

KLIC 2025 – Health Justice Keynote

Hanoi, Vietnam – December 2025

H.E. Samantha Yem, Founder and President of SK Law Office and Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia, delivered a keynote address at the Knowledge Lab for Innovation Community (KLIC) 2025, calling on governments across ASEAN to place health justice at the center of national development strategies.

In her address, H.E. Samantha Yem emphasized that health justice is not charity, but a legal guarantee and a core responsibility of government. “A country cannot build lasting prosperity on an unhealthy and unprotected population. Economic growth, innovation, and national security all depend on the protection of our people,” she stated.

She outlined three key pillars necessary to achieve health justice: intentional system-building, measurable national commitments, and strong accountability. She stressed that accountability is not punishment, but a promise that citizens can trust their institutions to protect their fundamental rights not only in times of crisis, but in everyday life.

Addressing regional cooperation, H.E. Samantha Yem underscored that health justice also serves as ASEAN’s defense against cross-border threats such as pandemics, natural disasters, and emerging health risks. “A strong ASEAN begins with strong member states,” she noted, calling for resilient national systems that reinforce regional stability.

As regional leaders move toward the adoption of the Hanoi Declaration, she reminded participants that true justice is measured through action, not paperwork. “Declarations do not create justice — leaders and systems do. The true meaning of our commitments will be measured by the protection people feel in their daily lives,” she said.

H.E. Samantha Yem concluded with a clear call to action: “Health justice begins with us. With clarity, courage, and conviction, we can build an ASEAN where no one is left behind.”

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