KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

NATIONAL DEFENCE POLICY

2022

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) firmly supports the defense policy defined in the Defence White Paper 2022 (DWP22) in order to safeguard peace; and ensure security, stability, and comprehensive national development. The newly formulated defence policy serves as a strategic guideline for the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) to undertake its role and duty as outlined in the Constitution of Cambodia.

For the sole purpose of sustainable development of the defence sector, the Ministry of National Defence (MoND) and the High Command Headquarters (HCHQ) alike must implement in-depth reforms. This effort would produce highly competent and capable servicemen and servicewomen to serve for the cause of safeguarding peace; ensuring security and stability; participating in

national development efforts; and representing RCAF on the international stage.

"Defend our motherland. We, together, for the defence". Building the defence foundation is a top priority which RCAF must fulfill in order to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cambodia. The armed forces are formed by the people, thus, the relationship between the people and the armed forces is crucial in bolstering the defence foundation of our nation.

I would like to extend my compliments and recognition to the leadership of MoND and RCAF for the great efforts in formulating the defence policy and defence strategy documented in DWP22. I would like to affirm that this priceless and valuable document has been attentively written in accordance with the government policy on the future of the defence sector. Finally, I believe DWP22 will be an essential strategic directive for RCAF in fulfilling its role and duty for the cause of the defence and development of our motherland.

Phnom Penh, 24 March 2022

Prime Minister

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen

RCAF is obligated to protect Cambodia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and plays a key role in safeguarding peace; and ensuring security, stability, and social order which are the bedrock of national development in every sector.

It is indeed undeniable that Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen's win-win policy has brought about peace and political and social stability to Cambodia which proves to be a reliable foundation of sustainable development of the nation. In light of the local, regional, and global shifting security environment, RCAF is committed to implementing the government policy on the defence sector in order to duly protect the Constitution and the government of Cambodia at any price as well as to participating in national development efforts in the future.

Aligning with involvement with the civil sector in national development efforts, RCAF must pursue in-depth reforms in order to develop and enhance its capability and capacity for the effectiveness of the defence. RCAF must also promote international cooperation especially in peacekeeping operations under the United Nations framework.

My primary intent is to strengthen the defence foundation via a bonding connection between our defence personnel and the populace. This method would prove effective and timely in responding to all forms of threats from both internal and external adversaries.

To effectively achieve every strategic objective that has been set in the government policy on the defence sector, RCAF must duly adhere to the defence policy and defence strategy defined in DWP22. Eventually, I would like to call on every leadership hierarchy and all servicemen and servicewomen of RCAF to profoundly make use of this DWP22 as a strategic guideline to fulfill every assigned role and duty henceforth.

Phnom Penh, 11 March 2022
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of National Defence

Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh

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Preface

In the early stages of the establishment of defence policy document, also known as the defence white paper, there were numerous difficulties emerging during the formulation process. In late 1998, the Department of Policy and Planning, MoND, envisioned the importance of long-term defence policy and defence strategy. This finally led to the initiation of the formulation of the first defence white paper in 2000. Despite discord among the leadership at the beginning, **H.E Tea Banh**, who was the Co-Minister of Defence at that time, presented the significance of the defence white paper to **Prime Minister Hun Sen**. Consequently, the prime minister approved the formulation process via a Defence White Paper Working Group to kick start Cambodia's first ever defence white paper.

DWP22 is the third published strategic document preceded by the Defence White Paper 2000 and the Defence White Paper 2006. The formulation of these documents was demanding and time consuming—requiring great efforts of collective teamwork and constant support from the government. Furthermore, to guarantee the sustainability and flexibility of the formulated defence policy, defence strategic review documents were subsequently developed in 2002 and 2013.

DWP22 will prove to be significant in the realm of international military cooperation and particularly for Cambodia's defence sector as a whole. It lays out the long-term strategy in terms of defence and security of the nation. It also promotes cooperation and mutual support between the military and relevant civil institutions and ministries—aiming to strengthen the foundation of national defence in order to safeguard peace and social stability, and to ensure sustainable development under the wise leadership of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of Cambodia. DWP22 will provide instrumental

defence strategy to promote transparency in international cooperation with regional partner nations in the realm of defence and security.

The accomplishment of instituting DWP22 reflects on the wise leadership of **Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and collective efforts of every leadership of MoND and RCAF. Moreover, the involvement and contribution from various key partners and national stakeholders are key factors in making this defence white paper formulation a success. Therefore, sincere appreciation and utmost recognition are dedicated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Ministry of Economy and Finance; Ministry of Social Affairs Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation; Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, General Commissariat of National Police; and last but not least, Asian Vision Institute (AVI).

Other entities behind this great achievement are the Department of Defence of Australia; Australian Defence Attaché in Cambodia; General Department of Research and Intelligence, MoND; National Council for Khmer Language of the Royal Academy of Cambodia; and College of Social Sciences and Languages, National Defence University. Their continuing and unconditional support and assistance in terms of financial and technical are undeniably priceless.

Summary

The National Defence Policy 2022 document is outlined into three main sections:

Section 1 reviews and evaluates the implementation of the previous strategic approaches of the defence policy in a number of key areas, including border defence, military reform, counter-terrorism, training, maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, peacekeeping operations, international cooperation, defence resource management, and other contribution to national development. This section also reflects the vision set forth for the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF), focusing on analysis and assessments of the security threats to the Kingdom of Cambodia until 2030, including land, maritime, and air security; internal security; terrorism; cyber security; disasters; and pandemic. As such, our national defence policy has been set reinforcing line of efforts to **"preserve and safeguard lasting peace, protect national interests, and enhance international cooperation."**

Section 2 sets out the national defence priorities based on the level of important and by order of priorities as follows:

1. **Border Defence.** It focuses on securing and resolving border issues through diplomacy on the basis of law and order, strengthening bilateral and tripartite relations mechanism. By maintaining military posture, it helps to reinforce the sense of security and facilitate the development of the border areas.
2. **Internal Security.** This focuses on the necessary strategies and measures to combat colour revolution, terrorism, transnational crimes, and any threatening cyber related activities.

3. **Military Reform.** This presents measures for restructuring, personnel management, improving the training quality of reserve personnel, and improvement on defence resource management.
4. **International Cooperation.** This identifies directions for expanding and strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations, enhancing capability and capacity in peacekeeping operations, and reaffirming Cambodia's firm stance on Ream Naval Base modernisation.

Section 3 provides recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of national defence policy, including the commitment of top leaders, cooperation and mutual supports from ministries and institutions related to the national defence affairs, and the proposal on basing national defence budget on national GDP.

Introduction

RGC has always prioritised the defence sector as one of key factors that contribute to the ensuring of peace; security; and stability; and the promotion of Cambodia's image and prestige on the international stage. Cambodia's security landscape faces noticeable changes as the international geopolitics and security environment are evolving rapidly. Consequently, it is indeed critical for MoND to thoughtfully put together defence policy and defence strategy that are applicable and relevant in order for RCAF to be able to respond to threats, challenges, and opportunities at present and in the future.

RCAF has fulfilled its duty by defending and preventing effectively and timely activities that are conducive to inflicting terror and instability, whilst, also playing a huge part in national infrastructure development and taking a leading role in HADR operations during the Covid-19 pandemic. RCAF is fully committed to successfully executing the government's policy in the field of defence and will continue to act as a core and leading actor in safeguarding and protecting peace, security, stability, and national interests as well pursuing regional and global peace. The government's vision on defence for the next 10 years predominantly focuses on capability development, armed forces modernisation, and international cooperation enhancement.

1. Peace as the Foundation of Nation-Building and Development

Under the wise leadership of **Samdech Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister, Cambodia has transformed from a country embroiled in decades of internal conflicts into a peaceful nation. National independence, state sovereignty, and territorial integrity are the defining factors in guaranteeing peace, nation-building, and development.

After the general election in 1993 under the organisation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), Cambodia did not obtain

peace until 29th December 1998 of which the Win-Win Policy of **Samdech Techo Hun Sen** was successfully implemented. This marked the country's first total achievement in peace until this very day. This achievement has set a cornerstone for sustainable national development and left a good model in the world stage.

Win-Win Memorial: A symbol of peace and national unity (Picture by Sena Techo Unit)

The Win-Win Policy had ended decades of armed conflicts and fully restored peace through national reunification and non-discriminatory integration which served as building blocks for nation-building and development. Former battlefields have been transformed into developing communities which help drive economic growth rapidly and improve the living standard of the people. Cambodia is committed to safeguarding peace at all costs for the legacy and the sake of the future generations.

