Good Morning. I am grateful for that kind introduction, and I'm honored, touched and delighted to be given the opportunity to speak today and share some of my thoughts on such an important subject.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

‘Why’ trade and poverty is so much in the mind of people today? And why are we all here?

For me, as a young survivor of the Killing Fields and a refugee, 24 years later, I still feel the shiver and great trepidation and emotion when it comes to speak about the topics of poverty. You can’t never imagine or feel poverty unless you have been there. The same goes with war and peace. One takes peace for granted until one looses. We watch the images in CNN and BBC about war and misery as news but we do not see the human drama in the heart and mind of people. In recent years as a practitioner of trade negotiation and a firm believer of free trade, I also see strong rays of hope that indeed trade can lift the people out of poverty.

For all of us we are not here just as policy makers, development specialists, or economists. And we should not be addressing the question of poverty just from economics. There is a human element in this. And because of this it concerns our moral obligation to work together to overcome the worst forms of suffering and build a more cooperative world and safer future.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

No one doubts the centrality of poverty and the alleviation of poverty on the global agenda. For those who do, a glance at the facts will help change their minds.

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1 Extract from Keynote speech on Trade and Poverty Eradication through Millennium Development Goals made at AITIC/ACP Secretariat Symposium on the Trade Dimension of International Development Initiatives, UNCTAD XI, Anhembi Convention Center, São Paulo, Brazil, 13 June 2004.
In addressing this complex linkage of trade and poverty, let me share with you a few questions which can help put the whole thing in perspective. First the ‘what’ is happening in the world we live in today and its future.

We recognize that in our world of 6 billion people, one billion have 80 percent of the income and five billion have under 20 percent. In the next 25 years, 2 billion more people will come onto our planet, and all but 50 million will go to developing countries. So that in the year 2025, we will have a planet of 7 billion out of eight in developing countries, and by 2050, it will be 8 billion out of 9.

We also have to recognize the challenge of youth - youth that is now just about half the world, 2.8 billion people under the age of 24, a billion and a half under the age of 15, and in the next 20, 25 years, 2 billion more people coming onto the planet.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The international community began to recognize the magnitude of the problems and challenged itself to provide a response on a corresponding scale. In a series of United Nations conferences during the 1990s the international community established a set of common goals, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs, the 25-year targets to be achieved between 1990 and 2015, to which the international community committed itself in 2000, represent a crystallization of a decade of international effort and gatherings devoted to understanding the meaning of poverty, its causes, how we can measure it better, and how we can act to overcome it.

If the goals are clear, as embodied in the MDGs, so are the means, as agreed at the Summits in Monterrey and Johannesburg. What we have seen is the convergence of the political will to invest in development—as expressed since 2001 at major international meetings in Doha, Rome, Copenhagen, Geneva, Bangkok, Shanghai, and more. The messages were clear. It is necessary and urgent to scale up actions by developing and developed countries, and by international agencies, if the MDGs are to be achieved. Resolute and concrete steps are needed to implement the policies and actions that have been agreed upon to accelerate progress on growth and poverty reduction.

Mutual accountability is at the core of the global “compact” that emerged between developed and developing countries at these Conferences. The underlying idea is that sustained political and economic reform by developing countries is to be matched by direct support from the developed world in the form of trade, aid and investment that is needed if they are to succeed. MDG 8 contains a number of explicit indicators encompassing issues such as increasing development assistance, opening markets, expanding debt relief and improving the availability of essential drugs to the poor.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Why “Trade”.

As everyone in this audience knows, the benefits of free trade are clear. It has become widely accepted, particularly within the Bretton Woods institutions, the UN and WTO, that poverty reduction is best addressed by economic growth. This argument follows that presented in a paper by David Dollar and Aart Kraay (Dollar and Kraay (2000) that incomes of the poorest quintile rise in line with overall growth. Their conclusion was that policy-induced growth is as good for the poor as it is for the overall economy - encapsulated
in the phrase ‘a rising tide lifts all boats’. Moreover, their paper argued that the openness of the economy benefits the poor to the same extent that it benefits the whole economy.

