



KEYNOTES

BY H.E. Mr.PAN SORASAK, MINISTER OF COMMERCE OF CAMBODIA

AT THE HIGH-LEVEL THEMATIC ROUNDTABLE ON
REGIONAL SUPPLY CHAINS AND CONNECTIVITY
OF THE 78TH SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

24 May 2022, at 3:00-3:30PM Cambodia Time

Pre-Recorded Video (05 Minutes)

- **H.E. Mr. Collen Vixen Kelapile**, President of the Economic and Social Council (TBC);
- **Mr. Albert Park**, Chief Economist of ADB;
- **Dr Deborah Elms**, President, Asia Business Trade Association;
- Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

Very good afternoon from Cambodia!

1. First and foremost, I have a great pleasure and honor to be invited to deliver my keynotes on **“Regional Supply Chains and Connectivity”** at the 78th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.
2. Indeed, it has been two and a half years since the world has started to live in a new normal. Not only has the global spread of COVID-19 affected public health, endangering the lives of our people, but it has also plagued regional and global socio-economic development including supply chains and connectivity. This very moment, however, has us all focus on how to turn all these challenges into opportunities.
3. In this regard, I would like to contribute my humble views to the discussion as follows:
On regional supply chain resilience, I am of the view that no unjustifiable restrictive measures in disguise shall be imposed and sustaining open and liberalized markets for trade and investment to ensure free flow of goods and services is imperative. This necessitates collective efforts and strengthened regionalism and multilateralism.

Cambodia, on one hand, has been working closely and actively with other Members of the ASEAN and the WTO to ensure that there will not be trade-restrictive measures imposed to disrupt the free flow of foodstuffs, medical supplies, and other essential goods across borders. On the other hand, we join with other countries in committing to an open, connected, inclusive, and more deepened regional and global economic integration.

As the Chair of ASEAN for 2022 with endorsed 19 Priority Economic Deliverables, Cambodia will promote, accelerate and harmonize efforts to revitalize all sectors to build a sustainable, inclusive and resilient ASEAN community at the post-COVID-19 crisis, which is in line with the theme “**ASEAN A.C.T.: Addressing Challenges Together**”. ASEAN has also committed to work together to find solution in mitigating the impact from current global crisis and to keep ASEAN region connected.

Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen!

4. **On Trade Digitalization**, ASEAN ought to ensure full and effective implementation of ASEAN Digital Transformation Agenda, including the Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap on ASEAN Digital Transformation Agenda, the ASEAN Digital Integration Framework Action Plan 2019-2025, the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025, the ASEAN Agreement on E-Commerce, and its plan of action, and the RCEP Agreement, particularly its E-commerce chapter.

Both the ASEAN Agreement on E-Commerce and the RCEP Agreement, particularly its E-commerce chapter, are aimed at:

- facilitating cross-border e-commerce transactions,
 - contributing to improving ecosystem, creating an environment of trust and confidence in the use of e-commerce and electronic payment; and
 - deepening cooperation amongst the Parties to further develop and intensify the use of e-commerce to spurr inclusive growth and to narrow the development gap among parties.
5. As Cambodia is also a party to the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade Agreement in Asia and the Pacific, it is worth exploring the synergies and complementarities between this Framework Agreement and the above-mentioned ASEAN Digital Transformation Agenda.
 6. Indeed, adapting to digital economy transformation, Cambodia has established several key laws, such as Law on E-Commerce, Law on Consumer Protection and Law on Competition, which serve as an essential impetus to develop the legal framework for digital economy and e-commerce.

Cambodia's Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework 2021-2035 has also been introduced and this framework is a phase-by-phase approach to transform Cambodia into a digital economy and society by 2035 and contains 3 pillars: digital citizen, digital government, and digital business. Cambodia has already established the Committee on Digital Economy and Business which serves as mechanism in promoting Cambodia's digital economy.

7. In addition, I am of the view that we shall also engage with and enhance private sector's role in addressing the critical barriers, including but not limited to:
 - Addressing regional disparities by narrowing "the digital divide" and ensuring more equitable access to technology;
 - Supporting the adoption of technology by MSMEs and upskilling MSMEs, and improving productivity through digital skills
 - Addressing ICT infrastructure issues, including the affordability and widely accessible internet access so that digital services can be widely used, and
 - Protecting data and cyber security.
8. **Last but not least, on connectivity**, Cambodia has already begun to digitize public services and build key platforms such as the Cambodia National Single Window, which we are planning for its phase 3. The National Single Window provides interlinked digital public services platforms from various Ministries and Agencies for businesses to conduct trade. It also enables electronic submission, increases transparency and traceability, and offers zero charges for using. This, in turn, creates a user-friendly platform, favorable for the current situation of pandemic and also contributes to reducing compliance costs. This is not only part of the ASEAN Single Window initiative but in direct response to the provision of the Framework Agreement. At the bilateral level, Cambodia has signed several free trade agreements which covered chapters on connectivity and promotion of value chain.
9. At regional level, Cambodia, along with all other ASEAN Member States, has also joined the ASEAN Single Window Live Operation which further expedites cargo clearance, promoting ASEAN trade facilitation and economic integration by enabling the electronic exchange of border trade-related documents among ASEAN Member States.

Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen!

10. I would like to conclude my keynotes by expressing my appreciation to the UNESCAP for inviting me to this important discussion. May I wish Excellency, Colleagues, and all participants fruitful and satisfactory deliberations.

Thank you for your kind attention!