



5th NIU Exchange Programme (Cambodia – Lao – Myanmar)

Opening Remarks by LCT Tekreth Kamrang, Secretary of State, EIF Focal Point

Siem Reap, Cambodia
7 December 2015

H.E. Somchith Inthamith, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
H.E. Dr. Pwint San, Deputy Minister and EIF Focal Point, Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar
Delegates from Lao PDR and Myanmar
Colleagues from MoC, DICO and Line Ministries, Cambodia

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor and privilege to have been given the opportunity to officiate at this collaborative effort involving the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for the Fifth NIU Exchange Program. Allow me to start by giving you all a warm welcome to Cambodia, the Kingdom of Wonders and to the ancient city of Siem Reap, the Land of Smiles, the growth of culture and civilization.

We are honored and pleased to organize this important event to share information, knowledge, lessons learned, and experiences in the implementation of Aid for Trade (AfT) and trade sector development among the three countries under the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and the Trade Development Support Program. If I may recall, last year's NIU Exchange Program was conducted with representatives of two countries in attendance, Lao PDR and Cambodia, at the beautiful city of Luang Prabang, a town known for its fusion of traditional architecture and Lao urban structures with those built by European colonial authorities in the 19th and 20th centuries. Its unique, remarkably well-preserved townscape illustrates a key stage in the blending of those two distinct cultural traditions. Now, in the 5th CLM Exchange Program, we welcome to the fold, Myanmar, the home to bustling markets, numerous parks and lakes, and the towering, gilded Shwedagon Pagoda, which contains Buddhist relics that dates back to the 6th century.

We have tried to put together a comprehensive program of the 5th CLM Exchange Program in order for us to learn from each other's experience. The occasion today is yet again an example of how our countries will be able to establish our institutional linkages in order for us to improve our Aid-for-Trade program implementation, which over time, will be a regular stature and mechanism in skills and knowledge transfer in the area of trade. It is said that knowledge facilitates thinking which in turn facilitates foresight – and foresight is necessary to make decisions in life. I hope that this international collaborative effort will ultimately help all of the participants in effectively drawing effective trade policies. Looking forward, I do hope that we will see more institutional linkages and exchanges

between Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar in trade and other sectors, collaborative research and publications, and capacity building to enhance each other, in the spirit of mutual benefit and exchange.

As you will be aware, Cambodia's Trade Development Support Program (TDSP) and EIF's Tier 1 and CEDEP I will be closing down its implementation by the third quarter of next year. We are also uncertain of the continued EIF funding beyond 2016. With the ASEAN Community now in place, MoC needs to determine future trade-related technical assistance needs and ensure that aid-for-trade program continues to be mainstreamed in our institutional operations to development and implement effective trade policies and strategies. One step towards this undertaking is the preparation of a robust, ambitious, and far-reaching Medium-Term Plan (MTP) for Cambodia's Aid-for-Trade covering the period 2016-2020, which was funded by EIF and commissioned by UNDP.

I think that it will be enriching for all of you to share your Aid-for-Trade experiences and to bring your own cultural perspectives to the various topics we have in our Agenda. I would strongly recommend to the participants that you take this 5th Exchange Programme very seriously setting measureable goals for this unique learning and sharing experience.

For our part, we will also have the pleasure to take you through our reflection on the past years' experience in designing a Trade Sector Wide Approach (Trade SWAp) and in implementing two concurrent programs, the Trade Development Support Program (TDSP) and the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF). You will see how we have been able to increase trade mainstreaming and ownership of the programs through carefully designed implementation arrangements and the formation of inter-ministerial committees. We will also highlight in some of our presentations on the role of the private sector on trade, and the coordination mechanism in place called the Cambodia Government-Private Sector Forum (GPSF).

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you once again to the Kingdom of Wonders, Cambodia. We hope that your stay here will mark the start of a lasting relationship between us.

I also see enthusiastic faces and curious eyes all around the room. I hope that at the end of the Program your enthusiasm will be preserved if not furthered, while your curiosity will be satisfied in full. I wish you all fruitful and successful discussions for the two days ahead that will further enhance the good working cooperation between our countries.

After the Program, we encourage you to visit our beloved city of Siem Reap, the World Heritage Site, and the Angkor Temples. I thank you once again for your participation. I look forward to seeing you again and wish you a nice time in Cambodia.