



## Remarks

**Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei HUN MANET,  
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia  
in the Eightieth Session of the UN-ESCAP  
“Leveraging Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development  
in Asia and the Pacific”  
Bangkok, 22 April 2024**



- *Your Excellency Battsetseg Batmunkh, Chair of the Eightieth Session,*
- *Your Excellency Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP,*
- *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!*

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to **Excellency Dr. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana**, and the entire ESCAP team for organizing this important event, which is a testament to our shared commitment to shaping a brighter future for the Asia-Pacific region. I would like to highly commend ESCAP for your relentless dedication to fostering sustainable development and innovation across our region. I would also like to express my appreciation to **Excellency Srettha Thavisin, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand**, and the people of Thailand for the warm hospitality.

- *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!*

Indeed, digital innovation is crucial to sustainable, inclusive, and resilient development, especially in addressing inequalities

exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as in timely responding to growing emerging needs of our people. Through the use of technology, we can narrow the gap in accessing to the opportunities and essential services. In other words, it enables us to redistribute the benefits of the development to all people, equally.

Like other countries, Cambodia considers digital technology as a critical driver for the socio-economic development in the context of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. **On the one hand**, it creates new engines of growth and promotes access to essential public services as well as contributes to building a modern and civilized society, where citizens receive inclusive benefits with reliability and heightened security, and **on the other hand**, it can help maintain national identity and culture. In this regard, the Royal Government of the 7<sup>th</sup> legislature of the National Assembly has adopted the **“Pentagonal Strategy - Phase I”**, with five key priorities, namely *People, Road, Water, Electricity, and Technology*, of which Digital Technology is a new priority set out in the fifth strategic pentagon, **‘Building a Digital Economy and Society.’** Moreover, the Royal Government has also implemented various policy frameworks, including **“Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework of Cambodia 2021-2035”**, **“Cambodia Digital Government Policy 2022-2035”**, **“Cambodia Financial Technology Development Policy 2023-2028”**, and **“National Policy on Science, Technology and Innovation 2020-2030”**. These policy frameworks involve all stakeholders in the society including the government, citizens and private sector, and together contributing to achieving Cambodia's ambition of **“Cambodia Vision 2050”**.

In global and regional context, Cambodia has been proactively engaging in digital policy agenda to achieve global

and regional digital development goals, including the **“ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025”** and the UN’s **“Digital Strategy 2022-2025”**. Also, Cambodia has actively involved in other ASEAN digital initiatives, particularly the preparation of the **“ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA)”**, a framework aimed to provide a strategic and comprehensive regional approach to promote timely and inclusive digitalization in the region. The implementation of this framework will expand the size of ASEAN digital economy from USD 1 trillion to USD 2 trillion by 2030. In addition, ASEAN has already considered digital economy as a priority chapter in various agreements such as the **ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA)**, and **ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA 3.0)**, and **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)**.

Indeed, Cambodia, ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific region have made significant progress in digitalization over the last few years. However, we still face some challenges, including digital gap between countries, and between cities and rural areas, the lack of infrastructure and the access to quality internet service, the limited level of digital literacy of the people, the lack of adoption and implementation of digital technology, digital trading and services, cyber security and cybercrime. These challenges have hampered abilities of countries to realize full growth potential of their economies. In addition, war, conflicts, and remnants of war also present obstacles for some countries to fully embrace digital technology as an engine for growth.

In this regard, for the case of Cambodia, the issue of demining and removal of explosive remnants of war remains as an obstacle for overall development, including the bridging of digital gap and access to quality internet services. Recognizing the necessity of this issue, mine actions have been embedded as Cambodia’s 18<sup>th</sup>

Sustainable Development Goal. Cambodia remains committed to fulfilling its obligations under the “**Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Destruction of Mines**”, known as the **Ottawa Convention**. As the President of the Ottawa Convention this year, Cambodia presides over and hosts the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Conference, titled “**The Siem Reap-Angkor Summit on a Mine-Free World**”, on 25-29 November 2024. I call for joint efforts to eliminate this deadly weapon, as well as to support and participate in this historic event.

Also, allow me to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to UN-ESCAP for assisting Cambodia in drafting a National Mine Action Policy, which is the first time that UN-ESCAP has participated in mine action.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!*

I hope that through this forum, we will be able to collaboratively address the above challenges as well as to provide concrete suggestions for the development and implementation of emerging digital technologies to promptly respond to the emerging needs of the people in the Asia-Pacific region on the path towards a fully digital economy and society.

Finally, I strongly believe that, together, we will be able to make a difference and create a secure and prosperous future for all, and together, we will be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. I wish all ESCAP members great success in this 80<sup>th</sup> Commission Session today.

*Thank you!*