

World Teachers Day

Welcome Remarks by Mr Sardar Umar Alam, UNESCO Representative to Cambodia

National theme: Teacher Development to Enhance Human Capital Towards Cambodia's Vision 2050

International theme: Valuing teachers' voices: towards a new social contract for education

26 September 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Excellency **Dr Hang Chuon Naron**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Youth, and Sport
- Excellency **Dr Nath Bunroeun**, Secretary of State, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
- Excellencies, Lok Chumteav, Senior Ministry Officials
- Dear Teachers, School Principals, Teacher Educators and Trainers, Development Partners, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

TALKING POINTS

- It is my great pleasure to join you today to celebrate the invaluable contributions of teachers across Cambodia on this special occasion of World Teachers' Day. On behalf of UNESCO, I would like to express my appreciation to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport for organising this significant event, and for your continuous commitment to the empowerment and development of Cambodia's educators.
- Today, as we gather here under the national theme "*Teacher Development to Enhance Human Capital Towards Cambodia's Vision 2050*," we are reminded of the vital role that teachers play, not only in shaping young minds but also in building a more prosperous future for Cambodia.
- Over the past decade, Cambodia has made steady progress in teacher education reforms. UNESCO would like to congratulate the MoEYS for the launch of the flagship publication highlighting its achievements in the reform since 2014, including in upgrading teacher education institutions, elevating teacher qualifications and standards and investing in teacher development. UNESCO also commends the Royal Government of Cambodia and the MoEYS for their recent efforts in the successful

teacher recruitment this year. All these achievements are important conditions to attract quality individuals into the teaching profession and build a strong teaching force.

- UNESCO has been a longstanding partner of the Ministry throughout this transformative journey. Since the MoEYS and UNESCO launched our \$27.02 million STEPCam programme in 2018 supported by the Global Partnership for Education, teachers have always been at the centre of our collective vision. We recognise that teachers are at the heart of education, the most powerful way to enhance human capital, achieve social progress, and transform our societies. As one of the largest and most comprehensive teacher education programmes in Cambodia, STEPCam has already benefitted hundreds of thousands of students and education staff across the country since its launch.
- As we look to the future, towards Cambodia's Vision 2050, teachers will continue to be the agents of change. The Pentagonal Strategy Phase 1 places human resource development as the first priority and recognises education transformation starts with teachers. As Cambodia sets its sights on graduating from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status, teachers remain at the centre of this Vision and must receive the professional development, recognition, and support to inspire and guide future generations.
- This is also the central message underlying the international theme this year, which is "Valuing teachers' voices: towards a new social contract for education." It reminds us how important it is to value teachers' voices as drivers of change and to forge a supportive environment for their professional development.
- In celebration of World Teachers' Day today, let us remember the profound impact that teachers have on us. Let us also ensure that teachers are empowered to fully realise their potential, to lead the way in shaping the future of education in Cambodia. By equipping educators with essential digital competencies and innovative teaching methods, with comprehensive support in teacher education and professional development, we ensure that every child can thrive and develop the foundational skills needed to succeed.
- In the years to come, UNESCO, along with development partners, remains committed to support the Ministry in professionalising the teaching force through policy development and research in teacher education, teacher management and professional development. UNESCO will continue to support the Ministry in developing professionalised pathways into the teaching profession for primary

teachers. We will expand the Continuous Professional Development system to offer ongoing opportunities for teachers and teacher educators to enhance their capacities and upgrade their qualifications. We also continue to invest in the early grade learning programme to ensure that teachers support young learners to gain the foundational competencies they need to succeed. In a changing world driven by technology, we are supporting the Ministry to invest in ICT and digital transformation in education, so that teachers can effectively use digital technology and tools to enhance the learning experience of students inside and outside the classroom.

- UNESCO stands with MoEYS in this mission to support teachers as the core drivers of Cambodia's national development, and we look forward to continuing our strong partnership in the years to come.
- To all the teachers here today and across Cambodia, thank you for your dedication and contribution. We see the work you do and we applaud you! Happy World Teachers Day!