2. What is Defence White Paper?

Defence White Paper is a key national policy document published by MoND of the Kingdom of Cambodia. This document reflects on the government's vision, policy, and strategy on defence with thorough analysis and comprehensive

reviews. Defence White Paper is an open document representing transparency by informing the public of the purpose and strategic objectives of the government on defence by outlining defence policy and defence strategy for RCAF to fulfil in the future.

The sole purpose of DWP22 is to demonstrate the government's unwavering commitment and ability to develop and strengthen its military capabilities. As peace, security, and stability still stand as the foundation for nation-building and development, the provision of defence policy in this document will help strengthen awareness and understanding of the policy of which RCAF will boldly fulfil their duty to protect lives and safeguard peaceful livelihood of the people.

Section 1

The Outlook on National Defence Policy Implementation

Chapter 1

The Review of National Defence Strategy

The Defence White Paper 2006 (DWP06) and the Defence Strategic Review 2013 (DSR13) outlined the strategic priorities and measures for RCAF's reforms and key activities, of which past implementations have resulted in significant achievements and desired outcomes. There are, however, gaps that need to be reviewed, revised, and supplemented.

1. Border Defence

RCAF has implemented the 3-point strategy and the 10-point operational activity and development from DSR13 focusing on the protection of territorial integrity based on commitment, responsibility, strong will, discipline, and flexibility to safeguard peace and security along border areas. Simultaneously, RCAF has been implementing strategies in accordance with the government's guidelines for the development of borders to promote peace, friendship, cooperation, and development. Cambodia maintains utmost restraint and strives to use diplomatic and legal measures to resolve issues. These aspects have convinced regional and international communities to gain a better insight into Cambodia's policy - prioritising peace, peaceful resolutions, and abiding by national and international law.

Cambodia has always been committed to maintaining good relations with its neighbouring countries and always seeks peaceful resolutions to any potential conflicts. However, the border dispute in July 2008 escalated to skirmishes, which inevitably resulted in damages and casualties on both sides. Based on the spirit of firm national unity and the common cause of protecting territorial integrity, Cambodia, under the wise leadership of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, simultaneously employed a variety of strategies including diplomacy, legal measures, and military (as the last resort) to resolve disputes.

With regards to diplomatic and legal measures, Cambodia sought to address bilateral and multilateral mechanisms through ASEAN, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Cambodia intends to employ RCAF in a posture of self-defence against any violations of Cambodia's sovereignty with utmost restraint and responsibility.

In implementing its defence strategies, RCAF encountered great difficulties in the early stages of the conflict due to its belief in the spirit of peace and friendship. Nevertheless, with the fervent leadership of **Samdech Techo**, a great force of national unity and a surge of support for post-battle forces, enabled the armed forces to sustainably defend its territorial integrity under the rights of self-defence. This led to a diplomatic solution with international support.

By employing **Samdech Techo**'s mixed strategies, combining diplomatic and military approaches, the situation returned to normalcy, and the spirit of building good relations between neighbouring countries and communication mechanisms at all levels have been restored and strengthened. Furthermore, RCAF has been actively contributing to national mechanisms in demarcation along the borders with adherence to legal and legitimate law and regulations.

Recently, border areas have faced an unprecedented threat—the COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted development, security, and stability along the border areas. During these high-risk circumstances, RCAF has been actively involved in containing the spread of COVID-19 nationwide. Under the directive of RGC, RCAF has become a key actor in implementing the COVID-19 prevention strategy—controlling cross-border movements; managing quarantine centers; providing transportation means; and more importantly, leading the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in the designated Red Zone areas and areas with high prevalence of the virus.

2. Military Reform

RCAF has implemented military reform plans in line with the government's policy, defence strategy, and requirements based on challenges, opportunities, and changes in national and international contexts. However, situations at the borders have hindered the military reform process, especially with regards to military capability and capacity building.

The implementation of military reform has achieved remarkable results in defence, security, stability, and public order, focusing on several priorities. This includes force posturing; strengthening command and control; technical capacity; administration; strengthening legal work in formulating law and regulations; education on psychological well-being; information dissemination; military foreign affairs; and organisational structure to meet actual needs of the current situation.

In line with the requirements, military reform focuses on the restructuring of the Army Headquarters—transferring relevant units from HCHQ to the command of Army Headquarters—further modernising the border forces, air and naval capabilities, and enhancing human resources. Capability and capacity building for disaster relief is being carried out through the enhancement of skills as well as the provision of additional equipment and means, and exercises on disaster relief with partner nations.

The reform process has faced some challenges due to complicated and overlapping structures between MoND, HCHQ, Army, Navy, Air Force, and Royal Gendarmerie. Additionally, the conscription law, which came into force in 2006, has not been fully implemented yet. Furthermore, COVID-19 hindered the military reform process due to a large sum of resources being allocated to the fight against COVID-19.

3. Training and Education

RCAF has strengthened and enhanced education and training institutions through upgrading teaching facilities. These efforts aim to build a strong foundation for human resource development and promote professional military educational institutions in accordance with national and international education standards.

RCAF has defined training as a strategy for human resource development and capacity building for personnel at all levels. In this process, military educational institutions are still researching and developing doctrines, emphasising curriculum developments, and enhancing the quality of education and training to strengthen the professionalism of RCAF personnel. In addition, RCAF's specialisation training must align from strategic to tactical level and focus on capacity building for trainers through progressive education and training courses locally and abroad.

MoND carefully selects personnel who are qualified to undertake training courses locally and internationally. Additionally, RCAF has strengthened its relations with partner nations in order to increase educational exchange programs to enhance military capabilities. As a result, the military education system has made significant progress in producing competent and capable junior officers.

Although military education has progressed significantly over the years, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted RCAF training and education plans, including annual exercises. For instance, for the last two years (2020-2021), the annual selection of new military personnel was temporarily suspended, and most forms and methods of training and education have been modified to effectively adapt to the new normal.

4. Peacekeeping Operations

Cambodia, which was once a host nation of a peacekeeping operation known as the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), has become an active peacekeeping troop contributing country, aiming to promote peace, security, stability and development in various regions globally. Cambodia is committed to contributing resources, knowledge, and experiences in the interest of peace and development, especially for those nations in turmoil.

Cambodian peacekeepers deployed in Central Africa

Since 2006, RCAF has actively been involved in peacekeeping operations under the framework of the United Nations in a number of countries in Africa and the Middle East. Cambodia's contributions ranged from engineering, demining, military police, level 2 hospital, staff officers, and observers among others. RCAF has earned international recognition due to its experiences and contributions to national development via demining and developing infrastructure. As a result, there has been an increase in UN requests for RCAF participation in future peacekeeping operations. The National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces, Mines and Explosive Remnants of War Clearance (NPMEC) has continued to enhance its capabilities and capacity to meet with the UN requests for future operations.

Cambodia has thus far deployed its peacekeepers to nine countries in Africa and the Middle East, with a remarkable increase in female peacekeepers. In 2020, Cambodia ranked 13th out of 122 countries in the world and ranked 2nd among ASEAN member states (AMS) for female peacekeepers being deployed to UN peacekeeping operations. This achievement was obtained through RGC's clear vision and appropriate frameworks for the promotion of female personnel in the defence sector.

Within the international peacekeeping framework, Cambodia has also strengthened and enhanced cooperation with other countries, both bilaterally and multilaterally. Cambodia has received support from partner nations, including material and technical assistance. Moreover, Cambodia has shared experiences with partner nations, particularly related to demining skills. From 2014-2017, RCAF co-chaired the ADSOM-Plus Expert Working Group (ADSOM-Plus EWG) on peacekeeping operations with the Republic of Korea and is co-chairing ADSOM-Plus EWG on Humanitarian Mine Action with China from 2021 to 2024.

Cambodia's participation in UN peacekeeping operations has brought forth positive results and has been commended by the leadership of other international peacekeeping forces. However, Cambodian peacekeepers still face a number of challenges and threats, such as shortages of technical equipment, and security factors in mission areas. As a consequence, Cambodian peacekeepers has suffered some casualties in previous missions. In response, Cambodia has enhanced the quality and intensity of training to enhance human resource development and resilience in order to respond to challenges and threats more effectively in the future.

5. Counter-Terrorism (CT)

Terrorism remains a threat to national and global security. RCAF has demonstrated its commitment to strengthening its CT forces through increasing

and enhancing training both domestically and internationally in order to prevent and respond to all acts of terrorism; to safeguard peace; and to protect security, and stability.

Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Ministry of National Defence, once stated that **"It is better to prevent terrorism from happening rather than fighting against it. We shall not attract terrorism"**. In this sense, Cambodia clearly understands that peace, development, and improvement of people's livelihoods are crucial in preventing homegrown terrorism and extremism. Moreover, RGC embraces freedom of religions; adherence to various political positions; and respect for individual indigenous traditions without discrimination. Additionally, RGC encourages harmony among different ethnic groups in Cambodia. These efforts to encourage social harmonization have been instrumental in making Cambodia a safe place from terrorism.

RCAF is increasing its cooperation with relevant units, civilian stakeholders, and international partners to prevent homegrown and transnational terrorism by focusing on sharing information, researching, and exchanging experiences with each other. CT forces have effectively carried out tasks to prevent and tackle all forms of terrorism. For instance, Cambodian CT forces have eradicated local terrorist networks in the country to disrupt opportunities and planning which could cause insecurity, instability, and inflict fear within the society. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the training and readiness of CT forces and close cooperation of RCAF with relevant authorities locally and internationally.

6. Maritime Security

In line with RGC's strategic objectives to strengthen the management and control of Cambodia's maritime domain, the National Committee for Maritime Security (NCMS) was established in December 2009 in order to combat piracy; human trafficking; drug trafficking; transnational crimes; illegal fishing; and to promote the conservation of natural resources, and emergency response in the vicinity of Cambodia's maritime domain.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, tourists on board the Westerdam were welcomed by Samdech Techo Prime Minister (Picture by the Royal Cambodian Air Force)

Within the national framework, NCMS has strengthened cooperation with relevant ministries and institutions involved in maritime security by coordinating forces and effective exchange of information during operations. NCMS has performed its core role of conducting operations; managing issues; coordinating and enforcing the law to protect, prevent and suppress all kinds of threats and crimes, in addition to participating in various humanitarian assistance operations. Notably, through inter-ministerial cooperation, Cambodia exhibited a historical humanitarian compassion by allowing the MS Westerdam cruise ship to dock at

Sihanoukville port on 13 February 2020. The ship's port calls were rejected by several countries due to concerns of the spread of COVID-19 during the initial outbreak. In contrast, **Samdech Techo**'s decision to allow entry of the cruise ship demonstrated Cambodia's goodwill. Although Cambodia is a small country with limited resources, it was able to make a significant contribution to a humanitarian endeavor. Subsequently, Cambodia received huge supports and recognitions from national and international media and from other countries around the world.

Within the international framework, NCMS promotes bilateral and multilateral cooperation with international partners to enhance the effectiveness of interoperability. NCMS has actively participated with maritime agencies from different countries, such as ADMM-Plus's Expert Working Group (ADMM-Plus EWG) on Maritime Security, and the Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative (SEAMLEI). In addition, NCMS has formulated several key documents including National Maritime Security Policy, National Maritime Strategy, and Guidelines on Maritime Security Cooperation.

Along with these developments, NCMS also faces several challenges that need to be addressed urgently, such as sharing timely information and resources to ensure effective operations. These challenges can be addressed through the modernisation of RCAF and provision of support from partner nations.

7. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)

RCAF plays a crucial role in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations. In the event of a disaster, RCAF has the obligation to cooperate with all relevant authorities, particularly the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), which is the national coordinating body on disaster relief. For example, the Royal Gendarmerie was a leading force in cooperating with other units in relief and search and rescue operations during the severe drought in 2016 and the severe flood in 2020. This has become a traditional task for the Royal Gendarmerie in addition to its core roles.

In the fight against COVID-19, RCAF has provided a wide range of assistance including medical assistance; transportations for repatriated migrant workers; operating quarantine centers; and vaccination campaigns for all, regardless of their political opinions, especially in the designated Red Zone and high-risk areas. In bilateral and multilateral cooperation, RCAF has also engaged with other countries, particularly neighbouring ones, in exercises and training related to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

HADR operation during a building collapse (Picture by General Department of Defence Services)

RCAF is still in need of necessary means, equipment, and expertise in several areas, such as rescue operations in building collapse and landslides among others. These shortcomings must be addressed swiftly in order to ensure effectiveness in future operations.

DSR13 highlights RGC's intent to send rescue teams to regional countries in case of disasters. However, the lack of logistics capability and practical experiences remain an obstacle. It requires a clear strategic plan for RCAF to enhance its capabilities to enable its participation in regional search and rescue operations in the future.

8. International Cooperation

International cooperation is one of the key priorities of RCAF's defence strategy, which was clearly identified in DWP06 and DSR13, stating that RCAF must strengthen its military cooperation with partner nations, regardless of their political ideology, and based upon equality and mutual interests. In line with this defence priority, RCAF has significantly strengthened and enhanced its military cooperation with other nations regionally and globally.

Since 2006, military cooperation with foreign countries has expanded remarkably, especially in the areas of capability and capacity building, and technical assistance. For instance, MoND has sent officers to attend training courses at all levels abroad, and vice versa. The aims of international training are to strengthen ties with partner nations and to exchange experiences, knowledge, and skills.

In bilateral military cooperation, RCAF follows existing mechanisms and legal agreements, namely the annual agreement of military cooperation with China; the convention with France; the annual protocol with Vietnam; the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Russia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea; and military cooperation mechanisms with Australia and the United States among others.

In terms of military cooperation within the region, RCAF has actively participated in various cooperation activities within the framework of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), etc. In addition, Cambodia played an active role in promoting the establishment of practical cooperation of the ADMM-Plus EWG and the establishment of the Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative (SEAMLEI). The participation in the establishment of these mechanisms aims to promote practical cooperation and strong partnerships with regional countries, and to enhance interoperability to jointly respond to

current and future security challenges. Furthermore, military cooperation also aims to enhance RCAF capabilities based on the principles of equality, national independence, state sovereignty, and mutual interests.

Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh, representing Samdech Techo Hun Sen, bringing COVID-19 supplies to Laos (Picture from Laos PDR)

RCAF leadership has always been instrumental in sharing views on defence and security in high-level international defence dialogues, such as the Shari-La Dialogue, Beijing Xiangshan Forum, Seoul Defence Dialogue, and Tokyo Defence Forum. In addition, RCAF has also shared its best practices on the implementation of **Samdech Techo**'s Win-Win Policy, which put an end to the three-decade long civil war and brought about peace and development to Cambodia.

While military cooperation has increased, the emergence of COVID-19 in the last two years has disrupted this progress—suspending exchange visits, joint exercises, and cooperation activities. At the same time, international meetings and

dialogues have shifted the format of interactions, specifically from physical to virtual forms.

Despite these issues, RCAF's cooperation at all levels has contributed to promoting confidence building; developing capabilities; and safeguarding peace, security, and stability in the region. It is undeniable that global challenges cannot be addressed by any country alone. It requires comprehensive and collective efforts and cooperation among nations.

9. Defence Resource Management

Defence resources are fundamental for RCAF to effectively perform its duty. These include armored fighting vehicles, armaments, administrative equipment, machinery, logistics, and other physical infrastructure. It requires a comprehensive strategic plan to ensure that these resources are being effectively and efficiently acquired and sustained.

In addition, RCAF has achieved key milestones such as the new administrative building of MoND, tactical command headquarters, the expansion of communication systems for regional military headquarters, and the upgrading of air defence radar systems, etc. Furthermore, a significant amount of equipment has been acquired to meet specific needs, namely transport trucks, medical equipment, and tactical equipment among others.

10. Contribution to National Development

RCAF has actively contributed to national development and improving people's livelihood via the construction and restoration of physical infrastructure nationwide. RCAF has played a crucial role in demining and clearing lands off unexploded ordnance (UXO). In collaboration with national and international stakeholders and agencies, over the past 29 years (1992-2021), RCAF has cleared 2,325 square kilometers of landmine contaminated land—which subsequently reduced landmine casualties from 4,320 to 44 in 2021.

RCAF has strengthened and enhanced civil-military relations with civilian institutions, which is an important part of supporting defence efforts in demining. Cooperation with civilian partners must be maintained to ensure continued effectiveness in safeguarding peace, security, and stability.

New Building of Ministry of National Defence (Picture from SPS's Facebook Page)

Chapter 2

Strategic Vision

RCAF must develop a strategic vision in response to rapid changes in the regional and global defence sector. Numerous factors such as security, and geopolitical competitions have complicated the global security environment. Challenges and threats to security, including, but not limited to, environmental security, are also a major concern. As a direct implication of these complications, RGC must tactfully develop a strategic plan in order to safeguard peace, protect national interests, and promote national development through strategic research and analysis.

