



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
NATION RELIGION KING

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Press Release

**On the Outcomes of the ASEM Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) Retreat
via Videoconference on 1-2 March 2021**

* * * * *

Cambodia, as the host of the 13th ASEM Summit (ASEM13), organized the ASEM Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) Retreat via videoconference on 1-2 March 2021, chaired by H.E. LUY David, Secretary of State and ASEM SOM Leader for Cambodia, with the participation of all ASEM SOM Leaders.

As the Retreat coincided with the celebration of the ASEM Day on 1 March, H.E. PRAK Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, delivered his remarks via a pre-recorded video to warmly welcome ASEM SOM Leaders and to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of this inter-regional forum. In the remarks, he reiterated his conviction that ASEM has been one of the cornerstones of global governance and that multilateralism, which ASEM always cherishes, remains an indispensable part of solutions to global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In this time of unprecedented crisis, the ASEM13 theme that Cambodia has proposed - "Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared Growth" - is relevant and even more important. On behalf of Samdech Prime Minister Hun Sen, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister looked forward to welcoming all ASEM Leaders to the ASEM13 in Phnom Penh this year.

The Retreat unanimously supported Cambodia to reschedule the ASEM13 to the last quarter of 2021 due to the unabated risks posed by COVID-19. Moreover, the postponement is to ensure not only the safety of ASEM Leaders attending the Summit but also their meaningful interactions as well as frank and constructive exchange of views on regional and global issues of common interest that can only be done in a physical setting.



The Retreat also expressed full endorsement of Cambodia's initiative on the Asia-Europe Forum on Women, Peace, and Security to be held regularly as one of side events of ASEM Summits with the objective of streamlining women's vital roles in the development, conflict resolution and peacekeeping efforts. In this connection, the Retreat recognized the role of ASEF in coordinating with Cambodia to organize the side events of the ASEM13 and enhancing ASEM's relevance and visibility.

The Retreat substantively discussed and agreed upon the structures of the two outcome documents of the ASEM13, namely the Chair's Statement and the Phnom Penh Statement on the Post-COVID-19 Socio-Economic Recovery. The Meeting also discussed the proposal on ASEM Connectivity with the hope that the paper would become one of the key deliverables of the ASEM13.

ASEM SOM Leaders expressed high appreciation to Cambodia for continued commitment to hosting a safe and successful ASEM13 in a physical format and maintaining momentum of the ASEM process despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which has raged on across the globe.



Phnom Penh, 04 March 2021