



Address

by

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high representative of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia**

At the

**Opening Ceremony of the 17th ASEAN Telecommunications and
Information Technology Ministers Meeting and Related Meetings**

Siem Reap, 30 November 2017

(9:00-10:00)

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- ***Excellencies ASEAN Telecommunications and Information Technology Ministers,***
- ***Excellency ASEAN Secretary General,***
- ***Distinguished Delegates, National and International Guests,***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen !***

First of all, on behalf of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia**, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to the Distinguished ASEAN Ministers, ASEAN Secretary General, ASEAN Delegates and honored guests that have come to attend the 17th ASEAN Telecommunications and Information Technology Ministers' Meeting and other related meetings including the sideline meetings of the private sector, being held in Siem Reap, the Ancient Land of Angkor. Cambodia is honored to host this important meeting as, on the one hand, it coincides with the celebration of the **50th Anniversary of ASEAN**, on the other hand, it is convened amidst ASEAN's ongoing efforts toward realizing the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

After five decades of development, ASEAN has undergone a major transformation since its founding, from an unstable region to a region of peace, security, safety, stability and development. Today, ASEAN has become a closely-integrated political

and economic entity, an influential player in Asia and an indispensable strategic partner of major countries and organizations in the World. Cambodia is certainly proud of having made positive contribution to ASEAN according to its capacity and ability in bringing about such progress since it became a full member of ASEAN. Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank Philippines for successfully chairing ASEAN this year and congratulate Singapore in assuming ASEAN chair in coming year. As a proactive member of ASEAN, Cambodia will make great efforts within its capacity to closely cooperate with other ASEAN member States in achieving various priorities of ASEAN toward the realization of "**ASEAN Community Vision 2025**".

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Telecommunications and ICTs have been catalytic in the rapid development of the Internet mobile and mobile communications. It has unconditionally brought about great transformation and noticeably made it possible to share knowledge in all area of human lives and has become a central part of all aspects of our lives, including politics, economic activities and social interactions. The achievement of an information society and knowledge economy is one of the main priorities of the RGC towards the attainment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The latest ITU statistics show that globally, the number of mobile-cellular subscriptions is higher than the number of the World's population. Mobile-cellular telephone subscriptions will reach almost 7.7 billion by end 2017, corresponding to a penetration rate of 103.5%. More than half of these (4.2 billion) will be in the Asia-Pacific region. 3.6 billion people moreover are online by end 2017 which is about 48% of the world's population. Indeed, by end 2017, 53.6% of the world's households will have internet access at home. 43% of households in developing countries will be connected to the internet, compared with 84.4% in developed countries. In Cambodia, the number of mobile subscription increased to around 19 million by end 2017, covered around 100% of urban areas. The mobile penetration is almost 125%. The number of Internet subscription will reach 8.5 million by end 2017, corresponding to a penetration rate of almost 60%. Those who are not yet connected often live in the rural areas. To connect them, we'll have to make efforts. Therefore, creating an attractive environment for investment ICTs must be one of our top priorities.

The 4G/LTE technology have been deployed in 25 capital and provinces and covered almost 60% of Cambodian territory. 4.5G/LTE advanced technology has been indeed newly launched to allow our youth to enjoy the fastest speed and

cheapest internet in the region. Nevertheless, we still need to strengthen the competitiveness of Cambodia's mobile cellular and Internet service, in particular quality of service, compared to the neighboring countries.

Recognizing the rapid technological evolutions as well as industry and market trends in the ICT sector, the Royal Government of Cambodia has further developed the telecom and ICT sector as a modern, high quality service in accordance with international standards, competitive prices and nationwide coverage so that the public can use and benefit from the service. In this regard, let me share some related-achievements as follow:

Firstly, after the harmonization of telecom and ICT sector under the same roof and the new management team, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications has been realizing impressive achievements over the past four years in building universality and affordability in telecommunications services, particularly in the mobile and ICT sectors. Enterprise-oriented policy and regulatory regime is one pillar of this growth. Building trusted partnership with the telecom and ICT industry and cultivating user communities are an other pillar. Therefore, the Cambodian ICT Master Plan 2020 and the Telecom-ICT Development Policy 2020 have been officially announced in August 2014 and in April 2016 respectively. Five priority projects have been identified in the Cambodian ICT Master Plan 2020, such as e-government framework developed since 2004, cyber-security, e-education, e-commerce and e-tourism. With the clear and proper vision of transforming Cambodia into a society with Telecom-ICT connectedness and readiness, the Telecom-ICT development Policy 2020 indeed aims to strengthen and widen Telecom-ICT infrastructure connectivity; to enhance human resource development; and to promote ICT industry and ICT use.