In a compelling address by Anne O. Krueger, IMF Acting Managing Director to the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, May 18, 2004 entitled “Willful Ignorance: The Struggle to Convince the Free Trade Skeptics” she stated that the evidence to support the argument for trade liberalization is powerful: the advantage of twentieth century experience and, in particular, the rapid growth of the world economy after 1945 which was largely driven by the much more rapid expansion of world trade. She also quoted a study by Warcziarg and Welch of 133 countries between 1950 and 1988 - Countries that liberalized their trade regimes enjoyed annual growth rates about one half of one percent higher after liberalization. And opening up to international trade has become increasingly important: removal of trade barriers during the 1990s raised growth rates by 2.5% a year. In 1950, merchandise exports accounted for about 8% of world GDP; by 2002 that figures had risen to 19%. From these facts, we can see that trade liberalization brought huge benefits. It paved the way for the most rapid and sustained economic expansion in history. Almost all countries benefited, rich and poor.

At the Johannesburg Summit when UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has called on donor countries to double present levels of assistance to US$100 billion a year in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals, he was mindful that official development aid provided by developed countries has fallen to an average of 0.22% of their GNP. So, how do we pay for the Millennium Development Goals and make the vision of sustainable development a reality? One answer is in assisting developing countries to benefit more from trade and generate the resources needed for development. In the words of WTO Director-General Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi: “The Doha Development Agenda is more than a catchword or a vague expression of shared sentiment. It offers the promise of real development gains. An open trading system will help increase income levels and reduce poverty.”

The World Bank's Global Economic Prospects 2002, estimates that abolishing all trade barriers could boost global income over a ten year period by US$2.8 trillion. Of this, developing countries stand to reap more than half of these gains and an additional reduction in global poverty of 320 million people by 2015. In income terms, an agreement on trade in the Doha Development Round could deliver substantial benefits for both high-income and developing countries. These are rough estimates, but they provide us with a clear indication; freer trade, accompanied by appropriate domestic macroeconomic policies and a sound legal framework, is vital in helping poor countries grow their way out of poverty and move on to the path of sustainable development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Time now to take stock of the realities. As time is a constraint I will concentrate today on just two substantive areas in which developed countries can have a powerful impact on trade and poverty reduction. These are their commitments to raising aid flows, and how they open their markets to allow poor countries to increase their trading opportunities.

On ODA, the eighth Millennium Development Goal maps out how developed countries can meet their obligations in a global partnership for development and it is far ranging in scope. It is four years since the international community committed itself to reach the MDGs. Next year will probably see the first targets missed for the MDGs. Shortly after the Monterrey
Conference of March 2002 many of the world’s richest countries agreed to increase their international aid budgets by around US$15 billion by 2006. Yet in 2001 the average DAC donors aid effort was only 0.22 percent of their combined GNP, compared with over 0.3 percent in the early 1990s and 0.5 per cent in the early 1960s. Only five countries have reached or surpassed the 0.7% target adopted by the United Nations in 1970.

Estimates of the additional resources needed to reach the Goals are of the order of US$ 50–60 billion each year. That would mean a doubling of global aid budgets to US$100-120billion a year or around 0.5% of rich countries’ GDP. Any such increase has to go hand-in-hand with improvements in the quality of that aid. Mr. Nicholas Stern, in his speech at the Shanghai Global Poverty Conference criticized many donors which still tie their aid to commercial opportunities for their companies, particularly through technical assistance.

On trade, rich countries have yet to deliver on their promises to cut out their protectionist policies which exclude precisely those goods in which developing countries have a comparative advantage. Mr. Stern argued that roughly 6 times as much money is spent on agricultural subsidies in rich countries as is spent on international aid. Tariffs and quotas for textile exports to developed countries cost developing countries an estimated 27 million jobs. Escalating tariffs, coupled with non-tariff barriers, undermine employment in industries that would otherwise be competitive.

