

## ***ITALY WANTS TO INCREASE TOURISM WITH CAMBODIA***

PHNOM PENH, Jan. 13, 2010 (PQRU) – His Excellency Dr. Sok An welcomed an initiative raised by His Excellency Michelangelo Pipan who wanted to bring the two countries' art performance which is part of the efforts to attract more tourists.

His Excellency Pipan told Dr. Sok An Deputy Prime Minister that “Italy wants to get involve in the activities related to the work of Angkor.”

He also said “we should organize a trip for tourist investors to visit Cambodia because such the event could attract more Italian tourists to Cambodia.”

His Excellency Dr. Sok An agreed with that initiative and asked the two countries to work together more on how to allure more Italian tourists and investors to visit as well as to invest in Cambodia.

At the same time His Excellency Pipan said he was working on a plan to get Italian artists to perform at Angkor complex which is expected to take place in August this year. And Cambodia could also organize, on that occasion, its traditional art performance there.

His Excellency Dr. Sok An also highlighted the rich culture of more than 600 years old of the two countries.

He also told the Ambassador on Wednesday that “our two countries have had very long and outstanding civilization. Cambodia's culture emanated from Angkorian Empire and Italy's culture from Roman empire.”

His Excellency Dr. Sok An, who is also minister in charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers, said the planned art performances of the two nations also show cultural links between the empires of Angkor-Roman, which leads to improve relations in culture, tourism and economy.

He also told the Ambassador there are six Italian restaurants in Phnom Penh, two in Siem Reap and one in Kampongsohm province. Italian tourists ranked 20<sup>th</sup>. But Excellency Pipan said “I want to see Italian tourist ranks 10<sup>th</sup>, not 20<sup>th</sup> in the future.”

Cambodia has been received more 2 million tourists last year and is expected to increase by 15 per year.