



WELCOME REMARKS

H.E. TEKRETH KAMRANG

Secretary of State, Ministry of Commerce

Joint Mission

**Trade Development Support Program Implementation Support Mission
& EU-Results Oriented Mission (EU-ROM)**

Kick-Off Meeting, Tuesday, 22 September 2015

Venue: Angkor Wat Conference Room, MoC, Phnom Penh

Excellencies, Lauk Chum Teav

Team Leaders and Members of Implementation Support Mission and EU-ROM

Representatives of Development Partners,

Representatives of Line Ministries,

Representatives of Private Sector,

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning!

On behalf of the Senior Minister of the Ministry of Commerce, on behalf of my colleagues from the other ministries, and on my own behalf, I am pleased to welcome you all to the Ministry of Commerce to attend the kick-off meeting of the Joint World Bank TDSP Implementation Support Mission and the EU-Results Oriented Mission (EU-ROM). We are glad that EU-ROM can join us on this mission which is the final year of the implementation of TDSP.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our current donors of TDSP (EU, DANIDA and UNIDO) for their support to TDSP in particular and to the Trade SWAp as a whole. Without the financial support and technical assistance provided from 2009 up to the present, TDSP and the Trade SWAp would have some difficulties in the implementation of the various programmed activities and in reaching our goals.

As you are aware, TDSP plays a very important role in trade development in Cambodia. It does not help only the Ministry of Commerce, but also in shaping the destiny of the Cambodian economy, specifically in the trade and business sectors. Trade-related development assistance, such as TDSP, is recognized as an important development tool that facilitates the integration of Cambodia into the global economy through initiatives that expand trade. Indeed, the Trade Development Support Program has come a long way in achieving its Project Development Objective of contributing to an increase in the Royal Government of Cambodia's efficiency in formulating and implementing effective trade policies. TDSP was indeed very instrumental in reviewing trade policies related to trade facilitation, legal reforms, SPS and TBT. The trade policies adopted by the government and donors promote an export-led growth approach through rapid liberalization and further integration of Cambodia into the ASEAN and the global economy. In trade facilitation, the continuous expansion of the customs automation system; the elimination of the requirements for annual certificate of origin registration; and a customs valuation system have translated into significant progress in trade facilitation.

At this point, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that under the leadership of H.E. Senior Minister, Minister of Commerce, the Ministry of Commerce has gone through a lot of reforms starting with the restructuring of the organizational structure of MoC; automation of the business registration process, the issuance of the Certificate of Origin, and registration of trademarks, including the facilitation on the automation in the issuance of SPS Certificate at the General Department of Agriculture at MAFF, among others. These reforms at the Ministry of Commerce has transformed Cambodia's trade sector into an engine of economic growth, and were

aimed at making Cambodian business and trade more competitive, prepare ourselves for the country's integration to the ASEAN Economic Community, attract more foreign direct investment, improve the business and investment climate, and build trade-related infrastructure and institutions.

Coinciding with the Joint Mission of TDSP Implementation Support Mission and the EU-Results Oriented Mission, the Mission to prepare the Medium-Term Plan (MTP) is also here that will support the trade sector in the next five years. As we are introducing various reforms that will change the general character of the trade sector and the business climate in the country, we need to further technical assistance in at least 10 clusters. However, since the development of 10 priority clusters into individual concept notes for technical assistance is too complex, the job of the Mid-Term Plan Mission is to reduce them into five priority clusters. By the end of the MTP Mission, the Concept Notes of future technical assistance program for the trade sector will be drafted that are expected to provide the basic framework, in which we can organize and carry out the necessary development of our legal and institutional structures, pursue a more improved trade-centered development strategy, and other programs and activities that will further pursue our trade reform agenda. If we rise to this challenge, the future technical assistance programs on trade will be seen by future historians as a major turning point leading to the acceleration of Cambodia's development.

Time is of the essence. The vigorous pursuit of the multiple tasks ahead of us in implementing the various activities of the TDSP-funded projects will improve the competitiveness of our firms and create an environment that will be more attractive to new investors. In the next two weeks, the Joint Mission will: (i) review the results of the project implementation in meeting the Program Development Objectives; (ii) engage in constructive dialogue with implementing agencies; and (iii) to determine the feasibility of other successor program with TDSP. The review to be undertaken by the Joint Mission of the TDSP Implementation Support Mission and the EU-Results Oriented Mission is expected to guide us to improve the way we envisage in implementing the remaining eight projects, the system we handle trade sector development, the method we address bottlenecks faced by our exporters and pave the way for even more challenging outcomes. The review shall also provide guidelines on how to address shortcomings in implementing strategies not only for TDSP, for also for the Trade SWAp Roadmap and the Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy 2014-2018.

We understand at the Ministry of Commerce that trade has become 24/7 business and good performance in trade requires connectivity along the supply and value chains. Thus, while we are reviewing the various projects financed by TDSP, we must be able to address aggressively certain shortcomings in the way our implementing institutions are functioning on a daily basis. The complaints of business regarding overlapping and time consuming procedures need to be thoroughly examined and changes need to be incorporated in future programs on trade to be supported by donors.

I wish the Joint Mission of the TDSP Implementation Support Mission and the EU-Results Oriented Mission to have fruitful and meaningful discussions and deliberations with the implementing agencies.

Thank you for your attention!