In rich countries, protectionist policies translate into gross overpayment for food, hitting poor people in those countries particularly hard, and represent huge drains on the public finances. In poor countries they translate into a tragic denial of trading opportunities. In September last year the then Chief Economist of the World Bank summarized current policy as follows, and I quote “politically antiquated, economically illiterate, environmentally destructive and ethically indefensible”.

Here I quote Anne Krueger again: “The annual cost to consumers and taxpayers of 29 OECD members’ support for agriculture and horticulture is so large that it could pay for each of the 56 million cows in the OECD dairy herd to enjoy a first class air ticket around the world. Each cow would also have $1450 spending money to finance stopovers in the U.S., Europe and Asia. If the cows were willing to slum it in business class, they could have $2800 spending money instead. And they could enjoy this luxury holiday every year. …. For each one of the 2,300 jobs saved in the American sugar industry through barriers to imports in the 1990s cost around $800,000 per year. Similar results would come from calculating the impact of European Union or Japanese—or Swiss—trade barriers. Or take the 216 jobs saved by protection for the US benzenoid chemical industry—almost $1.4 million per year per job.”

On the Doha Round, Anne Krueger confirmed again that: “the stakes in the Doha round are infinitely greater. There is a wide range of studies suggesting that the addition to global income will be anywhere from several hundred billion dollars to around one trillion dollars. Benefits on this scale accord with our experience of trade liberalization since the Second World War. The World Bank calculates that two thirds of the benefits of a successful Doha round would accrue to developing countries themselves. And most of that would come from lowering their trade barriers against each other.”

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.*
Speaking about sharing experiences, I guess what I should speak about is from what we’ve gone through this last 10 years and what I think the evidence of trade, growth and poverty in Cambodia is. I’m not saying that it can be replicated in other countries. I think Cambodia is quite a unique country in the sense that we have a unique history of genocide and this paints a very black picture on a background. In fact, wherever I go, I never forget two backgrounds: (1) we had a genocide; and (2) we’re an LDC. These are the two backgrounds that always shape how I’m thinking.

Cambodia started from scratch. We don’t have the opportunity or the luxury of having a stable, peaceful country where we can take our time to develop our economy, to try different policies. We started from scratch a little more than 10 years ago when the UN came to Cambodia. In this sense, we had no trade. Cambodia was under a complete economic embargo. After we had the general election in 1993, that’s when we started exploring what so-called globalization is all about. What market opening is all about? Only about three years later, 1996, when we had market access to the US and the EU that’s when we started seeing exponential growth of trade. And there, I can say that our economic growth has been to a very large extent resulting from market access to the EU and the US. Of course, the export base is very narrow. We started benefiting from the textile and the footwear industry, which we all know that in a year from now will be facing a new dynamism in a post-2005 quota free world.

But having said that, because our growth came about from this export, the Cambodian people realized that indeed they have a taste of growth through trade. And more so after you live through nearly two decades of economic isolation, you start seeing the other side of the picture. Isolation is very painful and although market opening is not all that easy competing in this global, regional world, it is much better than being isolated.

We see that the export industry is thriving. It employed about 250,000 people and feeds nearly a million (directly and indirectly). So in a small country of 11-12 million people, it feeds about 9-10% of the people. In a sense, we cannot deny that trade has an impact on our economic growth. In fact, we had steady 5-5.5% growth. Of course, based on the economists’ projection, we need 6-7% steady growth for the next 12 years before we can meet our MDG of reducing poverty by half.

We are also benefiting from market opening is tourism. When we started opening up the ‘Open Sky’ policy less than 3 years ago, we barely had 200,000 tourists arriving. Now, if it hadn’t been for SARS last year, we would have 1 million tourists arriving. You figure out, if each tourist spends $400-500 in my country, I can easily see $400-500 million spent in the country. In fact, in the town of Siemreap, where we have one of the Seven Wonders of the World, we have 3*, 4*, 5* hotels mushrooming. Every week, we see something new coming up. There again we see, that we do benefit from openness.