Moreover, to oversee the technical aspects of the telecommunications sector, the Telecommunications Regulator of Cambodia has been newly reformed by telecom law promulgated in December 2015 which is properly consistent with the Cambodia's commitment to WTO and the regulation guidelines of the International Telecommunication Union. The telecom law aims at ensuring the utilization of telecom infrastructure and delivering telecom services efficiently, securely, reliable, affordable and high quality; ensuring the promotion of private sector investment and fair and legal competition; and ensuring the protection of end-users.

Many other policies and strategies have been being prepared to be deemed as supportive pillars in transforming Cambodia toward Digital Economy by 2023, such

as E-Government Strategy, including its Architecture, Start-Up Policy, Digital micro SME and SME Policy, and FinTech Strategy, etc.

Secondly, Cambodia is effectively committed to connecting the country and to ensuring that the benefits of ICTs reach the remotest corners as well as the most vulnerable communities. The network and service coverage of optical cable were gradually expanded with more than 28.000 km by connecting Phnom Penh to all districts across the country by 2018. This year marks Cambodia's milestones in realizing two submarine cable infrastructures. The first submarine cable, named as MCT (Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand) and invested by Telcotech, is regional submarine. The other one, named as AAE-1 (Asia-Africa-Europe-1) and invested by Heyroute, mother Company of CFOCN, is the first intercontinental submarine cable of which Cambodia is historically taking part for the first time. With my great pleasure and I am so delighted to preside over the launching ceremony of the AAE-1 submarine just right after this opening.

Thirdly, the Royal Government of Cambodia is also committed to extend the access all corner of the society to ensure that digital economy can be benefit equally to our citizen. That is why recently the RGC has just adopted the Sub-Decree on Mechanism on implementation of Universal Service Obligation, a globally mechanism for bridging digital divide gap while also assist those areas, where in normal circumstances are not economically viable to build telecommunication infrastructure and relevant content and applications. More importantly and excitingly, because of the fast evolution of mobile, latest technology will be made available to millions of Cambodians in those rural areas, allowing them to access to mobile Internet and increase access to a widespread of information that will also indirectly build the communities there. As a broad vision of the Royal Government of Cambodia, we have 2020 targets of 100% broadband coverage in urban areas and 70% in rural areas, 80% of internet penetration rate, 10% of IoT or connected devices in the network, and many others as mentioned in the Telecommunication/ICT Development Policy 2020.

Fourthly, While the sector outlook may sound positive and indeed glamorous, we must admit that we have a lot more to do, particularly with regard to the quality and range of education opportunities and the ICT skills gap still remains a challenge. For instance, the high-level management, network and technical jobs in the fast-growing mobile telecommunications sub-sector are still in the hands of expatriates. This trend is not unique to Cambodia, but also in the region. Our technological readiness score is still low and the Telecom-ICT development policy 2020 and the Industrial Development Policy 2025 bring together the Government,

private sector and International organizations to ensure affordable access to broadband and ICTs in general, ushering Cambodia into the knowledge economy.

Therefore, new National Institute of Telecommunications and ICTs has been newly established in early 2014. It is aimed at more efficient use and deriving maximum benefit from the ICTs by strengthening all levels of education curricula, training of government officials and encouraging the private sector to participate in enhancing public's literacy in the ICTs. The Research and Development in this sector has been pragmatically promoted including the introduction of a research network model linkage Universities, Public Institutions, and Industry. The Royal Government of Cambodia indeed acknowledges the necessity to establish an environment that supports innovation and investment. In doing so, the Royal Government of Cambodia has also adopted Sub-decree on Mechanism on implementation of Capacity Building and Research and development to serve as the regulatory framework to address the challenges.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ultimately, the futures of our region are inextricably intertwined through the digital technologies, so it is paramount that we work together to move the AMS and all people of ASEAN into the digital community, which relies on electronic information systems of essential infrastructure and services. Accordingly, ASEAN needs both digital connectivity and e-people. ASEAN Telecom and IT Ministers have a crucial role to play in the ASEAN digital Economic Community Building. Moreover, I noted that TELMIN-17 has a very futuristic theme "***ICT Connectedness and Readiness: Towards a Digitally Integrated Community***". This topic is of great importance and at a right time while countries and nations in region targeting for digital economy, increased use of digital technologies to drive economic growth. In the context that digital economy penetrated all sectors and become an important element, ICTs remain continue to play a defining role in societal transformation and achievement of ASEAN Citizens prosperity and open up new opportunity to achieve an inclusive ASEAN integrated Community. With that future direction, I would like to share my perspectives in relation to the roles of TELMIN for further consideration as follows:

