Opening Remarks by
H.E. Jean-François Cautain, EU Ambassador
2nd Higher Education Forum:
EU-Cambodia Higher-Education Policy and Cooperation
7-8 May 2015, Phnom Penh

- H. E. Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport
- H. E. Mak Ngoy, Director General of Education
- Dear Colleagues Ambassadors
- Representatives of the Royal Government of Cambodia
- Representatives of the Development Partners,
- Rectors, Speakers and Facilitators
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the European Union, I have the pleasure to welcome all of you to this Forum on cooperation in the higher-education between the European Union and Cambodia.

This event has been prepared in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and France, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

This Forum is a key event in the EU week 2015, allowing us to showcase international experiences and promote opportunities for the cooperation on higher education between Cambodia and Europe. This is the second event in this year EU week with the academic world: two days ago, my colleagues from the EU MS and I had the pleasure to go back to university! To speak on the EU. These two events clearly demonstrate the importance we give to higher education and students.
Knowledge is borderless. Globalisation, technology, and the need to tackle global issues are increasing the need and demand for international exchange. It is more and more the case for higher education as the key catalyst for knowledge development.

Increasingly over recent years, the world of higher education has come to depend on international cooperation as a means of responding to local, national and regional needs. This afternoon's plenary session will touch on this issue under the theme "Internationalisation of Higher Education".

In this sphere, the European Union and its Member States invest considerably in promoting cooperation at all levels – from policy-level, through collaboration at the level of institutions, to the level of mobility of individual students and scholars. In this Forum you will hear presentations about the EU SHARE project, a major new cooperation initiative focusing on the ASEAN region; the new Erasmus + programme of the European Union, the outcomes achieved by Erasmus Mundus projects involving partners from Cambodia and the EU, and many other cases of effective cooperation.

Let me say a few words on the EU flagship programme in higher education cooperation, Erasmus. Many of you have heard about Erasmus Mundus and some of you have even benefited from it.

Erasmus Mundus does not exist anymore! But it has been replaced by an even more ambitious programme, Erasmus +.

Erasmus+ programme was launched in 2014. With a budget of 16.5 billion euros, this programme supports projects and mobility in the areas of education, training, youth and sport, both inside Europe and between Europe and the world.

A major part of its funding goes towards supporting higher education cooperation, and around 18% of funds towards higher education scholarships and projects that involve mobility or cooperation between Europe and the rest of the world.
• As part of Erasmus, Joint Master Degrees are integrated degree programmes with study at two or more universities. Joint programmes of this type have been around since 2004. It is also possible for Cambodian universities to take part as partners in projects. In the frame of Erasmus +, 30,000 more scholarships worldwide will be offered by these programmes up to 2020, with the expectation of having some 350 masters courses available.

I know that among you there are a number of graduates of degree programmes funded under Erasmus Mundus. I am sure that you will tell other participants about the benefits from your participation in this programme.

• Credit mobility. The Erasmus programme has been funding student mobility within Europe for the last 27 years. A university can send its students to follow part of their course at a partner university in another country and return home after a period of study of up to 12 months. The credits that a student acquires are recognised by the home university and form part of their ultimate degree. The first agreements between European universities and those outside Europe will be selected this summer and will hopefully include agreements with Cambodian universities. This is a new development compared to the previous Erasmus Mundus learning mobility from which around 400 Cambodians could benefit since 2004 but with no guarantee of credit recognition.

• Another element of Erasmus + is Capacity-building actions. They are collaborative projects between universities. This allows Asian universities to take part in projects with European counterparts to develop curricula, improve staff skills and university governance. The first projects will be selected this year. The regional allocation for Asia is significant – more than one in four capacity-building projects will be focused on developing countries in Asia. A clear opportunity for Cambodia!

I stop here on Erasmus + as you will learn more about it and about higher education in some of our MS tomorrow afternoon under the theme "Study and Cooperation activities"
This leads me to the activities of the EU MS. At the Forum you will hear about the contributions made by Member States of the European Union to cooperation in the higher-education sphere with the Kingdom of Cambodia. An historical and important role in this respect is played by France, which has a long and close cooperation with partners in Cambodia in higher education and research – we will listen to case-study presentations about two such successful ventures, l'Université de Medecine and l'Institut de Technologie du Cambodge. We will also listen to presentations relating to the activities of universities from other EU Member States – Ghent University of Belgium, Turku University of Finland, the Central European University of Hungary, Liverpool John Moores University of the United Kingdom.

Alongside the contributions from the academic sphere will be one from the perspective of employers, in a presentation by the European Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia, EuroCham-Cambodia. It will be this afternoon under the theme "Employability and graduate skills" This is critical not only because Cambodia and the European Union benefit from increasing trade and investment flows which require more and better skilled staff, but also due to the challenges and opportunities that Cambodia will face with the forthcoming ASEAN Economic Community.

Minister let me thank you once again to have mobilise the resources of your Ministry to make this Forum happen. Let me also thank the National Institute of Education for hosting us and the speakers and facilitators for sharing their expertise and preparing fruitful contributions. My thanks go also to the participants and to the organizers.

Thank you very much for your attention, and I wish you a successful Forum!