Opening Remarks by Pauline Tamesis, the UN Resident Coordinator Office

- His Excellency Kitti Setha Bandit Chhay Than, Senior Minister and Minister of Planning
Good morning. My best wishes to all for a healthy start to 2022.

Thank you, Your Excellency Kittisetha Bandit, Senior Minister Chhay Than, and Ministry of Planning for co-organizing today’s workshop on “Preparing for a Sustainable LDC Graduation of Cambodia.”

On behalf of the United Nations system, I once again congratulate the Royal Government of Cambodia for having met, for the first time the criteria for graduating from LDC status at the 2021 Triennial Review of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP).

Today’s workshop is part of our effort to respond to the needs of the Royal Government in preparing for LDC graduation, discussed at our initial official in June 2021.

The objective for today is to enhance understanding of policymakers from various line ministries of the process, requirements and implications of LDC graduation for Cambodia. This workshop also provides a platform for policymakers to raise concerns about potential institutional challenges in the graduation process, as well as to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration with relevant UN entities.
Our discussions will also touch upon the review of the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) and the preparatory process towards the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA). I hope this will help prepare the Cambodian delegation to constructively participate in the LDC5 Conference in Doha, Qatar later in 2022.

Our colleagues from UNESCAP will share in detail the preparation for graduation process and the Doha Programme of Action.

Allow me at this time to convey two points:

First, is to note that the 2021 triennial review, due to timing of data available, did not take into account the impact of the pandemic COVID-19, which have significantly set back the country’s development gains.

In 2020, Cambodia’s economy witnessed a sharp contraction of 3.1%, and poverty was estimated to have risen to 17.8% [based on the results from the 2019-2020 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey].

In 2021, the Cambodian economy is estimated to recover with a growth rate of around 2.3%. The immediate economic outlook remains marked by high uncertainty and complexity driven by the rapidly changing pandemic context and resulting virus mutations and global policy responses.
To meet the graduation criteria again at the second triennial review in 2024, Cambodia needs to accelerate its efforts to recover better from the pandemic and reduce vulnerability and inequality.

This leads me to my second point. **Crisis is an opportunity for transformation.** The pandemic provides a unique opportunity to transform Cambodia’s socio-economic development model to be more inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

I congratulate the Royal Government of Cambodia for recently rolling out the “**Strategic Framework and Programs for Economic Recovery 2021-2023**,” which identifies key priorities under pillars of recovery, reform, and resilience. This is a major step forward to ensure that the aspiration to turn the COVID-19 crisis into opportunity becomes a reality.

The successful implementation of the Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery will be indispensable for accelerating progress towards the accomplishment of Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs). We need to hold firm to our development compass, the CSDGs, while striving to promote effective implementation and linkage between the Strategic Framework and Programs for Economic Recovery and the CSDGs.

The UN system’s commitment is to support Royal Government’s efforts to implement the Recovery Framework, including the important means of implementation. Sustainable financing for recovery and CSDGs will ensure collective efforts to recover better from the pandemic will accelerate CSDG achievement and enable Cambodia to transition from LDC status in a smooth and sustainable manner.
In closing, I express once again appreciation to the Ministry of Planning and UNESCAP, who together with my office, organized this important workshop.

I am also grateful to all participants from relevant line ministries/institutions and UN entities for joining the workshop today.

I wish you all a successful year and a fruitful discussion.

Thank you very much.

Speech by

Pauline Tamesis
RCO
Resident Coordinator
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