

MESSAGE BY H.E. PRAK SOKHONN, SENIOR MINISTER,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE
KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF ASEM DAY

1 March 2018

1. Today, 1st March is the 2nd Anniversary of the annual ASEM Day which was designated by the Leaders of Asia and Europe at the 11th ASEM Summit in July 2016 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. On this auspicious occasion, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I am very pleased to convey my warmest greetings and my best wishes of happiness and prosperity to all Cambodians and peoples of Asia and Europe.
2. Since its inaugural Summit in March 1996 in Bangkok with 26 state partners, Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) has changed significantly and proved its value by expanding its members to 53 countries and partners from Asia and Europe, becoming one of the largest inter-regional fora in the world and representing around 50% of world GDP, approximately 60% of world population and 60% of world trade.
3. For more than two decades, ASEM has played a key role as an important and unique platform for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe with its main objectives to strengthen partnerships, promote peace and security and enhance sustainable socio-economic development between the two regions and beyond.
4. ASEM's value and continuing importance in today's politics, diplomacy, and inter-regional relations is uncontested and destined to evolve along with a transforming global environment, adapting itself to an increasingly multipolar world, an expanded European Union and a progressively more inter-dependent Asia region. The process has covered more ground, reflecting newly emerging global challenges that Asia and Europe need to tackle together and move forwards to turning the informal dialogue process into tangible outcomes and common policies. Currently, ASEM partners have carried out activities which encompass cooperation across 20 areas of tangible cooperation centering on ASEM's three pillars: Politics, Economy and Culture.

5. While entering its 3rd decade, the "Ulaanbaatar Declaration" adopted at the 11th ASEM Summit clearly underlined ASEM as an important platform in shaping the global setting in the 21st century through its contribution to sustained peace, security, stability, economic recovery and to responding to global and regional challenges. The Leaders spelled out their commitment to lead ASEM successfully into its third decade through reinforcing their partnerships, focusing cooperation for tangible benefits, fostering connectivity in all its dimensions, and promoting informality, networking and flexibility.
6. At the current context of the rapid changing and complex world, we need an ASEM more inclusive and engaged, particularly with civil society, youth, academia, NGOs, public sector and business community. More interactions and closer communications are needed for ASEM to enhance its knowledge of the complex global challenges ranging from terrorism, migration, poverty to climate change, all of which would require ASEM to address together despite the geographical distance.
7. In this respect, the 13th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting held on 20-21 November 2017 in Ney Pyi Taw, Myanmar, reaffirmed ASEM's cardinal values of equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual benefit. They emphasized the need for closer engagement towards a stronger and more dynamic partnership in the process of addressing global issues and the creation of a favorable environment for a stronger, more sustainable and balanced development. The Ministers also endorsed the work of the ASEM Pathfinder Group on Connectivity (APGC) including the definition of ASEM connectivity that encompasses the hard and soft aspects, including the physical and institutional social-cultural linkages that are the fundamental supportive means to enhance the economic, political-security, and socio-cultural ties between Asia and Europe.
8. For Cambodia, we value ASEM as an important informal forum for region-to-region cooperation. ASEM has offered benefits for Cambodia. Firstly, ASEM provides Cambodia an excellent venue to promote Cambodia's image in the international arena. Secondly, it is an opportunity to strengthen its bilateral cooperation with other members through high-level meetings of ASEM and boost tangible areas of cooperation for development of Cambodia's economy, including exchanges of trade, investment, and tourism etc. Thirdly, ASEM has contributed to the development of Cambodian human resources both private sector and public. Fourth, ASEM

connectivity is a most vibrant one for Cambodia to promote its people to people exchanges in an increasing inter-connected Asia-Europe regions.

9. Since officially joining ASEM during the 5th ASEM Summit in 2004 in Vietnam, Cambodia has actively taken part in activities and events under the framework of ASEM. For instance, in 2016 and 2017 Cambodia organized public lectures with the participation of around 600 students to disseminate and promote awareness of ASEM. Cambodia has contributed an annual voluntary budget of USD 10,000 to Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) since 2005 to support ASEF's activities which complement the government-led ASEM process, particularly in the fields of youth, culture and education, as well as participate in activities and events are being organized by ASEF.
10. In order to gain more benefits and help promote public awareness and visibility of the ASEM process, be reminded that the government alone cannot do it successfully. As such, I would like to take this special opportunity to call upon all concerned institutions such as media, civil society and private sector, and above all youth, our new generation, to have an active participation in the ASEM process so as to both promote and bring the image of ASEM to the next level, especially in term of connectivity or relationship not only in Asia and Europe, but also in the entire world.
11. Looking forward to the forthcoming 12th ASEM Summit, which will be held on 18-19 October 2018 in Brussels under the key theme of "Europe and Asia: Global Partners for Global Challenges", Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, will lead a high level delegation of the Royal Government of Cambodia to attend this important Summit. Samdech Techo Prime Minister's participation at the Summit will certainly reflect Cambodia's continued commitment to actively engage in the ASEM process in addressing today's global challenges and find opportunities to further strengthen dialogue and cooperation among ASEM partners.
12. Finally, let me reiterate my personal commitment to the values of ASEM and I want to make this year's ASEM Day as a tangible milestone of our long journey toward prosperity together in this third decade and beyond.
