

STATEMENT
of
H.E. Dr SOK Siphana
Guest of the Host and Chairman of the Asian Vision Institute
At the 43rd General Assembly of ASEAN-Interparliamentary Assembly (AIPA)
21st November 2022, 16:00-17:00
Ballroom III, Sokha Hotel, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

- *Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei HENG SAMRIN, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and Chair of the 43rd ASEAN Interparliamentary Assembly (AIPA),*
- *Heads and Members of Delegations,*
- *Distinguished Guests, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. It is my distinct honor and privilege to be invited as a Guest of the Host to deliver an intervention at the 43rd AIPA General Assembly on behalf of the Asian Vision Institute (AVI).

2. First, I would like to congratulate the Royal Government of Cambodia for successfully hosting the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits and Related Summits two weeks ago. Despite all the worrisome concerns surrounding the global geo-political and geo-economic landscape, Cambodia and its circle of ASEAN friends and development partners had managed to deliver on a series of outstanding achievements, aimed at addressing existing and emerging challenges, and, most importantly, at fostering a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive ASEAN Community.

3. I am pleased that the usual annual ASEAN-AIPA Leaders' Interface Meeting has also taken place as part of the summit agenda. In my humble view, this Interface has provided a great opportunity for our

parliamentarians to engage in dialogue with leaders of the executive branches on matters of great concerns to our people and communities. Let me congratulate the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia for the successful convening of this Leaders' Interface. Certainly, much wisdom and insights were expressed there, and I feel that they would enrich the discussions at this 43rd AIPA General Assembly as well.

4. *“Advancing Together for a Sustainable, Resilient and Inclusive ASEAN”* is a very pertinent theme of AIPA General Assembly this year. Now more than ever we must recognize the roles that parliaments and parliamentarians can play in representing the wills of the people in response to regional and international challenges, particularly at moments of multifold crisis that we are now living in. Cambodia's Chairmanship of this AIPA assembly is such a concrete example of its active contribution to strengthening multilateralism and engaging dialogues for peace.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. We, at the Asian Vision Institute (AVI), are thrilled to have this honor to address such an august body to share our perspectives on regional and global issues and how they can affect the lives and livelihoods of the common people. As a young, home-grown policy think-tank, AVI was founded in 2019 as an independent applied research organization with the aspirations and ideals of improving societies in Asia. Our activities touch on many critical areas of today's

world, ranging from analysis on foreign policy, sustainable development and economic integration, cultural diplomacy, digital economy, legal studies, and women empowerment, among others.

6. Throughout this entire year, AVI has been a steadfast supporter of Cambodia's ASEAN Chairmanship, particularly in its effort to strengthen multilateralism and economic integration as well as to support the Royal Government in its endeavor to resolve the Myanmar crisis.

7. AVI has also provided steady support to the National Assembly of Cambodia in its role as the Chair of this year's AIPA General Assembly. I am proud to recognize the contributions of my colleagues in their respective fields of expertise in various inter-parliamentary mechanisms. As I said earlier, parliamentary diplomacy is becoming more and more important in the evolving regional economic and security architectures, especially in the areas of preventive diplomacy and confidence-building measures.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. ASEAN is facing unprecedented challenges. The strategic competition among major powers has led to mounting pressure on small states like my country, Cambodia. Moreover, the effects of the war in Ukraine are reflected in increased food and energy prices. The political instability in Myanmar and the protracted violence inflicted by the

military upon innocent civilians have cast serious doubts on the relevance of ASEAN as a regional body.

9. On the economic front, the rapid adoption of digital technologies and the fast -evolving digital economy among our societies have created new opportunities for social mobility and income growth for the young tech-savvy population. But it is a double-edge sword as the potential digital divide will be felt on our women and small businessowners with inadequate digital skills and knowledge. Criminal activities conducted through cyberspace will hinder growth and destabilize our region. For its part, climate change will continue to weigh on our societies as an existential threat.

10. All of these challenges will converge to form a perfect storm. Without concerted collective efforts to muster solid responses from both the legislative and executive branches, I can say without a slight doubt that the prospect will not be good at all for mankind. However, being an optimist by nature, I am confident that this AIPA General Assembly will send a strong message to the Executives to express their unwavering partnership to jointly tackle all these challenges so that the economic well-being and livelihoods of their respective constituents are protected. For its part, AVI stands ready to contribute our expertise and policy recommendations to AIPA and AIPA parliamentary members to achieve this noble quest.

11. On that note, let me once again express my thanks to you, Honorable Chair, for giving me the opportunity to address this prestigious body. I yield the floor back to you. Thank You.