After our WTO accession (we worked very hard to complete accession in a little bit more than two and a half years), we see that we built a lot of confidence in the private sector. We start seeing the impact of the WTO accession, for example, opening up the education sector – we see a mushrooming of education facilities to respond to the needs of the people. In intellectual property, we pass the IPR laws and we now see a thriving cultural industry booming up – movie theatres start reopening up, copyrights in movies, videos, songs. Something that we did not see a year and a half ago.
These are just some of the ‘real’ examples that we see that Cambodia does in fact benefit from the liberalization. I think that the evidence is there. Of course that was not all because we opened up and that trade automatically brings about economic growth and poverty reduction. In fact, in our case, we’re very mindful of the two backgrounds (genocide and LDC) and that is why in our trade policy, we made it clear from the start that it is a pro-poor trade sector strategy. Whatever we do, we all have this vulnerable group of poor people in mind. Of course one cannot do everything for the poor, but it helps to think of them when you do something. It does translate into concrete activity when we design a project. Right now, when we are doing Industrial Export Processing Zones, we have environmental and social impact assessments. We talk to the poor. We have surveys done to get their feedback. We do a lot of this sort of thing here.

If I can go to the next point deriving from this, the reason Cambodia moved very fast in this market opening is that we have a very clear pragmatic policy. From the outset, Cambodia recognized that joining WTO could play an important role in accelerating its growth and development. In order to maximize these benefits (and minimize any potential disadvantages) it was necessary to devise a negotiation strategy that fit Cambodia’s needs, and that would lead to the kind of outcome that we desired.

In formulating such a strategy, we started with the fundamental realities of present day Cambodia.

Cambodia is a small country with a relatively small population, a large proportion of which is impoverished. At the same time, Cambodia’s population has been growing rapidly. The number of young people entering the job market has thus been growing, and will continue to grow at a rapid pace in the years ahead. Expanding rapidly employment opportunities is thus a major challenge facing Cambodia. Given the lack of purchasing power in the domestic economy, a rapid creation of new jobs can only result from producing for other, larger markets. In other words, Cambodia’s future growth and development must be outward oriented, with exports playing a key role in creating employment and reducing poverty.

Cambodia’s experience with its garment industry illustrates the role that exports can play in increasing employment rapidly and helping to alleviate poverty. Our garment industry now employs directly some 250,000 people. Moreover, more than half of these jobs has been created during the past 5 years, making the industry by far the largest source of jobs growth during that period. The workers concerned are generally from low-income families, and their earnings usually flow back to these families in the countryside.

A second reality of Cambodia’s present situation is that the necessary increase in exports and employment can occur only if there is a rapid expansion of investment. Because adequate savings, skills and technology are not always available within Cambodia, foreign investment has an important role to play in bringing about the necessary expansion. Foreign direct investment has an especially critical role to play in expanding exports, since foreign firms know best foreign markets, and possess the technology, managerial experience and marketing channels that are needed to engage successfully in exporting.

Again, Cambodia’s experience with its garment industry provides a concrete illustration of the way in which foreign direct investment can be used to expand exports rapidly. Garment exports rose from $26 million in 1995 to $650 million in 1999 and more than $1.3 billion in 2003. The knowledge by foreign investing firms of marketing and other requirements in
foreign markets has obviously been a key element in allowing this rapid expansion of exports.

This emphasis on exports and foreign direct investment must not, however, imply any neglect of the important role of small and medium sized enterprises in Cambodia’s development. These enterprises produce almost exclusively for the domestic market. They account for a very important part of Cambodian employment (though still a small part of the growth of employment) and are an important breeding ground for the development of indigenous entrepreneurship.

The third fundamental reality of Cambodia is that it is a rural society and economy, with most Cambodians depending directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihood. Cambodia is competitive or potentially competitive across a fairly wide range of agricultural sectors. Much remains to be done, however, to realize the full potential of this competitiveness and prospective competitiveness. Achieving this will require, among other things, very large investments in rural infrastructure, in agricultural extension services to improve producer skills, and improved processing of food products, for example the milling and grading of rice to international standards. Here, Government programs, the donor community and foreign direct investment all have an important role to play. The development of Cambodia’s agriculture will be a long and complex process that needs to be backstopped by a trade policy that provides reasonable protection to domestic producers from agricultural imports, while ensuring that Cambodian agriculture that is competitive has access to markets abroad.

