



Kingdom of Cambodia
Nation – Religion - King

Remarks

by

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Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia

at the

**National Meeting on the Formulation of
National ITC Policies and Strategies**

Phnom Penh, 03 July 2003

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today I am most delighted to participate in the *National Meeting on the Formulation of National ITC Policies and Strategies*. This is another proud event in advancing Cambodia's information technology and communication capacity towards closing the digital divide between Cambodia and the rest of region and the world.

May I take this opportunity to express and convey our deep gratitude to Ms Dominique McAdams, the UNDP Representative in Cambodia and Mr. Sahit Atta, the UNDP-APDIP Representative, for your continuing support to ITC development of Cambodia, including your support in organizing this important national meeting. I would like also to express my thanks to all of you who present here today.

As I have mentioned many times, the formulation and implementation of ITC policies and strategies is crucial to keep Cambodia firmly on the development track. Indeed, those countries in the region and the world that are benefiting from the dynamic pace of globalization are attuned to ITC. Such economic growth linked to the modern world can help ensure sustainable development and an equitable society.

The formulation of the ITC policies and strategies that we discuss today is important for improving efficiency, reducing work time and the overall costs to meet our everyday needs as well as the needs in management, business and the government's operation. This work also reflects the commitment of the RGC to fulfill the goals identified under ASEAN integration and engagement in Globalization.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We all realize that success in the modern era is greatly dependent on the broad integration of ITC in society. The value of ITC lies in its understanding, recognition and use by society. For developed countries, ITC is widely used due to their firmly-established infrastructure and strong fundamentals. The increasing speed and lowering costs of computers and the progress of wireless communication has enabled this modern technology be shared and used all over the world, a phenomenon that is quite new. Moreover, the value of the entire network grows as the number of users increase.

Moreover, the participation by developing countries in the universal ITC network would add more value as such participation enables the posting of the data and information they have at their disposal, for use and dissemination throughout the global network. At the same time, they would benefit from using the network to communicate or trade with other countries. Thus, all countries, developing or developed, shall benefit from participation in the worldwide web.

Therefore, I would like to use the stage of this opening session to raise some additional key ideas and comments, which I hope this meeting can discuss.

First, we should focus on the formulation of the appropriate regulatory and institutional framework for the development of the ITC sector. We need to develop an ITC infrastructure consistent with our liberalization policy, institutional strengthening for regulation and control, while preserving openness for broad and fair competition. Indeed, the beginnings of Cambodia's modern

communication network and appropriate IT foundation are now being built. Yet there remain many outstanding jobs to work on in cooperation with donors, the international community, NGOs, and especially the private sector to attract investments. Success in this regard will ensure that Cambodia will no longer be isolated or left behind the mainstream of ITC revolution.

Second, we must continue to improve the computer literacy and the use of internet among Cambodians, expanding especially to rural areas and focusing on attracting private sector investments and new technologies. This should be undertaken by promoting free and fair competition and preservation of the principles of the free market, which are the prerequisites for low costs and high quality of service, enabling the government, private sector, academic and research institutions and the public broadly and openly.

At the same time, we should note with pride that our liberal policies in education and the strengthening of partnerships with private sector from both within the country and overseas, which I launched since a decade ago, has been quite fruitful. Today, many educational institutions have been built in Cambodia, consistent with the rights, freedom and capacity of Cambodian youth. All Cambodians have open access to information from overseas for study and general knowledge, through internet and email without any restrictive controls as is the case in some countries in the region. In this free atmosphere, I note that our Cambodian youth enjoy their access to learning and information, and thereby experience less fatigue or difficulty, thus enabling them to learn still more and further.

Third, language is an important means to promote development and use of technology. The use of technology in Khmer will open the door for more Cambodian people to benefit from scientific achievements. Thus, the issuance of Khmer language standards in computers will enhance effectiveness, capacity and communications at all levels. Therefore I urge the National Authority for ITC Development to pay intense and urgent attention to this issue. Parallel with this, the strengthening of English knowledge remains very important for absorbing and deeply developing this modern technology.

Fourth, we should pay attention to the protection of intellectual property rights as we use the internet, using the technology and facility solely for the objective of development, and not using the technology for criminal purposes, which is contrary to morality, tradition and good customs of the nation.

These are the main points that I think the meeting should also discuss in the formulation of the long term policy and strategy for ITC development in Cambodia. Furthermore, I emphasize that in all these concerns, the training of quality and highly skilled human resources is indeed very crucial in improving the human resource base to perform work that will ultimately promote Cambodia's competitiveness. We all are aware that a well-performing economy is one with effective training, use and management of human capital. Thus, it is necessary to create a favorable environment for good development and management of Cambodia's intellectual capital.

Once again, I am delighted and deeply grateful for the cooperation between Cambodia and UNDP.

In closing, I wish to thank all ministries, national institutions, civil society, the private sector, key national and international organizations for their proactive cooperation in the development of Cambodia's ITC.

Finally, I wish the meeting a success, and wish all of you the five gems of Buddhist blessing.

Thank you!