

# Kingdom of Cambodia

## Nation Religion King

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### **Remark by Representative of Indigenous People of Por, Chornng, Suoy and Saouch Congratulations on the 12<sup>th</sup> Global Day and 2<sup>nd</sup> Event on Indigenous People in Cambodia**

- *Your Excellency **Leu Laysreng**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Rural Development and Chairman of the meeting*
- *Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen Representatives of Ministries and Departments concerned*
- *Representatives of local and international organizations*
- *Representatives of indigenous people from 15 provinces participating in your important Day today,*

As the representative of indigenous people from Battambang, Pursat, Koh Kong, Kampong Speu and Sihanouk Ville, with permission from Mr. Chairman, I have the honour to make some remarks on the occasion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Global Day and 2<sup>nd</sup> Event on indigenous people in Cambodia.

This commemoration is importantly meant to ensure and protect the rights of indigenous people in Cambodia. I would like to bring to your attention that our indigenous people in the above mentioned areas share similarity with other indigenous people in culture and tradition of our livelihood such as animal husbandry and swidden cultivation ...etc. We are living in strong unity. Apart from rice cultivation, we go into the forest to collect forest products such as chopping rattan and plucking vine, tapping resin, picking cardamom, searching for quintessence of Kreusna tree, which are the main source of our family's income.

It is worthwhile to note that the indigenous people's livelihood depending on forest product does not destroy the forest because we think that land and forest that have been preserved by our ancestors are our lives. On the other hand, on the part of belief, we believe in Neakta/spirit of old people, old people, and offer food to their spirit after they die; and we also strongly observe Buddhism. However, we speak different languages depending on each particular indigenous people, and there are no written characters. During Pol Pot regime, our nation lost everything having been observed and worshipped; we were forced to do extremely hard work and some of us and even the whole families were killed.

At present, with great attention given by the Royal Government, national and international organizations, the rights of indigenous people has been reinforced; we have understood many national and international laws through a series of consultative meeting, training courses and such an important day as today. The indigenous people determine to retain this knowledge and broadly transmit it to the community with the aims for national development. We all will always remember and thank the Royal Government for its support for making this event possible, which is part of the recognition of the rights of our indigenous people.

Taking the opportunity of the high presence of Your Excellency Deputy Prime Minister, and through Your Excellency, we would like to request to the government that land safety is ensured, forest and natural resources are protected, some social services are provided such as health, and language education is offered, and the rights of indigenous people are more broadly promoted in Cambodia.

In conclusion, on behalf of indigenous people in the said four provinces, once again I would like to extend my thanks to Your Excellency Mr. Chairman, local and international organizations, and all participants. I would like to wish you all the best.

***Thank you,***

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### Remark by Representative of the Northeastern Indigenous People Congratulatory on the 12<sup>th</sup> Global Day and 2<sup>nd</sup> Event on Indigenous People in Cambodia

- *Your Excellency **Leu Laysreng**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Rural Development and Chairman of the meeting*
- *Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen Representatives of public agencies and Department of Rural Development local and international organizations*
- *Ladies and gentlemen,*

Today is an auspicious day that we the indigenous people are participating in the Global Day on Indigenous People of the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2006 at Wat Phnom, which is the historical site of Cambodia. This the second time in itself for the indigenous people in Cambodia to honour the indigenous people's event followed by the first one held in 2005 at Hotel Sunway.

We the indigenous people from the Northeastern part of Cambodia would like to brief you all about our culture and tradition that we are depending on natural resources, forest product and swidden cultivation for making our livelihood. Our daily lives are indeed linking to and depending on nature, namely land and forest. The language is different from one nation to another. For our tradition, we believe in Neakta/spirit of old people, worship, respect for old people and tribal chief; we are living together with our family line and concentrated neighborhood of particular indigenous people.

The community of the Northeastern indigenous people are facing the problems of land loss and illegal logging, land sale and buying, and land grabbing for private ownership. Our culture and tradition are facing with the loss due to the encroachment of foreign culture on the one hand, and younger generation does not value the identity of languages of indigenous people, and with the lack of knowledge, indigenous people become marginalized from the society on the other. We the Northeastern indigenous people would, therefore, like to make request to the head of Government, local and international organizations that communal land registration for indigenous people is accelerated, law enforcement related to indigenous people as provided in the Land Law from Article 23 to 28 and Article 265 is enhanced, and the culture and tradition of indigenous people is further promoted and strengthened.

Taking this occasion, we the Northeastern indigenous people would like to wholeheartedly commend the attention and support to the organization of this event in Cambodia so that indigenous people are having higher profile in a developed society. We the indigenous people are thankful to the efforts and support of the Royal Government to the issues of indigenous people and further request that the Royal Government continues to make such an effort to bring to a complete stop immediately all the problems faced by the Northeastern indigenous people.

At last, we the indigenous people would like to wish the head of Government, Guests of Honor, national and international guests, particularly the State agencies, Department of Rural Development, local and international organizations supporting the Global Day on Indigenous People for all the best.

*Thank you,*

**Speech by Representative of the Northern Indigenous People  
Congratulations on the 12<sup>th</sup> Global Day and 2<sup>nd</sup> Event  
on Indigenous People in Cambodia**

- *Your Excellency **Leu Laysreng**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Rural Development*
- *Representatives of the Department of Rural Development, local and international organizations*
- *Ladies and gentlemen,*

Today we are commemorating the 12<sup>th</sup> International Day and the 2<sup>nd</sup> event on indigenous people in Cambodia. This year's commemoration is very important, and only with best efforts by the Department of Indigenous People Development, come the support and authorization of the Royal Government to organize this Global Day on indigenous people.

I have the conviction that this event proves to have the recognition of the rights of indigenous people to land and natural resources that we are owning and using in a traditional manner, and the need for the State to protect and recognize the legal rights to the available land and natural resources. On the other hand, the ILO's Convention 169 appeals to governments to identify indigenous people's identity in owning the land in a traditional manner so that the effectiveness of our land ownership is ensured. In addition, the 2001 Land Law recognizes the rights of indigenous people's community to their communal ownership. However, we are waiting for the communal land registration and protection of indigenous people's land.

On the aspect of our way of life, our livelihood depends on natural resources, rice cultivation and farming, and forest products. We traditionally believe in Neakta/spirit of old people, worship and Buddhism observance. We are concerned about the loss of our language and belief in the future through the manipulation of some religions. On the other hand, there is also gradual decrease in land, wild lives and fish stock.

On this occasion of the international day on indigenous people today, we hope for the years to come that the event will always provide for right to land ownership, and protection and sustainable management of our traditional natural resources. We will make known to the public all the issues of indigenous people so that the society will not trouble our happiness.

We strongly hope that the Royal Government will accelerate the communal land registration, and adopt more laws and policy regarding the development of indigenous people, and give more emphasis on indigenous people.

In conclusion, I would like to wish Samdech, Excellencies, representatives of local and international organizations, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen for every success, good health and wisdom for further developing our country.

*Thank you,*