



Statement

By

His Excellency Mr. Sun Suon

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Cambodia  
to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization  
and other International Organizations at Geneva

at

The 21th Session of the Human Rights Council

Agenda Item 10: Individual ID with Special Rapporteur  
on the Situation of Human Rights in Cambodia

25<sup>th</sup> September 2012

Madame President,  
Distinguished Delegates,

1. At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Cambodia, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on the noble task you achieved so far at the helm of this August Assembly. My congratulations are also conveyed to the members of the Bureau and the Secretariat for the diligent work which they undertake at this Council. I am confident that, under your able leadership, you will further guide the deliberation at this Session to a meaningful conclusion. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Madame Navi Pillay for her nomination of the second term as the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

2. The delegation of Cambodia wishes to thank Professor Surya Subedi, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Cambodia for submission of his Report (doc.A/HRC/21/63) at the Council on the promotion and protection of the human rights in Cambodia following his subsequent sixth and seventh missions in the country.

3. Cambodia takes note of the content of the Report of the Special Rapporteur, along with the outlining of his preliminary findings, observations and recommendations, (including the recent addendum to the Report). In general, we share the common purpose and vision of the Special Rapporteur to promote human rights. At the same time, we believe that it is up to the Government to consider those recommendations that are practical, feasible and implementable. These require more work in a period of time for consideration by the Government to look at the recommendations which reflect the practical need of the country. By the way, the relevant national authorities have made a number of responses through communications to the Special Rapporteurs on some of relevant matters.

4. If there are inconsistencies of views and ideas in some areas of issues in the Report and some of recommendations, these could not, however, hamper us to share the Government's experiences and perspectives with a better understanding of the issues in order to find the common ground to advance the cause of human rights. Cambodia has its goodwill and sustained efforts as evidenced by the fact that the country has engaged itself with the UN over the years, including the current Council through the acceptance of this Special Procedure for technical cooperation. It should also be noted that for the time being the country is highly being engaged with the on-going process to implement all accepted recommendations from the country's first UPR cycle.

5. On this occasion, the delegation of Cambodia wishes to take this opportunity to inform the Council of the update on new developments in line with the comments we wish to make on some of the important issues addressed in the Report over the last year period.

Madam President,

6. As mentioned by the Special Rapporteur in his Report, Cambodia has made important progress since the conclusion of the Paris Peace Agreements of 1991, passing various milestones in strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It has held four national or parliamentary elections and three local or commune elections.

7. With the latest round of commune elections that was successfully held on 3 June 2012, Cambodia is making another important step forward toward the process of democratization at the grass root level. Cambodia is now looking forward to the next round of preparation for the national elections scheduled to take place for July 2013.

Madam President,

8. The political stability and peace over the last decade has brought economic growth and progress to Cambodia. In spite of the global and financial crisis in 2009, the economy has bound back with the growth rate of 6% since 2010, and according to the forecasts of the Government and other sources, the growth rates are estimated to persist between 6% to 7% in 2011 and 2012 respectively. With this trend, Cambodia is most likely on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of halving extreme poverty by 2015.

9. In the process, the Government has also made great progress, for instance, in halving infant mortality rate between 2000 and 2010. In fact the findings suggest that Cambodia has made good strides towards meeting most of the MDG Targets. But we cannot take this progress for granted. This implies that our task is yet not complete until the time when our problems of underdevelopment, poverty and human security are effectively solved. We have therefore to strive hard to make further progress by redoubling our efforts to address many other issues such as the social inequalities, especially between those Cambodians living in urban areas and those of majority living in rural areas.

10. These will be carried out in line with the overall efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia to further address the economic, social and cultural rights through the implementation of its pro-poor policy and relevant national plans, (including an update National Strategic Development Plan of 2009-2013), with established necessary means to achieve the employment creation objective and ensure the right to work for the Cambodian people from all different backgrounds.