1. Security Environment Analysis

a. Global

The complex and fast evolving global security situation has affected and will continue to influence both regional and global security and stability. This has been shown through fierce competitions between superpowers as well as direct and indirect involvement of middle and regional powers. These competitions could result in a more distinct and realistic presence of a multi-polar world. These developments can present opportunities, challenges, and threats to the security and national interests of Cambodia.

The geopolitical shifts and competitions between superpowers will continue to exist in all domains and regions, directly affecting the global economy, trade, and technology. In addition, the growth of military power around the world has become a major concern including the lack of transparency and cooperation. The current and future global security environment will encounter threats and challenges posed by both non-state actors and non-traditional threats

including transnational crimes, terrorism, pandemic, cyber security, and artificial intelligence (AI) among others.

Additionally, the world must recognise long-term impacts of climate change that results in the rising of sea levels, droughts, freshwater shortages, and severe natural disasters. Overall, the threats of environmental security could possibly endanger social order, political stability within the region, and could even lead to armed conflicts. This requires constant alertness and readiness in order to respond at all times.

b. Regional

Constant changes and fluctuation in global security have a direct correlation to regional security. Roles and relations between superpowers while expanding their spheres of influence and geopolitical dominance remain major challenges for Southeast Asia as a whole. Additionally, existing regional security challenges and threats will lead to complex and unpredictable changes. Utmost attention from nations within the region as well as cooperation are required to peacefully resolve disputes.

The South China Sea (SCS) has become a potential flashpoint where superpowers compete for regional influence and dominance. The SCS is now the focus of a tug of war between nations with competing claims; the aim of which is to assert control over maritime sovereignty and natural resources. The competition between superpowers, and territorial disputes between claiming nations have exacerbated the complexity of the issue which requires mutual understanding and complete focus on a peaceful resolution.

With regard to the Korean Peninsula issue, a potential measure to ease tensions and to prevent nuclear escalation is to take peaceful approaches, including self-constraint and negotiations. Furthermore, the Indo-Pacific Initiative (IPI) would gain profound support if it remains true to its main purpose of promoting peace, stability, cooperation, and prosperity in the region.

Terrorism, cyber security, natural disasters, and pandemic among others remain challenges and threats to regional security. Although numerous terrorist organisations and networks in the Middle East have been neutralized and dissolved, the threats continue to persist. The remnants of foreign fighters from the destruction of terrorist organisations and networks still pose grave concerns. The return of foreign fighters to their home countries could cause great risks to the region in the form of recruiting and planning for other attacks in the future. Apart from terrorism, cyber-crimes also pose a major concern for the region, due to Southeast Asia becoming a hub of economy, trade, military cooperation, and technology. These areas of activities are the main targets of cyber-attacks by both state and non-state actors. Attacks on key institutions will impact the economy enormously. The security, stability, and common interests of the region as a whole will inevitably be impacted by these developments.

The fast pace and never-ending development and innovation in biological experiments and gradual degradation of the environment are conducive to other forms of non-traditional threats including pandemic and natural disasters. They present various challenges to the populace, health sector, food security, etc. In this sense, a well-designed strategy is required to respond effectively and in a timely manner in order to mitigate calamity.

2. National Security Threat Assessment

a. Subversion

Subversion can happen in numerous forms such as colour revolution; racial and religious discrimination; social class discrimination, incitement to oppose the government; and dissemination of false news and disinformation.

The interference of Cambodia's internal affairs continues to exist through the provision of financial and political support from external parties in the guise of social and environmental activities. The main goal of these acts of interferences is to keep in check the neutrality of the armed forces. Furthermore, false reports

on human rights and freedom violations could incite social unrests and violence. These forms of activities undermine the legitimacy and image of the government which can be regarded as a threat to national security.

b. Land Border Security

Land border security requires a great deal of efforts and commitment in order to ensure security and stability, which are the core foundation of full-scale national development. Incidents such as illegal border crossings and transnational crimes among others are viewed as potential threats to border security and national security as a whole.

The inconsistency of land border demarcations; the use of unilateral unofficial maps; the shifts of political agendas; and extreme nationalism could lead to border disputes between neighbouring countries. These factors are conducive to territorial and sovereignty violations in various ways, including, but not limited to, illegal settlements, and illegitimate occupation by military forces. Additionally, transnational crimes in the form of trafficking, and illegal border crossings, lead to difficulties in immigration control, especially with the challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

c. Maritime Security

Maritime passages have become significant to the economy in terms of transportation and trade routes. In addition, the abundance of natural resources provides strategic significance to the economy. Cambodia must protect its maritime sovereignty and security, especially the protection of strategic economic routes and natural resources.

The ambiguity of maritime border which subsequently leads to illegal fishing; maritime territorial disputes; and illegitimate occupation of natural resources sanctuaries could impact Cambodia's national interests. Furthermore, maritime crimes such as piracy, smuggling, and other maritime incidents in the form of shipwrecks, and oil spills could possibly pose threats to Cambodia's

maritime security. Therefore, RCAF must strengthen its capabilities and readiness to prevent and respond to these threats effectively and in a timely fashion.

d. Airspace Security

Airspace security is vital for Cambodia in protecting its sovereignty, promoting national interests, and expanding national economic potentials. Challenges and threats to airspace security can be defined by the lack of management capability, in terms of human resources and technical equipment such as radar and air surveillance systems.

Threats that are considered harmful to Cambodia's airspace are those of hijackings or crimes that could be carried out by terrorists or criminals. Inevitable threats that are also worrisome come in the form of unauthorized entry into airspace including foreign surveillance and reconnaissance aircrafts, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) or drones, etc. This indicates the priority of airspace security protection that requires RCAF to make necessary modernisation in air defence capabilities.

e. Cyber Security

Cyber threats and attacks are happening everywhere around the world. With the advancement of modern telecommunications and information technology, including Internet of Things (IoT) and 5G technology, the opportunity and capability for criminals to launch cyber-attacks have significantly increased. Furthermore, it presents opportunities for organised crime groups such as human and drug traffickers, and arms smugglers to obtain intelligence from public and private institutions for criminal purposes.

Cyber threats affect national security through threatening, attacking, and undermining national security and social stability. This includes the economy, intelligence, and key infrastructure such as hospitals, telecommunications entities, power plants, water supply systems, shelters, transportation systems, etc.

Strengthening cyber security is crucial for preventing cyber warfare, cyber terrorism, espionage, and scams.

f. Terrorism

Terrorism will always remain a major threat to regional and global security. Cambodia must raise awareness of all forms of terrorism, including homegrown and transnational terrorism, which pose threats to national security and stability. Although terrorism has never greatly affected Cambodia, strategic measures to prevent and respond to these threats are significantly required.

g. Natural Disaster

Non-traditional security threats such as man-made and natural disasters have increased as a result of environmental degradation and climate change. Floods, droughts, earthquakes, typhoons, and wildfires are serious threats to humanity worldwide, and they will remain so in the future.

Since Cambodia is an agricultural dependent nation, floods and droughts are classified as severe challenges and threats to the local populace. RCAF's readiness and preparedness is a top priority for Cambodia's strategic plan for dealing with the increasing intensity of natural disasters. Hence, it is very important for RCAF as the leading force in search and rescue operations to strengthen its capabilities to respond effectively and in a timely manner. In addition, this endeavour will be achieved through international cooperation with partner nations, especially among AMS.

h. Pandemic

The growth of connectivity and globalisation has demonstrated that pandemic is more than just a threat to public health, but also a threat to national and global security. The spread of COVID-19 is clear evidence that pandemic also affects the economy, trade, tourism, education, national security and more. This matter requires an international cooperative mechanism to rapidly respond

as well as to recover socio-economically in the post COVID-19 phase of the pandemic.

Although there was misinformation and distortion of the actual situation during the COVID-19 community outbreak in Cambodia, RGC, with strong support from RCAF, successfully contained the spread of COVID-19 and prevented it from getting worse.

The leading role of RCAF in joining RGC in battling the pandemic is in line with the government's strategy of quarantine management; the setting up of medical centres; transportation of repatriated immigrant workers; installation of COVID-19 analysis laboratories; and the launch of COVID-19 vaccination campaigns nationwide. Vaccines have been provided to Cambodians and foreigners alike without discrimination. Moreover, RCAF has produced and distributed vaccination cards to those who have been vaccinated. Through all these efforts, Cambodia has achieved significant positive outcomes in the battle against COVID-19.

Future pandemic cannot be foreseen and cannot be predicted. As such, RCAF must skillfully define a defence strategy composed of feasible, suitable, and acceptable approaches for coping with pandemic threats in order to ensure readiness, preparedness, and effectiveness.

