



**Opening Remarks of  
H.E. PAN Sorasak  
Secretary of State, EIF Focal Point, Ministry of Commerce**

***On the occasion of the  
13<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Sub-Steering Committee on  
Trade Development and Trade-Related Investment***

***Ministry of Commerce, February 21, 2013***

Excellencies, Lauk Chum Teav  
Representatives of Cambodia's Development Partners,  
Representatives of Line Ministries,  
Distinguished Participants,

Good morning,

On behalf of HE Cham Prasidh, Senior Minister, Minister of Commerce it is my pleasure to welcome you all to the Ministry of Commerce for the 13<sup>th</sup> ordinary meeting of the Sub-Steering Committee on Trade Development and Trade-Related Investment (SSC-TD-TRI).

Five years ago, some of you would remember that we had all gathered in Sihanoukville to formally launch the Trade SWAp as a means not only to increase the harmonization of development partner aid practices in Cambodia but also to develop a shared vision for Cambodia's trade sector development. As we have now embarked on the update of the DTIS 2007, feeding into the NSDP IV and the next rectangular strategy of the Royal Government of Cambodia, it is time to look back and learn from our successes and shortcomings.

Increased mainstreaming of trade into national development strategies in Cambodia has happened at three levels:

**At the policy level**, the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) has provided the country's essential policy context for mainstreaming trade and the fourth NSDP (NSDP-IV) that is being prepared will be no exception. The four main components of the current NSDP were configured around what is known in Cambodia as the 'Rectangular Strategy Framework (phase II), i.e. (i)

enhancement of the agriculture sector, (ii) rehabilitation and construction of physical infrastructure, (ii) private sector development and employment and (iv) capacity building and human resource development.

In NSDP III (2009-13), three out of the five priorities were directly linked to trade, while the remaining two are indirectly linked, showing a remarkable recognition of trade. The section on “Integration of Cambodia into the region and the world” provides for integration and cooperation with neighboring countries, regional entities and the WTO. Integration within ASEAN and formulation of WTO-compliant legislation were highlighted as focus areas

In that context, the Trade SWAp ensures a greater prioritization of the government’s trade development policy. The Trade SWAp also enhances ownership of the design, programming, and implementation of support provided by development partners under the Aid for Trade modality.

**At the institutional level**, this Sub-Steering Committee on Trade Development and Trade-related Investment oversees the Trade SWAp. The Government Private Sector Forum provides a framework for private sector advocacy and inputs on business and trade-related policies and measures. The Joint Technical Working Groups (TWGs) provide a means for government-donor coordination on a sectoral basis. A number of government-led steering committees work with the G-PSF and TWGs in an effort to strengthen coordination within government, but the overall impression is one of institutional fragmentation.

**At the international cooperation level**, since the global launch of the Aid for Trade initiative in 2005 and, particularly, after the inauguration of the 2007 Trade Integration Strategy and Trade SWAp in Cambodia, Aid for Trade inflows have increased considerably both in terms of commitments and disbursements. The catalytic role of the SWAp in coordinating aid delivery on trade reforms and institutional strengthening is acknowledged by all. The three pillars and their respective road maps are playing an increasing role in aligning donor assistance to national priorities.

Yet, while progress towards the overall Programme Development Objectives (PDOs) is showing already, with more and better discussion on results and outcomes ensuing, there is still a lot to be done in terms of improving efficiency and effectiveness: to name but a few, mainstreaming the policy response to poverty and gender inequalities, mainstreaming the policy response to regional integration are two areas where more needs to be done. Similarly the capacities of the private sector to engage fully with the policymaking process and to better participate in the dialogue efforts need to be strengthened, through the Private Sector Development TWG and better links between the G-PSF and the trade SWAp. There is scope to streamline the current

arrangements for institutional coordination and consultation. Finally, more and better participation of development partners to the SWAp mechanisms and better information on individual DPs contributions to the overall Trade SWAp goals need to be sought. We are hopeful that the DTIS update 2013 will provide the right forum for this to be discussed, approved and translated into concrete actions. I encourage DPs present here to work with the Ministry of Commerce to ensure the final product is an ambitious and satisfying one for all.

We are happy and thankful that our development partners keep a continued review of the SWAP and provide comments for the improvement on the implementation activities. In that regard, I welcome the participation today of the ADB, UNDP and the IFC, in addition to our more traditional partners (TDSP and EIF donors alike), who have accepted our invitation to come and share information on their on-going support to trade sector development. I also look forward to listening to the report of our MoC officials on progress made under the different programme components.

With these words, I now declare the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Sub-Steering Committee on Trade Development and Trade-Related Investment open.

Have a fruitful meeting.

Thank you!