

Speech delivered by:
His Excellency Mr. TEP NGORN
President of the Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia
Head of the Cambodian Parliament Delegation
At the 137th IPU Assembly
(14-18 October 2107- St. Petersburg, Russian Federation)

- **Your Excellency Saber Hossain Chowdhury, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**
- **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1- The National Parliamentary delegation of the Kingdom of Cambodia would like to express our great pleasure in participating in the 137th IPU Assembly held in St. Petersburg, the beautiful and historic city of the Russian Federation. We have been very impressed by the outstanding hospitality and warm welcome given to us by the People of Russia, and we would like to express our deep gratitude to the host of this event--the Federal Council and the State Duma of the Russian Federation.

2- The topic of this Assembly “*Promoting cultural pluralism and peace through inter-faith and inter-ethnic dialogue* “ has been chosen as a result of the problems in current world politics that have led to many regions being threatened by complex tensions, conflicts and civil wars. Many of these stem from extremism and discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, culture, language and race.

In spite of the fact that the current trends in globalization and regionalization have been progressing along with scientific, technological and ICT growth, the pluralism of humankind still remains under a cloud of violence exacerbated by extremism, radicalization, hatred, xenophobia and exclusiveness.

3- As one of the nations with oldest culture and civilization in the region, Cambodia has historical heritage, cultural and art richness, particularly legendary of Angkor Wat, that it can share with other

nations in the region and the world. Cambodia highly values the concepts of peace and national reconciliation, living together in harmony at all levels. This embraces respect for the human rights of everyone, including their right to follow and practice any religion of their choosing.

As representatives of a nation decimated by genocide and civil war during the Cold War period, the Parliament of Cambodia fully supports the Royal Government of Cambodia's many activities and multi-sector policies aimed at maintaining a balance between respect for pluralism and social inclusiveness in order to build social stability to improve the lives of every Cambodian citizen.

In this respect, the Kingdom of Cambodia has set forth many national plans and policies, such as the Rectangular Strategy, the National Strategic Development Plan, National Policies on the Development of Indigenous People, Social Protection Policies, and the Sustainable Development Goals, etc. These plans and policies aim to strengthen and develop the economy, society, culture, the environment, and the livelihoods of citizens in all sectors. The government plans to reduce poverty and the income gap between rich and poor, as well as to implement gender equity. These goals are being achieved through job creation, and the equitable distribution of the wealth that accompanies economic growth.

- 4- The Kingdom of Cambodia recognizes and respects human rights as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and all treaties and conventions related to human rights including the rights of women and children. All Cambodian citizens have equal rights under the law, and enjoy the same freedom and obligations regardless of race, color, sex, language, religious belief, political tendency, ethnic origin, social position, wealth or status.
- 5- Due to our supreme responsibility, the Cambodian Parliament have always focused on the following priorities:

- Cooperating with the Royal Government to organize elections in an atmosphere of peace and non-violence, to hold elections that are free and fair and to achieve a result that is acceptable to all. This is fundamental to strengthening and developing the multi-party liberal democracy of Cambodia as a result of which Cambodian citizens can thrive.
- Promoting the Rule of Law, social justice, equality under the law, and the exercise of freedom, and political, economic and socio-cultural rights.
- Developing further the culture of dialogue, exchange and participation so that all social strata can contribute to society to their full potential in a spirit of mutual cooperation, valuing unity and solidarity, and nurturing pride in their national identity. At the same time ensuring that the socially marginalized and vulnerable, such as displaced people, migrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled, and women and children, receive special attention.
- Improving the relationships between the Legislative, Executive and Judiciary branches of government, authorities at subnational level, NGOs, other associations and media organizations in order to strengthen and develop the effective and equitable enforcement of the law. And ensuring that the branches of government continue to work together to govern the State in a responsible manner, and to better manage society, the economy, culture, and the environment for the benefit of all citizens.
- Actively preventing political deceptions which incite discrimination, xenophobia, and political extremism and thereby create turmoil and destabilize society. The government likewise counters any bid to incite war with the foreign community, or any attempt to defame or use violence against any of Cambodia's neighbors or friends.
- Deterring interference in Cambodia's internal affairs by hostile agents using media, social networks or forums to introduce

negative ideologies, including color revolutions, which distort the true situation in Cambodia. Such movements aim to hinder progress and weaken Cambodia by creating internal political conflict, and spread distrust between citizens and among different ethnic groups.

- Encouraging the process of Cambodia's integration into a regional and global framework with a new vision of equal cooperation based on mutual interests, and promoting Cambodia's development in all sectors. The Kingdom of Cambodia is an independent, sovereign, permanently neutral, non-aligned, and indivisible State.

I would like to wish the general discussion and the 137th IPU Assembly proceeds with success and achieves the result as fruitful as expected.

Thank you for your attention!