Country Statement

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Senior Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia

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- *Madam Chair, Your Excellency Ms. Arzu Rana Deuba, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nepal;*
- *Your Excellency Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and ESCAP Executive Secretary;*
- *Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,*

It is a great honor to address this 81st session on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia. I wish to extend sincere gratitude to ESCAP Executive Secretary and Secretariat for organizing this important session and to the Government and people of Thailand for their warm hospitality.

The theme this year—"Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development"—could not be more relevant. Our region is home to over two billion urban residents and countless

rising cities. And yet, these centers of growth face rising pressures—from climate shocks and inequality to infrastructure gaps and resource stress. The answers to these challenges lie not in isolation, but in cooperation.

Cambodia's story offers a glimpse into what regional partnership and resilience can achieve.

From Recovery to Resilience: Cambodia's Urban Journey

Madam Chair,
Honorable Delegates,

Just four decades ago, Cambodia's cities were silent. The fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979 left Phnom Penh empty and many provinces abandoned. The land was unsafe, scarred by landmines. Our cities had no voice—only ruins and fear.

But through the visionary leadership of **former Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen**, we began rebuilding—brick by brick, policy by policy. His Rectangular Strategy laid the foundation: peace and security, infrastructure, education, and economic growth. Cities like

Phnom Penh, Battambang, and Siem Reap were reborn—transformed into vibrant centers of trade, learning, and opportunity.

At the ASEAN Mayors Forum in 2022, Samdech Hun Sen said, "To grow a strong, green, and fair community, we must begin with smart, tough, and connected cities." These words guide us still.

Urban Risks Are Shared Risks

Recent disasters have reminded us all of our vulnerabilities. The 7.7-magnitude earthquake that struck near Mandalay just weeks ago claimed thousands of lives and damaged infrastructure as far as Bangkok. Typhoons, floods, and earthquakes across our region continue to threaten urban centers and test our resilience.
Cambodia has not suffered such disasters recently—but we are not immune. These events are a powerful reminder that resilience must be built before the storm arrives—and that we must learn from one another.

ESCAP plays a crucial role in this. The knowledge shared from Japan's earthquake-proof infrastructure, Indonesia's community-based preparedness, and Thailand's rebuilding strategies strengthens us all. This is the value of regional cooperation.

New Leadership, Same Vision: Building Sustainable Cities

Today, under the leadership of **Prime Minister Samdech Hun Manet**, Cambodia continues to invest in urban resilience, with an eye to the future. His Pentagonal Strategy – Phase I puts sustainable cities at the heart of development. At the Cambodia–Republic of Korea Summit last year, he pledged that Cambodia will generate 70% of its energy from clean sources by 2030 and reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

This is not just a climate goal—it is a growth strategy. It reflects a deep belief that resilient cities must also be green, inclusive, and economically viable.

Our Phnom Penh Sustainable City Plan 2018–2030 is being implemented with support from ASEAN and ESCAP partners. It is improving waste systems, flood resilience, and public transport. We are part of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network, exchanging experience and innovation that benefit not just Cambodia but the entire region.

Looking Ahead: A Call to Action

Madam Chair, Honorable Delegates,

Cambodia's journey—from landmines to lively cities—proves that transformation is possible. From a nation once dependent on aid, we are now nearing graduation from the Least Developed Country category. But we know that sustainable urban growth must leave no one behind.

As we reflect on the goals of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the New Urban Agenda, let us renew our commitment to shared action. Regional solidarity is our strength.

Let us build cities where digital technology drives inclusion, where clean energy powers homes and hospitals, where people of all backgrounds find dignity and opportunity. Let us work together to make urban spaces engines of peace, prosperity, and resilience. Cambodia stands ready to share, to learn, and to grow—together with all of you.

Thank you for your attention.