



Opening Remarks of H.E. Dr. Ly Thuch
President of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
at the Opening of the Siem Reap-Angkor Summit on a Mine-Free World
Siem Reap, 25 November 2024

- *Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia*
- *Your Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al-Hussein of Jordan, Special Envoy of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention*
- *Your Excellency Dr. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP*
- Excellencies, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

Greetings

On behalf of all delegates, I would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to Samdech Thipadei Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia for gracing the opening ceremony of the 5th Review Conference.

Your esteemed presence is not only an honor but also a source of inspiration as we embark on our noble mission this week.

It is a profound honor to stand before you today as we gather in Siem Reap, Cambodia, for the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention—an occasion that reflects our shared determination to rid the world of the cruel and lingering legacy of landmines.

This Summit, fittingly named the Siem Reap-Angkor Summit on a Mine-Free World, is not just a meeting of nations but a collective reaffirmation of our unwavering commitment to peace, human dignity, and solidarity. Together, we stand at the crossroads of history, where the painful memories of conflict are being replaced by a future built on hope, resilience, and peace.

A Legacy of Hope

For 25 years, this Convention has been a beacon of hope for millions around the world. It has saved lives, restored communities, and enabled families to reclaim their futures. But it has also done something more—it has brought the world together in a shared mission to uphold the dignity of life. Together, we have proven that even the darkest legacies of war can be overcome when we unite under the banner of peace.

The work of this Convention has cleared more than just land; it has cleared a path toward a future where fear no longer rules. It has allowed farmers to once again sow their fields, children to walk freely to school, and communities to flourish. The ripple effect of mine clearance is immeasurable—what begins with safety blossoms into growth, opportunity, and prosperity.

As we gather here today, we celebrate the tireless efforts of all those who have sacrificed—often at great personal cost—to make this vision of a mine-free world a reality. We remember the lives that have been saved and honor the memories of those who gave everything to this cause.

A Nation's Leadership: From Vision to Reality

None of this would have been possible without the courageous and visionary leadership of the Royal Government of Cambodia. Under the guidance of former Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, Cambodia embarked on an ambitious and life-saving journey of mine clearance. His devoted commitment to peace laid the groundwork for the incredible transformation we witness today. He believed deeply that Cambodia could rise from the horrors of war and become a beacon of hope for the world—and it is his vision that guided us here.

Today, we continue this journey under the leadership of Prime Minister Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet, whose dedication to the cause of mine action has reinvigorated our mission. His commitment ensures that Cambodia remains a global leader in the fight against landmines, standing tall on the international stage as a nation that has not only survived but thrived. To the Cambodian government, past and present, your tireless efforts and unyielding determination have made this transformation possible, and we honor your leadership today.

Samdech, Your Royal Highness, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Gratitude to Our Partners

As we reflect on Cambodia's role in presiding over and hosting the historic conference, we must acknowledge the profound contributions of all respectable partners who have stood by us in this journey.

My special thanks go to the 2023 President - Germany and 2025 President - Japan who have made critical contribution to Cambodia's presidency through the Troika system.

I am grateful for the relentless supports from the Implementation Support Unit, the United Nations of Disarmament Affairs, Committee on Article 5 Implementation, Committee on Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance, Committee on Victim Assistance, Committee of Cooperative Compliance, the Universalization Coordination Group, and Australia as Sponsorship Program Coordinator.

My deep appreciation also goes to the convention special envoys: His Royal Highness Prince Mired bin Ra'ad bin Zeid of Jordan, and Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium. Their unwavering dedication to the implementation of the convention principles especially their universalization efforts are highly commendable.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to convey our deepest gratitude to our invaluable international partners, whose strong support has empowered Cambodia to host this significant conference. Their contributions reflect a shared vision for a peaceful, mine-free world. Together, we are not only advancing the goals of this convention but also reaffirming the spirit of global solidarity.

Regard vers l'avenir : Un Appel à la Solidarité Mondiale

En célébrant cette étape importante, nous devons aussi reconnaître le travail qu'il reste à accomplir. Bien que nous célébrions les progrès réalisés, nous ne devons pas perdre de vue les communautés qui vivent toujours sous la menace des mines terrestres. Notre mission est loin d'être achevée, et c'est seulement par une solidarité mondiale inébranlable que nous pourrons mener à bien ce que nous avons entrepris.

Ce Sommet est un appel à toutes les nations, à tous les peuples, pour réaffirmer notre engagement envers un monde sans mines. Chaque nouvel État qui rejoint notre cause nous rapproche de la réalisation de notre vision commune : un monde où personne ne vit dans la peur des dangers cachés sous ses pieds, où chaque enfant peut jouer, chaque agriculteur peut cultiver, et chaque communauté peut prospérer en toute sécurité.

Que ce moment soit celui où nous, en tant que communauté mondiale, décidons non seulement de finir de déminer les terres, mais aussi de construire un avenir où la paix, la sécurité et la dignité sont des droits pour tous. C'est notre responsabilité partagée, et c'est une tâche que nous ne pouvons accomplir qu'ensemble.

Un Avenir Fondé sur la Paix et l'Unité

En regardant vers l'avenir, que nous soyons guidés par les principes qui nous ont menés jusqu'ici : la solidarité, la persévérance, et la conviction qu'ensemble, nous pouvons accomplir l'impossible. Le combat pour débarrasser le monde des mines terrestres va au-delà d'une mission humanitaire : c'est le témoignage de ce que nous pouvons réaliser en tant que famille mondiale unie.

Dans cette mission, il n'y a pas de place pour les frontières, pas de place pour la division. Les défis que nous affrontons peuvent être grands, mais notre volonté collective est plus grande encore. Nous avons vu comment les plus petits actes de bravoure — le courage d'un démineur, la détermination d'un survivant — peuvent transformer des communautés entières. Imaginez ce que nous pouvons accomplir lorsque les nations s'unissent avec ce même courage, cette même détermination.

In Conclusion

Let us leave this Summit with a renewed sense of purpose, knowing that the world we envision is within our grasp. Together, we have laid the foundation for a future free from the dangers of landmines—a future where no one need fear what lies beneath the ground. But we must continue to build upon this foundation, to stand in solidarity with those who still wait for the day when they too can live without fear.

To all those who have worked tirelessly to bring us to this point, I extend my deepest gratitude. Your dedication has brought us closer to a world where peace is not just a hope, but a reality. And to all those who will continue this vital work, know that you are not alone. We stand with you, and together, we will achieve a safer, better tomorrow.

As the Buddha once said, “Just as a candle cannot burn without fire, men cannot live without a spiritual life.” Our work to clear mines and build peace is that fire—a flame that guides us to a future of compassion, safety, and unity for all humanity.

Thank you.