

Statement of ICAPP and CAPDI on the Cambodian Elections

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On the invitation of the National Election Committee (NEC) of Cambodia, a joint, representative delegation of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) and the Centrist Asia Pacific Democrats International (CAPDI), led by their founder, Jose de Venecia, Jr, former Speaker of the Philippines, and CAPDI Chairman Jusuf Kalla, former Vice President of Indonesia, arrived in Cambodia for the purpose of observing elections and monitoring the democratic electoral process.

During its stay in Cambodia, the delegation met leaders of the three major political parties, the Cambodian People's Party, the Cambodian National Rescue Party and Funcinpec. The delegation also received a detailed briefing from the NEC on its functioning, powers and role on how best to organise a transparent election.

On Election Day, the delegation visited over a dozen polling stations, some pre-arranged visits and some randomly, within Phnom Penh and provinces on its outskirts, both before and during the polling process, as well as observing the counting of ballots after the polls closed.

The ICAPP-CAPDI considers the elections in Cambodia as a triumph of popular will and a victory of the Cambodian people in their quest to build a better future based on the supremacy and sanctity of the ballot. That the elections were free, fair and transparent, and, above all, peaceful, non-violent and smooth bear testimony to the fact that Cambodian democracy has not only matured, but come of age politically. We extend our heartiest congratulations to the people, political parties, leaders, media, civil society and the NEC of Cambodia for the successful and orderly conduct of the general election.

It was an election without any victors or any vanquished, rather, democracy triumphed, with the gusto, zeal, active participation and enthusiasm of the people, especially the youth, proving that democracy is, in fact, Cambodia's destiny.

In this spirit, we welcome the patriotic call of the leader of the National Rescue Party, Mr. Sam Rainsy, for "peace and reconciliation", and view it as most timely and the need of the hour. ICAPP and CAPDI, representing over 340 political parties from all over Asia and civil society and opinion leaders of various parts of the world, urge all the political parties of Cambodia to respect the mandate given by the Cambodian people, and rise to the occasion and meet the expectations of their electorate by giving Cambodia a healing touch through perhaps an inclusive Unity Government, which would be a win-win situation for all Cambodians.

Cambodia is heir to a glorious civilisation and its history has witnessed a chequered and difficult past which the people of Cambodia are determined never to repeat. The future of Cambodia would be well served by such an inclusive approach, since it upholds tolerance, harmony and progressive, peaceful coexistence. The ICAPP and CAPDI are more than willing to support this process of promoting peace, reconciliation and inclusive democracy in Cambodia.