Peace and Development from Cambodia's view

Cambodia was once known as a warzone and killing field after the country plunged into a civil war from 1970 to 1975 and experienced the worst tragedy of humankind from 1975 to 1979. After the liberation from this tragedy in January 1979, starting from scratch, the country encountered enormous hardship from different fronts. It goes without saying that Cambodians never knew real and full peace and stability, which are the common desire of all peace-loving peoples. Thanks to the win-win policy of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, a long-awaited dream of all Cambodians of having peace, stability and social development come to reality.

These hard-earned peace and stability were a golden opportunity for Cambodia to move forward from a country of instability and food insecurity to a country of food exporter, an outstanding performer in poverty reduction with an economic growth of around 7% per annum for the past two decades and a popular tourist destination. These accomplishments gave Cambodia a visa to officially become a lower middle-income country in 2016. More impressively, the country's economic growth is recorded at 7.5% in 2018, higher than expected. Moreover, the government has long-term visions to achieve upper middle-income and high-income nation by 2030 and 2050 respectively. From our past experience, we must admit that full peace, political and macro-economic stability are the main attributors to socio-economic development. In this respect, our government is committed to safeguarding peace at all cost.

We are proud to say that as a responsible member of the United Nations and formerly a recipient of the United Nations peacekeepers, Cambodia has become one of the most active contributors to the UN Peacekeeping Operations. Our more than 6,300 peacekeepers have been deployed in 8 countries, namely Central African Republic, Sudan, South Sudan, Chad, Lebanon, Serbia, Syria and Mali, since 2006. This year, Cambodia ranks 29th out of 122 troop-contributing countries and 3rd among ASEAN countries for the largest number of peacekeepers. Cambodia now gains more capacity to contribute to the peacekeeping process in international community as it is the Vice President of United Nations General Assembly for 2018-2019, the member of United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2019, and the host of 13th Asia-Europe Meeting in 2020.

As a significant contributor to regional and international peace, Cambodia upholds principles of and is committed to culture of dialogue and peaceful settlement, bearing in mind that war is not a solution. Producing, using and storing of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons shall be absolutely prohibited. Having been through horrible paths, we share with Japan's great suffering from nuclear bombs. Cambodia has become a state party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and is recognized as a Non-Nuclear Weapon State (NNWS) as stipulated in the NPT. Additionally, we signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty while also a signatory to the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SNWFZ) Treaty. In October 2013, Cambodia was one of 125 countries to sign the Joint statement on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons from the United Nations First Committee, in which we express our deep concerns about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and raise that the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again is through their total elimination.

As a person who experienced wartime, destruction and suffering, I am sincerely grateful that full peace prevails in my country. At the same time, I wish that regions with hot spots will be covered by blue sky and sun shine. I sincerely pray for world's peace and I wish that humanity of the Earth lives in peace and harmony. Nurturing culture of dialogue, tolerance and building trust and confidence would secure our world peace. Let's work together toward a world free of war and nuclear weapons.