



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**  
**NATION RELIGION KING**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Briefing on Cambodia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2022**

**29 December 2021**



On 29 December 2021, H.E. PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, led the briefing on Cambodia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2022 under the theme "ASEAN A.C.T.: Addressing Challenges Together" at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation with the attendance of H.E. PAN Sorasak, Minister of Commerce and National Representative for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Council and H.E. Dr. Dy Khamboly, representative of H.E. Hang Choun Naron, Minister of Youth and Sports, National Representative for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council. The briefing was attended by members of the diplomatic corps both in Cambodia and overseas and members of the local media, and was followed by a Q and A session.

H.E. Deputy Prime Minister underscored that the theme "ASEAN A.C.T.: Addressing Challenges Together" endeavors to promote ASEAN's spirit as a united family of Ten with a strong sense of "Togetherness" in jointly acting for results to achieve common goals, thereby contributing more constructively to the maintenance and enhancement of regional and global peace, stability, and sustainable development.


He also underlined four clusters of challenges with strategic implications far beyond ASEAN, namely the urgent need to achieve a speedy recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the immense pressure deriving from geopolitical rivalries, existing traditional and non-traditional security challenges, and ASEAN internal and institutional challenges.





H.E. Deputy Prime Minister emphasized that ASEAN priorities in 2022 are defined to address these challenges. In this regard, he highlighted the key priorities under the ASEAN Political-Security Community Pillar for ASEAN 2022, which include maintaining and strengthening ASEAN Centrality for peace and prosperity, promoting regional contribution to global peace, and reenergizing and expanding partnerships with external partners. He further added that the immediate attention is to ease the situation in Myanmar based on the 5-Point Consensus agreed at the ASEAN Leaders' meeting in April 2021 and the guiding principles the ASEAN Charter. Cambodia also aspires to finalize the process of admitting Timor-Leste into the ASEAN family. He also announced plan to hold two major side events - the ASEAN Global Dialogue on Post-Covid-19 Comprehensive Recovery and the 2nd ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit on entrepreneurship.

Some of the Economic and Socio-cultural priorities were highlighted at the briefing, such as ensuring effective implementation of COVID-19 response initiatives; launching Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnerships implementation and enhancing existing Free Trade Agreements; promoting digital economy, MSMEs and women empowerment; enhancing digital connectivity and cooperation in science and technology; and strengthening health, well-being and social protection of the ASEAN peoples.

Full text of addresses at the briefing are herewith attached. 

Phnom Penh, 30 December 2021



**Briefing on Cambodia's Priorities  
for ASEAN Chairmanship in 2022  
29 December 2021, 15:30-17:30, MFAIC**

**Address by H.E. PRAK Sokhonn, DPM,  
Minister of FAIC**

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- *Excellencies ambassadors, rep of the DC,*
  - *Members of the media,*
  - *Ladies and Gentlemen*
  - *Very good afternoon*
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1. **House-keeping first:** due to time constraint and heavy schedule, we were obliged to set a 2 in 1 program, having the media joining the DC in this briefing with simultaneous translation. After the briefings, there will be a Q&A session. As a courtesy arrangement, the DC will be given the microphone first to ask questions. Questions in English will be answered in English and likewise, questions in Khmer will be answered in Khmer. I am joined by Minister Pan Sorasak, our national rep. for AEC and Dr. Dy Khamboly, representing Minister HCN for the ASCC. Mme Iet Sophea, SOM leader and Vireak DGA are also with me.
  2. A **warm welcome** to the many members of the DC based in Phnom Penh and to those joining us online from Bangkok as well as to **members of the media** who are also with us today for **the briefing on Cambodia's priorities for ASEAN during our chairmanship in 2022**, which will officially start in a few days.
  3. I wish to thank my colleague **Pan Sorasak**, Minister of Commerce who has accepted to present our **priorities**



**in the Economic dimension.** H.E. Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports regrets for not being able to join us, but Dr. **DY Khamboly** will talk on his behalf on Cambodia's priorities for the **ASEAN Socio-cultural community.**