11. The Government of Cambodia is taking steps to address the continued challenges of other political, economic and social issues and concerns, including land problem which remains high in the agenda. Over the last short period, a number of steps have been taken on implementation of Land Policy by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to address the land issue, including the expansion of land demarcation and titling program, granting land to purely landless people and those projects associated with the indigenous communities.



12. For example, the Royal Government of Cambodia issued a sub-degree on 07 March 2012, which put on hold recently the granting of new economic land concession, reviewing existing concession deals and revokes the license of any firms breaching the agreement. This measure aims to address the negative impact upon local people's land, which arises from the economic land concession. The Prime Minister of Cambodia, Samdech Techo Hun Sen, for his part, solemnly instructed all concerned authorities on 14 June 2012 to expedite the tasks issuing land deeds in six months to villagers who have lived in concessional forest, concessional land and state's land that they have occupied. Under this land titling scheme, total land of about 1.2 million hectares will be demarcated and allocated to approximately 350,000 families nationwide.

13. The implementation of the said scheme is continuing with more youth people enlisted to help measure the land for landless people in many provinces throughout the country at present. The RGC will continue to address its policy and plan of action through a sound, equitable and efficient management, distribution and utilisation of land by addressing the continued related challenges of land problems.

Madam President,

14. Cambodia remains committed to nurturing the culture of democratic and pluralistic debate among all political parties and stakeholders under our Constitution. The Government has strived to promote greater tolerance for the exercise of views and expression by individuals throughout the country's evolving democratic process. However it is recognized that the challenges still remain in the practices associated with the perception as how to strike a balance in the exercise of this fundamental right of freedom of expression. As a country that has gone through its own historic experiences, Cambodia remains committed to the notion that freedom of expression should be exercised within the legal framework and special duties in line with ICCPR and as practiced in most of democratic countries.

15. Progress has been made in the stage of finalization of a draft of country's report to the Human Rights Committee under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The promulgation of Law on Prison in December 2011 is a significant step for the implementation of prison reform.

16. Cambodia has made further step toward the adoption by the National Assembly and the Senate of the instrument of ratification to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which will be shortly signed by His Majesty the King, this year. This is another progress in the government's commitment and efforts at improving the lives of children and adults in Cambodia that are living with disabilities. The purpose is to promote awareness of their capabilities and to provide access to social services and other rehabilitation and reintegration support in view of the fact that an estimated 1.44% (=192,538) of Cambodians are living with disabilities.

17. Apart from legal and institutional reforms, Cambodia has made efforts to enhance the capacity building such as through the promotion of a culture of constructive dialogue

toward the deepening of the democratic process. In this context, we also believe that social media and civil societies (including NGOs) continue to play a significant role in driving social and democratic transformation in a positive and constructive fashion, delivering services across the country, including those advocating for human rights.

18. From January of this year, the Government has decided to extend its continued cooperation with UNHCHR through signing between the RGC and UNOHCHR for an extension of the Memorandum of Understanding aimed at providing technical support on human rights, for another two years term (2012-2013). This demonstrates sustained efforts in the engagement of the Government with United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the country's human rights Office.

19. In the regional context, Cambodia continues to work with others ASEAN fellow members to achieve further progress on human rights through an Intergovernmental Commission of human rights and other related bodies, including the efforts to complete the drafting of the ASEAN human rights Declaration during the Cambodia's Chairmanship of ASEAN.

20. Overall, the country has made important progress in the country's journey towards democratization and development. Admittedly, in this progress, there remain the challenges and constraints ahead for the Government to further address, bearing in mind that human rights is a continuing process in which new developments entail new challenges. These require, along the way, sustained efforts, perseverance and learning. We would therefore appreciate the balanced assessment of human rights that should reflect on overall picture of achievements and shortcomings of the country.

21. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the Government's continued commitments to promoting and protecting human rights of its people. Cambodia shares, and remains committed to, the principles and the value of democracy and human rights, along with its profound belief that these should be upheld and carried on in a practical fashion, taking into account the cultural particularities, the tradition and the level of development of the country.

