



Statement

By H.E. PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Address to the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Theme: "Better Together: 80 Years and More Peace, Development and Human Rights"

Madame la Présidente,

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les délégués,

Je tiens tout d'abord à féliciter chaleureusement Son Excellence **Annalena Baerbock** pour son élection à la présidence de la 80e session de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies. Je félicite Son Excellence **Philémon Yang** pour la ferme direction dont il a fait preuve au cours de la 79e session. Le **Pacte pour l'avenir** adopté au cours de son mandat a trouvé sa place dans le thème de cette année, « **Mieux ensemble : 80 ans et plus de paix, de développement et de droits de l'homme** », illustrant l'esprit de continuité et de coopération qui soutient cet auguste organisme mondial pour rester une lueur d'espoir pour toute l'humanité.

Le thème de cette année n'est pas un simple slogan. C'est un rappel solennel que la promesse de l'ONU ne dure que lorsque nous sommes unis, lorsque nous cultivons la solidarité entre les nations et les peuples et lorsque nous mesurons le succès non pas uniquement en termes nationaux, mais en fonction du bien-être commun des citoyens du monde.

Il y a huit décennies, au lendemain d'une guerre mondiale dévastatrice, les nations, grandes et petites, se sont unies derrière une vision singulière : la paix, le développement et la dignité humaine ne peuvent être garantis que par l'action collective.

Pourtant, alors que nous nous réunissons pour célébrer cette étape importante, les idéaux du multilatéralisme sont mis à l'épreuve. Les divisions géopolitiques se sont aggravées : les rivalités entre grandes puissances entravent trop souvent les décisions du Conseil de sécurité, laissant des crises non résolues dans de nombreuses régions du monde et des millions de vies en danger. Le monde est

maintenant confronté à la dure réalité que « la force fait le droit » et que l'interdépendance n'est plus la pierre angulaire de la paix, mais plutôt un outil de menace et de coercition.

Si nous croyons vraiment que nous sommes « meilleurs ensemble », nous devons revigorer la confiance dans les institutions multilatérales, investir dans la diplomatie préventive et veiller à ce que l'ONU soit équipée - politiquement et financièrement - pour répondre de manière décisive et efficace aux défis anciens et émergents.

- *Madam President,*
- *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Allow me to speak about peace and to do so from lived experience. For decades, war and genocide traumatized our people and destroyed our country. Dialogue, and not war, between two true statesmen, our late King Father, His Majesty Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk and our former Prime Minister, Samdech Techo Hun Sen, both blessed with wisdom, willpower and genuine patriotism, had engendered the peace process and national reconciliation. It is now well known that peace was finally achieved through the Win-Win Policy of Samdech Techo Hun Sen that ended 30 years of conflict without a single bullet being fired.

We remain forever grateful to the many countries, and to the UNPKO, that have extended support to Cambodia throughout the peace process. Across our towns and villages, the words “We Thank Peace” are not mere decoration – they are a daily affirmation that peace is our nation’s most precious treasure.

This peace allowed us to rebuild from complete ruin. Before the pandemic, our economy achieved an average annual growth of around 7%, positioning Cambodia to graduate from Least Developed Country status by 2029. Through this development, millions have been lifted out of poverty in the past decades. We are grateful for our partners who are supporting Cambodia towards smooth graduation through, among others, open and inclusive trade.

Guided by our Pentagonal Strategy, Cambodia aligns its development agenda with the Sustainable Development Goals. We officially launched, last year, the Roadmap to achieve the Universal Health Coverage in Cambodia by 2035 and expanded access to quality education, ensuring that our youth are equipped for a changing world. Our women now hold leadership positions in government and private enterprises at unprecedented levels, strengthening the fabric of our society.

We are firmly committed to protecting and expanding the civic space and strengthening democratic governance, knowing that development and human rights are inseparable pillars of lasting peace.

On climate action, one of humanity's greatest collective tests, Cambodia has submitted its third Nationally Determined Contribution to the UNFCCC; last June, we signed the Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and already deposited our ratification instrument earlier this month. These steps reflect our belief that environmental stewardship is a global duty and a moral imperative.

With the complete peace at home, Cambodia has been able to offer our humble contribution to peace building and peace keeping around the world. From a country once hosting UN peacekeeping mission, Cambodia has become a steadfast contributor to global security. Since 2006, we have deployed over 10,000 peacekeepers—more than 800 of them women—to ten UN missions across the globe. They have protected civilians, cleared landmines, and support rebuilding war-torn communities. We are currently an active member of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, helping nations emerging from conflict to build institutions and foster reconciliation.

