



Remarks
By
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Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia
At the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
From Phnom Penh, via Videoconference, 25 September 2021

(15 minutes)



Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. At the outset, let me express my heartfelt appreciation to Excellency Volkan Bozkir for his past efforts to guide the work of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I wish to congratulate as well Excellency Abdulla Shahid for his election as the President of the 76th UNGA Session. I also have the great pleasure to congratulate His Excellency Antonio Guterres for his second term reappointment as the United Nations Secretary-General.

2. This is the second time that the UNGA has to hold its session in a virtual setting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 and the surge of its variants are the biggest challenge and the most disruptive event in modern history. Overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic and efforts to restore growth have been the top priority for all countries. Cambodia has joined international efforts to rollout a widespread vaccination campaign. Our National Campaign was launched on 10 February 2021, and we have made steady progress, including the vaccination of foreign nationals, children and youth between 12 to 18 years of age. At this rate, we expect to vaccinate around 80% (13 million people) of the total population (of around 16 million) by no later than November of this year.

3. With good vaccination progress in combination with strong containment and treatment measures, Cambodia looks ahead to a gradual re-opening of a sustainable and inclusive social and economic activities. We take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to all our bilateral and multilateral friends for the generous support extended to Cambodia in our fight against COVID-19.

Mr. President,

4. Our world still has to tackle a myriad of other pressing challenges such as geopolitical competition and rivalries between major powers, technological and trade wars, territorial armed conflicts, terrorism and transnational crimes, and Climate Change. The pressure on international peace and security is as great as ever.

5. History has told us time and again that interference and worse, military options to impose different systems of governance are not the solutions. Far from it, they have only led to many more deaths, human suffering and misery, social and economic strife. Cambodia is the real life example and has experienced the worst tragedy; and sadly, we are now witnessing the repetition of the same policies. If the recent events in Afghanistan, and many more before it, are lessons to be learnt from, there is great merit to respect the wishes of each nation and their people's rights to self-determination.

6. That is why there is now a compelling reason to strengthen multilateralism and rules-based international cooperation. Countries, large and small, differ in their history, culture, traditions, ways of life and political organization. They should not be hindered by the imposition of unilateral sanctions, embargoes or other coercive economic measures that violate international law and the very principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

7. This coming November, Cambodia is proud to host virtually the 13th Summit of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM13) with a theme "Strengthening multilateralism for shared growth" that we view today as still very important. In my view, the main agenda that must dominate the Summit should be that multilateralism gives priority to convergences: a convergence on the fight against COVID-19 and to build back a stronger society and economy; a convergence on the fight against climate change and on key proposals for WTO reform, amongst others.

8. Climate change is another impending challenge that requires urgent and concrete global actions at all levels. In this context, Cambodia supports the Secretary-General's call to scale up support for regional adaptation and mitigation efforts and reaffirm our commitment to the Paris Agreement, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Mr. President,

9. International peace and security are of utmost importance for a sustainable future. Cambodia would like to reiterate its longstanding position that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the United Nations. Since 2006, Cambodia has contributed more than 7,500 troops to serve in various UN peacekeeping missions across the globe, and a number of our troops

have made the ultimate sacrifice during their mission to protect the innocents. Moreover, Cambodia supports the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) initiative. Cambodia also supports the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda which will help integrate a meaningful gender perspective in various peacekeeping operations.

10. In addition, I would like to emphasize that the changing realities of the twenty-first century demand a newly revamped and responsive United Nations. The organization requires a more democratic, inclusive, and representative approach to the problems of the day. In this light, Cambodia fully supports the Secretary-General's proactive efforts to make the organization nimbler and responsive to the needs of its Member States. The relationship between the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the United Nations Secretariat must also be reinvigorated. In this regard, Cambodia wishes to reaffirm its support for the Security Council reform. We are of the view that the foremost priority should be given to increasing the representation of developing countries which comprise the vast majority of Member States.

Mr President,

11. As the incoming chair of ASEAN next year, Cambodia will seek to address the common challenges facing our region. With a strong solidarity from ASEAN Member States and the support of its external partners, Cambodia will aim to further advance the ASEAN Community building process and to sustain ASEAN as a region of critical importance for global trade, investment and supply chains. Cambodia will continue to push for a more vibrant and harmonious ASEAN Community with better protection of migrant workers, a greener and more inclusive development agenda, and a more advanced digital transformation for MSMEs, women and youth entrepreneurship.

12. May I conclude by expressing my strong hope for a strengthened multilateralism with the United Nations at the core to galvanize international solidarity for the global community to succeed in overcoming the Covid-19 crisis, advancing peace, sustainable development, and shared prosperity for all. Multilateralism is our hope and we look to the UN as our "beacon of hope".

I thank you for your kind attention.
