

As the ASEAN Chair, Cambodia has urged the five nuclear powerful countries to sign the protocol on the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ) by 2012.

H.E. Koy Kuong, Undersecretary of State and Spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation told reporters here this morning after the meeting between Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister H.E. Hor Namhong and ambassadors and chargé d'affaires of the five nuclear powerful countries – China, France, Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom – that are permanent members of the UN Security Council.

On the occasion, the letters asking the five countries to sign the protocol were delivered to each ambassador by H.E. Hor Namhong.

According to H.E. Koy Kuong, ASEAN signed the protocol on SEANWFZ in 1995, and it came into force in 1997. In May 2001 in Hanoi, ASEAN held the first negotiations with the five states, and after successive negotiations from 2001 to 2011, they finally agreed in principle to sign the protocol in last November in Bali, Indonesia.

It will become an important event if the five nuclear powerful countries sign the protocol as the SEANWFZ will contribute to strengthening the nuclear-free zone in Southeast Asia as well as the Nuclear No-Proliferation Treaty, he stressed.

ASEAN member countries are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.