4. Now, let me start with the theme that we have chosen for this year **"ASEAN A.C.T.: Addressing Challenges Together"**. The idea is to highlight **the importance of ASEAN's spirit as a united family of ten; ASEAN's strong sense of togetherness in jointly acting for results to achieve common goals.**
5. In **"Togetherness"** we want to **emphasize ASEAN centrality, unity and solidarity.** Unless we stand as one, we would not be able to take major internal and regional challenges head on and contribute more constructively to the maintenance and enhancement of regional and global peace, stability, security and sustainable development.
6. Here, I wish to emphasize that **we stand by unity for cooperation and mutual interest, and not unity for confrontation.** To this end, we will strive to focus more on issues that bind us all together, build trust and confidence to reduce gap on dividing issues.
7. It is in this spirit that we aspire to steer ASEAN process through the numerous challenges facing our region. Here, I can perceive **four clusters of challenges** with strategic implications far beyond ASEAN.
  - a. **Firstly, the Covid-19 pandemic and the urgent need to achieve speedy recovery from its impacts.** As we speak, the newly emerged Omicron variant is causing concern and the return to the much-loathed **lockdown and restrictions** throughout the world; The whole region has to carefully **weigh**

between the risk to public health and the need to safely open up and resume cross-border travel and businesses to recover. Nobody can give any accurate assessment on when this trend is going to end.

- b. Secondly, the immense pressure deriving from the geopolitical rivalries between and among the superpowers as well as major powers. No AMS wants to choose side. We all hope that the two greatest powers could build relation btw them that is stable, predictable and healthy. In addition, the emerging trend toward bifurcation of the world order in every dimension from politics to economy, trade, technology and cyberspace is a matter of growing concern.**
- c. Thirdly, the existing traditional and non-traditional security challenges. The issues include the multiple crises in Myanmar, the South China Sea with its territorial disputes and geo-strategic rivalries, the nuclear threat in Korean peninsula, climate change and transboundary issues, transnational crimes, international terrorism, etc. These are long-term issues, some with decades or century-old root causes that cannot be resolved overnight or in a one-year term chairmanship.**
- d. Fourthly, ASEAN internal and institutional challenges.**

The coming years would be even challenging for ASEAN to maintain our **unity, cohesiveness, ASEAN 10, solve emerging insttn'l problems, pursue our community building process, integration + expansion mbsp / DPs etc...**

Find **common ground** with regards to intern'l & reg issues ( Afghanistan / AUKUS / MY / SCS...)

8. **These are the major challenges facing our region, our community. ASEAN priorities in 2022 are and will be defined to address those challenges.** Cambodia's priorities are **not entirely new**. They are **built on past achievements and initiatives** during the previous ASEAN chairmanships. **Ensuring continuity** is key to the success of the ASEAN Community Building which is a long and continued process and ASEAN's advancement belongs to all member states.
9. As you all know, ASEAN Community building dwells on **three pillars**, namely political-security, economic, and socio-cultural pillars. **Now, let me go through our priorities within those 3 pillars.**
10. **For the Political Security Pillar:**
  - a. In addressing the mounting geopolitical, strategic rivalries, Cambodia will seek to **strengthening ASEAN Centrality in the ASEAN-led mechanisms in maintaining and upholding peace, security, and prosperity**. We will reinforce multilateralism and multilateral processes through ASEAN-led mechanisms and concerted actions that shall remain open, transparent, inclusive, and rules-based. We aim to foster mutual trust, mutual respect, mutual interest, and mutual understanding, in accordance with the principles and objectives as laid out in the UN Charter, ASEAN Charter, Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).
  - b. Development of ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision and the achievements of sustainable



**development** is another focus. In 2022, [Cambodia will co-chair the meetings of the High-Level Task Force to formulate elements of this Vision with Malaysia](#), who is the permanent shepherd.

- c. Next priority is to **promote regional contribution to global peace**. Cambodia will work to sustain a positive momentum of **ASEAN's proactive contribution to UN PKOs**, and the incorporation of the **WPS agenda within ASEAN's frameworks**. We will also seek to further **promote ASEAN's visibility through ARMAC**, in addressing the humanitarian aspects of the issues of landmines and ERW within and beyond the region.
- d. We give attention to **Timor-Leste membership** in ASEAN. At the 39<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit on 26 October 2021, my Prime Minister express commitment to expedite Timor-Leste's membership. [We hope that the necessary process could be completed soon to admit Timor-Leste into the ASEAN family.](#)
- e. Cambodia sees merit in **reenergizing and expanding partnerships with external partners**, in order to maintain regional peace, stability and enhance the ASEAN Community building efforts. We would like to see relations between ASEAN and external partners continue to grow on the **basis of mutual respect and mutual interest**. ASEAN welcomed the **UK as the 11<sup>th</sup> Dialogue Partner** last August; **ASEAN-China** and **ASEAN-Australia** relations are starting a new chapter with the recently announced **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**; we also look forward to a fruitful year of cooperation in this context. Cambodia is the **Country Coordinator for ASEAN-Russia relations** from this year until 2024.