- *Madam President,*
- *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Cambodia's transformation embodies the UNGA-80 theme, namely countries once in need can now become providers of peace and stability for others. It is therefore deeply painful to inform this august Assembly that the hard-won peace that we so profoundly cherish and wholeheartedly share around the world is today threatened in our own home. Not by internal division like in the past, but by border conflict with a neighbour.

We are grateful that a ceasefire, brokered by US President Trump, effectively halted armed clashes that had caused deaths, injuries and destructions, and the displacement of hundreds of thousands innocent civilians.

Like Armenia and Azerbaijan, Cambodia has nominated President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize for his crucial role in this important step to peace. However, the ceasefire remains very fragile despite expressed commitment from both countries on the sincerity to strictly comply with the ceasefire terms, to rebuild trust and restore normalcy, and the positive outcome of following meetings hosted and coordinated by Malaysia, the ASEAN Chair.

But sincerity is only credible and trust can only flourish when respect with both the letter and the spirit of the agreements matches with real action on the ground. Sadly, continued unilateral moves to impose territorial sovereignty from our neighbour, using forces instead of agreed mechanisms, unilateral maps instead internationally recognized ones that were produced in accordance with treaties that bind the two countries, and countless other actions undermine these trust building and peace efforts.

Of great concern is the forced eviction of Cambodian civilians and threats to use national laws against them and to evict hundreds more from the lands they have lived in for decades. Such way of territorial control on the segment of the border yet to be demarcated demonstrates a clear disregard not only for the terms of the ceasefire, but also for the mutual agreements on the settlement of border issues.

In the process, Cambodia's sovereignty and territorial integrity are violated and the rights and dignity of many Cambodians infringed.

Cambodia has consistently and strictly observed the ceasefire, demonstrating good faith and full transparency in the implementation of its terms. We have exercised the utmost restraint, even in the face of repeated incidents and provocations. As recently as this morning, there was an unprovoked attack near a sensitive site, following an allegation that our forces had opened fire first. We firmly reject such accusation.

Our troops have not and nor have they return fire, even refrained from any retaliatory action, underscoring our commitment to peace.

Guided by the same spirit that ended our internal conflict nearly three decades ago, Cambodia reaffirms its call for dialogue and the peaceful settlement of all outstanding issues. We urge strict and sincere adherence to the agreed terms of the ceasefire, full respect for bilateral agreements, and observance of international law, including the Charters of both the United Nations and ASEAN.

We earnestly seek the continued support and good offices of the ASEAN Chair and member states, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and relevant UN bodies, as well as leaders around the world, to help de-escalate tensions, encourage a peaceful resolution, and prevent any further tragedy.

Cambodia is a small nation focused on rebuilding our economy and improving the well-being of our people. We pose no threat to the sovereignty of any country. While we will always safeguard our independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, the use of force will only remain a last resort.

Cambodia will continue every effort to restore trust and normalcy, to promote harmonious coexistence and good-neighbourly relations, and to transform border areas into zones of peace, friendship, cooperation, and shared prosperity.

- *Madam President,*
- *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

To honor the founders' vision and meet today's realities, the United Nations itself must adapt. Cambodia supports pragmatic, incremental reform - reform that strengthens the UN's effectiveness without undermining the Charter.

We believe that key priorities include:

- **Empowering preventive diplomacy and mediation**, giving the UN more tools to defuse crises before they erupt.
- **Strengthening the General Assembly, which is the most representative body**, by giving its resolutions greater follow-up capacity and moral weight.
- **Expanding non-permanent Security Council seats** to better reflect today's multipolar world and enhance legitimacy of the Council.
- **Enhancing peacekeeping and border-monitoring missions**, especially in disputed areas, so that small states have equal access to mediation and protection.
- **Complementary measures** such as funding, technology, and gradual legal adjustments, can turn broad reform principles into concrete progress.

For countries like Cambodia, the UN's greatest strength is not coercive force but its moral authority, legitimacy, and convening power – qualities that can shield small nations and sustain peace.

As we commemorate 80 years of the United Nations, let us honour the vision of its founders by choosing cooperation over confrontation, dialogue over division, and hope over despair.

Cambodia stands ready to work to be “Better Together” with all Member States, the UN system, and our partners worldwide to ensure that the decades ahead are defined by peace, sustainable development, and the unshakable dignity of every human being.

Thank you.