

Remarks By
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Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia
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- Madame President!

My participation in this General Assembly is in the context that Cambodian Nation is enjoying the dividends of peace, stability and rapid development which had never been before in her modern history. Cambodia is a successful case of a war-torn country which has succeeded in making a complete and proudful transformation.

Previously infamous for its killing fields, an unstable region caused by armed conflicts and dangerous mine disposals, an economically backward country mired in poverty and food insecurity, Cambodia now enjoys full peace, and has become a popular tourist destination in Southeast Asia; a food exporter; an outstanding performer in poverty reduction and improvement in social indicators. Cambodia is recognized as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, which recently has successfully graduated from its status as a low-income country to a lower-middle income country, owing to its high economic growth at around 7% per annum over the past two decades.

Notably known for its armed struggle for the power and changes of government, Cambodia is now governed by the rule of law and firmly respects the multi-party liberal democracy, with regular, free and fair elections, held to enable its people to choose the country's leadership.

In the general election of Cambodia's Sixth Legislature of the National Assembly in July, nearly 7 million Cambodians, or 83.02% of the total registered voters, cast their votes and decided on their political choices freely and without any coercion, threat or violence. Twenty registered political parties have competed in the election which clearly demonstrated a legitimate representation of pluralist politics and reflected what thousands of domestic and international observers described as a stable democratic process in Cambodia and as a free, fair, and credible election.

By their votes, Cambodians reaffirmed their desire for peace, stability and long-lasting sustainable development. Indeed, the free choice of the Cambodian people and the legitimate result of this election is not a subject for question or debate. Some external circles, who have fed on ambition to interfere in the domestic affairs of Cambodia, still fail to see the quality and integrity of our election process by issuing statements against or attacking the election outcome. Such actions are a serious assault on the will of the Cambodian people.

- Madame President!

I would like to draw the attention of all UN members to the vitality of the United Nations Charter. It depends on all of us to provide a proper respect for this crucial document by avoiding the interference, damaging, or disrupting sovereignty of an independent state. We are heartedly regretful to highlight the fact that human rights nowadays have become "**a mission to impose civilization**" for some powerful nations or, perhaps, as their operating standards as the pretext for interference under the name of political right protection.

As a result, the imposition of unilateral sanctions has become a popular weapon of powerful nations in managing their international politics, which is completely driven by their geopolitical agendas. This is nothing but a use of the brutal force of a particular state to impose its will on other sovereign states. In a world, where the eras of imperialism and colonialism became the history, we have to acknowledge that not all nations in this General Assembly shall follow the governing model of any country. Big countries should not attempt to install their administrative system on other small countries, because those small countries also possess sovereignty and legitimate aspiration to maintain their own identities. In the modern-days of interdependence, such an old style coercive mindset should be put to rest. Together, both big and small countries, must respect one another and uphold the rules of the international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

- Madame President!

Currently, the world is facing severe instabilities while the threats to peace are coming in many forms, more than what we have witnessed in the past 25 years. We are all living in a world faced with fragility, unpredictability and complicated changes, as challenges are coming from various fronts, including the increase in persistent conflicts and unprecedented humanitarian crises.

We are deeply concerned by the tensions made by a first world class superpower in the diplomatic circle and by the conflicts happening in many places thank to the interference by this superpower. We are also deeply concerned by the rush decisions made by this superpower to urgently withdraw from major international agreements that threaten the core legitimacy of international legal order. These unilateral actions have undermined the state-to-state relationships and caused tension in the international community. Yet, what puts the most pressure is a direct attack on multilateralism. Undoubtedly, in our globalized world, all things are connected. If we begin to adhere to the protectionist policy, unilateralism and trade war, we are closing the door by not welcoming any trade and investment opportunities which have provided prosperity to our countries, both small and big ones, for many decades. Eventually, we all are poorer; our economies will decline; financial capital will shrink and the ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as, addressing the challenges caused by climate change would be seriously affected. Those factors will make poor countries suffer prolonged poverty, and thus we are more vulnerable to the dangerous ideology of terrorism, extremism, and regional conflicts.

Cambodia, as a small economy, believes in the interests of rule-based international cooperation. As a matter of fact, we all have been prospering because of globalization. We all are thus convinced that the global trade should not be hindered by the imposition of unilateral tariffs; yet it should be enhanced and supported through the adherence to conducive policies for trade and investment, as well as, the provision of special preferential treatments to developing countries. Stability and diversification in the financial sector need to be further encouraged to promote innovation and development. All in all, we need to jointly maintain and strengthen **"multilateralism"**.

In fact, peace without development is not sustainable. In this context, **"Sustainable Development Goals"** of the United Nations play a pivotal role in guiding toward prosperity for the peoples. Cambodia views the SDGs as an important opportunity to mobilize efforts in achieving poverty reduction, as well as, sustainable and inclusive development. The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) soon will approve **"Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs)"** which has been fully localized, and we will use those goals to shape our medium and long-term policies and plans for Cambodia.

Moreover, the conflict prevention is a precondition for a long-lasting peace. The UN Peacekeeping forces play a vital leading role in these efforts. As a result, Cambodia greatly welcomes the vision of **H.E. António Guterres**, the UN Secretary-General, on peace-building and peace-keeping, particularly further paying continued attention to the conflict prevention. Cambodia is a consistent supporter of the architecture of peace and security of the United Nations. For instance, for the last 12 years, Cambodia has sent thousands of Blue Helmet forces to join peace-keeping missions under the umbrella of the United Nations. However, peace-keeping is facing unprecedented challenges since the non-state actors have waged rebellion wars against our peace-keeping forces, which have caused many lives and disabilities. We are sincerely indebted to the sacrifice of these UN peace-keeping heroes. Nonetheless, their death and sacrifice have not distorted our commitment to further contributing to the cause of this great mission.

Another severe and complicated threat which is the barriers to the long-lasting peace is terrorism. They have disintegrated communities, worsened the conflicts and weakened the stability of the whole region. Currently, the battles against terrorism have become even more complex and modernized since the terrorists are turning to the cyberspace for their malevolent operation. Profoundly, the cross-border nature of terrorism requires us to build a multilateral cooperation with concerted coordination, including **"countermeasures"** and **"preventive measures"**.

Addressing climate change is another key element for the success of the 2030 Agenda, which requires urgent and focused attention from the global community. The fundamentals for action on climate change are undoubtedly rested upon the Paris Agreement. In this spirit, Cambodia will provide full support to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to organize the Climate Summit next year to foster the inspiration to further address climate change.

- Madame President!

Finally, I would like to emphasize that Cambodia fully supports the UN's global leadership, and commits to implementing our shared responsibility to build a peaceful and equitable human society who enjoys sustainable and inclusive development.

Thank you for your attention!