

National Environment Strategy and Action Plan National Workshop
Phnom Penh, 10 August 2016

Welcome Remarks

By

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Your Excellency Say Samal, Minister for Environment,

Senior officials of the Ministry of Environment, National Council for Sustainable Development, and other government ministries,

Colleagues from international/multilateral development agencies, Ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning.

It is my privilege to welcome you to this national consultation workshop. On behalf of the Asian Development Bank, I would like to congratulate the Ministry of Environment for preparing the National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan.

With support from the Asian Development Bank's Greater Mekong Sub-region Environment Operations Center, the formulation of the National Environment Strategy and Action Plan commenced in November 2015 with an extensive consultative process. The result is a scientifically sound and financially practical strategy with a broad-based ownership. This strong ownership will enable the NESAP to be a basis for different sector agencies, working and collaborating together to realize a shared vision of environment sustainability.

ADB's engagement with the Ministry of Environment and other government ministries in preparing the draft NESAP underscores the

main emphasis of ADB's Partnership with the Royal Government of Cambodia and the region – which is reducing poverty and vulnerability. The Country Partnership Strategy embeds ADB's strategic agendas of environmentally sustainable and inclusive economic growth, as well as regional cooperation and integration. I am pleased to note that these concepts are also at the heart of NESAP. ADB is privileged, therefore, to be taking a lead role in supporting the Ministry to develop this strategy through technical and advisory support under the GMS Core Environment Program.

The draft NESAP will become Cambodia's first major cross-cutting and national environmental strategy in more than a decade. Together with an ongoing parallel initiative to prepare a National Environmental Code, it exemplifies the progress that the Royal Government of Cambodia is making towards strengthening its environmental management activities. Cambodia's commitment to mainstream environment sustainability, climate change, disaster risk reduction, and social inclusion into its national development framework is further demonstrated by the recent establishment of its National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD).

The draft NESAP also incorporates global and regional best practices and key principles of sustainable development outlined in major international and regional agreements. These include the United Nations Resolution on Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Nationally Determined Contributions, and the Convention on Biodiversity's Aichi targets.

These steps to modernize the country's environmental management system are vital to ensure the sustainability of Cambodia's rapidly developing growth sectors.

Excellency,

The adoption of the NESAP will help ensure a more systematic implementation of environmental policies in line with the government's Rectangular Strategy. The NESAP provides a comprehensive framework to be applied over the next eight years to ensure that economic development is efficient, sustainable, and inclusive. It identifies and prioritizes policy and financing tools to ensure that environmental protection and sustainable natural resource management are pillars of economic development in Cambodia. It will be the basis for Development Partner support, including the ADB, in this important area.

To ensure the successful implementation of the NESAP, the Ministry of Environment, the National Council for Sustainable Development, and sector ministries will require sufficient institutional and technical capacity. In this regard, I would like to congratulate the Royal Government of Cambodia for its recent institutional reforms which are expected to strengthen government performance.

I am pleased to note that the ADB support to Cambodia on environment issues continues to expand. Apart from its NESAP support, the GMS Core Environment Program is helping to strengthen the application of safeguards by supporting Environmental Impact Assessment capacity building. In addition, ADB is implementing major investment projects in the areas of biodiversity conservation corridors, water resources

management and climate friendly agri-business value chain development. Underlying these investments are technical assistance projects for sustainable natural resources management, sustainable forest management, water accounting, and climate resilience.

While recognizing that ensuring environmental sustainability and inclusive economic growth is an aspirational target, I am confident that the Ministry of Environment, in collaboration with other ministries, will be successful in adopting and implementing a robust and practical NESAP; and that this will significantly contribute toward the goal of sustainable economic growth and ultimately - an improved quality of life of all Cambodians.

Thank you.