

The National Reading Day Celebration 2016

Welcome Remarks Ms. Anne Lemaistre

UNESCO Representative in Cambodia

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Som Korup Ayodom Hang Chuon Naron, Roat Montrey Krosoung Oprum Yuveachun Neung Keila
Som Korup Ayodom Khieu Kannarith, Roat Montrey Krosoung Podominh
Som Korup Ayodom Kep Chutema, Samachtict Sapea
Som Korup Ayodom, Lok Chumteav, Lok, Lok Srei, Deiku Apiwat, Tieng hok-kni.

Chum reap Sour!

Kniom min Keuteyout Cholrum Knong Tivear Om-nan Pi poan dop pram mouy

Kniom Som Orkun Krosoung Oprum Yuveachun Neung Keila ban ripchium piti-nis neung Kniom

Som ob-hosato nin neak mok pi Tchnai

Som nié pisar anglais

I have been informed that the participants in today event is 1,883, and the Royal Government of Cambodia has decided 11th March as the National Reading Day. This is to remember one Cambodian Intellectual person Samdech Preah Sangkareaj Chuon Nath who was born on 11th March 1883. I would like all of us in this room to give a big applause dedicating for his wisdom.

Ladies and gentlemen

The theme ***“Inspire the Habit of Reading, Encourage the Culture of Reading”*** dedicated for the first NRD this year encourages all Cambodian people to embrace the love of reading. Cambodia has a good experience in the past as it used to be the country with emergence of writers, publishers and pool of readers, printing industrial, and publishing market in the period of 1950s to early 1970s. Currently, the MoEYS with its development partners have rebuilt and strengthened this good practice such as establishing libraries and reading rooms within schools and community centres through formal and non-formal education programme. For instance, numbers of library at formal school have increased to 4,474 in 2014-15 school year which is almost double over the last 10 years, and through non-formal education programme, numbers of libraries and reading rooms increased from 34 to 205 during the same period.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Taking the importance of this event the MoEYS, Ministry of Environment (MoE), UNESCO, and Sipar have the pleasure to launch the excellent Biodiversity Book produced by MoE, SIPAR and UNESCO. The central objective of the book is to present to young people and students the main 5 biodiversity hotspots of Cambodia; such as, Cardamom Mountains, Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, Mangroves, Coral Reef and Mekong Ecosystem. Through the book, the reader might discover the functioning of those ecosystems and the threats, understand the current conservation actions as well as eco-tourism projects in the target areas. I personally hope you can read it and enjoy all the images as well as the scientific content

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

At the 2015 World Book Day on 23rd April, Madam Irina Bokova UNESCO DG said, "**Literacy is the door to knowledge, essential to individual self-esteem and empowerment. Books, in all forms, play an essential role here**". With 175 million adolescents in the world – mostly girls and young women – unable to read a single sentence, UNESCO is committed to promote functional literacy for young people and adults. In this regards, MoEYS together with UNESCO and other partners just announced the result of the National Literacy Campaign 2015 that enabled almost 66,000 adults to be able to read and write. Congratulations to MoEYS for this impressive achievements

We, gathered here today, knowing and recognizing that reading is the foundation of Lifelong Learning and contributes to develop our self, family and society. Books are the doors to knowledge. More reading makes us confident in contributing to the social development. Parents, teachers, librarians and all of us are the main source of knowledge and values for our children and we all bear the responsibility of ensuring reading opportunities for all to meet the SDG 4 related to quality of education lifelong learning in Cambodia. Inspiring the habit of reading from early childhood awakens or renews Cambodians' desire to read.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the development partners, and civil society, I am pleased to see the increasing attention given to the reading activities and programs by the Royal Government of Cambodia, relevant ministries, and public and private media channels and especially by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS). I would wish the event today will be the key lever for inspiring, and encouraging the culture of reading within the whole Cambodia society. Allow me to conclude by inviting our Cambodian friends of all ages to turn off televisions, computers, smart phones and to switch from Facebook to look and enjoy the simple pleasure of reading instead, today and the following days.

Okun Chroeun.