- f. **Rising tension in the South China Sea** amplify the **urgent need** to conclude a substantive and effective COC. We can only hope to achieve sufficient momentum to **finalize** this important document by the **end of this year**. We will conduct **activities to commemorate** the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DOC.
- g. **Our immediate attention is on improving the situation in Myanmar.** ASEAN's 5PC and the ASEAN Charter should serve as our **guiding principles** in addressing the crisis. To pave the way for progress on the 5PC, my **Prime Minister will visit Myanmar on 7-8 January**. Extraordinary situation such as Myanmar crisis, need extraordinary action.

Creating a conducive environment for **inclusive dialogue and political trust among all parties concerned**, achieving common ground on a **process towards ending violence** and obtaining **concurrence among relevant stakeholders on expediting humanitarian relief / vaccination** to reach those most in need are on **top of our agenda**.

#### 11. On the deliverables in 2022:

- To promote the spirit of togetherness in upholding and strengthening multilateralism with ASEAN at the centre, we will issue a **Leaders' Vision Statement on "ASEAN A.C.T.: Addressing Challenges Together"**. The Statement reaffirms our shared **determination to march ahead as one**, effectively **braving all pressing challenges** on path; and to ensure that, as one, **ASEAN shall enjoy peace, stability and further development**.
- To **celebrate the 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN** and highlight the achievements from its inception to



become a closely integrated political, economic and socio-cultural community, we will seek the adoption of an **ASEAN Leaders' Statement** on that Anniversary.

- Cambodia will **propose an ASEAN Leaders' Statement on ASEAN Connectivity Post-2025 Vision**. This Statement aims to chart out the vision to enhance ASEAN Connectivity beyond the Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025, encompassing synergies between up-to-date developments and past lessons and experiences.
- Cambodia will propose an **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Statement to Promote Peace, Stability, and Prosperity through Preventive Measures**. This document is aimed to further strengthen ARF to engender more concrete **preventive diplomacy activities** to ensure the prevalence of mutual respect, dialogues and consultations; to **avoid misunderstanding or miscalculation**.
- Next year will mark the **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC)**. In this regard, a Joint Statement is proposed to celebrate this historic achievement. It will keep the spotlight on the **importance of the full and effective implementation of the DOC for maintaining peace and stability in the region and favourable atmosphere for the conclusion of the COC**.
- **East Asia Summit (EAS) Plan of Action (PoA)** to Implement the Phnom Penh Declaration on the EAS Development Initiative for the period 2023-2027 will be developed to continue implementing

the EAS Leaders' decisions and proposals consistent with the principles of the 2005 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the East Asia Summit.

- **APT Cooperation Work Plan 2023-2027** will be formulated as the successor document of the current Work Plan (2018-2022) that will serve as a principal guide to enhance APT cooperation over the next 5 years towards achieving the goal of establishing an East Asian community.

## **12. For the side events in 2022:**

Cambodia will organize **two major side events**

- (1) **ASEAN Global Dialogue on Post-Covid-19 Comprehensive Recovery**, possibly back-to-back with the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits and Related Summits. The Dialogue aims to bring together Leaders and heads of major international organizations to share in-depth views on how ASEAN can ensure good outcomes from their recovery plans. The **dialogue centers on four topics**:
  - Promoting ASEAN as a Post-Pandemic Climate-Resilient Community.
  - Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in the Post-COVID-19 Era
  - MSMEs' Digitalisation for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth.
  - Investing in Human Capital Development for inclusive and sustainable growth.
- (2) The Ministry of Women 's Affairs of Cambodia will host the **2nd ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit** during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2022 under the theme **"Building More Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient: Unlocking Women's Entrepreneurship in**



**ASEAN".** The event will be presided over by Samdech Techo Prime Minister Hun Sen.

13. Some of the **Economic and Socio-cultural priorities**, include **ensuring effective implementation of COVID-19 Response initiatives**, especially **ACRF**, accelerate the decision on the host of **ACPHEED**, launch **RCEP** implementation and enhance existing **FTA**, promote **digital economy**, **MSME** and **women empowerment**, enhance **digital connectivity**, cooperation in **science and technology**, enhance **health**, well-being and **social protection**.
14. I will leave the elaboration on these to H.E. PAN Sorasak, who the National Representative for the ASEAN Economic Community Council, and H.E. Dr. DY Khamboly, who represent H.E. Dr. HANG Chuon Naron, National Representative for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council.

Thank you.