22. We sincerely appreciate the partnership by international community in providing support to Cambodia to achieve its goals. We welcome the approach of the Special Rapporteur to work cooperatively with the Government authorities of Cambodia within his mandate to promote and protect human rights in Cambodia. We also believe that only through sustained efforts in sharing the experience and constructive dialogue, thus we can meaningfully advance human rights.

Thank you.





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His Excellency Mr. Sun Suon

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Cambodia  
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at

The 21th Session of the Human Rights Council

General Debate: the Report of the Secretary General on Human Rights  
on the Roles and the Achievements of the Office of the UN High  
Commissioner for Human Rights in assisting the Government and  
people of Cambodia in the promotion and protection of human Rights

26<sup>th</sup> September 2012

Madame President,

1. The Delegation of Cambodia welcomes the Report of the Secretary General on Human Rights on the Roles and the Achievements of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in assisting the Government and people of Cambodia in the promotion and protection of human rights.

As a concerned country, Cambodia has made its statement on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, during the interactive debate at this Session under the agenda item 10 in response to the Report of the Special Rapporteur. We would like now to make additional comments on some of issues as contained in the Report of the UN Office of human rights in Cambodia as follows:

2. First of all, we take note of the Report prepared by the UNOHCHR highlighting a number of practical steps taken along with further progress through a good cooperation and partnership between the Royal Government of Cambodia and other relevant stakeholders and the UN Office of Human Rights in Cambodia.

In essence, these relate to certain activities carried out by the Office to enhance the capacity of relevant national institutions in Cambodia in the related fields of human rights. Some of the progress and other critical issues of concerns such as those related to the judiciary reforms, land reform, including the right to freedom of expression, have been highlighted in the delegation's statement as well as in the communications of Cambodian authorities concerned to the relevant UN office and Special procedures during the past sessions as well through our communication to special procedure on thematic issues.

3. As mentioned also in the report, progress has been made, over this one year period, in the process of finalization of a draft of country's report to the Human Rights Committee under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The the promulgation of Law on Prison in December 2011 is an important step for the Government to implement the prison reform. We welcome the good partnership between the Office of UNHCHR and the authorities concerned in this process.

We also continue to take practical step to consider the preparation of accession to some of important instruments. This year, the Government has made progress in the adoption by the Parliament of the two houses on the instrument of the UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disability.

4. In cooperation with certain partners including OHCHR, a basic framework and action plan is envisaged to implement UPR recommendations. We believe that the follow up of UPR recommendations remains essential for next year cycle of Cambodia UPR at the Human Rights Council.

Madame President,

5. Cambodia welcomes the partnership and cooperation which has been extended by the Office to enhance the country's capacity building in the areas of human rights under the existing MoU framework. In this spirit, along with its country constant commitment, the

Royal Government and the UNOHCHR have signed the MoU to extend the cooperation of the UN Office of Human Rights in Cambodia for another 2 years starting from 2012- 2013. We also welcome the newly appointed Head of the Office of UNHCHR in Cambodia in this regard.

6. We believe that further work of the Office will be focussed on the promotion of relevant programs of education of human rights and other areas pertaining to the concrete and practical need for Cambodia by providing support to enhance the capacity of the country institutions, including in the training programs to promote human rights, and by further assisting in the areas of follow-up of preparing and implementing recommendations of various treaties bodies in a new cycle, as well as on other relevant program for supporting national and local institutions on the advisory and technical services.

Madame President,

7. Despite the great efforts of the authorities concerned at addressing the related challenges, we acknowledge the shortcomings and limited capacity. Cambodia remains therefore committed to constructive partnership with stakeholders, including the UNOHCHR to effectively address the related challenges ahead by striving to further deliver on the country's commitments with respect to the promotion and protection of human rights.

8. In conclusion, we would appreciate the approach the UN human Rights Office should further take in order to work cooperatively and constructively with the Government to advance human rights in Cambodia according to the existing term of the MoU.

Thank you