

## Remarks

*By*

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**Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia**

*At the*

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**"One Asia, Diverse Strengths"**

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សម្តេចនាយករដ្ឋមន្ត្រី

- ***His Excellency Prayuth Chan-Ocha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom Thailand,***
- ***His Majesty the Sultan, Excellency Leaders of Participating Countries,***
- ***Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,***

A the outset, please allow me to begin by thanking His Excellency **Prayuth Chan-Ocha**, Prime Minister of Kingdom of Thailand, for inviting me to the **2<sup>nd</sup> Asia Cooperation Dialogue(ACD) Summit**. I would like to express my profound gratitude and deep appreciation to the people and Government of Thailand for the warm hospitality extended to my delegation.

Cambodians of the view that this summit serves as an important platform for exchanges of views and experiences on cooperation policy for Asia as a whole. The expansion of ACD membership from just 18 countries in 2002 to 34 countries this year reaffirms credibility and relevancy of ACD for other countries in the world. As all of us are fully aware, we ASEAN member states have just embarked upon a new phase of the ASEAN Economic Community this year. In this context, I believe that ACD's mechanisms would complement our existing ASEAN frameworks and regional cooperation frameworks led by ASEAN or with ASEAN as the core.

Certainly, achieving an Asian Community is a long and strenuous journey. Nonetheless, to realize this long-term goal I think that we

should start by working together to ensure that Asia is a continent of shared peace, stability, harmony, progress and prosperity. In this regard, I would like to share my perspectives on the roles of ACD as follows:

**First:** Cambodia supports the strengthening of the ACD as a regional dialogue to promote Asia's cooperation based on the ACD's founding principles such as positive thinking, informality, voluntarism and respect for diversity. Taking into account the diversity of ACD members, I would like to stress that two other key principles of cooperation – inclusiveness and complementarity – also play an important role in increasing efficiency and ensuring harmony of our cooperation.

**Second:** Cambodia stresses the importance of having a balanced agenda on cross-cutting issues and challenges in Asia such as poverty alleviation, connectivity, the nexus of food, and water and energy security, coupled with climate change. In this context, I fully support the ACD's decision to consolidate the 20 areas of cooperation to just 6 pillars of cooperation and the **Adoption of ACD Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030**, which is well in line with the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Cambodia is of the view that the adoption of this vision presents an opportunity for the ACD Member States to contribute to the success of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and welcomes the initiatives and practical activities that complement the six ACD's priorities.

**Third:** Amongst the 6 priority pillars, I would like to highlight two of them. The first one is **"Regional Connectivity"**, especially physical infrastructure connectivity, which is regarded as one of the most important priorities and requires a large amount of financing. As such, the ACD should seek to ensure the synergy with other important regional initiatives like China's **"One Belt, One Road"** and **"Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)"** as well as Japan's **"Partnership for Quality Infrastructure"** in Asia. These are the new sources of financing that would respond to the massive needs for infrastructure financing in our region. The second one is **"Culture and Tourism"**. Cambodia regards this pillar as a major contributor to its

economic growth, and views tourism as an important part of people-to-people connectivity. In this regard, ACD could promote greater flows of Asian tourists within wider Asian region through more cultural-exchange activities, youth exchange programs, festivals, sports events and academic seminars.

**Fourth:** I am very pleased to see that ACD has evolved from a Government-to-Government initiative to an initiative that engages private sector as another pillar of cooperation. In this spirit, I welcome the launch of the **1<sup>st</sup> ACD Connect Business Forum** under the theme **"Innovative Financial Connectivity for a Sustainable Asia"**. Moving forward, I encourage more organizations of this kind of forum in order to allow businesses from ACD countries to promote stronger business networks, in particular the SMEs as well as female and young entrepreneurs.

**- Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

Before ending, I would like to congratulate Iran for hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> ACD Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in Tabriz last August 2016. As a Tourism Co-Prime Mover, Cambodia is pleased to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> ACD Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in Siem Reap in 2017. I would like to invite all ACD members to attend this meeting, and visit and explore Cambodia's Angkor Wat temple, which is one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Finally, I also would like to congratulate the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for its role as the incoming ACD Chair; and I am confident that under the UAE's chairmanship, more progresses will be made towards realizing the ACD's Vision for Asia Cooperation 2030.

***Thank You!***