



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT GENEVA

Statement by

Cambodia Ambassador and Permanent Representative Sokkhoeurn AN

At the 46th Session of the Human Rights Council

General Debate on Agenda Item 10: Technical Cooperation

“Right of Reply to the Delegation of Finland”

23 March 2021, Geneva

[Speaking Time: 3 minutes]

Madam President!

1. My delegation would like to exercise the right of reply to the statement of Finland.

2. We note with utter dismay that Finland refuses to review the state of human rights in Cambodia through objective, non-selective and de-politicized lens. Below are some facts we all must know.
 - First, the call for Cambodia to cooperate with the OHCHR is truly indicative of Finland’s reckless disregard of the fact. Cambodia’s open and constructive engagement with the OHCHR is manifested through the nearly three-decade presence of its country office in Cambodia since 1993 where today becomes the oldest one in the world. Last December, Cambodia further renewed the MoU with the OHCHR, proving our resolute commitment to advancing all categories of human rights through the technical cooperation program.

 - Second, it is ironic that Finland, having lately invoked national lockdown and state of emergency restricting the people’s fundamental freedoms at home, demands Cambodia’s respect for civil and political rights over the others. This approach deviates from that of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who emphasized in this Council,

“Human rights must never be a vehicle for double standards or a means to pursue hidden agendas.” Resolutions of the UN also affirm that all human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including rights to development - must be treated in a fair and equal fashion on the same footing and with the same emphasis.

- Third, the Law on Preventive Measures Against the Spread of the Covid-19, recently enacted by Cambodia’s bicameral parliament, adheres to the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality. This legislation does not aim to castigate but shield the life of the citizens and encourage responsible participation of everyone in the pursuit of securing public health and precious lives. The punitive measures, as Western countries do, specifically target the rule-breakers causing the community transmission, depending on the offense and the intent behind it.
 - Fourth, only Cambodian people have the highest say on the assessment of democracy and human rights in the kingdom. Their voice is reflected through electoral outcomes, which must be respected by everyone. The success of the test must be measured by the yardstick of improvement of people’s lives, not the catharsis of critique, as spelled out by Secretary-General António Guterres.
3. To conclude, this very Agenda Item should be the fulcrum of promoting respectful exchanges of global best practices of technical cooperation. Any intrusion into it to score a political goal should be avoided if we are to uphold the highest integrity and credibility of this Council.

I thank you, Madam President!