



## Assembly of Francophone Mayors in Phnom Penh



KT/Dec 04

The 39th General Assembly of the International Association of Francophone Mayors officially kicked off in Phnom Penh on December 04, where Deputy Prime Minister Hor Namhong addressed more than 400 foreign delegates (from 140 cities in 41 countries) and highlighted the Kingdom's achievements in rebuilding its cities after decades of civil war. The theme of the meeting is "Resilient Cities: Rethinking the Challenges of Urban Reconstruction."

The senior official of Cambodia also encouraged the International Association of Francophone Mayors (AIMF) to be a multilateral mechanism for the sustainable development of its members.

Governor of Phnom Penh Khuong Sreng highlighted the process of rebuilding and development of Phnom Penh capital city and emphasized on Prime Minister HUN Sen's win-win policy, where Cambodia was able to eradicate the endemic (civil) war and ensure the current development. The genocidal regime of Khmer Rouge lasted almost four years, from 1975 to 1979, transforming Phnom Penh into a ghost town, without life and without human rights being respected.

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## Free Mobile Legal Advice Offered

KT/Dec 05

The Cambodia Human Rights Committee (CHRC) has established a team of lawyers to provide free legal advice to the public via mobile phones.

The team consists of 37 lawyers and volunteer legal experts. They are divided into seven groups to stand by daily to offer advice to callers facing legal problems.

CHRC's lawyers are pleased and ready to provide free legal advice and consultations to the public at any time. People no longer need to show up at its office for a face-to-face free legal consultation. The lawyers are experts in all aspects of the laws.

The team was set up on a voluntary basis and members will neither receive any salary nor become civil servants. The team will operate under budget from CHRC. They offer advice on all sorts of disputes, including labour rights, criminal and civil cases, land conflict, family violence and other problems. •

## Cambodia Committed to the Welfare of People with Disabilities

AKP/Dec 05

The Cambodian government is committed to enhancing welfare, rights and living condition of Cambodian people with disabilities. The effort was highlighted by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Samdech Kralahom Sar Kheng, who presided over an official launching of the National Disability Strategic Plan 2019-2023, the 21<sup>st</sup> National Day and 37<sup>th</sup> International Day of People with Disabilities in Phnom Penh.

Samdech Sar Kheng continued that the development of the National Disability Strategic Plan 2019-2023 aims to eliminate exploitation and discrimination against crippled persons, rehabilitate their physical and mental health and encourage them to participate in social and political activities. The intention reflects the government's strong commitments in addressing any problems of the people with disabilities through providing them with more opportunities and supports.

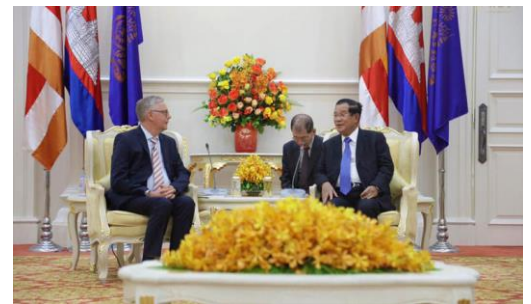
According to an economic and social work observation in 2014, Cambodia's prevalence of disability was 4 percent of the total population or approximately 524,000 people.

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AIMF, chaired by the Mayor of Paris, was founded in 1979. It is the worldwide network of French-speaking local elected officials and their associations, united by the values they share. Its executive office represents the diversity of its members. They are bound by very strong individual links, which favour the continuity of exchanges and the circulation of ideas at the highest level.

Many discussions on a wide range of topics related to urban reconstruction and development have been organised a few days prior to the official opening ceremony. •

## New Swedish Envoy Seeks to Boost Bilateral Ties



KT/Dec 04

Sweden's new ambassador to Cambodia vowed to enhance bilateral relations and cooperation between the two nations and said his country will continue rendering development aid to the kingdom.

Ambassador Haggmark said that his diplomatic tenure will push more to strengthen relations and cooperation, especially on broader global issues, namely climate change and globalization.

The ambassador noted that the Swedish government played an active role in assisting in the funding of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. •

## What to Motivate Female UN Peacekeepers

KT/Dec 04

The Defence Ministry last year announced the United Nations ranked Cambodia 29 out of 122 countries to have sent the most peacekeepers in conflict areas around the world under the United Nations. It also highlighted the contribution of hundreds of female Royal Cambodian Armed Forces deployed along with their male counterparts. An English-language local paper, Khmer Times, spoke to some of them to find out what motivated them to enlist in the armed forces and become professional peacekeepers under the UN umbrella.

