



Welcome Remarks

By

H.E. PRAK Sokhonn

Minister of Posts and Telecommunications

At Cambodia ICT Award 2015 and ITU's 150th Anniversary Celebration

Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra, 25 June 2015



Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Good evening!

It is my great pleasure to be with you this evening to inaugurate the first Cambodia ICT Award and celebrate the 150th Anniversary of ITU. Today's event marks an important milestone in the efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia to promote innovation in ICT industry by building an environment that allows optimal and equal opportunities for all citizens and businesses to participate fully in the digital economy.

Cambodia ICT Award is an initiative by the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication. It is a National Competition that focuses not only on products and services developed by telecommunication operators, but also those developed by ICT companies. This inspiring award is dedicated to the best ICT achievement among entrepreneurs in Cambodia. It aims to be an effective instrument for promoting innovation and creativity and to offer funding opportunities for start-up and business in ICT sector in Cambodia. We believe that the award will help foster Cambodian ICT Companies to reach the next level, so that they can be front and center at the Regional and International Competitions such as ASEAN ICT Awards and Asia-Pacific ICT Award. Let me take this opportunity to express our sincere congratulations to Smart Axiata for its award last week by Frost and Sullivan as the winner of Asia-Pacific ICT Award in the category of Emerging Market Telecom Service Provider of the Year.

The private sector has played significant role in developing the ICT industry in Cambodia. Their investments in infrastructure and appropriate technologies bring new services, increased productivity, and a great deal of benefits for our economy. As stakeholders we all should institute a dialogue mechanism and utilize opportunities such as this event to build lasting partnership. I am confident that the event would serve as a platform for

players in ICT and related industries to meet and exchange ideas, and form networks that generate the best interest for Cambodia.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

For 150 years, the ITU has been the center of advancement in communications. First we saw the telegraph and the telephone, then radio and television, followed by satellite communications and the Internet, heralding a new era of ubiquitous connectivity over the past twenty years. It is difficult to imagine now how we communicated in 1865, with no phones, no email, no instant messaging or SMS.

The theme of celebration for ITU's 150th Anniversary is «***Telecommunication/ICTs: Driver of innovation***». As we look back, we should always remember that the Union's phenomenal achievements bear undisputed testimony to the accomplishments of humanity. A comparison of the Union's structure then and now, its modus operandi, and a nearly perfect form of public-private partnership reaffirm that the Union is unique in many ways. Currently the ITU has a membership of 193 countries and about 700 private institutions. These numbers speak well of the ITU.

Cambodia has been a member of the ITU since 1952. As a country, we are proud to be associated with the oldest intergovernmental agency of the United Nations. In recent years Cambodia has received technical assistance from the Union, which includes formulation of policy and regulatory framework for telecommunication, USO, Spectrum Management, broadband, licensing and various trainings to name a few. We seize this opportunity to pledge our firm support to the commendable work of the union in enabling, ensuring and enhancing the accessibility, availability and adaptability of telecommunication services at a global level.

We also take special note of the ITU efforts in bridging the digital divide by offering the platform and opportunities for developing countries to participate in global telecommunication forum. Yet more still needs to be done to help developing countries catch up in the technological blaze. As a country, we genuinely appreciate the efforts of the ITU, particularly **Dr. Hamadoun T. TOURE**, former Secretary-General, **Dr. Houlin ZHAO**, current Secretary-General and their team, in empowering every nation to fully reap the benefits of technological innovation. In this regard, I encourage all related partners to jointly support the activities of the ITU in the region and the world, including annual event of the ITU World, which will be held in October in Budapest and special event of the World Radio-communication Conference 2015 which will take place in November in Geneva.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

To grace this occasion, allow me to share with you two important points.

Firstly, the effective use of ICT in both private and public sector can significantly contribute to and accelerate the progress in ICT development. The quality of ICT infrastructure should be the one that meet the needs of different kinds of enterprises, from micro-and small enterprises to larger and transnational corporations. Leveraging the opportunities created by mobile phone and its related services and applications is particularly important for small enterprises in low-income countries. However, promoting innovation and ICT applications need quality of mobile broadband and effective spectrum allocation and management. In this regard, we need a conducive policy in telecommunication-ICT aimed at providing appropriate ICT infrastructure, promoting clustering entrepreneurship, and improving the availability of skills. Thus, I urge private sector, university, NGOs, development partners and other stakeholders to continue to collectively promote innovation in ICT sector in Cambodia.

Secondly, I would like to reiterate that Cambodia needs to promote human resource development to respond to the fast growing modern technologies and enhance public literacy level in ICT. Our National Institute of Telecommunications and ICT is playing a crucial role in strengthening all levels of education curricula, training of government officials and encouraging the private sector to participate in enhancing public's literacy in the ICTs. The Research and Development in this sector has been promoted including the introduction of a research network model linking Universities, Public Institutions, and Industry. Therefore, I appeal to all related stakeholders including industry, universities and vocational training centers to collaborate closely with our National Institute in this challenging mission.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Before I conclude, let me thank my colleagues for successfully organizing the Cambodia ICT Award 2015 and the ITU's 150th Anniversary Celebration. Today's celebration is a testament to our strong commitment to continue our support to the ITU in enhancing connectedness and bridging digital gap in the region and the world. Once again, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the ITU for their support, particularly the video message kindly delivered by **Dr. Houlin ZHAO**, Secretary-General and his representative Ms. **Aurora** who is present here with us today.

I thank all participants for their innovative ideas, which make our competition all the more vibrant. I am delighted to learn that participants come from various fields in telecommunication and ICT sector from e-government services to smart home technology passing by education, entertainment, health, telecommunications, traffic and business applications. I am amazed by the number of applicants, the creativity and talent of our Cambodian entrepreneurs. I am pleased to note that there are 20 finalists across the six categories. I look forward to see many more of those in the near future.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation to all members of the Judging Panel for their valuable contribution and dedication to select the winners of this year's competition.

My sincere appreciation also goes to our main sponsor Smart Axiata, and other sponsors such as Edotco, Huawei, ZTE, Cambodia Posts, Telecoms Cambodia, Telecoms Regulator of Cambodia, Ggear and the media sponsors including thmeythmey.com, Geek in Cambodia, Sabay and Blue Media for their support to make this event successful. Let me indeed thank the wonderful performance made by 150 students coming from NIPTICT, ITC and Norton University.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the winners of this year's Cambodia ICT Awards. You have shown to us your might and potential impact on society. For those who did not make it, you have my admiration for your determination and contribution to make this competition meaningful and great for our ICT development. All contestants believe that they are innovators, and those with the innovative ideas will never give up. I hope that you would continue to take part in future contest and your efforts would surely be rewarded one day. As the saying goes: innovation comes from ***“the people who try but fail rather than from those who fail to try”***.

I wish everyone a pleasant dinner. Bon Appetit!

Thank you!