Chapter 3

National Defence Policy

Cambodia adheres to the principles of neutrality, non-alignment, and peaceful coexistence with every nation. Cambodia does not permit foreign military bases on its sovereign territory, nor will it establish military bases abroad, except under the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) framework. Cambodia firmly believes in the spirit of respecting common interests among nations and employing peaceful solutions in accordance with both national and international law. Cambodia strongly opposes foreign interference in its internal affairs under any circumstances and vice versa.

Based on the security analysis and threat assessment stated in chapter 2, Cambodia has mindfully identified a set of defence policies that serve as a top-level national guidance for RCAF to fulfill its role and duty.

1. Safeguard Peace

Peace has always been the bedrock of national unity and development in all fields. It is the reflection of personal sacrifices and merits of **Samdech Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of Cambodia, in the cause of the national salvation from a three-decade long civil war and armed conflicts. In this sense, Cambodia recognises distinctly the value of the history that it has gone through. At the same time, Cambodia promotes the value of military history as a testament to the struggle and devotion of those who have given their ultimate sacrifices for the cause of peace. To safeguard peace, Cambodia will exercise its sovereign rights as a legitimate state to implement the most appropriate and just methods and mechanisms based on national and international law. RCAF has the role and duty to protect the legitimate government; defend the Constitution; safeguard peace;

and ensure safety, security, stability, and public order which is the foundation of national harmony and prosperity.

2. Protect National Interests

Cambodia recognises national independence; state sovereignty; territorial integrity; national security and stability; developed border areas; and strategic economic routes as national interests. In this sense, within the boundary of national and international law, Cambodia upholds the rights of self-defence against internal and external threats that could affect national interests.

3. Enhance International Cooperation

Cambodia upholds a defence policy that strengthens and enhances the capabilities and image of RCAF. Cambodia welcomes all initiatives that promote peace, security, stability, and prosperity through bilateral and multilateral cooperation based on mutual benefits and respect.

4. Promote the Value of Military History and Win-Win Policy

Cambodia maintains and promotes the value of military history by reflecting the great sacrifices and merits of **Samdech Techo** in the salvation of Cambodia. This includes building peace, ensuring stability, development, harmony, and the prosperity of the nation.

Samdech Techo's Win-Win Policy saved Cambodia from the brink of destruction and brought about peace, national unity, and development. The peace and national unity of Cambodia are critical factors in building and promoting peace and stability in the region. Therefore, it is important for military personnel and civilians alike to understand military history and the Win-Win Policy. Preserving historical evidence, especially the construction of the Win-Win Memorial, is a symbol of remembrance and gratitude to the founders of the Win-Win Policy and its practitioners who brought peace and national unity. Initiation and construction of military historical sites along the border areas are also one of the main approaches of RCAF's border defence strategy.

Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh oversees the development of military history sites along border areas.

Sharing experiences and best practices on the successful implementation of Win-Win Policy is also an important contribution to promoting peace and stability within the region. The concept of reflecting on military history to build lasting peace is becoming a topic of dialogue in regional forums now and in the future.

“Only victors shall write history”

(Samdech Techo Hun Sen)

“Let history write about us for future generations”

(Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh)

Section 2

National Defence Strategy

Chapter 4

Border Defence

1. Land Border

Cambodia has a strong commitment and a clear policy regarding the development of neighbouring borders to promote peace, friendship, cooperation, and development. Establishing various infrastructure and community development along the borders has been a core strategy to actively defend Cambodia's borders. As part of the border defence strategy, RCAF will continue establishing and developing military history sites.

Border disputes shall be resolved using bilateral and multilateral mechanisms and in accordance with international law to ensure stability and peace. The existing mechanisms of cooperation at all levels shall be maintained to strengthen border cooperation with neighbouring countries.

Relevant institutions involved in border defence will continue to use existing mechanisms to set both short-term and long-term plans in bilateral cooperation with neighbouring countries. Furthermore, the completion of border demarcations is an effective way to reduce hostility along the borders. Local units must communicate regularly with higher command to provide each other with timely information to resolve any potential issues. Regular joint border patrols along the borders with neighbouring countries shall be conducted accordingly and shall be expanded based on the availability of resources.

Despite the key principle of defending the border by employing diplomacy and maintaining good relations, RCAF must enhance the capabilities of local units along the borders. The development of land border defence capabilities focuses on strengthening force posture and consistent border patrols; promoting readiness

and preparedness; enhancing logistics support; and modernising border defence systems.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen laid out a profound strategic directive to promote and strengthen sustainable civil-military relations between the front and the rear lines in order to enhance and ensure RCAF's border defence capabilities and effectiveness. The unbreakable bond of partnership between the armed forces and relevant civil and private sectors is vital in providing all sorts of support to RCAF. Furthermore, land and property ownership management strategy for military personnel and dependents is consistently implemented. Additionally, strategic plans on rural development along the border areas are making progress steadily. Thus, the value and sacrifices of the armed forces shall never be neglected. With all of this strategic vision, **Samdech Techo Hun Sen** and **Samdech Kittipritthbindit Bun Rany Hun Sen** were given the title of "Supreme General-Logistics" for RCAF.

2. Maritime Border

Maritime joint border patrols with neighbouring countries must comply with existing cooperation agreements and can be further expanded as necessary. Additionally, the focus on maritime awareness and management is vitally important. This focus includes the development of strategic naval infrastructure such as Ream Naval Base, bases in other strategic locations, and the development of workshops for repairing and for naval asset maintenance. Modernisation must include radar stations; acquisition of modern destroyers and patrol vessels; and other defence systems which provide necessary capabilities for RCAF to respond effectively and promptly.

3. Air Border

The strategic goal of defending Cambodia's air border requires human resource development and materials, especially air defence systems capable of intercepting fighter jets, reconnaissance aircrafts, drones, etc. It also requires

strategic force posture to enhance the effectiveness of monitoring, defending, and preventing air threats.

RCAF must look into enhancing cooperation and communication with the Secretariat of State of Civil Aviation (SSCA), and relevant civil institutions for the purpose of capability and capacity building, as well as bolstering cooperation in order to protect air sovereignty and national security.

Chapter 5

National Security Protection

Besides the core principle of protecting national sovereignty, the legitimate government, national interests, and defending the Constitution, RCAF has a primary duty to safeguard peace; ensure security, stability and public order; and to participate in humanitarian assistance operations. Additionally, RCAF plays a vital role as a military diplomat to maintain good relations and cooperation with neighbouring countries and other countries around the world. Cambodia has passed a law on managing the state of emergency, which requires RCAF to be ready to enforce the law when critical moments arrive.

1. Combating Colour Revolution

Subversion is the activity of extremist and biased groups who seek to overthrow the legitimate government that emerged from free and fair elections. Therefore, RCAF cannot be neutral in this regard and will be ready to cooperate with relevant authorities to prevent, control, and suppress all forms of subversion.

Cambodia's historical moment of peace and national unity was threatened by the colour revolution instigated by hostile foreign forces. At the heart of the colour revolution is the ambition to place RCAF in a neutral position so the legitimate government can be overthrown without any resistance. RCAF must be robust and loyal without any conditions to the nation, the religion, and the King. Also, RCAF must defend the Constitution and protect the government. Ultimately, RCAF will take immediate actions to combat any activity related to colour revolution to safeguard peace, ensure national unity, harmony, and the prosperity of the people of Cambodia.

2. Counter-Terrorism (CT)

Although there is no indication that Cambodia has been a target for terrorist attacks, security concern with terrorism is still a threat to peace, security, and social stability.

Consequently, RCAF must have appropriate strategies to promptly deal with all forms of terrorist activities and to the highest standard possible. In addition, it is an important consideration to set a high quality for professional development and resources for CT units and other relevant units which focus on broader cooperation with other institutions. Meanwhile, RCAF needs to cooperate with partner nations to share information, conduct professional training and joint exercises, and receive other aids.

Notably, the policy of social harmonisation is the most effective approach to prevent terrorism in Cambodia. According to **Samdech Pichey Sena**, **"It is better to prevent terrorism from happening rather than fighting against it. We shall not attract terrorism"**.

3. Transnational Crime Prevention

Human and drug trafficking and other illegal border crossing activities are still problematic and a cause of concern for Cambodia. These activities require RCAF to promote and strengthen inter-institutional mechanisms and international cooperation to increase the capabilities to prevent, share, and exchange information promptly. The objective will be to effectively prevent and crack down illegal activities along the borders.

