

**Handover ceremony of the books on Sbek Thom  
UNESCO and Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts**

Phnom Penh, 07 October 2014 at 3 pm  
#227, Preah NORODOM Blvd, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**Ms. Anne Lemaistre  
UNESCO Representative in Cambodia**

**Excellency Ms. Phoeurng Sackona**, Minister of Cultural and Fine Arts,  
**Excellencies, Madams** officials from Ministry of Cultural and Fine Arts,  
**Mr. Kong Vireak and Preap Chanmara**, authors of the *Sbek Thom* publication,  
**Dear journalists,**

Today, I have a great pleasure and honor to joint you all in this Handover Ceremony of the books on Sbek Thom and the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts for organizing this very important event, to officials from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the authors of the books for their intensive work to achieve this useful publication and all journalists for your participation.

Why is this book important? This is the most recent monographic book on Sbek Thom which is one of the two elements being proclaimed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity since 2008. It reminds us the holy character of the Sbek Thom performances as well as the fact that, according to ancient tradition, the recitation of the Reamker can cleanse all our sins. It informs us also all aspects linked to the performances: music, narration, masters, performers, the making of the puppets etc...

UNESCO handovers to the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts 800 books on *Sbek Thom* (400 in Khmer and 400 in English) and 400 books on the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage with practical operational directives to implement the Convention (in English and in Khmer) to be used as the most recent reference on Sbek Thom for students and researchers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to Government Donor of Japan for its constant support to the Royal Government of Cambodia in view of preservation and promotion of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Cambodia.

UNESCO is ready and determined to pursue the close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and relevant institutions, public and private sectors and other development partners in safeguarding cultural heritage in Cambodia, especially to achieve the project on "The establishment of the database of the intangible culture heritage of Cambodia", identified as a priority in the newly adopted Cultural Policy for Cambodia.

**Thank you for your kind attention!**