



## Keynote Remarks

by

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**At the "20<sup>th</sup> Leaders Meeting and 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Forum of the National  
Association of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
in Southeast Asia"**

**Phnom Penh, 21 September 2023**



- ***Samdech Kittipritthbindit Bun Rany HUNSEN, President of Cambodian Red Cross;***
- ***Samdech Moha Rotsapheathikathipadi, Khuon Sodary, President of the National Assembly;***
- ***Excellencies members of the Royal Government;***
- ***Excellency Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN;***
- ***Mr. Alexander Matheou, Asia-Pacific Regional Director of IFRC;***
- ***Mr. Juan Pedro Schaerer, Head of ICRC's Regional Delegation to Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam;***
- ***Excellencies Ambassadors, Representatives from International Organizations;***
- ***Excellencies, Neak Ouknha, Ouknha, Ladies and Gentlemen!***

Today, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) headed by **Samdech Moha Bovor Thipadei, Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia**, I am greatly honored and pleased to deliver remarks at the opening ceremony of the **"20<sup>th</sup> Leaders Meeting and 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Forum of the National Association of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (RCRC) in Southeast Asia."** In this auspicious occasion, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to the noble presence

of **Samdech Kittipritthbindit Bun Rany HUNSEN**, President of the Cambodian Red Cross, Samdech, Excellencies, Distinguished national and international guests, especially all RCRC delegates in this meeting now.

Truly, hosting this meeting with the dialogue focusing on the theme on "**Youth Contribution for the future of Red Cross and Red Crescent/Humanitarian Innovation**" vividly reflects the commitment and high attention of Cambodia to contribute to enhancing humanitarian cooperation in the region and inspiring youth to address various global challenges. In this regard, I would like to express my high respect and appreciation for the effort made by **Cambodian Red Cross** under the competent and wise leadership of **Samdech Kittipritthbindit Bun Rany HUNSEN** who has led the collaboration with National Association of RCRC Societies in Southeast Asia to organize this leaders meeting.

We have learnt that the Covid-19 pandemic has claimed millions of lives and brought about the downturn in economic activity as well as has caused the loss of millions of jobs and declined in incomes. In addition, the world is now surrounded by numerous and acute challenges and risks, namely the scarring effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, the impact of the continued escalation of geo-political tensions between superpowers, the unfavorable economic situation of the largest economies, the increasing impact of climate change, etc. All of which have generated more difficulties to the daily lives of millions of people for the poor and vulnerable families across the globe and especially in our Southeast Asia region. In this regard, today's gathering is strategically important to monitor our work progress and exchange information as well as consideration to explore thought-provoking views and approaches and set out new directions and activities, aiming to address challenges more effectively, in particularly in response to vulnerability and humanitarian activities in our region.

**- *Samdech, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!***

In the shade of peace and development over the past 25 years under the leadership of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, who were the head of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the **Cambodian Red**

**Cross**, with youth as a solid backbone, has been playing an important and leading role in enhancing humanitarian activities as well as social cohesion in Cambodia through carrying out 3 key tasks, including **(1)**. Providing direct humanitarian aid to victims, supports to people's welfare, and preparing disaster preparedness mechanisms to mitigate the effects of socio-economic crises, natural disasters, and climate change; **(2)**. Increasing awareness and contributing to providing health care for the people and public health care in the community; and **(3)**. Enhancing humanitarian core values and movements. At the same time, the **Cambodian Red Cross** has not only strengthened the spirit of solidarity and mutual assistance in the society, but also deepened comprehensive international cooperation under both bilateral and multilateral frameworks at regional and global levels with the aim to increase efficiency in protecting lives, enhancing people's welfare and alleviating people's misery.

Taking this opportunity, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to express my high respect and sincere appreciation to **Samdech Kittipritthbindit Bun Rany HUNSEN** and **the Cambodian Red Cross** for the utmost effort and dedication to humanitarian works with many achievements in the mission to save people during difficult times, crises, and emergencies over the past years. Certainly, the victory that the RGC attained in the fight against Covid-19 crisis, particularly by reducing the socio-economic impacts to a minimum level, was inseparable from active participation of the **Cambodian Red Cross** that worked closely with national and international charities, as well as relevant international institutions such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to contribute to providing vaccines, finance, medical equipment and other donations.

Looking forward, given the arduous and complex context of international geopolitics, uncertain global economy, and climate change, I am of the view that youth is the indispensable driver to help address major social issues and bring about social prosperity and social cohesion, especially for humanitarian activities. Youth is our future in the capacity as leaders that

strive for innovative problem-solving and sustainable, inclusive, and resilient development of communities, societies, and economies. In this regard, I would like to share some key views to contribute to strengthening and expanding the role of youth in social activities widely, enhancing resilience to crises and climate change, and expanding and strengthening the role of the National Association of RCRC Societies, especially the **Cambodian Red Cross** as follows:

**1<sup>st</sup>.** Continuing to further strengthen cooperation and partnership in regional, sub-regional and international framework, both bilaterally and multilaterally, as well as to enhance collaboration from all key players including public institutions, multinational corporations, domestic private sector, philanthropist communities, local communities, research institutions, youth, and women to support the humanitarian movement of the RCRC and to promote socio-economic development. For instance, the Covid-19 crisis has showed that through the united efforts as one from all walks of life, we can successfully address public health issues in a highly innovative and efficient way.