RCAF must increase cooperation with national institutions, including the National Police, Customs Office, and other relevant agencies, as well as enhance cooperation with partner nations in the region and internationally to share information; prevent, protect and respond to transnational crimes. Simultaneously, RCAF will also enhance the development of specialised forces by expanding and enhancing training both locally and internationally.

4. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)

RCAF will always be ready and prepared to respond to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations under the coordination of NCDM. The Royal Gendarmerie is the leading force in making strategic plans and conducting joint operations with relevant units and civil agencies. On this note, other RCAF units must be prepared and ready to deploy forces, means, equipment, command, and cooperate with the Royal Gendarmerie and other relevant agencies to operate in disaster relief operations within respective designated areas. Both unilateral and multinational training with partner nations is crucial for enhancing RCAF capabilities and interoperability in future operations.

Royal Gendarmerie in HADR (Picture by General Department of Defence Services)

5. Epidemic and Pandemic Response

RCAF has gained considerable awareness and experiences from the Covid-19 pandemic through its involvement in the government's efforts to prevent and address public health issues. The armed forces will be a leading force when dealing with pandemic, especially in areas that are most affected. Along with relevant authorities, the armed forces are tasked with cooperating with neighbouring countries to implement national and international measures which

deal with pandemic across the borders. If Cambodia is placed under a state of emergency, RCAF will become the main force to enforce the law.

Vaccination campaign (Picture by Royal Cambodian Army)

Future epidemic or pandemic cannot be predicted and are unforeseen. Therefore, RCAF must always enhance its preparedness and readiness to be able to respond effectively in the future. To do this, significant efforts are needed for this to be achieved:

- Increase and strengthen RCAF medical corps personnel capacity and capabilities.
- Enhance RCAF medical corps capabilities by developing an annual budget plan to support the effort.
- Constantly raise situational awareness related to epidemic and pandemic in accordance with national health protocols.

6. Cyber Security

Currently the military is utilizing sophisticated technology in various realms including command and control, intelligence, and communication systems, from strategic down to tactical level. In this sense, cyber security must not be neglected since it provides precise, rapid, secure, confidential, and highly effective means for the aforementioned realms.

Alongside its immense benefits, there are also more complex and sophisticated cyber threats which are considered one of the most concerning topics among international communities as well as Cambodia. RCAF must set a clear strategy and robust strategic plans to respond to this matter accordingly. In this context, RCAF will put forward the following strategies:

a. Legal Framework

The establishment of a legal framework on cyber security is one of the crucial elements in providing a solid foundation and guiding principles to develop a national strategy on cyber security. The objective of establishing a legal framework is to ensure that cyber activities in all forms which present threats to national security can be prevented and tackled effectively. In order to effectively develop this framework, three guiding principles are outlined: standardization; laws (both national and international must be in alignment); and regular reviews to identify areas for amendment in order to keep up with the developing pace of technology need to be implemented.

The legal framework for RCAF cyber security is considered to be a priority task which requires attention and needs to be addressed promptly in accordance with the rapid evolution of technological globalisation.

b. Organisational Structure

All units are to amend their organisational structure to suit the current technological evolution which enhances the units' ability to monitor; conduct surveillance and reconnaissance; analyse, and ultimately tackle any cyber security

threats promptly. Additionally, all units need to establish cooperation across all stakeholders on all levels from national, sub-national, private sectors, and NGOs. This should be carried out at both strategic and operational level through information sharing dialogues, and experience and strategic plan exchange programs.

c. Human Resources

Human resources cannot be overlooked, despite units and institutions being equipped with the latest technology, updated organisational structure, and applicable legal framework. The people still stand as the core element in the development of cyber security. With that, capability development, knowledge, and capacity building of RCAF on cyber security has become one of its top priorities.

In order to develop effective human resources to serve as valuable assets to RCAF in cyber security, every relevant unit must have a clear strategy which includes establishing cyber security training centers; planning for recruitment and retention of specialists and technical experts, as well as RCAF training and cyber security awareness campaigns to raise baseline knowledge and improved computer literacy.

d. Technical Capability

The strengthening of technical capability is a key factor in responding to rapid technological advancement and the increase in cyber threats in the present and the future. Furthermore, the modernisation of operating systems, software and core networks is fundamental to protecting against cyber-attacks. Therefore, regular updates of both software and hardware need to be maintained in the future to enable technological infrastructure to be more sustainable and more capable to protect against all forms of threats.

e. Cooperation

Any cyber related activities that can destabilise national security have to be prevented at all costs. RCAF requires practical cyber security cooperation with both national and international operations. In addition, cooperation with the private sector is considered one of the main focal points in relation to capacity building through international partners.

National cooperation includes inter-ministerial and intra-sectoral cooperation, including MoND and relevant units under RCAF, institutions, technology research institutes, major universities, local technology companies, and specialised units.

Regional cooperation requires participating in, contributing toward, and exchanging defence strategies which concern telecommunication technology and information technology bilaterally and multilaterally. Furthermore, it is crucial to expand cooperation at the international level with partner nations who have more advanced technology and extensive experience in cyber security.

f. Research and Development

Research and development on cyber security is a critical factor for a nation or organisation to achieve efficient technological advancement with confidence. This can be achieved through support from relevant ministries or institutions to the successful research and development of cyber security. This support will enable expert teams to research and develop intelligent technology to ensure the suitability of cyber security in the future. In addition, establishing a platform where governmental organisations, NGOs, and private sectors can facilitate the exchange of information, knowledge, experience, and technological development is essential to research and development.

Chapter 6

Military Reform

Despite some significant challenges, RCAF will continue to implement military reform plans in greater depth. Future reforms focus on the following key measures:

1. Organisational Structure and Command and Control System Adjustment

Organisational structure and command and control system must be optimised to meet necessary needs of actual tasks in order to avoid structural overlap between MoND, HCHQ, and the four services. This optimization will ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the long run. Force hierarchical structure will need to be reformed to strengthen the command and control system; technical standards; and administrative affairs to mitigate complexity and to comply with the role and duty of each institution and unit.

2. Personnel Affairs

Institutional and organizational frameworks need to be updated to meet specific needs and circumstances. At the same time, new recruitments will be carried out in accordance with government plans and resources. This process will be conducted with transparency and efficiency.

RCAF will continue the process of new recruitments along with intensive training and education domestically and abroad for the newly qualified recruits. This effort will guarantee the production of professional, competent, and capable servicemen and servicewomen.

Meanwhile, RCAF must look into the implementation of military conscript law in order to prepare and build sustainable armed forces for the future and to build a strong defence foundation among the people. Also, enforcement of

the pension law will be bolstered in order to encourage voluntary early retirement and to achieve the annual desired retirement rate.

RCAF must set a fair and transparent post-retirement strategy in line with the government's policy. This is to ensure the value of the retirees and veterans in society. Equal opportunities, welfare, and recognition must be outlined in the strategy in order to guarantee a comfortable life in post-retirement.

3. Defence Budget Management

MoND needs an appropriate annual defence budget to build human resources; enhance in-depth military modernisation; improve physical infrastructure, etc. Defence budget allocation must be prioritized based on strategic needs and requirements such as RCAF capability and capacity building; and military technology among others. In this sense, defence budget allocation must align with defence strategy to ensure a successful and effective execution.

4. Defence Industry

A defence industry initiative is key for MoND to enhance military capabilities and keep pace with technological advancement and innovations. The main goal of establishing a defence industry is to support necessary defence needs by encouraging self-reliance on domestic defence products over the long term. This approach will guarantee sustainability through increasing the production volume of small-sized and medium-sized armaments and military equipment and provide opportunities for RCAF to engage internationally in terms of defence industry cooperation and collaboration. When self-reliance is ensured, RCAF will no longer be dependent on foreign procurements.

The long-term goal of improving RCAF self-reliance will prove that the defence industry is key in contributing to supplying defence demands for both actual operations and training and exercises, and most importantly to achieve RCAF modernization plans.

5. Training and Education

Higher educational and training institutions in the field of defence must focus on improving strategic and defence studies and research. In order to bring the military education system in line with international quality and standards, every military educational establishment must update training curriculums, upgrade facilities, and develop doctrines paralleled with the progress of military advancement regionally and globally. Additionally, it is also of vital interest that the expansion of professional training and education exchange programs with partner nations must be taken into high consideration. General understanding and knowledge on military history and Win-Win Policy is important so that all servicemen and servicewomen grasp the value of what the foundation of today's armed forces is, and what has brought about peace and development to Cambodia. Therefore, every military educational and training institution must include the subjects of military history and Win-Win Policy into relevant curriculums.

