

Welcome Speech of

H.E Sok An, Senior Minister in charge of
Office of the Council of Ministers

During the inauguration of the seminar on Information Technology (IT) awareness
On 11st September 2001
(Intercontinental Hotel)

Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister
Excellencies, members of the Royal Government
Excellencies, ambassadors and representatives of International Organization to Cambodia
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is a most auspicious and splendid day on which the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) under the high leadership of Samdech Hun Sen as Prime Minister organizes this very seminar on IT awareness in Cambodia. I would like to express my profound thanks to Samdech, Royal Highness, Excellencies and honorable guests attending the significant seminar. I also avail myself of this opportunity to express my deep gratitude for the generous support of UNESCO and UNDP for the seminar.

The National Information Communications Technology Development Authority (NiDA) with Samdech Hun Sen as chairman has the great honor to hold this seminar to promote and disseminate IT awareness nationwide in public administration, civil society and the private sector, especially to realize computerizing government administration that's an integral component of Public Administration Reform.

The vital roles of NiDA are as follows:

- To promote, develop and regulate the IT sector
- To formulate IT policy and ensure its implementation for maximum growth
- To monitor IT related projects

The seminar is to lay open the government's policy, strategy and action plan for IT development at national and international levels, in both urban and rural communities, in conjunction with the government's decentralization policy. Furthermore, the seminar may likewise be regarded as an application of the principles of agreement on the e-ASEAN Framework, dated 25th November 200, signed by Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister, in Singapore.

Having adopted a platform, the RGC is fruitfully achieving her four crucial sectors of reforms: public administration reform, economic and public finance reform, military reform and judicial reform. Along with these reforms, the RGC is also reforming other sectors, including the IT sector as part of the RGC's new reform during the second term.

Samdech, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The IT sector is one of the most advanced sciences and has developed rapidly over the last two decades. So far, the IT sector has played an important role in all fields especially in socio-economic development. Owing to new discoveries, a number of nations in over region and across the world, are able to swiftly develop their countries with efficiency and productivity.

However, Kingdom of Cambodia must be cautious in starting IT operations, which have great implications on the society as a whole.

Cambodia is a member of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and has yet to become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and we will not benefit from globalization and liberalization unless Cambodia furnishes herself with information technology from now on.

Recently, the computerized administration (payroll system, land registration, finance management, statistic database and public investment plan etc.,) has put into effect by the RGC. Meanwhile, the private sector and civil society have been likewise equipped with information technology to meet the consumers' requirements and for their own activities. The RGC realizes that the accomplishments achieved in the IT sector are a starting point leading to significant and sub structural development of IT throughout the country. In this regard, the RGC has been defining its vision to manage and develop the IT sector.

The RGC's vision considers IT as both a means and an objective, being an essential factor for national development in both the public sector and in civil society. Following this point of view, developing the information infrastructure nationwide and furnishing public administration with IT are the RGC's strategic objectives.

In the strategic framework, the RGC is establishing the crucial projects within the IT sector including the IT projects, set up by Council for Administrative Reform, for administrative reform starting with computerizing the payroll system.

Information technology can be neither put into effect lightly nor achieved in a short period of time. However, we must not pass over the IT revolution and we are obliged to think deeply about human resources and capacity building, ensuring quality and quantity at all levels (both the urban and rural areas as well as the legal and legislative framework). Moreover, we should ponder the government's financial capacity to offset modern IT equipment costs.

In giving the remedy to the above issues, I would like to call upon the private sector, non-governmental organizations, civil society and friendly countries to support IT awareness, in order to contribute to poverty alleviation in Cambodia, according to the government's platform and the second five-year socio-economic development plan.

I do hope that, starting from these concepts regarding the seminar, and the extremely important speech to be delivered by Samdech Hun Sen in a few minutes, the three-day discussion will compile viewpoints and new constructive recommendations on IT

awareness contributing to the development of Angkor's motherland and to poverty reduction in Cambodia.

I would like to wish Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister, good health and success for the leading government in its second term.

I would like to wish the seminar members positive results in your deliberations.

Thank you for your attention.