

**The achievement of an information society and knowledge economy is one of the main priorities of the RGC towards the attainment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs)**

Telecommunications and ICTs have been catalytic in the rapid development of the Internet mobile and mobile communications. It has unconditionally brought about great transformation and noticeably made it possible to share knowledge in all area of human lives and has become a central part of all aspects of our lives, including politics, economic activities and social interactions. The achievement of an information society and knowledge economy is one of the main priorities of the RGC towards the attainment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) are what I want to share today.

**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In Cambodia, the number of mobile subscription increased to around 19 million by end 2017, covered around 100% of urban areas. The mobile penetration is almost 125%. The number of Internet subscription will reach 8.5 million by end 2017, corresponding to a penetration rate of almost 60%. Those who are not yet connected often live in the rural areas. To connect them, we'll have to make efforts. Therefore, creating an attractive environment for investment ICTs must be one of our top priorities.

The 4G/LTE technology have been deployed in 25 capital and provinces and covered almost 60% of Cambodian territory. 4.5G/LTE advanced technology has been indeed newly launched to allow our youth to enjoy the fastest speed and cheapest internet in the region. Nevertheless, we still need to strengthen the competitiveness of Cambodia's mobile cellular and Internet service, in particular quality of service, compared to the neighboring countries.

Recognizing the rapid technological evolutions as well as industry and market trends in the ICT sector, the Royal Government of Cambodia has further developed the telecom and ICT sector as a modern, high quality service in accordance with international standards, competitive prices and nationwide coverage so that the public can use and benefit from the service. In this regard, let me share some related-achievements as follow:

**Firstly**, after the harmonization of telecom and ICT sector under the same roof and the new management team, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications has been realizing impressive achievements over the past four years in building universality and affordability in telecommunications services, particularly in the mobile and ICT sectors. Enterprise-oriented policy and regulatory regime is one pillar of this growth. Building trusted partnership with the telecom and ICT industry and cultivating user communities are an other pillar. Therefore, the Cambodian ICT Master Plan 2020 and the Telecom-ICT Development Policy 2020 have been officially announced in August 2014 and in April 2016 respectively. Five priority projects have been identified in the Cambodian ICT Master Plan 2020, such as e-government framework developed since 2004, cyber-security, e-education, e-commerce and e-tourism. With the clear and proper vision of transforming Cambodia into a society with Telecom-ICT connectedness and readiness, the Telecom-ICT development Policy 2020 indeed aims to strengthen and widen Telecom-ICT infrastructure connectivity; to enhance human resource development; and to promote ICT industry and ICT use.

Moreover, to oversee the technical aspects of the telecommunications sector, the Telecommunications Regulator of Cambodia has been newly reformed by telecom law promulgated in December 2015 which is properly consistent with the Cambodia's commitment to WTO and the regulation guidelines of the International Telecommunication Union. The telecom law aims at ensuring the utilization of telecom infrastructure and delivering telecom services efficiently, securely, reliable, affordable and high quality; ensuring the promotion of private sector investment and fair and legal competition; and ensuring the protection of end-users. Many other policies and strategies have been being prepared to be deemed as supportive pillars in transforming Cambodia toward Digital Economy by 2023, such as E-Government Strategy, including its Architecture, Start-Up Policy, Digital micro SME and SME Policy, and FinTech Strategy, etc.

**Secondly**, Cambodia is effectively committed to connecting the country and to ensuring that the benefits of ICTs reach the remotest corners as well as the most vulnerable communities. The network and service coverage of optical cable were gradually expanded with more than 28.000 km by connecting Phnom Penh to all districts across the country by 2018. This year marks Cambodia's milestones in realizing two submarine cable infrastructures. The first submarine cable, named as MCT (Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand) and invested by Telcotech, is regional submarine. The other one, named as AAE-1 (Asia-Africa-Europe-1) and invested by Heyroute, mother Company of CFOCN, is the first intercontinental submarine cable of which Cambodia is historically taking part for the first time.

**Thirdly**, the Royal Government of Cambodia is also committed to extend the access all corner of the society to ensure that digital economy can be benefit equally to our citizen. That is why recently the RGC has just adopted the SubDecree on Mechanism on implementation of Universal Service Obligation, a globally mechanism for bridging digital divide gap while also assist those areas, where in normal circumstances are not economically viable to build telecommunication infrastructure and relevant content and applications. More importantly and excitingly, because of the fast evolution of mobile, latest technology will be made available to millions of Cambodians in those rural areas, allowing them to access to mobile Internet and increase access to a widespread of information that will also indirectly build the communities there. As a broad vision of the Royal Government of Cambodia, we have 2020 targets of 100% broadband coverage in urban areas and 70% in rural areas, 80% of internet penetration rate, 10% of IoT or connected devices in the network, and many others as mentioned in the Telecommunication/ICT Development Policy 2020.

**Fourthly**, While the sector outlook may sound positive, we must admit that we have a lot more to do, particularly with regard to the quality and range of education opportunities and the ICT skills gap still remains a challenge. For instance, the high-level management, network and technical jobs in the fast-growing mobile telecommunications sub-sector are still in the hands of expatriates. This trend is not unique to Cambodia, but also in the region. Our technological readiness score is still low and the Telecom-ICT development policy 2020 and the Industrial Development Policy 2025 bring together the Government, private sector and International organizations to ensure affordable access to broadband and ICTs in general, ushering Cambodia into the knowledge economy.

Therefore, new National Institute of Telecommunications and ICTs has been newly established in early 2014. It is aimed at more efficient use and deriving maximum benefit from the ICTs by 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 pragmatically promoted including the introduction of a research network model linkage Universities, Public Institutions, and Industry. The Royal Government of Cambodia indeed acknowledges the necessity to establish an environment that supports innovation and investment. In

doing so, the Royal Government of Cambodia has also adopted Sub-decree on Mechanism on implementation of Capacity Building and Research and development to serve as the regulatory framework to address the challenges.