



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Press Release

Courtesy Call by Mr. Bertrand LORTHOLARY, Director for Asia and Oceania Affairs
of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the French Republic,
on His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia
and
Outcomes of the First Session of Bilateral Political Consultations between Cambodia and France
Phnom Penh, 06 February 2023

In the morning of 6 February 2023, Mr. Bertrand LORTHOLARY, Director for Asia and Oceania of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France, paid a courtesy call on His Excellency PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, before co-chairing the first session of Bilateral Political Consultations with His Excellency Dr. CHEM Widhya, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on the same day, following the Joint Declaration of Intent on the Establishment of a Mechanism for Bilateral Political Consultations between Cambodia and France which was signed on 23 January 2023.

His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister PRAK Sokhonn is delighted to note the long-standing relations of friendship between Cambodia and France. He highly appreciated the recent Working Visit of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia to Paris on 13 December last year.

His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister also expressed his deep satisfaction with the recent visit of Mr. Olivier BECHT, Minister Delegate attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, in charge of Foreign Trade, Attractiveness, and the French Nationals Abroad. These two events have further strengthened political and economic cooperation between the two countries.

His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister briefed the Director on the success of Cambodia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2022 and Cambodia's diligent efforts to help Myanmar in implementing the Five-point Consensus in order to bring this country back to normalcy through dialogues.

Mr. Bertrand LORTHOLARY deeply appreciated the Kingdom of Cambodia for the great success of her economic and social development, compared to his first visit to the Kingdom as a student in 1993. He also highly congratulated the Cambodian Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2022, especially in the context of the rise of challenges in the region and around the world, particularly in Myanmar that Cambodia had made many sustained efforts throughout 2022 to help implementing the five points of consensus approved by the Heads of State/Government of ASEAN States in order to defuse the tensions.

2023 marks the commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the National Independence of Cambodia and the establishment of the Pasteur Institute, the 30th anniversary of CIC Angkor and the presence of the French Development Agency (AFD) in the country.

On the same day, His Excellency Dr. CHEM Widhya, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, held the First Session of Bilateral Political Consultations between Cambodia and France with Mr. Bertrand LORTHOLARY, Director of Asia and Oceania of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

The two parties reviewed the political, economic and social situation of their respective countries bearing in mind the rule of law which regulates their countries. They exchanged in-depth views on their bilateral relations at the political, economic, educational and cultural levels. They agreed to further enhance trade relations and promote investment

taking into account the attractiveness of Cambodia within the dynamic regional market of the ASEAN Community and the large market provided by the Regional Common Economic Partnership (RCEP), her dual French and English identities as well as the new generous Investment Law and the geographical advantage at the heart of ASEAN. Similarly, the French side has taken note of the new strategy of the Royal Government which focus on the cooperation in the field of science and technology in the future and on trainings of one and a half million young people to become qualified human resources in the coming years. France excelled in the professional training sector.

In this regard, **Mr. Bertrand LORTHOLARY** paid tribute to the resounding success of the Royal Government in its strategy to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic which has enabled a rapid, dynamic and notable economic recovery of around 5.2 % in 2022.

For his part, His Excellency **Dr. CHEM Widhya** stressed the importance of a long-standing faithful friendship that Cambodia nurtures toward France, including that in the framework of La Francophonie, which Cambodia is a founding member as initiated by **late His Majesty NORODOM Sihanouk** in 1970. Cambodia salutes the leading role of France for peace, recovery and sustained economic, and social development in Cambodia. This is reflected in AFD's long and continuous presence in the country.

In addition, both parties agreed on the vital importance of ASEAN-France relations, including the resumption of negotiations for a region-to-region free trade area between ASEAN and the European Union (EU). Cambodia highly appreciates the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy which was reflected by the Ministerial Forum for Indo-Pacific Cooperation held under the French Presidency of the European Commission on February 22, 2022 in Paris. This strategy complements the one developed by ASEAN through ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific-AOIP.

Cambodia and France are in favour of a strict respect for international law and multilateralism under the aegis of international institutions, primarily the United Nations, ASEAN and the EU.

The representatives of the two Ministries also underlined the significance of tackling global challenges together such as climate change and transnational crimes as well as other non-traditional challenges, and joint efforts to try to resolve regional conflicts through peaceful means and inclusive dialogue.

The first session of the Bilateral Political Consultations between Cambodia and France took place in an atmosphere of cordial friendship, mutual respect and trust. The Second Session of Bilateral Political Consultations between the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs will be held next year in Paris.

Phnom Penh, 6 February 2023