

Statement

By H.E Sabo Ojano

Secretary of State of Ministry of Environment and Head Cambodia Delegation

The first Substantive Session of the ad hoc open-ended working group entitled

“On Towards a Global Pact for the Environment”

14-18 January, 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya

- H.E. Acting Executive Director, UN Environment
- Co-Chairs H.E. Amal Mudallali, Permanent Representative of Lebanon and
- Co-Chairs H.E. Francisco Duarte Lopes, Permanent Representative of Portugal,
- Distinguish Colleagues Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and His Excellency Say Samal as a Chair of National Council for Sustainable Development and as a Minister of Ministry of Environment I am very delighted to participate the First Substantive Ad Hoc working group that was established by General Assembly Resolution 72/277 date 10 May, 2018 entitled “Toward a Global Pact for Environment” and On the other hand, I would like to convey my sincere thanks and appreciation to the United Nation Environment Program (UNEP) for host this technical meeting at United Nation Building in Nairobi from 14-18 January, 2019.

Take this opportunity, I am proud to share with you that the Royal Government of Cambodia in her fifth mandate had achieved remarkable progress in socio-economic development. Peace and political stability, sustained annual economic growth of around 7 percent and freedom of information have opened up new opportunities for the Government to effectively carry out various reforms including the environment and natural resources sectors. These achievements have helped cultivating and reintegrating Cambodian people with international communities.

The government’s commitment for mainstreaming the environment and natural resources sustainability into the national development framework is demonstrated through the establishment of the National Council for Sustainable Development in 2015 and the formulation of National Environment Strategy and Action Plan (NESAP) 2016-2023.

The Ministry of Environment has been modernised through the restructuring of its management structure and additional policy development namely NESAP and Environment Code. Moreover, the Ministry’s human resource capacity has been

substantially developed to cope with the increasing workload. At the same time, the annual public budget allocation for the environment sector has been steadily increased.

In this term of the government, we have focused on environment protection, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development by promoting the development and implementation of relevant policies responding to the Sustainable Development Goals of Cambodia and the United Nations. For environment protection, we have strengthened the implementation of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) for both public and private development projects, as well as enforcing the laws and regulations concerning pollution control. For natural resources management, biodiversity conservation and local communities' livelihood improvement, we have increased the number of our national parks and wildlife sanctuaries from 23 to 50 and established 3 biodiversity conservation corridors making the size of our protected areas system to around 7.5 million hectares (some 40 percent of our country surface areas) – a sizable protected areas not just for Cambodia but our region and the world as a whole. Recognizing the role of natural capital for socio-economic development, National Forums on Protection and Conservation of Natural Resources have been organized annually since 2016 under presidency of Samdech Techo Prime Minister.

Moreover, effective management of economic land concessions and natural resources has been strengthened. We have ceased all logging operations in the country and no logging licenses to be renewed or issued. Our forest degradation rate has dropped to below one percent in 2016 and we aim to neutralize emission from forest sector by 2040. We are not issuing any new economic land concessions for rubber or palm oil plantations and existing economic land concessions are being strictly monitored and evaluated. We have put an end to the land disputes and curbing illegal logging and land encroachment. Carbon trading schemes are being implemented and our protected areas have been turned into ecotourism destinations across the country. We applied one dollar per air tickets and payments for ecosystem services for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection services.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has delegated waste management, pollution control and natural resources management functions, with provision of necessary resources, to sub-national administrations. We are cleaning up our industrial sites. Our people are generating less wastes these days, recycle more than ever before and more environmentally conscious. We are making cities across Cambodia environmentally sustainable and livable. Four of our cities were recognised by the ASEAN for their outstanding achievements on environmental commitment. They have followed previous achievements and in turn they set example for others to follow.

However, there are various regional and global challenges to be jointly addressed in a timely manner. In this regards, our hard works today and in the future will go a long way in creating a more sustainable and green environment for our people.

Based on 10 May 2018, the United Nation General Assembly (the Assembly) adopted, resolution entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment”. According to the resolution’s text, the Assembly decided to establish an ad hoc open-ended working group to consider a technical and evidence-based report that identifies and assesses possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments with a view to strengthening of implementation.

Take into account, Cambodia willing to cooperate and work with all member state to contribute any technical comment as much as possible to resolve the gap of the report.

I wish the First Substantive meeting of the Ad hoc open-ended working group success.

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