



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

PRESS RELEASE

**Outcomes of the Second Senior Officials' Talks between Cambodia and Australia
On 28th January 2021 via Video Conference**

The Second Senior Officials' Talks (2nd SOTs) between Cambodia and Australia was held via video conference on 28th January 2021. The meeting was co-chaired by Her Excellency Dr. SOEUNG Rathchavy, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia, and His Excellency Justin Hayhurst, Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia.

Both sides had exchange of views on the progress of cooperation between Cambodia and Australia in bilateral, regional and international frameworks as well as the global common concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic and its adverse impact.

The Australian side commended the Royal Government of Cambodia under the wise leadership of **Samdech Techo Prime Minister** for the successful prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cambodia. Australia also expressed her appreciation to the Royal Government of Cambodia for the humanitarian gesture in allowing the Westerdam Cruise Ship to dock at the port of Cambodia as well as providing consular assistance and support for Australians who stranded in Cambodia due to COVID-19 to return home safely.

In response, the Cambodian side appraised the Government of Australia, under the leadership of the **Hon Scott Morrison**, Prime Minister of Australia, for effectively and successfully curbing the spread of COVID-19 in Australia. Cambodia expressed high appreciation to the Government of Australia for her generous assistance of USD 28 million in grant financing to support the rollout of WHO-approved vaccines in Cambodia and other financial aid to assist Cambodia to minimize the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On security and defence cooperation, both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in border management, the fight against transnational crimes including people smuggling, drug trafficking, money laundering, countering terrorism and maritime security through training programs for military and law enforcement officials. The Australian side welcomed remarks by **Samdech Techo Prime Minister** of the Kingdom of Cambodia that Cambodia adheres to the policy of permanent neutrality and non-alignment and will not allow foreign military base in Cambodia.

On economic relations, both sides agreed to further expand bilateral trade and investment between the two countries. Moreover, both sides agreed to promote cooperation in tourism.

On development cooperation, the Australian side reaffirmed Australia's commitment to continue assisting Cambodia, especially in priority areas such as education, high quality infrastructure, trade, agriculture, health and demining. Cambodia thanked Australia for providing invaluable assistance and support in various areas, which greatly contributed to Cambodia's socio-economic development.

Both sides agreed to promote people-to-people links through New Colombo Plan and Australian Volunteers Program. Cambodia expressed appreciation to Australia for her pledge to increase the number of scholarship to Cambodia in 2022.

The meeting exchanged views on human rights cooperation and democracy in Cambodia and agreed to work closely together in a constructive manner.

Both sides expressed common desire to strengthen cooperation and render mutual support in regional and international frameworks, including ASEAN, ASEM, UN and Mekong Sub-regional cooperation in order to contribute to the maintenance of peace, security and sustainable development. Furthermore, the Australian side reaffirmed support to Cambodia in hosting the 13th ASEM Summit in 2021 and Cambodian's Chairmanship of



ASEAN in 2022. They also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interests and concerns including the strategic competition between the super powers, QUAD, South China Sea and Korean Peninsula.

On Mekong-Australia Program, the Cambodian side welcomed the Australian Government's initiative on Mekong-Australia Program which reflects her commitment to promote sustainable development in the Mekong basin region.

On ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations, Australia expressed her appreciation to Cambodia for her support to convene Annual ASEAN-Australia Summit. Cambodia commended Australia for her unwavering support for the ASEAN Centrality and ASEAN regional integration, particularly, Australia's support for Cambodia's preparation for ASEAN Chairmanship in 2022.

Cambodia and Australia agreed to hold the Third Senior Officials' Talks (3rd SOTs) in Australia in 2022.

The meeting was held in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding reflecting the common aspiration to promote fruitful cooperation between Cambodia and Australia in bilateral and multilateral frameworks. Q.

Phnom Penh, 31 January 2021

