborate with multiple national and international institutions in order to make the relevant Cambodian national laws consistent and harmonious with relevant regional and international drug laws.

As a result of the great success it has achieved in this area, Cambodia has removed itself from the international black list of countries involved in the planting and growing of cannabis (marijuana) for export. It has confiscated and stopped production of methamphetamine tablets and ice types. In addition, bogus influenza medications were recently found and a large number of tablets were confiscated. Other important activities include capacity building for law

enforcement, as well as capacity building on court procedures and investigative skills, including surveillance, methods of transfer and selling of illicit drugs, and on controlling the use of chemical substances. These are provided to all relevant officials, both at the national and local level.

Although Cambodia has achieved much success in fighting the drug menace, it still needs to make a stronger effort and commitment. Establishing and maintaining strong regional and international cooperation in combating the scourge of illegal drugs is also a must, and in particular, harmonizing specific and common legislations among our ASEAN member states must be taken into consideration and prioritized.

Samdech President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Once again, on behalf of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and on myself, I would like to express my sincere thanks and profound gratitude to *Samdech* the President of the National Assembly, Excellencies, and Ladies and Gentlemen for your valuable time joining with us today, and I hope that with your active participation in the discussion and deliberation on the three key points, the draft resolution will be adopted. This resolution will be used as road map for AIPA member countries to implement in order to achieve a drug-free ASEAN by 2015.

Last but not least, may I wish Samdech President of the National Assembly, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, National and International Distinguished Guests to have four kinds of blessings: longevity, good health, great strength, and happiness, as well as for all of you to have a successful meeting and also to have a wonderful stay in Cambodia, the Kingdom of Wonder.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.