



Celebration of World Teachers' Day
Opening Remarks by Anne Lemaistre,
UNESCO Representative and ESGW Chair
03 October 2014, Institute of Technology of Cambodia

*H.E. Minister Dr. Hang Chhun Naron,
Excellencies Secretaries of State and Under-Secretaries of State,
Director Generals and Directors of Technical Departments,
Representatives of Provincial Offices of Education,
ESWG colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, and **all teachers,***

We are here today to present our awareness and appreciation for positive contribution that all teachers in Cambodia make to education and development. We are commemorating the 20th anniversary of World Teachers' Day which was declared by UNESCO in 1994, recalling the adoption of the UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers in 1966. The recommendations provide a framework to the rights and responsibilities of teachers and international standards for their initial preparation and further education, recruitment, employment, teaching and learning conditions.

The global theme for this year is "Invest in the future, invest in teachers", and it is consistent with the national theme: "Teachers with Education Quality". The consistency between these two themes shows that quality teaching and learning requires a sufficient investment for supporting teachers who need adequate professional development to enable them to respond to the diverse learning needs of all learners. Teachers play a role as change agents within the four pillars of Education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and, learning to live together. In addition to providing content knowledge to learners, teachers help transform learners to become responsible global citizens.

On behalf of the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), I would like to congratulate the Leadership of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport for developing Teacher Policy Action Plan (TPAP) internally – demonstrating the Ministry's institutional and technical capacities in education policy planning for teachers. Expectations from this TPAP are huge as it is one of the strategic plans that provide the foundations to realize Cambodia's aspirations in joining the ASEAN Economic Community by 2015, becoming an upper-middle income country by 2030, and becoming a developed country by 2050. To achieve these aspirations, the TPAP is reflected within the Education Strategic Plan 2014-2018 to guide us through a process of upgrading qualifications of teachers.

Excellency, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the strong efforts and commitments of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport in improving teachers and teaching profile. The Ministry, with support and collaboration from the ESGW members, has developed the Teacher Development Master Plan in 2010, the Policy on Teachers in 2013 and other legislative documents and guidelines to strengthen the capacity of teachers. The Ministry has policies and strategies to upgrade primary school teachers to basic education teachers through additional training courses at the Regional Teacher Training Centers, to upgrade teacher level through internal examination, and to select the teacher trainees from the under-represented

group. We observe many reforms are underway to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Cambodia.

Excellency, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

World Teachers' Day also allows us to re-visit national and sub-national challenges facing teachers. With an estimated number of 1.7 million new teachers required to reach universal primary education by 2015, the teacher recruitment need to go hand in hand with improving quality of teaching and learning. Achieving quality education for all, in line with Goal 6 of the Dakar Framework for Action, calls for more and better trained teachers. Equally, schools must be supported in attracting qualified teachers. The challenge of quantity must also be ensured while discussing quality and equity.

The 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey reports that if teachers are expected to prepare students to become lifelong learners, teachers themselves have to learn and develop throughout their careers. They need to be able to use the latest tools and technologies, take advantage of the latest research on learning, pedagogy and andragogy practices.

To strengthen the effectiveness of teacher education and teacher professional development, there are some essential components: (1) good conditions of employment, including appropriate contracts and salaries, and prospects for career progression and promotion; (2) good conditions in the work environment, based on creating school contexts that are conducive to teaching; (3) high-quality pre-and in-service training for teachers, based on respect for human rights and the principles of inclusive education; and (4) effective management, including teacher recruitment and deployment.

Excellency, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The successful implementation of the Teacher Policy Action Plan requires support from the Ministry staff members of all levels including the PoEs, school directors, development partners, NGOs and civil society organizations, and all relevant education stakeholders - parents and students, and especially the 87,203 teachers. All of these stakeholders need to be well aware of vision and activities of the Teacher Policy and its Action Plan. Then, they can feel more engaged in the Teacher Policy Action Plan implementation. Keeping this in mind, we need to make additional efforts towards a systematic approach to hearing their voices for their participation and feedback for continuous quality improvement.

Allow me to conclude my remarks by reiterating a point stated in EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/14: "The quality of an education is only as good as the quality of its teachers". The report provides four strategies on how to achieve quality teaching for all. The strategies include attracting good quality teachers, improving teacher education, ensuring the best teachers teach the most disadvantaged students, and retaining good teachers with incentives in the form of appropriate salaries and attractive career paths. These recommendations can be a source of inspiration for Cambodia where shortage of teachers, low wages, performance system and learning assessment are discussed. In this spirit, the ESWG reaffirms our continued commitment to supporting the Ministry's goals in transforming the education sector and in upgrading qualification of all teachers.

Thank you!