Firstly, to forge ahead together in carrying out our tasks with unwavering commitment toward a unified goal of building ASEAN community with one identity, ASEAN needs to promote regional connectivity (direct connectivity and internet exchange points) facilitate geographically-challenged, and link landlocked

developing countries to the regional and global opportunities via access to the international fiber optic network including submarine cables in the region, and bridging the digital divide.

Secondly, I would like to underline that bridging the “digital divide” has been of utmost concern for everyone around the globe in recent years; and critical for the ASEAN to develop digital competencies, along with the relevant regulatory frameworks that will support the new environment. We know that this challenge still remains. I am confident, however with hard work and concerted efforts that we will overcome this challenge and be able to ensure digital inclusion so everyone can enjoy the benefits and opportunities of physical and virtual connectivity. Consequently, I would like to recall your strong commitment to accomplish goals determined by the AIM 2020 and “the Connect 2020” for Growth, Inclusion, Sustainable and Innovation to ensure that our digital gap will be remarkably narrowed by 2020.

Thirdly, approximately 1,5 billion youth live in the world today. The number of youth living in developing countries will grow to 89,5% by 2025. There is an increasing emphasis on using ICTs in the context of global and regional youth priorities, such as access to education, employment and poverty reduction. ICTs can indeed create effective channels of cooperation, dialogue and information exchange among young people. Therefore, the role of young people in the Information Society is an important one through their ability to learn to use and develop ICT and its application. In addition, we must take youth issue into consideration in the ICT development agenda of ASEAN and ICT policies of each ASEAM Member States. We should look forward prospectively and participate actively in building technological capabilities to suit their needs. Moreover, I would like to task TELMIN to work on this and to ensure that young people are equipped with knowledge and skills to use ITC appropriately, including the capacity to analyze and treat information in creative and innovative ways, to share their expertise and to fully participate in the information society.

Fourthly, we recognized that rising cyber-attacks have now become very sophisticated and large scale. The attacks threaten not only companies’ business operations and assets but also national security and sovereignty could cause great economic damage, have generated many new challenges for our national and regional development. Cyber security indeed is a global and cross-jurisdictional problem, therefore we need not only to develop and implement domestic cyber

security strategies but also to build cross-border between governments, law enforcement agencies, industries, business and consumers within ASEAN and cooperative other organizations on security initiatives to counter threats to networks, to develop multilateral approaches through develop multilateral approaches enhancing outreach activities on Cyber Security, particularly, digital infrastructure and services. In this spirit, I believe ASEAN TELMIN has to continue its focus on forging further cooperation for straightening outreach activities to facilitate the work of key stakeholders, law enforcement officials, legislators and others to combat malicious attacks and enhance cyber security. Sharing experiences and develops best practice approaches to cyber security to enhance response capabilities and to contingency plans in the event of a cyber-attack.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Apart from the above priority, we still have many other challenging issues which need to be jointly addressed in order to bring about the progress and prosperity for our people. In order to realize a digitally **ASEAN integrated Community by 2020**, cooperation at the government level alone is not sufficient. This requires a broader participation of relevant stakeholders at all levels, particularly the support and participation of private sector and of ASEAN people as a whole.

Finally, I wish Your Excellencies, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen success in your deliberation for the common interest of establishing the digitally ASEAN integrated community. Once again, allow me to wish you a pleasant and comfortable stay and hope that you will also carry back with you lasting memories of Cambodia's culture and civilization as "**The Kingdom of Wonder**" upon your return back to your respective countries.

May I now announce the official opening of the 17th ASEAN Telecommunications and Information Technology Ministers' Meeting!

Thank you for your attention!