In addition to these fundamental realities regarding Cambodia’s own situation, an important reality of the international trading regime needs to be mentioned. In accordance with the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, the special regime governing trade in garments comes to an end on 1 January 2005. This regime allowed countries to apply quantitative restrictions on imports of clothing. Accordingly, the garment exports of almost all countries have been subject to quotas in major world markets, in particular the United States. Cambodia’s garment exports have also been subject to quotas. On 1 January 2005, however, WTO members are obliged to eliminate quotas on clothing imports from other WTO members. As of that date, access to world markets will be unrestrained for WTO members. If Cambodia is not a member on that date, countries will be free to continue to impose quotas on Cambodia’s exports, and will undoubtedly do so. Thus, failure to join WTO by 1 January 2005 would put Cambodia’s garment industry at a significant disadvantage relative to its competitors.

On the Cambodian experiences, I want to summarize by using a small metaphor. In Cambodia we tend to lose sight of the real thing because we’re too stuck up in statistics. I tend to be more pragmatic. In 1991, when the UN came to Cambodia after the Killing Fields, after the 10 years of economic isolation, everybody was poor. I, myself, went through the killing fields before I ran away as a refugee to the States. I knew what it is to be a refugee. I knew what it is to be living in an economic embargo situation. Last year, according to our statistics, we have 36% of Cambodians still living under the poverty line. But I would like to put it in another way around. In 12 years, we’ve managed to move 64% out of the poverty, not so bad. Let’s look at the glass half full. The battle is far from being over, but today is much better than yesterday, and tomorrow will be much better than today.”

Last but not least, the Integrated Framework (IF). I could not wrap the Cambodian experiences by not mentioning, though briefly, about the role and importance of the
Integrated Framework (IF) in our success story. We owe our success to large extent on the advent of the IF in Cambodia.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.*

In conclusion, free trade is a win-win situation. Everybody can gain, and the gains are large enough to enable compensation to be provided to the losers. A more open and balanced global trading system is central to achieving the MDGs, and can be a powerful engine for growth and poverty reduction. But much more needs to be done by both sides. While the success of reducing poverty will depend to a large extent on the countries’ own actions a supportive international environment is also an important complement, if not a must.

We must move beyond safe statements about the Millennial Goals and about poverty. We need actions and delivery.

Mr. James D. Wolfensohn, The World Bank President, in his opening address at the Scaling Up Poverty Reduction Conference in Shanghai stated eloquently, and I quote: “We must deal with the question of social equity and social justice. Because without dealing with that question of poverty, there can’t be any peace, and $900 billion being spent on military expenditure, $300 billion being spent on agricultural subsidies, and $50- or $60 billion being spent on overseas development assistance is one of the absurdities that we have to change.”

Thank you
Short Biography: Sok Siphana

Mr. Sok was appointed as Secretary of State for Commerce (Vice-Minister) in May 1999. Since his appointment he has worked extensively on trade policies development and trade negotiation, commercial legal framework, trade promotion, and economic integration. He is the deputy chief negotiator for Cambodia’s accession to the WTO and the focal point for the Integrated Framework for Trade Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries (IF) initiative for Cambodia. He traveled extensively around the world and is a renowned speaker in the field of WTO, trade mainstreaming and the ‘IF’, law and development, and poverty reduction strategy.

Prior to being appointed to the post, Mr. Sok was the managing partner of a law firm in Cambodia where he did several legal assignments for the World Bank, UNDP and ADB. Prior to this post, he has served as the UNDP Legal Advisor to the Senior Minister in charge of Rehabilitation and Development, Minister of Economy and Finance, and Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Development of Cambodia. There he has assisted the Government of Cambodia at its highest level formulate national development policies and was instrumental in supporting the Government negotiating many bilateral and multilateral agreements and instruments.

