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National AIDS Authority

Speech

H. E. Senior Minister **Ieng Mouly**, Chairman of the National AIDS Authority
at the National Consultative Workshop on Advancing HIV-Sensitive Social
Protection in Cambodia

October 2, 2014
The Cambodiana Hotel

- Honorable Mr. **Napoleon Navarro**, Deputy Country Director of UNDP to Cambodia,
- H. E. Mr. **Nguy Chanphal**, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Interior and Vice-Chairman of Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD), Chairman of Social Protection Unit,
- Ms. **Marie-Odile Emont**, Country Director of UNAIDS to Cambodia
- Dear Friends from India
- Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen participants of the workshop

First of all, I would like to express my pleasure to participate in the Opening Session of this workshop. At the same time, I would like to congratulate United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to Cambodia for their initiative to organize this important forum. I would like to warmly welcome and express my profound thanks to Excellencies, Lokchumteav, Ladies and Gentlemen who come to debate on Advancing HIV-Sensitive Social Protection in Cambodia.

I would like to praise the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) for its decision to include people living with HIV in Special Vulnerable Group who need social protection and I would like to support the good ideas which have been raised on the need for systematically and strategically adhering the unique needs and circumstance of people living with HIV and key affected populations in social protection scheme, thereby making the scheme “HIV-sensitive”. This is the step toward a wider social protection in the principle of “leaving no one behind”.

We are meeting today to:

- Increase understanding of the needs and benefits of addressing unique needs and circumstance of people living with HIV and key affected populations within social protection schemes in the light of operationalizing Cambodia’s National Social Protection Strategy.

- Illustrate the significance of addressing stigma, discrimination and human rights of people living with HIV and key affected populations within the context of social protection services.
- Learn experiences from India, a global pioneer in HIV-sensitive social protection, regarding benefits and challenges of putting HIV sensitive social protection into practice.
- Identify priority issues and develop an action plan for moving forward HIV sensitive social protection effort in Cambodia.

The fight against HIV in Cambodia has been a success which makes us proud of. The prevalence rate has kept falling. The average new infections were between 0.7 and 0.6 in 2013 and will fall to 0.4 soon. However, people living with HIV still indispensably need social protection in addition to medication or medical treatment. From poverty evaluation in Cambodia, among identified poor people, people living with HIV and key affected populations have been identified as poorer than ordinary people who are AIDS-free and not affected by HIV. This is why people living with AIDS and key affected populations were included in social protection scheme in Cambodia. From experiences, out of being treated at the hospital, people living with HIV and key affected populations need at the same time to raise their family, to send their children to school, to manage to get ARV or medical care at the hospital or health center. For those patients who stay at the hospital or health center, they need care givers to help. Whereas care givers need to earn their own living in order to help caring AIDS patients in the hospital or health center.

I would like to welcome the idea of including people living with HIV and key affected populations in those who have been given ID Poor in order for them to receive Health Equity Fund (HEF). At the same time, I would like to welcome the idea of expanding the eligibility to HEF to include the people living with HIV and key affected populations besides treatment service which they are receiving at hospital or health center. Normally, AIDS patients will die if they have no mean to receive regular treatment service. For this reason, if there are only ARV and no mean to get it, they are still at high risk.

Excellencies, Lokchumteav, Ladies and Gentlemen

I hope that our discussion today will bring better ideas or input which can lead us to develop comprehensive and better strategy and plan of action on social protection in Cambodia that ideally contribute to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Finally, I would like to wish Excellencies, Lokchumteav, Ladies, Gentlemen and all participants good health, strength, wisdom and with the four gems of Buddhist blessing—longevity, nobility, healthiness and strength and I would like to praise members of organizing committee as well as United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to Cambodia for jointly hosted this important workshop.

I would like to declare the Opening of the National Consultative Workshop on Advancing HIV-Sensitive Social Protection in Cambodia from now on.

Thanks.