



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement of
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International Recognition of the Day of Vesak
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Venerable Sirs,
Your Royal Highness,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Today, High Representatives from different cultures, civilizations and religions have gathered to celebrate one of the most auspicious days in mankind's history, the Day of the Vesak, the very Day when Lord Buddha saw enlightenment. Buddhism was borne on that day and has 350 million followers all over the world. Buddhism is not only a religion, Buddhism is a philosophy preaching selflessness, compassion, tolerance and non-violence that leads to a perpetual peace of mind reachable to all, big or small, poor or rich, in the society. As life is uncertain and death certain, Lord Buddha encourages human beings, who in his eyes are intelligent animals, to make merits irrespective of their social belongings and to devote their lives for the liberation of their minds from all greeds, be they material or sensual as they are pure illusions. The basic philosophy is: "Nothing belongs to you, even not your own hair. Everything is borrowed from Mother Earth and shall return to Mother Earth." The liberation from all greeds will bring serenity of the mind in the face of the four cycles of life, namely birth, ageing, illness, and passing away, leading to a state of perpetual peace or Nirvana.

2. Today is particularly auspicious as the Vesak Day falls on the year 2550 of the Buddhist Calendar. On this solemn occasion, the whole Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia, my wife Sulivann and me, are greatly honoured by the holy Message conveyed by His Holiness Samdech Preah Mahasumtheathipadey Tep Vong, the Supreme Patriarch of Mahanikaya Buddhist Order of Cambodia.
3. Secondly, in addition to all the 34 sponsoring countries Representatives, we are also very honoured by the gracious presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol of the Kingdom of Thailand, His Excellency Dr. Mok Mareth, Senior Minister, Minister of Environment of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Mr. Vijay Nambiar, and three Ambassadors from countries with great cultures and Buddhist traditions as special guests, namely H.E. Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Permanent Representative of Japan, H.E. Mr. Le Luong Minh, Permanent Representative of Vietnam and H.E. Mr. Zhang Yishan, Deputy Permanent Representative of China. We are also grateful to H.E. Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General, for the message he kindly addressed on the Day of Vesak and delivered by Mr. Vijay Nambiar, Under Secretary General and Special Adviser to the Secretary General.
4. I also would like to extend my deep appreciation and respect to the Venerable Monks of Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand for their valuable presence and their pious blessings. As this is the very first time that Cambodia has volunteered to organize and host the Day of Vesak this year, I would like to express my profound thanks for the active support and generous assistance that has been extended by friendly Missions in the preparation and in ensuring success of this Event today.
5. Last but certainly not least, I have the privilege and great honour to announce that my good friend, H.E. Mr. Daw Penjo, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bhutan, has expressed the willingness of his Delegation to organize the International Recognition of the Day of Vesak next year. On behalf of all Buddhist countries representatives and distinguished guests gathered here today, may I wish my good friend Ambassador Daw Penjo all success in this endeavor.

Thank you for your kind attention.