Mr. Sok has extensive experiences in the international trade and development arena. He has headed the Cambodian delegations to the 4th WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha in 2001; to the 1st and 3rd LDCs Trade Ministerial Conference in Zanzibar and Dakar respectively in 2001 and 2004; to the Joint UNCTAD-UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Ministerial Conference on Electronic Commerce for Development in Bangkok, 2002; to the UNCTAD Mid Term Review Ministerial Conference in Bangkok, 2002. He has served as Chairman of the ESCAP-UNCTAD Expert Committee on E-Commerce in Bangkok, 2002, and Chairman of the Committee of Whole on Managing Globalization at the 60th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Asia Pacific (ESCAP) in Shanghai, 2004; Chairman of OECD’s Regional Conference on Trade Capacity Building and Private Sector Development in Asia in Phnom Penh, 2003. He was requested to introduce the Singapore Issues at the Dakar LDCs Ministerial Conference.

During Cambodia’s efforts to accede to the WTO, he led the Cambodian trade negotiators to various capitals: Geneva, Brussels, Washington, DC, and Seoul. Mr. Sok was also the deputy chief of the Cambodian delegations to the Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey, 2002, and the 5th WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun, 2003. In promoting trade and investment for Cambodia he has led or received numerous missions to or from Japan, US, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Denmark, France, Spain, China, Australia, and New Zealand. The success of Cambodia in the ‘IF’ initiative has led him to travel at the requests of many international agencies and LDCs to share trade mainstreaming experiences in Washington, DC, Brussels, London, Geneva, Copenhagen, Bergen, Gran Canaries, Bangkok, Vientiane, Hanoi, Bamako, Conakry, Dakar.

Mr. Sok has also participated under various professional capacities in numerous international conferences such as the UNDP’s Conference on Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS), Bergen, Norway 2003; the EU’s Future of Textiles and Clothing after 2005 in Brussels, 2003; the Ministerial meeting on Making Trade Works for the Poor in Copenhagen, 2003; the Executive Forum on National Export Strategies in Montreux, 2001, 2002, and 2003; the DFID’s Trade, Growth and Poverty Conference in London, 2003; The World Bank Group’s Conference on Shaping Public Sector Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Strategies in Washington, DC, 2003; and the World Bank’s Global Conference on Scaling Up Poverty Reduction in Shanghai, 2004.

At the national level Mr. Sok’s pro-active stance in development has earned him the respects not only within the Government but also in the society as a whole as reflected in his various appointments as a member of the Legal and Judicial Reform Council in 2002, a member of the Land Economic Concession Task Force in 2003, the Vice-Chair of the Manufacturing and Distribution Government-Private Sector Working Group in 2002, the Chairman of E-commerce Policy Research Group in 2003, and an Advisor to the Royal Academy of Cambodia’s terminology development Task Force.

He sits on the board of two well respected Cambodian economic and law research institutes, the Cambodian Development Research Institute (CDRI) and the Cambodian Legal Resources Development Center (CLRDC) which he was co-founder, as well as served in numerous government, regional, and donor steering committees, particularly the UNCTAD’s TrainforTrade, the UNIDO's regional STMQ Project, the seco's Export Promotion
regional project, the EU’s Multilateral Trade Assistance regional Project, and the EU Asia-Invest. Recently he was proposed to serve as an Executive Committee member of the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation (AITIC) – an inter-governmental agency in Geneva - representing beneficiary countries in Asia. He awarded 2 royal medals (Class ‘Asarith’ and ‘Sena’) by the His Royal Highness the King Norodom Sihanouk, and a national medal ‘Class Thipedin’ by Samdech Prime Minister Hun Sen. In January 2004, he was recognized as one of the ‘movers and shakers under 50s’ by Asia Inc.

