



WELCOME REMARKS

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Senior Minister, Minister of Commerce

17th Sub-Steering Committee on Trade Development & Trade Related Investment (SSC-TD-TRI)

9am, 26 May 2014

Venue: Angkor Wat Conference Room, MoC, Phnom Penh

Representatives of Development Partners,
Representatives of Line Ministries,
Representatives of Private Sector
Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

I wish to welcome you all to the Ministry of Commerce in the occasion of this 17th meeting of the Sub-Steering Committee on Trade Development and Trade Related Investment. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and in my capacity as Chairman of this sub-steering committee, I would like to give my appreciation to all participants present today.

This session of the Sub-Steering Committee will allow all of you to be up-to-date on the recent development the Ministry of Commerce has spearheaded over the past three months.

Allow me first of all to brief you on the progress made under key reforms that are aimed at facilitating trade procedures for our exporters, for existing and future investors and for our local traders.

In a competitive environment where managing risk, reducing costs, and exploring savings opportunities are important drivers for trade professionals, investigating options for trade automation becomes critical. In this regard, a lot of trade automation processes are on top of the agenda at the Ministry of Commerce. Recognizing ICT's ability to contribute towards economic development and efficiency, the Royal Government of Cambodia supports the goal of achieving a paperless trading environment in both government and businesses. Various reforms have been introduced by the Ministry of Commerce that instituted introduction of new technologies to cover a wide range of transaction processes, namely:

- **Automation in the Issuance of Certificate of Origin:** A relevant aspect of the automation of the process in the issuance of Certificate of Origin is the inclusion of a digital signature on declarations and its storage on signed-document documentary bases and electronic payment system so as to allow more Cambodian exporters to take advantage of preferential customs duty rates that have been established by either bilateral agreements or the provisions arising from international treaties.

- **Trade Information Website (TIW).** The plan is to create a single platform, known as a Trade Information Portal or Trade Information Website (TIW), where all the information relating to trade from all the various agencies is aggregated under one roof and is readily available for searching and viewing. The establishment of a Trade Information Portal is seen as a first step towards the introduction of an electronic National Single Window, which is also increasingly being seen as a way of affording greater facilitation to trade. We are now at the stage of moving to develop the prototype for this website.
- **On-Line Business Registration System.** The proposed Business Registration automated process aims to reduce the number of steps, application forms and number of signatories needed in business registration and permit applications. It is a priority program in a bid to improve the business climate in the country.
- **Drafting of the E-Commerce Law:** The drafting of the E-Commerce Law in Cambodia is the initial step towards paperless trading initiatives in Cambodia. The draft E-Commerce Law defines the Royal Government of Cambodia's policies on electronic transactions, requiring the government to be a model user of electronic commerce, specifically in the delivery of core public services.
- **IPR Automation.** The Ministry of Commerce's Department of Intellectual Property Rights will soon cooperate with various intellectual property (IP) offices worldwide, users and other stakeholders to develop shared IP tools, services, standards, databases and electronic platforms.
- **SPS Automation.** The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, with assistance from the World Bank and the Ministry of Commerce is now in the process of harmonizing an automated SPS Clearance Application to Approval and Importation Procedures. **We will hear more details on this project proposal during this meeting.**

My team at the Ministry of Commerce will also present to you requests for additional funding in four on-going projects as well as two new projects to be considered under the Trade Development Support Programme (TDSP) that, if approved, will contribute to further accelerating the implementation of the above reforms. Before we do so, I encourage you all to provide your candid views on those projects during this meeting.

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 February, I instructed the 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 different industries, taking advantage of opportunities in the food-processing field, looking into the potential of some Cambodian products to qualify as Geographical Indication (GI) products as well as increase the attractiveness of the light manufacturing.

You will also remember that during the last SSC meeting, I instructed the Department of International Cooperation (DICO) to liaise with development partners and organize consultations on how to improve our Trade SWAp Governance Framework. We will hear from HE PAN Sorasak, Secretary of State, Ministry of Commerce, what recommendations have been drawn from those consultations and consider whether those recommendations can be applied immediately to improve the functioning, effectiveness and efficiency of the SWAP.

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. For this to happen, I am pleased to inform you that the Ministry of Commerce, based on the outstanding success of the first MoC Seminar Series held in March 2014, will organize no later than tomorrow a second series of workshop, this time on Cambodia Food System and Security, drawing students and other interested participants. 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, will continue and possible expand to other target audiences in coming months.

I am aware that this is a lot of information to be absorbed for one single session of the SSC.TD.TRI. As you may have observed, the Ministry of Commerce has developed several channels to ensure that information on reforms, projects and other initiatives led by the Ministry is shared regularly. I warmly encourage you to consult our MoC website and Facebook page to keep abreast of most recent development.

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

Thank you!