**2<sup>nd</sup>.** Mainstreaming and empowering the central role of youth—who is the successor force in initiating humanitarian activities, regional and international partnership mechanisms, and actual implementation platforms—to ensure full participation in responding to challenges in a timely manner and generating positive socio-economic impacts that cover nationwide. In this regard, we need to create and expand discussion as well as debate forums and digital platforms for youth, which fosters the sharing of knowledge, exchange of experiences and new initiatives as well as innovations, and strengthen leadership capabilities and knowledge related to climate change, environment, technology, and public health.

**3<sup>rd</sup>.** Enhancing the provision of emergency aids and giving additional attention to promoting public and mental health care campaigns, enhancing education, and equipping digital skills in the local to response to the progress of digital technologies, enhancing protection for migrant workers and migrants in general and enhancing women's participation in economic activities. In this regard, I anticipate the need to create and expand

partnership with the private sector, through mainstreaming these activities in their Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) programs.

**4<sup>th</sup>.** Continuing to carry out humanitarian activities and strictly adhere to "**Culture of Sharing**" in the region—that is helping each other from one country to another which encounters more hardships, in terms of experience, technical skills and resources through our national association of the RCRC societies mechanisms. In addition, ensuring financial adequacy and stability is most important priority task to continue the mission of saving people, with a primary focus on promoting transparency and spending the budget in a targeted manner which are the key elements to mobilize additional supports from local and international philanthropists. I would like to call on international institutions, development partners, donor communities, and local and international philanthropists to continually review the possibility of supporting social and humanitarian activities to the maximum, aimed at contributing to enhancing our resilience to climate change and natural disasters.

**5<sup>th</sup>.** Enhancing startups, leveraging digital technologies, and encouraging private investment based on social entrepreneurship models is essential to provide innovative solutions in the local and to amplify the role of youth for severing humanitarian causes and addressing various social issues. In this regard, the Royal Government of Cambodia has been promoting digital transformation in the society and economy through increasing public investment on developing digital infrastructure, establishing an investment-conducive ecosystem, creating digital platforms, enhancing digital literacy and TVET-integrated digital skills, and promoting innovation accelerator programs.

**6<sup>th</sup>.** Climate change is a global threat without borders, especially for less developed countries, which are very vulnerable to natural disasters. I call on all stakeholders to expand cooperation closely and cohesively within the national, regional, and global framework and call for strong participation of all circles to address this issue and prepare for an effective and timely response. RGC has attached important focus on strengthening adaptability to climate change by increasing public investment on developing climate-

resilient physical infrastructure, enhancing institutional capacity, raising awareness to climate change, and paying high attention to green and sustainable development through providing financial supports and various incentive policies.

**- *Samdech, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!***

For Cambodia, the Royal Government of Cambodia of the Seventh Legislature of the National Assembly headed by **Samdech Thipadei, HUN MANET**, has introduced the "**Pentagonal Strategy-Phase I**", which sets out **5** Strategic Objectives including: **(1)**. Ensuring an average economic growth rate of around 7% per annum; **(2)**. Creating more jobs, in terms of both quantity and quality, especially for the youth; **(3)**. Achieving the poverty reduction target to below 10%; **(4)**. Continuing to strengthen governance capacity, improving the quality of public institutions, and continuing to promote a favorable environment for business, investment, and trade; **(5)**. Ensuring sustainable socio-economic development.

Overall, the Royal Government has attached high priority to "**People**", especially youth and women by focusing on well-being, livelihood, and productivity. In this regard, we will promote the implementation of **six priority policy programs**, four of which focus primarily on the poor and vulnerable groups to enhance resilience and inclusion, namely **(1)**. Expanding healthcare services towards universal health coverage; **(2)**. Providing nationwide vocational and technical training for youths from poor and at-risk households; **(3)**. Institutionalizing the national social assistance program for poor households, vulnerable member of poor households, and at-risk households; **(4)**. Implementing the "**Informal Economy Development Strategy**" to enable these target groups to participate in the formal economy and seize the benefits from the formal social protection system and other governmental supports and incentives.

In the medium and long term, we will strive to achieve "**resiliency**" that extend over the public institutions, economic, financial, human capital and social, and environmental sectors in response to climate change, which is aimed to maintain momentum for peace, economic growth, and overall development as a on one hand, and build and strengthen a strong foundation

for accelerating the development of the nation towards realizing the Cambodia Vision 2050 as a high-income country on the other hand, through the implementation **Pentagonal Strategy-Phase I** comprising of Core and Five Strategic Pentagons as follows:

1. The Core. Strengthening Governance and enhance capacity of public institution,
2. 1<sup>st</sup> Pentagon: Human Capital Development,
3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Pentagon: Economic Diversification and Competitiveness Enhancement,
4. 3<sup>rd</sup> Pentagon: Development of Private Sector and Employment,
5. 4<sup>th</sup> Pentagon: Resilient, Sustainable, and Inclusive Development,
6. 5<sup>th</sup> Pentagon: Development of Digital Economy and Society.

Finally, I would like to wish the **"20<sup>th</sup> Leaders Meeting and 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Forum of the National Association of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Southeast Asia"** success and fruitful outcome as planned, and wish Samdech, Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen as well as Distinguished international and national guests, all the four gems of Buddhist blessing: Longevity, Nobility, Health, and Strength.

***Thank You!***