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**Statement
of**

**H.E. Dr. Chem Widhya
Ambassador, Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of Cambodia
to the United Nations**

on

**Agenda Item 61
Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development
and of the Twenty Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly**

**Third Committee
60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**New York
Wednesday, October 5, 2005**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First of all, I would like to congratulate our esteemed Colleague Ambassador Francis Butagira, on his assumption as Chairman of the Third Committee. My congratulations also go to the other newly elected Members of the Bureau. My Delegation pledges its full support and cooperation towards the successful achievement of the objectives of the Third Committee during the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.
2. I also would like to align the statement of Cambodia with the statement of H.E. Ambassador Stafford Neil of Jamaica which was delivered earlier on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
3. Ten years ago, the World Summit for Social Development was held in Copenhagen. Earlier this year in February, a Ten Year Review of the Copenhagen Summit was held at this august organization. Member states have used these events as well as other important meetings as forum to continue discussions and to review progress on three core matters of Social Development: eradication of poverty, promotion of full employment, and fostering of social integration.
4. While it is encouraging to see that a great deal of emphasis is still placed on these issues, the fact remains: the dreadful and inhumane impacts of poverty are still experienced by the majority of the world's population. Although poverty can be easily regarded as a problem of disproportionate distribution of wealth among members of societies, to combat this malady successfully, cohesive and consistent multi-layered approaches must be devised and implemented not only by Governments, but also by international organizations. Efforts should embrace a great array of sectors, such as sustainable development, social integration, education and health, and participation by private sectors and civil societies, to name a few.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The Royal Government of Cambodia fully understands the overall problem of poverty and has devised a National Poverty Reduction Strategy. This Strategy is designed to strive to create opportunities, enhance security, strengthen capabilities, and empower the poor. In order to strengthen institutions and to improve governance in support of poverty alleviation, four critical areas have been given emphasis: a justice system that supports development and rights, a system of local governance that empowers people and communities, an administration that is an effective provider of public services and an environment where corruption would be systematically combated.
6. One of prominent issues that hampers social development is HIV/AIDS. Though the spread of HIV/AIDS could be reduced from 3% in 1997 to 1.9% in 2003, the prevalence of this dreadful disease in my country is still among the highest in South East Asia. To encounter this, the Ministry of Health has developed a National Strategic Plan for Comprehensive and Multisectoral Response to HIV/AIDS for the period of 2006 – 2010. In this connection, the Royal Government of Cambodia appeals to the international community to remain firm in their financial and scientific commitments and lend their helping hands to countries severely affected by HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Another key factor of social development is the ability to provide full employment. With more than 80% of the general population in Cambodia is rural-based and 70% of them rely on agriculture, the rural unemployment rate, which stood at 2.3% in 2000, proves to be an important figure to consider. With a rapid population growth at 2.4% per annum, it is a high priority for the Royal Government of Cambodia to concentrate its efforts in creating more jobs and absorb the labor surplus, primarily for the newly graduates and young people, in sectors such as agricultural, tourism, and labor-intensive industries and services as well as in establishing skill-training networks which are linked to employment assistance programs. In 2003, about 40,000 jobs were created in manufacturing, mostly in Small Medium Enterprises, while numerous others were created in the informal sector to meet the number of about 200,000 new workers who entered the labor market during that year. To ensure competitiveness amongst regional players in the global market, more attention will be given in the development of technology and knowledge-based industries.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Cambodia understands that, for progress and development to be sustained, active involvement from all sectors is necessary. The Royal Government of Cambodia has mandated various Ministries to implement policies to cultivate an environment conducive for social integration. The Ministry of Women's Affairs spearheads the efforts to tackle gender equality issues in Cambodia.
9. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation leads the efforts to manage matters related to persons with disabilities and older persons. As a post conflict country, out of the total number of 169,058 disabled people in Cambodia, 90% are men and 60% have been disabled by wars.
10. The Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction has been given the mandate to handle matters related to land distribution for displaced persons. A few days ago, the Council of Ministers sent the Draft Land Law to the Cambodian National Assembly for consideration of adoption. Upon adoption, this law will give landownership to citizens by providing the necessary mechanism to register the land they legally occupied before the promulgation of the law. The Land Law would also greatly facilitate private and public investments where title issues are a condition *sine qua non*.
11. Essential to the efforts of fostering social integration in the country is the delegation of decision making process and the deliberate choice to bring accountability closer to individuals and community. By doing so, active community participation in grass roots institutions and ownership of development projects is encouraged. This process has enabled a greater percentage of available development resources to be programmed and leveraged to support locally identified priorities. In 2002, the first commune council election took place in Cambodia. In 2003, a number of regulations were adopted and a series of training were conducted to build capacity of the commune and district councils to ensure an effective decentralized governance.

Mr. Chairman,

12. It is clear that eradication of poverty continues to require greater and wider access to economic opportunities both for the people within nations and for nations within the international community. National efforts in poverty eradication will not be sufficient or even will fail if the international environment is not conducive to the development process. The questions of balancing economic efficiency and social integration, improving interaction between the state and society, and among various groups of the society are the core issues for a broad based concept of sustainable social development. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that we will succeed in our efforts to provide a better future for generations to come.

Thank You.