

Speech by H.E. Mr. KUMAMARU Yuji
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan
To the Kingdom of Cambodia
At the Japanese cocktail reception
on the occasion of the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee

“Your Excellency Dr. Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia, Minister in Charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers, and Chairman of the APSARA National Authority,

Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO

Excellencies,

And distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to congratulate the Royal government of Cambodia and UNESCO for the magnificent opening of the 37th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee yesterday.

The World Heritage Convention celebrated the 40th anniversary of its adoption last year. Since its joining the Convention as a State Party in 1992, Japan has been an active contributor to the implementation of the Convention and a staunch advocate of international cooperation for the management and preservation of World Heritage sites. Japan served as a member of World Heritage Committee for three terms, including the current one, and had the privilege to chair the 22nd session in 1998. Last

year, Japan hosted the Closing Event of the 40th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in Kyoto. The Event's theme was "World Heritage and Sustainable Development: the Role of Local Communities", and the event culminated with the adoption of the "Kyoto Vision"; a document that reflected on the results of the last 40 years and laid out plans and priorities for the future.

In Cambodia, Japan has been actively participating in the peace process since the 1980s and, following the signing of the peace agreement in 1991, has continued to support Cambodia's reconstruction and development as the largest donor to this country. In the area of cultural cooperation, Japan hosted the first Intergovernmental Conference on the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor in Tokyo in 1993. The Conference aimed at promoting international cooperation for the protection of the Angkor complex, Cambodia's first inscription on the World Heritage List, which was in crisis at that point. In addition, under a framework of international coordination established by the Tokyo Declaration, Japan has been playing a leading role, as a 'co-chair country' together with France, in the *International Coordinating Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor (ICC-Angkor)*. Japan has also worked strenuously, together with the Cambodian Government and other

countries, involving many experts, in various capacity building, preservation and restoration activities over last twenty years.

In this room, you will see many picture panels depicting the preservation and restoration work carried out by the Japanese Government Team for Safeguarding Angkor (JSA) and the Sophia University. These demonstrate a part of Japan's contribution to the preservation of the Angkor monuments, which has been one of the most successful examples of international cooperation in the safeguarding of a World Heritage site facing a crisis. I hope that you will enjoy looking at these picture panels.

Also, at this reception, we will be serving you some Japanese food and sake. Fostered by the four seasons and Mother Nature, Japanese cuisine and sake have become a part of our culture. I hope you will enjoy the taste of our culture that our people have inherited, nurtured and passed down from generation to generation.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you all for joining us tonight and I wish you all a great evening.

Thank you for your attention.

I would like to invite you all to toast to fruitful and successful discussions at the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee. Please join me and raise your glasses... (Cheers!)

Thank you for your attention.