



Opening Remarks by H.E. Dr. Chea Vandeth

Minister of Post and Telecommunications

at the Opening Ceremony of the "Cambodia Internet Governance Forum 2025" and
the Official Launch of the "Recommendation of the Internet Development in Cambodia"

8:30 AM | 6 December 2025

Diamond Island Convention and Exhibition Center, Phnom Penh

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- **Mr. Chengetai Masango** (ឆេងហ្គេតៃ ម៉ាសានហ្គេ), **Head of the Office**, United Nations Secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum
 - **Ms. Esther McFarlane**, Office-in-Charge, UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh
 - **Mr. Thy Try**, Executive Director/Editor-in-Chief, Open Development Cambodia
 - Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!
1. It is my great pleasure to preside over the opening ceremony of the Cambodia Internet Governance Forum 2025. I would like to extend my warmest welcome to all representatives from government institutions, the private sector, civil society, academia, youth groups, and development partners for joining us under the theme "Building Cambodia's Inclusive Digital Society." Your presence today reflects our shared commitment to advancing a resilient, trusted, and responsible digital economy and society for Cambodia.
 2. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretariat of the Cambodia Internet Governance Forum—comprising the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, UNESCO Cambodia, Open Development Cambodia (ODC), and the Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology (CADT)—for their collaboration in organizing this event. UNESCO has become a proactive development partner of the Ministry in work related to digital technology development, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI). This partnership has included cooperation on various assessments, including the "Assessment and Recommendations on Internet Development in Cambodia" being launched today, and the "AI Readiness Assessment in Cambodia" launched recently.
 3. The Royal Government, under the wise and visionary leadership of **Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia**, has set out the Pentagonal Strategy - Phase I, identifying five key priorities, including "Technology"—specifically digital technology—to respond to the Fourth Industrial

Revolution and the digital transformation of Cambodia's economy and society. This priority has also determined key policy activities set forth in the Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework and the Digital Government Policy, aiming to achieve the Cambodia Vision 2050 as a high-income country.

4. The Internet Development Assessment in Cambodia, conducted using UNESCO's Internet Universality Indicators (ROAM-X), is not merely a collection of data; it is a "mirror" clearly reflecting the current status of the internet ecosystem in Cambodia based on four major international principles, namely:
 - R (Rights): Respect for human rights and freedom of expression;
 - O (Openness): An open environment for data usage and innovation;
 - A (Accessibility): Ensuring that every citizen has access to the internet and digital services;
 - M (Multi-stakeholder): Participation from all relevant actors in the digital ecosystem; and
 - X (Cross-cutting): The intersection of digital technology with various sectors.
5. Through this report, we have identified strengths in Cambodia's digital development, particularly the strengthening of digital connectivity, which is a key driver of digital inclusion. However, the report also points out areas we shall further strengthen, specifically the need to enhance governance, digital skills training, the promotion of research and innovation in the Khmer language, and development of digital startup.
6. The recommendations from this report have become vital inputs for the Royal Government to prepare and orient the effective and inclusive implementation of Cambodia's Digital Policies. One concrete recommendation of this assessment is the establishment of a national Internet Governance Forum. Today, we are transforming this recommendation into a tangible reality before us. The IGF is a multi-stakeholder platform that allows representatives from the private sector, civil society, technical communities, youth representatives, and all relevant parties to sit together on an equal footing to discuss challenges, opportunities, and shape the shared future of our digital economy and society.
7. In a time when the world is witnessing the rapid evolution of emerging technologies—especially Artificial Intelligence—the role of an inclusive and resilient digital governance framework becomes even more crucial. Key issues such as online safety in the AI era, combating misinformation, bridging the digital divide, and strengthening digital skills and resources must be addressed collectively.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

8. Since 2020, MPTC has implemented numerous governance initiatives, including drafting relevant policies and regulations. These include the National AI Strategy, the AI governance Action Plan, AI Strategies in sectors under MPTC's purview, the Cloud

First Policy, the Data Governance Policy, the Draft Law on Personal Data Protection, and the Draft Law on Cybersecurity, as the foundation for embracing AI with trust.