Aside from his official duty, he has previously served as Secretary-General of the Cambodian Bar. From 1995 to the present he lectures pro-bono regularly on laws and trade policies at the Royal University of Laws and Economics, the Royal Academy of Cambodia, the National Institute of Management, and the National Institute of Economy and Finance. He has written and published extensively on Cambodia, particularly the "Compendium of Cambodian Laws, Volume I, II & III", the "Cambodian Business and Investment Handbook, Editions 1996, 1997 & 2000", the "Legal System of Cambodia," the "Legal Aspect of Doing Business in Cambodia," and “Formulation of a Legal and Judicial Reform Strategy”, and “Implementing the ‘IF’ in Cambodia”. He is the author of several essays and articles on international trade, economic development, and commercial laws as appearing in: the World Bank’s Trade and Development Report; Nanyang Technological University's Asia Business Law Review; Singapore; Prospect Media Pty Ltd's Product Liability in the Asia Pacific, Australia; Centre Francais du Commerce Exterieur's Cahier Juridiques et Fiscaux de L'Exportation, Paris; the Center for International Legal Studies' Investment in Asia Pacific, Salzburg; and Campden Publishing Limited, London. He is also quoted in many international press, including citations in the Harvard Business School's International MBA case studies, the New York Times, The Herald Tribunes, the Bangkok Post, BusinessWeek, Asia Inc., the Christian Sciences Monitor.

Mr. Sok has worked extensively and closely with the UNCTAD’s advisory team during the accession process and was involved in many UNCTAD initiatives both at the national level, regional and international level. He was asked to launched in Cambodia the UNCTAD World Investment Report 2001 and the UNCTAD/ICC Investment Guide to Cambodia; he has overseen the customization and training of several UNCTAD training materials – the Business Guide to the World Trading System, the Commercial Diplomacy, the Distance Learning on International Investment Agreements, the TrainforTrade’s Port Training Programme. At the regional level he has participated at the launch of UNCTAD’s regional training center, the International Trade Development in Bangkok, 2002; he contributed to the formulation and the delivery of several regional projects: FIELD; TrainforTrade’s role of regional grouping in Gran Canaries, 2004.

For the past 10 years, Mr. Sok has been instrumental in the formulation of many Government official reports and studies done in partnership with key development partners, particularly, the National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia (NPRD) with UNDP; the Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP I and II) and the Financial Blueprint of the Royal Government of Cambodia 2001-2010 with ADB; An Investment Guide to Cambodia 2003 with UNCTAD/ICC; the e-Trade Bridge Strategy with ITC; the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and the draft Private Sector Development Strategy with the World Bank.

Sok Siphana was born in 1960 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He survived the Killing Fields during the Pol Pot's regime in the mid 70s and resettled as a refugee in the United States in 1980. He received his Bachelor Degree in Business Administration from George Mason University, Virginia and his Juris Doctor from Widener University School of Law in Delaware, USA in 1992 and is admitted to both the Cambodian and the Pennsylvania Bars. He is currently finishing his Ph.D. thesis (Law and Economic: Role of Law and Legal Institutions and Economic Development in Cambodia: Opportunities to Skip the Learning Curve) which he undertook at Bond University School of Law, Australia since 1999.

Mr. Sok is fluent in Khmer, English, French, and a working knowledge of Spanish. He is married to Khieu Mealy, a Cambodian lawyer; they have two children, Rosette (8 years old daughter) and Samithi (3 years old son). Work aside, he sings and plays the guitar and has earned recently his Second Degree Black Belt from the World Karate Shotokan Academy, Paris. He is President of the Cambodian Association of Karate-Do Shotokan and Honorary President of the Cambodian Hapkido Association. He served previously two terms as board member of the International School of Phnom Penh.

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3. See chapter III, paragraphs 90 and 105.

4. TD/B/50/11.


6. There is one small, technical exception to this statement. In early 1999 Cambodia concluded a bilateral agreement with the United States on textiles and garments. That agreement set limits on the tariff levels that Cambodia would apply to imports of textiles and clothing coming from the United States. Cambodia extended those lower rates to other countries to which it granted MFN treatment. However, as a WTO member, Cambodia will need to apply these lower rates to imports from all WTO member countries. For a small number of products originating in a small number of countries this will involve lowering the tariff rates presently charged.