**Citation H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn**

**Kao Kim Hourn** was born in 1966 in the Koh Sotin district of Kompong Cham province, the son of a schoolteacher, and spent his early life in the war-zone not far from the Vietnam border. After the Khmer Rouge took over, his family was displaced, to work in rice fields in Battambang province and elsewhere. With the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge, his family ended up spending several years in a refugee camp near the Thai border, where Kao Kim Hourn used a bicycle to trade goods from Thailand in Cambodia.

Eventually his family was successful in moving to the United States, to Texas where he started school. Despite his poor educational background and the fact that he had to adjust to a new language, he graduated from high school three years later, in 1985.

He then went to Baylor University in Waco, Texas, where he did his B.A. in Asian Studies. This proved to be another turning point in his life, arousing an interest in politics at a time when many changes were taking place in Cambodia and the region.

In order to follow up on this new awareness, Kao Kim Hourn was awarded a National Fellowship scholarship to do graduate studies at Ohio University. He spent two years there and ended up with two Master’s degrees in 1991; one in Political Science, the other in International Affairs. He also became active in political affairs, being the president of the Southeast Asian Students Association.

He then went on to start a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Hawaii the same year. His eventual dissertation topic was Cambodia’s foreign policy and ASEAN, which he completed in 2001. However, during this time he was increasingly active back in Cambodia, accumulating the experience and the insights essential for a dissertation whose theme evolved in parallel with Cambodia’s continuing re-entry into the modern world.

His return to Cambodia was at the start of 1993, at first to do research funded by the Asia Foundation on UN peace-keeping activities. This introduced him to the emerging world of think tanks, as director of the new Khmer International Relations Institute under the Preah-Sihanouk Raj Academy. This included an attempt to launch the Cambodia Public Accountability and Transparency project, as a means of cauterising the problem of endemic corruption at its very earliest stage; unfortunately this commendable initiative lapsed through a general lack of interest during the UNTAC period.

Thereafter, Kao Kim Hourn moved to another think tank, the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace (CICP), where he worked for 10 years until 2004. During this time, he was responsible for producing many academic papers reflecting his interest in regional affairs and Cambodia’s integration into the modern world. Thus CICP was at the forefront of supporting Cambodia becoming a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1999.

His time at CICP involved much interaction as an advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Royal Government of Cambodia. Given his continuing contributions to the development of Cambodia’s relations with the region and beyond, Kao Kim Hourn was appointed a Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in 2004, where his main portfolio was Regional Affairs. As such, he was a key player in the development and negotiation of the ASEAN Charter, in relations with the Asia Europe Meeting and in crisis management (including the recent border dispute with Thailand).

Meanwhile, Kao Kim Hourn found the time to be active in other spheres dedicated to promoting Cambodia’s re-joining the international community. Recognising that education is the key factor, he was instrumental in founding the University of Cambodia in 2003, as a university which taught degree programmes based on the American credit-based system through the medium of the English language. Under his continuing guidance as its President, this has given the University’s graduates an advantage in the globalising job-market through their greater flexibility, not just in language but also in their thinking skills and attitude. This has been reinforced by ancillary projects such as the Asia Economic Forum and the Asia Faiths Development Dialogue, which have exposed faculty and students to the experience and insights of scholars and practitioners in their respective fields from the region and beyond.

Since then, Kao Kim Hourn has sought to take education to the public at large, through the establishing of South East Asia Television and South East Asia Radio in 2007, as a means of bringing educational and other programmes to all Cambodians.

In recognition of his fundamental contributions at home and abroad, Kao Kim Hourn was appointed an advisor to Prime Minister Hun Sen in 2009; and a member of the Supreme National Economic Council in 2010. After the recent elections, he was promoted from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to being Minister Delegate attached to the Office of Prime Minister. He has also received six Decorations of Honour from the Kingdom of Cambodia; as well an Honorary Doctorate in Public Service from Ohio University.

In recognition of these self-same fundamental contributions, KIIT University is proud to confer the Honoris Causa degree of Doctor of Letters on Kao Kim Hourn. The citation reads as follows:

1. You have sought to promote the re-integration of Cambodia with the outside world in all spheres.

2. You have also played a key role in shaping the continuing evolution of ASEAN, for the benefit of all member states.

3. You have not forgotten other Cambodians, and have striven to promote educational preparedness for the race into the future.

4. Thus you have sought to ensure that Cambodia has become, and will continue to be, a significant member of ASEAN and of the greater international community.