

H.E. Dr. SOK AN, Deputy Prime Minister
Presided over the Closing Ceremony of the Seminar on
“Prevention and Fights against Thefts, Trafficking and Illicit Trading of Cultural Properties”

H.E. Dr. Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister in charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers and Chairman of the Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO presided over the closing ceremony of the seminar on “Prevention and Fights against Thefts, Trafficking and Illicit Trading of Cultural Properties” held in the afternoon on 22 December 2009 at the Cambodiana Hotel, Phnom Penh and attended by Secretary of State, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, UNESCO representative in Cambodia, **Mr. Etienne Clement**, Deputy Director of UNESCO Office in Bangkok, senior government officials and representatives of relevant ministries and institutions.

H.E. Ms Tan Theany, Secretary General of the Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO summed up the outcomes of the two-day seminar by highlighting that more than twenty reports had been presented by Directors of Provincial Culture Departments and relevant ministries and institutions for preventing and fighting against thefts, trafficking and illicit trading of cultural properties. **H.E. Ms Tan Theany** said the seminar aimed at enhancing participants’ awareness of the law and relevant legislations as well as actions taken on prevention and fights against thefts, trafficking and illicit trading of cultural properties in Cambodia

Speaking at the ceremony, **H.E. Dr. Sok An** highlighted that a tendency of high price given by traders and private ownership had led to poor countries’ cultural properties being stolen and traded away. Therefore, some countries especially the UNESCO have been making effort to prevent such tendency by encouraging enactment of legislations concerning prevention and fight against thefts, trafficking and illicit trading of cultural properties as well as by enhancing public awareness so that they can take part in these activities.

Taking the opportunity, **H.E. Dr. Sok An** emphasized the importance of national cultural properties, which are not only essential for national identity but also for attracting tourists. Thus, under the wise leadership of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Royal Government has been paying close attention to sustainable preservation and development of national cultural properties.

To conclude, **H.E. Dr. Sok An** provided some recommendations by suggesting that the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts should cooperate more closely with relevant ministries and institutions in order to prevent illicit trading of cultural properties, that the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts should re-examine and propose revision of the existing legislations to include a more severe punishment on criminals, calling on the people from all walks of life to actively take part in the prevention and fights against these illegal acts and so on.

(Press and Quick Reaction Unit of the Office of the Council of Ministers)