9. On digital connectivity, MPTC has prepared and implemented regulations to license telecommunications operations and to promote the development of digital infrastructure, including mobile towers and submarine and terrestrial optical fiber networks. We have also paid close attention to introduce measures aiming at enhancing quality of services and consumers protection. MPTC is currently providing internet networks to ministries, institutions, educational institutions, and sub-national administrations to the communes across the country by 2027. To promote meaningful internet usage, MPTC has been providing computer devices and licensed software, as well as introducing digital government products such as [verify.gov.kh](#), [FormKH](#), [nomsa.gov.kh](#), [go.gov.kh](#), [Sarika](#), and other digital technology applications for public service delivery—specifically the common public service platform known as the DG SuperApp.
10. In human capital development, MPTC has focused on training of leaders and civil servants across all ministries, institutions, and sub-national administrations, as well as students. Specifically, to build digital human capital, our Ministry has implemented priority tasks such as providing scholarships through the Techo Digital Scholarships, Digital Skill Development Program, Financial Aid Program, and Professional Training Courses, various competitions, as well as provide scholarship to students to study in partner countries. Furthermore, the Ministry has established Community Tech Centers (CTC) at high schools, Digital Tech Centers, and University Management Systems. In addition, the Ministry launched the "Digital Skill Development Roadmap 2024-2035" to prepare the Cambodian workforce for the future of work in the rapidly evolving digital age. This roadmap serves as a framework for building advanced digital skills in telecommunications, ICT, digital technology, digital sales and marketing, digital innovation, and entrepreneurship.
11. On the research and development front, MPTC has established a dedicated research institution under the Cambodia Academy of Digital Technology (CADT) to focus on data and AI research and applications such as AI text-to-speech programs, Khmer-Braille translation for the visually impaired, and pilot projects to create a Large Language Model (LLM) in Khmer—a core technology in Cambodia's AI ecosystem. Recently, we launched the AI for Education Research Center in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and the Rectors' Council of Cambodia. Furthermore, to connect researchers to regional and international markets, MPTC has partnered with Plug and Play, a company with extensive experience and a vast network in Silicon Valley and globally. On this basis, MPTC will establish a multi-functional Digital Park aimed at gathering, supporting, and incentivizing all

stakeholders to transform Cambodia into a Digital Hub, specifically transitioning from savvy users to active participants in the AI development market.

12. Although many achievements have been realized, significant challenges remain regarding digital connectivity, such as quality, affordability, and equity. At the same time, building digital trust is a necessity and a shared responsibility. We shall have a robust legal system, effective data protection measures, national digital governance, and high cybersecurity capabilities to ensure every citizen is safe online and confident on the internet. Additionally, the foundation of building a digital economy and society requires sufficient human resources. Cambodian youth shall not only be trained to use technology but also be equipped to become leaders in driving digital transformation in Cambodia and contributing to policy-making at regional and global levels.
13. To address these challenges and achieving this vision requires collaboration and shared responsibility among the government, companies, educational institutions, civil society, professional communities, youth representatives, and development partners. The establishment of the Cambodia Internet Governance Forum (CamIGF) with the participation of all stakeholders will provide a platform for open, transparent, and inclusive discussion on challenges related to Cambodia's digital future. Furthermore, the process of organizing this forum represents a new "Bottom-up Approach" to seeking inputs and collaboration on policy formulation and implementation, which will also improve Citizen Engagement within the pillars of digital government development.
14. In conclusion, on behalf of the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the UN-IGF Secretariat and partners such as ICANN, APNIC, the Internet Society, and DotAsia for supporting the process of organizing this first CamIGF. I commend the Secretariat for organizing this forum and the 17 representatives from the private sector, educational institutions, civil society, youth, and development partners who have actively participated as multi-stakeholders in this process.
15. To all participants, thank you for your valuable time and contributions. I encourage you to share your knowledge, insights, and recommendations throughout these two days of discussion.
16. With this, I hereby declare the official opening of the "Cambodia Internet Governance Forum 2025" and the official launch of the "Recommendations of the Internet Development Assessment in Cambodia."
17. Thank you!