

Opening Remarks
By H.E. Mr. PRAK Sokhonn, Sr Minister
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
of Cambodia
At the 2nd Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral
Cooperation
between Cambodia and the Philippines
(Manila, 06 December 2017, 5 minutes)

- *Excellency Alan Peter S. Cayetano,*
Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines
And Co-Chair of the 2nd Meeting of the Joint Commission for
Bilateral Cooperation
- *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. I'm pleased to be back again in Manila this time to attend the 2nd Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC) between Cambodia and the Philippines. On behalf of the Cambodian delegation and myself, let me thank H.E. Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano and the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines for the warm hospitality extended to us as well as for the excellent arrangements of this meeting.

2. I'm glad to tell you that this is my fifth time here in your beautiful country, following my previous visits to attend various ASEAN-related meetings. I'm sure you can appreciate my commitment to work with you on both bilateral to multilateral settings to promote peace and stability in the region as well as to seek collaborative ways to enhance prosperity for our peoples.

Dear Co-Chair, Excellencies,

3. This year is particularly special for Cambodia and the Philippines as we mark a double celebration: the 60th anniversary of our diplomatic relations and the 50th anniversary of the founding of ASEAN. As our ASEAN

Community become more and more integrated, with additional milestones achieved this year thanks to some extent by the Philippines's chairmanship, we have to recognize that both bilateral and multilateral tracks are closely intertwined and cannot be separated from one another.

4. As such, the outcomes of today's JCBC should be seen from that complementarity perspective. The positive achievements in our bilateral cooperation will, no doubt, contribute to the strengthening of our ASEAN Community. If you recall the 1st JCBC which was held 6 years ago, it was co-chaired only by our deputy foreign ministers. That's why I am pleased that this 2nd JCBC is co-chaired by Secretary Cayetano and myself. This is a clear testimony of our common commitment to enhance and strengthen this bilateral cooperation mechanism. On this matter, I agree with Secretary Cayetano's view that intra-ASEAN relations and cooperation are as important as the ones with our outside partners.

Dear Co-Chair, Excellencies,

5. The JCBC provides us an excellent occasion to assess our past cooperation, which, I'm sure, carries some challenges as much as some potentials for improvement. While our discussion today will certainly look into these matters, I am keen to explore with you more on the prospects for our future cooperation: How can we chart together a roadmap with clear direction to advance our bilateral cooperation? How can we address jointly regional and global issues of common concern? And perhaps a few others that may come to mind later?

6. But before we get going, allow me to seize the moment to highly commend the hard work by our respective officials from relevant line ministries and departments for their tireless works in preparing the Joint Commission's papers, which are certainly a significant contribution for our deliberation today.

7. If it is ok with you, Excellency Co-chair, I would like to introduce now my Delegation.
