

**Welcome Remarks by
H.E. BUN Narith Director-General of the APSARA Authority
at the Signing Ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding
between APSARA Authority and China Civil Engineering Construction
Corporation**

on

**“The Project of Sustainable Management of the Existing Resources for
Conservation and Sustainable Development in the Angkor World Heritage
Site and the Siem Reap Region, Cambodia”**

**Presided over by H.E. Dr. Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister in charge
of the Council of Ministers and Chairman of APSARA Authority**

Siem Reap, 27 June 2013

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- H.E. Dr. Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister in charge of the Council of Ministers and Chairman of APSARA Authority
 - Mr. Liu Zhiming, Chairman of China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation
 - H.E. Azedine Beschaouch, Scientific Standing Secretary of the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor
 - Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of APSARA Authority, I warmly welcome H.E. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister in Charge of Council of Ministers and Chairman of APSARA Authority, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen for their participation in the Signing Ceremony of MOU between APSARA Authority and China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation.

APSARA Authority has a great honor to have H.E. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister in charge of the Council of Ministers and Chairman of APSARA Authority who presides over the Signing Ceremony in this occasion at the same time of the Closing Ceremony of 37th World Heritage Committee Session which will be held at Angkor World Heritage site this evening. We are very proud that the Kingdom of Cambodia hosts for the first time the 37th World Heritage Committee Session in Phnom Penh from June 16, 2013, and closes the session in the evening on June 27, 2013 in Angkor Site.

I would like to take this opportunity to review a brief about the important dates related to the Angkor World Heritage Site as follows:

- In December 1992, Angkor Site area of 401 km² is inscribed in the World Heritage List in danger.

- In October 1993, the International Coordinating Committee for Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor has been established.
- In February 1995, the Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap, called "APSARA Authority", was established.
- In 2004, the Angkor Site has been removed from the List of World Heritage in danger to become an ordinary World Heritage site.

I would like to recall that during the first phase of its operation from 1992 to 2004, APSARA Authority has concentrated its efforts to the prevention of cultural artifacts looting, the conservation and restoration of the temples that faced the high risk of collapsing, the assurance of security and the management of the site as the number tourists increased progressively and provided employment opportunities to the local people.

With the full support from the Royal Government and the collaboration from relevant partners the conservation of Angkor has been done successfully: the artifacts looting was almost completely eradicated and the security has been established everywhere in the region. With the help from the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor there are more than 20 countries and international organizations such as France, Japan and China...which come to work at Angkor in the field of conservation and restoration of the temples and, at the same time, to train Cambodian experts. Based on this success, the World Heritage Committee decided to withdraw the Angkor Site from the List of World Heritage in danger in 2004.

Since then, the APSARA Authority conducts in parallel another main mission, that is the sustainable development: the management of natural resources, the management of tourism and the improvement of the livelihoods of the communities. For these purposes the APSARA Authority has reorganized its structure by creating new departments such as the department of water management, department of forestry, cultural landscape and environment, department of agriculture and community development, etc. The main realization of APSARA Authority is the water management in the region of Siem Reap by restoring the historic water network. This has enabled to avoid floods in Angkor Park as well as in Siem Reap town in 2012.

The present Memory of Understanding on "the Project of Sustainable Management of the Existing Resources for Conservation and Sustainable Development in Angkor World Heritage Site and Siem Reap Region" will strengthen the capacity of APSARA Authority to deal with the sustainable development in the Angkor region, especially in the region of Kulen Mountain which is the source of water for the whole region of Siem Reap. Kulen is also a cultural and historical site rich in the archaeological remains. It was the place of origin of the Angkor civilization. Actually the site faces a tremendous problem of deforestation.

At the end, I would like to express my deepest thanks to His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister, yours Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen for having given to us the honor of your presence and I would like to take this opportunity to present my best wishes to you all.

Thank you for your kind attention.