



Speech of H.E. LY Thuch
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Royal Government of Cambodia

at

**the Seventieth Second Session of ESCAP:
Cambodian Perspective on science, technology and innovation for sustainable development**

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*Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates*

At the outset, allow me to express my sincere thanks and appreciations to the ESCAP Secretariat on behalf of my delegation for organizing this important event. I also congratulate ESCAP for continuous support of the member states for adaptation and implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. To meet this ambitious agenda, science, technology and innovation (STI) will indeed be critical. By identifying STI as an important means of implementation in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), I am confident that ESCAP under the leadership and direction of *Your Excellency Dr. Shamshad Akhtar*, the United Nations under Secretary General and the Executive Secretary of ESCAP is making a commitment to support countries to harness STI for inclusive and sustainable development.

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I would like to take this opportunity to present a brief perspective from Cambodia in relation to science, technology and innovation for sustainable development.

Initially May I brief you that under the visionary leadership of *Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen*, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, peace is reestablished in my country; security is guaranteed; and stability is very visible. Cambodia has been experiencing dramatic transformations in socio-economic development. Cambodia's GDP has surged from around USD 2,500 million in 1993 to USD 18,400 million in 2015, which is equivalent to a sevenfold increase. This underlines the government's constant efforts to implement pro-active policies and strategies as well as governance reform in the economic sector with clear direction and an appropriate approach. Although growing from a low economic base, Cambodia's journey of development and economic structural transformation has lifted millions of Cambodians out of poverty and given them hope and confidence in their future, family and the nation. In short, Cambodia has been enjoying prosperity beyond expectation.

At present, we are experiencing a rapid pace of socio-economic growth along with the favorable conditions created by regional and global integration; advancement of and improved access to science, technology, innovation; opportunities arising from political stability and full peace in the

country; and national unity and territorial integrity stemming from the win-win policy that results in national reconciliation and social harmony.

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Recently our government adopted SDGs for the next 15 years of its agenda. The goals and targets of SDGs are indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable. However, it is recognized that each government will be required to set its own national targets as well as indicators to adapt differing national circumstances, capacities and priorities, consistent with internationally agreed standards, and guided by the global ambitions expressed in the SDGs. For this, my government is now preparing a localization of SDGs including goals, targets and indicators in the Cambodian context, through an inclusive consultative process with all relevant stakeholders.

The objectives of localization of the SDGs are:

- (i) Building common understanding among policy makers, parliamentarians, inter-ministerial government officials, local authorities, development partners, and other stakeholders including the private sector on the nature of the new development agenda.
- (ii) Ensuring leadership and ownership of the government in the process of localizing the SDGs by setting prioritized indicators and targets and taking into account the different challenges, national realities, capacities and levels of development.
- (iii) Having a common understanding and agreement among key actors and multi-stakeholders on the goals, targets, and indicators of SDGs. This means there needs to be agreement on the sources of data including a relevant definition of each indicator and its purpose, benefits, approaches, and methodology, and agreement on how the process contributes to the localization of the SDGs.

The localization process will produce a final SDG framework called “**Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs)**” with a clear periodical review and the mandate of key relevant stakeholders, which will be endorsed by the Royal Government of Cambodia in mid-2017 for the next development framework and action plan. To meet the national realities of Cambodia, Demining, Removing Explosive Remnants of Wars (ERW), and Victim Assistance will be included and become the 18th Cambodian Sustainable Development Goal.

Science, technology and innovation are crucially important in national development, particularly sustainable process. It is a known fact that no nation can develop without science, technology and innovation. Given the role of STI to sustain development and growth covering the three SDG’s dimensions, the Cambodian government has recently embarked on the promotion of science and technology in the educational system and other key sectors, leading to a future innovative society.

In this regard, we appreciate our development partners in sharing and assisting science, technology and innovation for socio-economic development of the country, attempting to leapfrog the time wasted in its hardship period. Admitting limited resource, it is important that the development of STI be in concerted effort and focused direction, for which we acknowledge the support of the Republic of Korea in assisting the development of Cambodia’s National Science and Technology Master Plan, 2014-2020, focusing on establishing S&T foundation environment, activating S&T climate, securing Research and Development (R&D) capabilities, and empowering of S&T based core industry capabilities. Access to new and appropriate technologies promote steady improvements in living conditions, which can be lifesaving for the populations, drive productivity gains which ensure rising incomes, and eventually nurture greener, more inclusive societies.

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In order to facilitate the advancement of the work on STI, I would like to share some recommendations:

First, there is a need for agreement on a coherent conceptual framework for understanding STI, as well as its linkages with and role in promoting the three dimensions of sustainable development. While STIs are linked, each element has its own set of issues and supporting policies. For science, the development of education and vocational training takes center stage.

Second, both the government and private sectors have important roles and responsibilities to play in adding value in achieving sustainable development goals. While companies develop new products and services, government can likewise be innovative in the delivery of public services in areas such as education, health and disaster risk reduction etc.

Third, breaking barriers on trade and investment should better help to promote technology transfer and innovation, as well as to raise competitiveness and productivity. Innovation can be spurred on by promoting entrepreneurship; the establishment of special economic and technology zones; ecosystems for venture capital, business and technology incubators; as well as better support for small and medium-sized enterprises, which are some of the leading sources of innovation.

Fourth, adequacy of legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks for national STI policy formulation and effective implementation is critical. Approaches and frameworks to harness intellectual property rights, and to provide the right incentives for companies to undertake new Research and Development (R&D), and to commercialize R&D results, are also very important.

Fifth, financing of STI is crucial. While financing of technologies and most R&D appears to be undertaken by non-governmental actors, there is a key role for governments to tackle those areas to deliver high developmental returns rather than the financial returns prioritized by private business.

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In conclusion, we sincerely acknowledge ESCAP for its leadership, and deep commitment in bringing us – the Asia and the Pacific region together for the 2030 Agenda.

It is very timely and fortunate to have all of us here – the Eminent Scholars – the Experts – the Architects of policymaking of the region to adopt and implement the agenda that focuses on science, technology and innovation to nurture inclusiveness and shared prosperity.

Finally, allow me to once again express my government's sincere appreciation to the UN system and to our development partners for their continued cooperation and support for Cambodia and her people.

I wish the 72nd Session a successful outcome, and I wish you all peace and prosperity.

I thank you for your attention.

