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INTERVENTION
ON
CLIMATE CHANGE, AGRICULTURE AND FOOD
BY H.E DR. TY SOKHUN, SECRETARY OF STATE
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF CAMBODIA

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Mr. Chairman,
FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are from different countries, each within different stages of economic development, but we share common Sustainable Development goals to at least free our world and ourselves from poverty, hunger and malnutrition. Furthermore, we have the common formidable challenge of producing more food with less inputs and less carbon emissions in effort to combat climate change. The preoccupation with our past food production has resulted in the loss of natural resources, as well as environmental degradation. So, the underlying concern is how can we enable ourselves to achieve our common goals by 2030?

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

Agriculture must be profoundly changed to fulfill its multiple functions against harsher environmental conditions and both demographic and market movements. This transformation will depend on the significant alteration of our current patterns & practices of food production, distribution and consumption through targeted investments that will establish climate smart and resilient agriculture systems; ensure the efficient use of resources; develop no-waste supply chains; safeguard adequate nutrition; and encourage healthy consuming choices.

This accomplishment will be facilitated through an inclusive process that encourages the active participation of all stakeholders in a productive partnership at all levels among public and private sectors, development partners, civil societies, academia, scientists, researchers, farmers and local producers.

The development of such a productive partnership will depend on mutual trust. In the absence of trust, there can be no real partnership. Efforts to establish that trust will require transparency, accountability and more efficient governance in a process under which each participating partner will be needed to adapt and change.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

CAMBODIA is an agrarian country! It has a great potential in agriculture with relatively rich endowment of natural resources, and good natural conditions for agricultural production and growth . Agriculture is very important for Cambodia in terms of many things: GDP, employment, exports and livelihoods. However, Cambodia's agriculture is still dominated by smallholder farmers. The sector's development provides benefits to over 80% of the country's rural population, and employs almost 50% of the country's labor-force. It accounts for more than one-fourth of the country's GDP.

The enhancement of the agricultural sector has been prioritized by the Royal Government of Cambodia under the enabling leadership of Samdech Techo Prime Minister HUN SEN, as the first pillar to accelerate an inclusive growth in the country's development policy "Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity, and Efficiency and in the National Strategic Development Plan. The overall agriculture sector's goal is to promote annual growth by 5% through the enhancement of agricultural productivity, diversification and commercialization whilst ensuring high consideration for sustainable natural resource management.

In the past decade, Cambodia's agricultural sector has achieved notable progress, which is reflected in an average annual growth rate of 5.3% in value added and 8.7% in gross production. However, these growths were very sensitive to climate change. The growth has varied from one year to another. The high growth was in the year of good climate conditions, but low or even negative growth in the year of bad climate conditions, particularly the year faced extreme events such as drought and floods. It is important that the Government, Development Partners, Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations should strengthen their cooperation to coordinate climate resiliency investments at all levels, global, regional, national and local level.

I would like to conclude my remarks by taking the advantage of this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to our hosts, FAO and Italy, for their warmest hospitality and excellent arrangements. I wish each of you happiness and success in all of your endeavors, and extend to you my sincere desire for a fruitful and successful conference.

Thank you very much for your attention.