Training is one of the main priorities in capability development (Picture by Training Headquarters – HCHQ)

The transformation of the Naval Training School to the Naval Training Institute has been a success. This achievement will deepen and expand capabilities, knowledge, and skills of the Navy in order to operate and respond effectively in the future. At the same time, NPMEC will develop itself into a recognized regional center of excellence. This transformation will build and promote RCAF's reputation, capabilities, and contribution to peacekeeping endeavors in the future under UNPKO framework.

Finally, adequate financial and technical support are instrumental in these reform efforts. They define the successful achievement of developing quality human resources, based on subject matters and specialties.

Chapter 7

Military Cooperation and International Security Engagement

1. Principles of Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation

RCAF has a clear and consistent principle in military cooperation with partner nations to enhance solidarity, military capabilities, and friendship based on the principles of independence, neutrality, non-political ideology, and mutual respect in line with the government's strategic direction to promote sustainable international relations. Based on political, security, and economic development and as part of the strategic goals of the defence policy towards 2030, RCAF will strengthen and broaden cooperation and good relations with countries within the region and the world.

To ensure the sustainability of international engagement, RCAF will continue to deepen bilateral cooperation with security partners through military diplomacy. This will be achieved by increasing Cambodia’s defence attaché offices overseas and vice versa. RCAF is also committed to further promoting cooperation in mutual military assistance, increasing memorandums of understanding with partner nations, facilitating exchange visits, conducting joint exercises, exchanging experiences, and sharing information. These allow RCAF to develop its capabilities and contribute to safeguarding national and international peace and security.

Cambodia's defence policy is transparent and open to all friendly countries that are willing to strengthen military and security cooperation with Cambodia based on equality, mutual respect for national independence, and state sovereignty. Notably, all forms of military cooperation must respond to the needs of Cambodia and must be based on the spirit of solidarity and mutual interests.

2. Ream Naval Base Modernisation Policy

Like any other countries, RCAF has to develop its capabilities. The modernisation of Ream Naval Base, which has been in motion for many years, is an integral part of the Royal Cambodian Navy's capability modernisation plans. Ream Naval Base modernisation is essential to the sovereign rights of Cambodia to serve its interests and security of the region. This modernisation aims to effectively manage and control Cambodia's maritime domain and fully participate with other countries in safeguarding peace, and strengthening stability, and security in the region. This modernisation does not threaten any particular nation in the region while Cambodia does not permit any foreign military base on its sovereign territory.

This clear position is based on Article 53 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, which states:

"The Kingdom of Cambodia adopts a policy of permanent neutrality and non-alignment. The Kingdom of Cambodia follows the policy of peaceful co-existence with neighbouring countries and with all other countries worldwide".

"The Kingdom of Cambodia shall not invade any country nor interfere in any other countries' internal affairs and shall solve any dispute peacefully with due respect for mutual interests".

"The Kingdom of Cambodia shall not join any military alliance or military pact unparalleled with its neutrality policy".

"The Kingdom of Cambodia shall not permit any foreign military base on its sovereign territory. It shall not have its military base abroad, except under the framework of the United Nations requests".

"The Kingdom of Cambodia reserves the rights to receive foreign assistance in the form of military equipment, armaments, and ammunitions. The Kingdom of Cambodia profoundly welcomes foreign assistance in training and

education, and other forms of assistance in capability and capacity building for maintaining public order and security within its sovereign territory".

3. Regional Framework Cooperation

RCAF will continue to play an active role in safeguarding peace, security, and stability in the region, which is key to sustainable development and prosperity regionally, through continuing to actively participate in practical cooperation under the framework of ADMM and its related mechanisms.

Chairmanship of the ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting Working Group (Picture by General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs)

Cambodia clearly understands that sustainable development depends on the stability and peace of the whole region. Therefore, strengthening the role and cooperation of ADMM is an essential factor in building trust and confidence in the region and enhancing ASEAN collective response to the rapid change of the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region. Indeed, as the chair of ADMM in 2022, MoND has set strategic priorities to promote practical military cooperation among AMS, such as 1-Promoting military cooperation in response to global pandemic and 2-Enhancing participation of ASEAN female peacekeepers in UNPKO.

RCAF will continue its active participation in ADMM-Plus, particularly RCAF participation in defence dialogues and consultations; joint exercises; and other working group meetings at all levels. Moreover, RCAF will further contribute to the development of new defence and security initiatives which aim to promote solidarity and cooperation among AMS and the Plus Countries. This endeavour has the purpose of enhancing capacity building, mutual trust, and confidence in accordance with ASEAN core principles, centrality, and unity. This serves to strengthen ASEAN collective response to the fast-changing security environment in Asia-Pacific. Cambodia will continue to co-chair ADMM-Plus EWG in order to contribute to capacity building in the region by sharing experiences, best practices, etc. At the same time, RCAF will actively participate in security and defence dialogues and other multilateral security platforms, including ARF, to discuss military cooperation and address regional security concerns.

Cambodia believes that practical cooperation within ADMM framework at present is sufficient and effective to bolster interoperability in response to common regional challenges. Cambodia supports the sustainment of the current participants to continue the sustainability of this mechanism. Concerning regional disputes, Cambodia adheres to dispute resolution by peaceful means and exercises utmost restraint in accordance with international law. As a signatory of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and other relevant international treaties, Cambodia adheres to these agreed principles as they are significant for safeguarding peace, stability and promoting prosperity in the region. As for the recent security alliances and partnerships between superpowers in the region under the pretext of common interests, Cambodia sees some controversy that seems to be conducive to confrontation and initiating an arms race.

The recent development of the global security environment is of great concern for the region and the world as a whole, especially the hostilities that are taking place in Asia-Pacific and Europe. Although Cambodia is a small country, it experienced a long decade of war and conflict termination that led to peace and development. **Samdech Techo Prime Minister**, the founder of Win-Win Policy, emphasised that **"We certainly cannot end war with war. The most appropriate way to end war and armed conflicts is through negotiations and peaceful means. Parties who choose war as a solution will suffer severe consequences. Cambodia is fully engaged with other countries in the region in promoting the resolution of all conflicts with utmost restraint; the use of diplomatic means and dialogues; and efforts to reduce tensions in accordance with international law and mutual understanding in order to prevent escalation".**

Cambodia's and Vietnam's Defence Ministers strengthening bilateral military cooperation (Picture by General Department of Policy and Foreign Affairs)

4. United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO)

RCAF must innovate to become a Smart Pledge and a multi-disciplinary force to comply with the United Nations Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). In this regard, RCAF must be ready promptly in human resources, facilities, and equipment according to UN requirements, including the United Nations Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (UNPCRS) that is ready to be deployed within 90 days of a formal request. In addition, RCAF will continue its joint training programs with partner nations to strengthen and expand foreign language skills and other technical skills such as heavy machinery operation, demining and UXO clearance, engineering, information technology, and medical expertise in accordance with UN norms and regulations.

Samdech Techo Hun Sen solemnly announced at the 73rd, 74th, 75th and 76th United Nations General Assembly that Cambodia will continue its commitment to participate in UNPKO in accordance with RCAF capability and capacity. According to the statement of **Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh,** Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, stated during the Defence Ministerial Meeting among Troop Contributing Countries at the First Session at the UN Headquarters in New York, the Second Session in the United Kingdom, and the Third Session in the Republic of Korea, that Cambodia is committed to deploying more than 20% of female peacekeepers in the future in response to the United Nations formal requests.

Under regional cooperation, Cambodia will:

- Host a tripartite project organised by the United Nations, Cambodia, and Japan to provide heavy engineering training to peacekeepers in the ASEAN community and the region.
- Host a Tripartite Gender Training Project on enhancing the readiness of RCAF women peacekeepers for UNPKO

- Upgrade the Multinational Peacekeeping Training Centre to become ASEAN or Regional Peacekeeping Training Centre.

- Post 2025 plan, strengthen, enhance, and modernise RCAF capabilities through providing training and equipping modern facilities to all units in the area of UXO clearance.

- RCAF will continue fulfilling its duty in demining under the National Strategic Plan on "Mine-Free Cambodia 2025" (Letter of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia on 1st February 2022, delivered on the occasion of the 23rd Anniversary of the Commemorating National Mine Awareness Day on 24th February 2022).

Cambodian female peacekeepers deployed in peacekeeping operations in Central Africa, Lebanon, and South Sudan (Picture by NPMEC)

Section 3

Implementation

This defense white paper expresses Cambodia's vision on defence as well as provides a strategic guideline for RCAF to perform its role and duty in line with the defence policy as stated in chapter 3. A clear defense policy and defense strategy are critical foundations for a comprehensive development and prosperity of the nation which will bring forth harmony to the people of Cambodia.

