**Enrich Forum on Sustainable Development 2015**

**“Harnessing Clean Energy for Sustainable Development”**

September 17, 2015

**Speech by:**

**Heng Pheakdey**

**Founder and Chairman of Enrich Institute**

* H.E. Ken Sereyrotha, Deputy Secretary-General of General Secretariat of the National Council for Sustainable Development
* Ms. Julie Chung,Charge d’Affaires, Embassy of the United States of America, Cambodia
* Ms. Rebecca Black, Mission Director of USAID Cambodia
* Mr. Daniel Potash, Chief of Party of PFAN-Asia
* Excellences, Distinguished local and international guests, ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of Enrich Institute and our co-organizers, it is my great honor to welcome you to Enrich Forum on Sustainable Development 2015 on the theme “Harnessing Clean Energy for Sustainable Development”.

Enrich Forum on Sustainable Development (EFSD) is an annual flagship event organized by Enrich Institute in cooperation with development stakeholders in Cambodia. The Forum aims to raise public awareness, shape policy development process, forge partnership, create a network of experts and practitioners and promote research activities for sustainable development. Different sustainable development issues is selected as the theme of the Forum for each year.

This is the 2nd time that Enrich Institute organizes this Forum. Last year the forum discussed the role of leadership and multistakesholdership in promoting sustainable development in Cambodia and in the region. The Forum was presided over by His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Sirivudh and brought together more than 200 stakeholders to engage in the debate and discussion on issues such as Mekong River Management and Human Development Implications in Cambodia and in the Mekong Sub-region.

This year we are proud to partner with USAID Cambodia and P-FAN Asia to co-host the Forum on clean energy which is a very important development topic in today’s world. Access to energy has been recognized as a human basic need that must be fulfilled to achieve sustainable development.

In Cambodia, energy is a critical development challenge. Today, only 35% of the total population has access to grid electricity, leaving millions of rural population in the dark. Imported diesel fuel accounts for 90% for domestic electricity production and the electricity price is one of the highest in the world.

Energy shortage could hinder Cambodia’s economic growth and shy potential investors away. Promoting clean energy is one of the effective ways to address the problems. Renewable energy from the sun, water, wind and biomass can help reduce Cambodia’s dependence on the imported fossil fuel, contribute to mitigating climate change and increasing electricity access.

The good news is Cambodia has huge untapped clean energy potentials. But the not so good news is harnessing such resources is met with a number challenges including but not limited to low level of awareness on benefits of using clean energy, high risk perception among financers and project developers, the lack of supportive policies and readily available technology.

With this as the background, this Forum is organized to contribute to increasing awareness and promoting investment in clean renewable energy. In particular, the Forum aims to:

* Review the progress of clean energy development in Cambodia
* Explore the options to further promote clean energy investment
* Provide the opportunity for companies to pitch their business idea to potential/customers investors
* Offer a networking opportunity for clean energy project developers and financers

I’m both honored and excited that today we have attracted the interest of 70 national and international participants from a diverse stakeholder groups to join our discussion today. We have high level representatives from

* Government: National Council for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Mines and Energy, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Industry, EdC, REF, EAC,
* Development Partners: ADB, IFC, AFD, UNIDO, JICA, USAID, Asia Foundation
* Financial Institutions: ANZ Royal, FTB, TPC, Chamroeun Microfinance, Deloitte
* Energy Companies: Kamwork, Khmer Solar, Star 8, Solar Partner Asia, CominKhmer, SGFE, NRG Solution,
* Energy NGOs: GERES, SNV, NBP, Nexus, Good Neighbors, Picosol Cambodia, Entrepreneurs du Monde
* Research and Academic Institution: CDRI, RUPP, Zaman University

With almost all of the stakeholders in the energy sector are in this room, I sincerely believe that today’s Forum will bring out interactive engagement, rich discussion and meaningful exchanges of views on the future energy development in Cambodia.

Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, Enrich Institute has the mission to promote active stakeholder engagement in green growth and sustainable development effort. Today’s forum is part of our initiative to create an enabling environment for different stakeholders to make a difference. I hope you will find today’s event useful and I look forward to having an engaging discussion with you all.

I wish you all a productive day ahead. Thank you very much.