Captain Heng Seakleng recalls the time she was first deployed as a UN peacekeeper in the Middle East. Her past tours consist of operations in Mali and Lebanon, and she says her family motivated her to enlist in the army.

The kingdom between 2006 and this year dispatched 6,350 soldiers, including 328 women, to many UN peacekeeping mission locations. 65 female soldiers are currently posted in Sudan, South Sudan, Lebanon, the Central African Republic and Mali, where they work as medics, engineers and observers. Female troops play important roles, especially in getting information from victims of violence.●



## Youth Innovation on Hologram Tech



PPP/Dec 03

The virtual character of Rachana is a product of hologram technology, recently developed in Cambodia by Sovanvatey Khuon, a former young innovator of USAID-funded project Development Innovations (DI) and head of the *I Am Rachana! Project*.

It caught the attention and admiration of many participants, notably the Minister of Education, Youth and Sport Hang Chuon Naron and then-US Ambassador to Cambodia William Heidt.

The new hologram technology aims to promote and encourage women's participation in the technology sector.

A report of the DI and USAID published in 2018 showed that only 8.5 per cent of Cambodian high school girls chose to pursue a degree in information technology (IT) due to a lack of female representation in the sector.

Technovation is a global tech entrepreneurship programme for girls aged 10 to 18. It promotes women empowerment in the usually male-dominated technology field.

The *I Am Rachana!* animation lasted for 30 minutes and introduced the first step to encouraging young Cambodian women to be more active in the tech field. The presentation of the project saw its developers' desired response – youths who attended the event started showing interest in learning the hologram technology.●

## School Meals Programme in Cambodia

KT/Dec 02

More than 260,000 students in eight provinces of Cambodia have benefited from free school meals so far in 2018-2019 academic year.

The government, with support from the UN World Food Programme and development partners, implemented the school feeding programme in 1,167 primary schools through which 260,000 children received breakfast, about 8,000 children got funds to buy food and about 5,000 people benefited through the sale of community agricultural products for the students' meals.

This year, with additional funding from the government, the programme will be extended to additional six provinces and cover 205 more primary schools and benefit 50,000 children. ●

## Gov't, UN Marks Rights Day on Youth

PPP/Dec 05

The government and the UN Cambodia celebrated the 71<sup>st</sup> International Human Rights Day, with both attaching great significance to youth leadership roles in society.

Held under the theme “*Youth Standing Up for Human Rights*”, the celebrations were organised by UN Human Rights in collaboration with the Cambodian Human Rights Committee (CHRC), the UN country team and the EU delegation.

In a statement, the UN Human Rights said the event cast a light on youth leadership roles as a source of inspiration for a better future. Under our global call to action ‘Stand Up for Human Rights’ we celebrated the potential of youth as constructive agents of change, amplified their voices and engaged a broad range of global audiences in the promotion and protection of rights.

As part of the celebrations, the UN body also bestowed its 2019 Youth Human Rights Champion Awards on outstanding young people for promoting human rights through their participation in communities in Cambodia. ●

## Cambodia Acts on Plastic Waste

PPP/Dec 03

The government, civil societies and relevant partners have jointly committed to acting on the plastic waste crisis that is adversely affecting environment, wildlife and public health.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) country economist Richard Marshall said worldwide plastic usage had so far reached 8.3 billion ton, equivalent to the weight of more than one billion elephants. According to a forecast, without timely intervention, the plastic waste could reach 34 billion ton by 2050.

Every year, some eight million ton of plastic waste flowed into the sea through major rivers, including the Mekong River. So only changes in the attitude of each person against using plastics can prevent the increase in its usage.

Cambodia had taken preventive measures against the crisis by stopping plastic waste from being imported into the country for recycling. Additionally, environment ministry continued to spread awareness of the dire effects of the plastic waste pollution and how to properly dispose of plastics. ●

## Cambodia, Japan Bilateral Trade Reaches \$1.9 billion

PPP/Dec 09

Bilateral trade between Cambodia and Japan reached \$1.9 billion, in the first 10 months of 2019 – a slight increase of 0.44 per cent compared to the same period last year.

In the first 10 months of last year, the two countries’ trade volume was worth \$1.89 billion. Of which, exports of goods from Cambodia to Japan was worth \$1.45 billion, an increase of 7.8 per cent, and imports of Japanese goods from Cambodia was worth \$444.937 million, a 34.2 per cent increase.

Cambodian goods exported to Japan were mainly garments and footwear, auto parts and electronic components, while Japanese goods imports were finished products and electronics.

In terms of goods imported into Cambodia, Japan ranked fourth, with a 4.5 per cent market share of total imports worth \$10.5 billion. ●