A strong commitment and support of the whole-of-government is greatly required in order for the defence policy and defence strategy defined in DWP22 to be successfully implemented. RGC will give every effort and take strategic requirements into high consideration to ensure a feasible and transparent implementation.

Formulation of National Defence Policy (Picture by DWP Working Group)

Beyond the successful release of DWP22, a strategic defence review in approximately three to five years' time, or even a formulation of another defence white paper, will likely be required. This is because RCAF must follow and anticipate the complex, fragile, unpredictable, and dynamic evolution and change of the global security environment.

A joint effort of every RCAF relevant unit in implementing the defence policy and defence strategy will be instrumental for creating stronger, more competent, and more capable armed forces in the near future. In this sense, key strategic measures that require RCAF's focus are safeguarding peace, stability, national unity; developing the bond between the people and armed forces; promoting military modernization; and enhancing international cooperation.

Leaders at all levels must uphold DWP22 to the highest value. Proper and swift monitor and review mechanisms are necessary to ensure successful implementation of DWP22's defence policy and defence strategy. Every relevant unit must develop their respective mechanism to evaluate process and progress including challenges to guarantee effective implementation.

Strategic planning requires consensus and clarity from every unit across every service of RCAF—from MoND level down to tactical level for the main purpose of successful execution. On that note, based on the evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, relevant units must define strategic objectives and strategic plans for the short term, medium term, and long term.

Chapter 8

National Defence Priority Management

An in-depth military reform is crucial for RCAF to implement the defence policy and defence strategy, especially regarding the enhancement of military professionalism and modernisation. The success of military reform relies on consistent plans and support from all relevant units, organisations, and civil stakeholders. In this regard, the implementation process based on defence priorities will require effective, efficient, and transparent resource allocations. RCAF will focus on the following priorities towards 2030:

Border Security:

RCAF aims to strengthen border defence capabilities through increasing the presence of armed forces stationing or shows of force; training; technical equipment acquisition; and infrastructure development along the border areas. **Samdech Techo Hun Sen** once asserted, highlighting a broader vision, **"We shall build borders of peace, friendship, development, and cooperation. We shall transform former battlefields into communities of trade and commercial; development; production; and tourism".**

Internal Security:

In this aspect, RCAF focuses on protecting security, safety, stability, and public orders. Furthermore, neutralising all potential activities in the form of color revolution is another duty of the armed forces. RCAF prevents any insecurity and instability arising from terrorism and transnational crime to ensure security and harmony in the society. Additionally, RCAF continues to provide assistance to the populace in times of critical emergency support.

Military Reform:

Although the threat of the pandemic remains problematic, military reform stands as one of the top priorities. RCAF seeks to adjust and improve its force structure and obtain sufficient capability to best serve the defense policy: safeguard peace; protect national interests; and enhance international cooperation. Alongside the force restructuring and personnel management, RCAF must promote the enhancement of military professionalism and modernisation of the armed forces.

International Cooperation:

The purpose of this aspect is to expand and strengthen military cooperation with partner nations based on the principle of mutual respect. This effort aims to promote national interests and common interests with nations in the region through constructive bilateral, multilateral, and regional frameworks. RCAF reserves the rights to uphold military development via good cooperation with partner nations under the basis of national independence, state sovereignty, and decision-making process with loyalty and transparency. Furthermore, capacity and capability building in peacekeeping operations is among the top priorities in which Cambodia's reputation precedes. Most importantly, resource allocations for supporting defence cooperation is critical for RCAF to effectively supplement this effort and to meet specific requirements of defence cooperation in the context of globalisation.

Chapter 9

Defence Technology and Innovation

Defence technology and innovation will prove to be key in the defence of Cambodia in the sense of deterrence and armed conflict prevention. Emerging sophisticated technology such as AI, robotics, and advanced computing among others, have leveled up military capabilities worldwide including communication systems; data collecting and analysis; intelligence; etc. Superpowers and developed countries around the world have long been integrating these advanced technologies into their respective militaries. Meanwhile, the advancement in these sophisticated technologies and its utilization within military capabilities will significantly boost RCAF fighting power in coping with both traditional and non-traditional security threats. Thus, in this sophisticated technology era and in line with the defence strategy, RCAF must associate current technology with innovative technology.

Every scientific and technological development as well as innovation never fails to present strategic competitions as opportunities. Therefore, RCAF shall exploit these opportunities to harness potential advantages for the sole purpose of enhancing military robustness, sustainability, and flexibility.

To achieve what has been mentioned above, RCAF must follow four strategic approaches outlined as follows:

1. Human Resource Development

Investing in human resources has always been the foundation of RCAF defence capacity and capability building plans. A skilled workforce in certain areas is required, such as in technological and scientific research and development; strategic analysis; etc. Training and education quality must be enhanced by all means necessary.

2. Technology Utilisation

This approach focuses on boosting RCAF capability to better serve both domestically and internationally via utilization of advanced technology which meets RCAF standards.

3. Defence Industry Development

Robustly invest in defence industry to guarantee sustainability, self-reliance, advancement, and to minimize foreign procurements.

4. Partnership with Civil Sectors

Encourage a good partnership between the defence and civil sector, both public and private, through enhancing cooperation and collaboration. This approach aims at developing defence technology and innovation for the purpose of advancing RCAF capabilities in communications; and in exchanging accurate information and experiences in a timely fashion.

Chapter 10

National Defence Budget

The national defence budget is the essential element and crucial factor in the implementation of the defence white paper. Moreover, it is also vital that the budget is being spent under the principle of transparency and accountability with regards to the military reforms and modernisation, which aims to deliver more competent and more capable armed forces to meet with medium and long-term strategic plans.

Based on the defence policy and defence strategy outlined in section 1 and 2, MoND, first and foremost, needs the defence budget of around 2.5% of GDP over the next five years. Secondly, the defence budget is expected to increase to 2.7% of GDP by 2030 in order for RCAF to guarantee sustainable development and modernisation. This budgeting model will enhance the progress of the military reform and modernisation plans based on national economic growth. The proposal was once outlined in DWP06 and according to a report by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the defence budget allocation amounted to 1.78% of GDP from 2011 to 2020. Nevertheless, RGC, particularly **Samdech Techo Hun Sen**, has always expressed high consideration in supporting and financing RCAF to duly execute their duty.

The allocated national defence budget will be spent wisely based on priorities aligned with the defence policy and the four defence strategies—border defence, internal security, military reform, and international cooperation. The defence budget allocation plans will be developed and approved under relevant units to strike a balance between specific requirements and available resources. The implementation will be carried out in phases which are flexible and open for review accordingly. Any adjustment to the defence budget allocation plans will be implemented through a defence strategic review process.

Having a proper mechanism for monitoring and evaluating is instrumental in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the defence budget allocation aligned with the set strategic plans. Every relevant unit must develop comprehensive action plans and performance indicators in order to assess the progress and desired outcomes. This mechanism is significant for implementing any outlined strategy, and especially for top-level decision makers to be profoundly transparent and accountable in defence budget expenditure.

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Glossary

No.	Full Form	Acronym
1	ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting-Plus Expert Working Group	ADSOM-Plus EWG
2	ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting-Plus	ADSOM-Plus
3	ASEAN Defence Senior Officials' Meeting	ADSOM
4	ASEAN Member State	AMS
5	ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Expert Working Group	ADMM EWG
6	Artificial Intelligence	AI
7	Counter-terrorism	CT
8	Defence White Paper	DWP
9	Defence Strategic Review	DSR
10	Gulf of Thailand Initiative	GOTI
11	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief	HADR
12	High Command Headquarters	HCHQ

13	International Court of Justice	ICJ
14	Indo-Pacific Initiative	IPI
15	Ministry of National Defence	MoND
16	Memorandum of Understanding	MOU
17	National Centre for Peacekeeping Forces, Mines, and ERW Clearance	NPMEC
18	National Counter-Terrorism Special Force	NCTSF
19	National Committee for Maritime Security	NCMS
20	Non-commissioned Officer	NCO
21	National Committee for Disaster Management	NCDM
22	Royal Cambodian Armed Forces	RCAF
23	Royal Government of Cambodia	RGC
24	South China Sea	SCS
25	Southeast Asia Maritime Law Enforcement Initiative	SEAMLEI

26	State Secretariat of Civil Aviation	SSCA
27	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia	UNTAC
28	United Nations	UN
29	United Nations Peacekeeping Operations	UNPKO
30	Unexploded Ordnance	UXO