



WELCOME REMARKS

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Senior Minister, Minister of Commerce

16th Sub-Steering Committee on Trade Development & Trade Related Investment (SSC-TD-TRI)

9AM, 07 March 2014

Venue: MoC Angkor Wat Conference Room

Excellencies and Lok Chumteav,
Representatives of Development Partners,
Representatives of Line Ministries,
Representatives of Private Sectors,
Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome all of you to the Ministry of Commerce on the occasion of this 16th meeting of the Sub-Steering Committee on Trade Development and Trade Related Investment and the first after the successful launch of Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy and SWAp Roadmap 2014-2018. I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all participants for taking the time to attend this important meeting today.

This first post CTIS launch meeting gives us a unique opportunity to make good use of the lessons learnt over the past 5 years in the implementation of Cambodia's trade development agenda. This should start with looking at ways and means to improve our trade development governance structure, in light of the numerous reforms the Ministry of Commerce is leading but also the numerous challenges the CTIS has identified. I look forward to receiving your candid views and suggestions on how to streamline and improve the SWAp governance framework, starting with the functioning of this Sub-Steering Committee.

As you all know, the past two months have been rich in trade-related events, following the announcements on MoC reforms I made at the end of November 2013. The Ministry of Commerce will give you an overview of how the key projects under our SWAp have contributed to accelerating the reforms, be them for increased automation of trade-related processes or for diversifying our export base and export markets. I am pleased to report in that context that following the successful review of our CEDEP I project on rice and silk and the launching of our CEDEP II project on cassava, fisheries and tourism last month, I have already instructed our Department of International Cooperation to liaise with most relevant stakeholders, in particular in the private sector, to help us formulate a CEDEP III proposal to support the rubber industry, take advantage of opportunities in the food-processing field as well as increase the attractiveness of our light manufacturing. Cambodia is a pilot country and success story for

the EIF, being the first country to update its CTIS for a 2nd time. As such, we have been invited to share our best practices with 48 other LDCs in June 2014.

To facilitate trade and investment in Cambodia, a number of reforms and other major initiatives have been taken place at the Ministry of Commerce to eliminate regulations and remove unnecessary procedures and requirements that hinder trade such as the elimination of the Certification of Origin (C/O) to countries that do not require it, the elimination of the annual filing for the GSP status for exporters, the automation of the C/O and company registration systems to eliminate unofficial payments and to reduce the time to process the documents. While waiting for the system to be up and running, we have designed a common form for factories to fill in and draft the C/O forms at their office then bring the electronic copy to print at MOC. We are also restructuring our organization and changing the mindset of our staff to prepare Cambodia to compete in the upcoming ASEAN Community 2015.

In addition, we have set up hotlines to receive all recommendations and suggestions from factories and exporters, and we have developed our Ministry's Facebook page for the public awareness to promote a transparency and communication platform.

Yet, discussions and dialogue on trade, as well as showing the link between trade, employment and poverty reduction should not be limited to the trade SWAp, the Sub-Steering Committee of the technical working groups. We need to reach out to those beneficiaries, our stakeholders so that they too understand how trade can alleviate poverty, by giving them concrete examples of Cambodia's success stories and try to motivate to participate in this endeavor. For this to happen, MoC is launching this month the MoC Seminar Series, a programme aims at reaching out to different segments of the population by bringing them up-to-date information on Cambodia's trade patterns and trade-related achievements.

It is also clear that development partners can play an important role in mainstreaming trade, including by better integration of trade into their own strategies, assistance programs, and activities. Alignment and clear divisions of labor between the Royal Government of Cambodia, donor partners, the private sector, and civil society are highlighted to play a part in ensuring that programs and project related to trade delivers. I look forward to hearing for instance how the Private Sector Development Technical Working Group plans to improve its current consultation and decision-making mechanisms. Linking progress under the SWAp with actual disbursements under individual project and programme is an example of an avenue worth exploring. We would like therefore to engage existing donors and other development partners in helping us formulate ambitious and far-reaching project proposals to help us implement CTIS recommendations immediately.

I wish all of you a pleasant morning ahead, and a fruitful discussion in meeting today.

Thank you!