

Opening remarks

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Minister Education, Youth and Sport of the Kingdom of Cambodia
Dissemination of Course Catalogue Report of Dockside Project
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

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Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen Rectors,
Excellencies, Dear Professors
Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to be here today, and honored to be with you all for an official dissemination of **Course Catalogue Report of Dockside Project**. On behalf of Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, let me say welcome to you all.

I would like to thank Professor Thomas VALLÉE from Nantes University who is leading the European program Erasmus + "DOCKSIDE", his colleague from the University of Denmark, Professor Dewan AHSAN, and Professor Jaime CABEZA, University of Vigo and Ria DENISKA the program facilitator, for their regular participation in the Cambodian events of DOCKSIDE.

I thank all the other European participants, from the three universities involved in DOCKSIDE (University of Nantes, University of Vigo in Spain, University of South Denmark). And of course, I do not want to forget all the Cambodian colleagues who are also associated with this European program: National University of Management, Royal University of Law and Economics, University of Battambang and Royal University of Agriculture who are partners of this program.

I take this opportunity to thank the European Union, which through the Erasmus Plus "Capacity Building" programs allows several universities in Cambodia to benefit from support from European university colleagues, sharing their experience and the primer an international scientific network integrating Cambodian universities.

The collective and multidisciplinary approach that characterizes this project is also important for our Ministry, because so far the local personalized work, the disruption from one university to another one remain the big challenges in our country even we have some collectivities and associations working for promoting the networking among the universities. Beyond this methodological point of view, the theme "transboundary river ecosystems management" is important and very important, with COP21 and the evolution of the environment today. The example of the dam that gave way a few weeks ago in Laos, impacting Cambodia downstream, perfectly illustrates this problem. Also, studying the environmental balances in Cambodia and its region, the activities carried out from natural resources, in particular maritime and fluvial, the legal and socio-economic rules which apply, etc., are obviously fundamental subjects and around which it matters that our universities get involved.

The support of European partners, some of whom already have teaching and research experience in Cambodia, is crucial in this phase of growth in higher education. Improving the quality of Khmer universities is a priority goal of our Minister, HE Mr. Hang Chuon Naron. Also, international cooperation, the exchange of teaching and research staff and administrative staff, the international opening of local reflection, the exchange of students at the master-doctorate level are all elements that can contribute to the quality improvement we need in Cambodia.

The importance of the quality of higher education and research is also emphasized by the World Bank, which considers it important to move forward on the "road to academic excellence". Preparing our future is today improving our higher education and scientific research.

The Ministry sets up structures (Cambodian Scientific Committee for Research and Doctoral Training, post of Director of Research, Doctoral Schools) which must supervise and facilitate the improvement of research and specialized higher education (master and PhD). But quality cannot be built without universities! It is in universities and specialized research institutions that research is carried out on a daily basis.

The holding of this meeting is a realization that shows very concretely to us and all stakeholders, the interest of the international academic sphere in our work and our higher education in our country. Moreover, beyond the interest that foreign colleagues may have in discovering our university and local environment, these meeting will tell us more about the result of our work as part of this project and help to create personal ties that are essential to the sustainable international cooperation.

For all these reasons, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Cambodia, I can only warmly and personally be happy to open all of you here and to listen attentively your presentations led to the discussion.

I thank you for your attention and let begin our session of dissemination of Course Catalogue Report of Dockside Project from now.