



H.E. Mr. PRAK SOKHONN
Minister Attached to the Prime Minister,
Vice President of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance
Authority (CMAA), and President-Designate of the 11MSP

Welcoming Statement at the Opening Ceremony of the Eleventh
Meeting of the States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Convention (11MSP)

Sunday 27 November 2011, Peace Palace, Phnom Penh

- Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo **HUN SEN**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia and Lok Chumteav Dr. **BUN RANY HUNSEN**
- Madame **HELEN CLARK**, UNDP Administrator and undg Chair,
- H.E. Gazmend Turdiu, President of the 10MSP,
- Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

On this special occasion I would like to express my deep gratitude to Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo **HUN SEN**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia and Lok Chumteav Dr. **BUN RANY HUNSEN** for kindly presiding over this ceremony. I am also pleased and honored to warmly welcome all distinguished delegates from around the world to Phnom Penh, our charming capital. I hope that your trip has been a pleasant one.

It is truly an honor and privilege for the Kingdom of Cambodia to host and preside over the Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (11MSP). It is the political commitment at the highest level of our Government and its genuine commitment to the Convention that have shaped our decision to host and assume presidency of the meeting. When Cambodia was first approached and proposed to host Meeting of the States Parties, the very question we asked was how we could help bring about the best outcome of such meeting. The 11MSP

will not be merely symbolic in its kind, but significant for the people of Cambodia and the world given the many decisions it will make in one of the most mine-affected states. It will be the second time that the Convention returns to Asia and the Pacific, a region that is very dynamic economically and diverse culturally, yet is home to one of the most landmines-affected regions in the world.

The 11MSP will be a special and unique milestone in the life of the Convention as it returns to where it emerged two decades ago. It will also be a good opportunity for the Convention to celebrate its 20 years of achievements, while at the same time collectively agree and decisively fulfill our respective commitments and obligations for a mine-free world.

I am also grateful for the high level representation and generous consideration that States Parties, States not Parties, international and regional organizations, NGOs and civil society have given to this landmark meeting. Two decades ago, the human tragedy and suffering of men, women and children in places such as our country have prompted a global movement to ban landmines. Today our collective pursuit remains persistent and majority of the global community is still resolved to end such tragedy for once and forever. As the world comes to Cambodia, we all embrace a golden opportunity where we can make important decisions to save more lives and spare more arms and limbs. We cannot afford to give away this opportunity.

Next week, we will have a full list of agenda to fulfill and an impressive series of side events that are being organized by different stakeholders to further our noble causes and to share the wealth of knowledge and experiences which would benefit all of us regardless of our different status in and views of the Convention. Cambodia certainly has a great deal of lessons and experience to share and it would be worthwhile for all our friends to exchange.

Samdech Techo Prime Minister and Lok Chumteav,

Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Even wars have long ended, the sounds of explosion and screams of the injured in the mine-affected communities around the globe are still haunting us to this day and for many more years to come. The human cost of anti-personnel mines, their protracted consequences and impediments to socio-economic development have by far outweighed any benefits landmines can arguably bring in today's modern and civilized world. For the past 20 years, we all have made a history in the way in which we addressed the landmine problems. Our remarkable achievements continue to be the source of our inspiration and determination to sustain the momentum of progress until our respective missions are complete. Cambodia has always been at the fore front of the commitment to free the world from landmines. We are confident that as the international community gathers here in Phnom Penh our balls of progress will keep rolling.

I am also pleased to note that our joint universalization effort at regional and global levels continues to strengthen with Tuvalu and South Sudan being our newest members and more states are set to join the Convention. I also praise States that are not yet parties to the Convention for continuing to engage in the work of the Convention and support mine action in the affected states in various ways.

Last but not least I would like to take this opportunity to express once again our profound gratitude to all of our development partners for their sustained commitment and support to mine action in Cambodia and other countries around the world.

Finally, I would like to thank Samdech Techo Prime Minister and Lok Chumteav, Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen for your kind presence this evening. For those delegates who are first timers in Phnom Penh and Cambodia, I hope you will enjoy our beautiful city and have a chance to explore Phnom Penh and the wonder of Angkor Wat after this meeting. I wish Samdech Techo Prime Minister and Lok Chumteav, Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen the four gems of Buddha's blessings.

Thank you!