

**Speech of H. E. Dr Sok An,
Deputy Prime Minister and
President of the 37th World Heritage Committee**

**at the cocktail reception and the opening ceremony of the
Exhibition
“Japan’s Cooperation for the World Heritage Site in Cambodia
Preservation and Restoration for Ancient Ruins of Angkor”
organised by the Embassy of Japan in Cambodia**

Peace Palace, 17 June 2013, 19:00

H.E. Mr. Yuji KUMAMARU, Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of Cambodia

H.E. Mr. Isao KISO, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO

Her Excellency Mme Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the Embassy of Japan for organising this important event, a photographic exhibition entitled ***“Japan’s Cooperation for the World Heritage Site in Cambodia - Preservation and Restoration for Ancient Ruins of Angkor”*** at this venue. I think it is a perfect occasion that this exhibition takes place on the very first day of the 37th Session of the World Heritage Committee after the last night’s impressive opening ceremony presided over by Samdech Prime Minister.

Tonight, we are privileged and highly honoured by the presence of numerous representatives of UNESCO Member states among us. I would also like to thank Mme Director-General for her presence with us. It is indeed an immense pleasure for me to be invited and for being among representatives of authorities and experts from the member states of UNESCO.

Through this photographic exhibition we witness the history and great achievement of national and international cooperation, in particular of two

major cultural institutions from Japan; Japan-APSARA Safeguarding of Angkor (JASA) and Sophia University Team. Both teams have continuously maintained their presence at Angkor over 20 years working on the protection, preservation and restoration of temples in maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value of many of the elements of the World Heritage site, as well as contributing to the development of young Cambodian archaeologists. And today many of these young experts are taking important roles in the heritage conservation efforts. The exhibition showcases a retrospective display from concerted development initiatives taken by the Japanese institutions in cooperation with Cambodia over the last 20 years.

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to congratulate the government of Japan for its unshaking commitment as Co-Chair since the foundation of the International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding of Angkor (ICC-Angkor) in 1993, which is widely seen as a model for international cooperation in heritage management.

In conclusion, I would like to express again my heartfelt thanks to Japan for its long term support for the preservation and sustainable development efforts, and conclude my speech by expressing my thanks to Ambassadors, Excellencies and all the honourable guests attending this very meaningful event tonight.

I wish you a very successful exhibition.

Thank you very much for your attention.