

25 February 2007 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Building Banteay Mean Chey's Mean Chey University



25 February 07— Samdech Hun Sen and General HE Ke Kim Yan, Chief of General Staff at the Cornerstone Laying Ceremony at Banteay Meancheay

... I am very happy to return today to the province of Banteay Mean Chey to join with all of you in this ceremony to lay the cornerstones for the construction of the Mean Chey University at the initiative of HE General Ke Kim Yan, Chief of General Staff and Madame together with the CPP working team for the province.

Last year I came to Banteay Mean Chey twice - once in February to the Tropeang Thmor Reservoir and again to inaugurate the Japanese-Cambodian Friendship Hospital in the district of Mongkul Borei.

Having gone through the background of the idea to put the Mean Chey University into construction, I wish to share with you what I learned from the inauguration of the Svay Rieng University where HE General Ke Kim Yan who attended the ceremony said out that he would like to pro-

pose the construction of a University in Banteay Mean Chey. I have urged him to go with the plan. As we all see today that his idea has indeed realized.

HE General Ke Kim Yan told me last Friday that he already had raised 1.3 million US dollars and as of last night he told me the contribution has indeed secured a sum of nearly two million US dollars. The project is going to cost indeed 3.5 million US dollars.

Maybe it is worth sharing with all of us here today why HE General Ke Kim Yan requested me to reserve my schedule for the ceremony on February 25. He told me just now that February 25 for one reason is his birthday, the 52nd birthday.

For another reason, when he became a soldier in 1979, on this date (February 25, 1979) he was assigned to protect the
(Continued on page 2)

26 February 2007 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Building a Bridge Connecting Phnom Penh to NR 2

... I am very happy to join all of you once again to lay the cornerstones for the construction of the Bridge of Prek Chrey crossing the Prek Thnaot canal as well as the connection of road between Phnom Penh and the province of Kandal at the NR 2. We are now at the border between Phnom Penh and Kandal province. Before Phnom Penh has an ambition to expand its boundary to this area and some of the ideas for expansion have come from me as well.

As of now the idea of inte-

grating Kandal Stoeung and Angsnuol districts to Phnom Penh has yet to realize and the reason is because Phnom Penh will shortly be expanded through to Kandal province. As far as this place is concerned, it is no longer a quiet place because our population in general has gone from four to 14 million. Day after day the number of population increases while the capital suffers from the pressure of influx of population from all provinces. Economic and trade activities are on the increase as well. Phnom Penh faces more

(Continued on page 7)

21 February 2007 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
NCW's 2006 Stocktaking and 2007 Directive Setting Meeting

Presiding over the 2006 stocktaking and 2007 directive setting meeting of the National Council for Women (NCW), Samdech Hun Sen delivered a prepared address with the following selected comments:

On Judicial Irregularity vis à vis Human Traffickers

I wish to illustrate the concern of the Royal Government and related institutions on issue of repeated irregularities in the trials relating to human traffickers in Chhay Huor Hotel that the Municipal Court of Phnom Penh decided to be guilty. It is absurd that when the issue is being brought to the Appeal Court, the case has been marked to have no sufficient proof. Traffickers involved have been set free.

Why there was no effort to lodge an appeal? It was our lack of pursuing the matter. The Ministry of Women Affairs - the principal Ministry - has the responsibility in seeing this matter of human trafficking case through.

It is indeed a repetitive issue in the action against trafficking of human and in this case women as proven to be conducted by the Hotel Chhay Huor are getting the same verdict under arrest. I advise that this matter be brought to the attention of the Council of Magistracy as
(Continued on page 3)

In This Issue

- Mean Chey University — p. 1
- NR 2 Connecting Bridge — p. 1
- NCW's Directives — p. 1
- Interior's Directives — p. 4
- Building NR 78 — p.6
- Building NR 76 — p.8

(Continued from page 1)

bridge which is not far from our sight. From a soldier, HE General Ke Kim Yan has risen to his rank of general staff since 1987 and various positions - the Governor of Battambang province, etc. What is more important here today is the fact that bordering with Thailand, the province of Banteay Mean Chey is to have a new University in addition to facilities as branches of some Universities in the country. The Mean Chey University is to stand on an area of 13 hectares with another 27 hectares in reserve.

I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to HE General Ke Kim Yan and Madame, HE Yim Chhai Ly and Madame and others generous fellows for bringing the University closer to the people. We have done already our efforts to bring primary and secondary schools closer to the people and it is indeed splendid that we now bring the University to them.

We have a University in the eastern province of Svay Rieng and now we have a University in the western province of Banteay Mean Chey. We will do more for the whole country.

According to the report by Governor An Sum the University comprises of six faculties that are appropriately addressing market's demand - agriculture, technical science, agro-mechanics and electricity, information technology and foreign languages and pedagogy.

Teaching will be the sound we hear here instead of sound of fighting which used to be echoing from the districts around - Thmor Puok, Phnom Srok, etc. The win-win policy

has brought the country from war to peace and from destruction to development and it is indeed a long lasting one. As I speak about peace here some countries in the world have gone into troubles take for instance in Sudan where we also have our de-mining team there. A few months ago shelling landed near the place where our troops stayed but it did not cause any casualties. Problems continue to be messy in the Middle East, in the Kosovo's elections, etc. But we have in place now the benefit of win-win policy which now we compete in building infrastructures such as roads, water canals and reservoirs, hospitals, schools, etc.

According to the Governor An Sum, the construction has indeed started since 2006. As the foundation began at that time and my presence here is indeed the official approval of the construction. The construction could be finished in 2008 while in early 2009 the University would be ready to enroll between 1000 and 2000 students. Now that our students here are going to get their exams soon, we have started the construction of the University for them so that they do not have to go far for further education.

I used to be separated from my parents in Kompong Cham province in pursuit of education in Phnom Penh when I was 13 years old. I felt that part of my life was a sad one. It is not without a reason that I have requested for the mounting of statue of a monk and a young boy at every major achievement like bridges and schools. I knew our problems and I am determined to resolve them whenever I had a chance to do so. I used to see my father's eyes full of tears because of flood

that destroyed his rice in the field.

When the opportunity arises, I and my colleagues in the Royal Government as well as the Cambodian People's Party - which has led the country 28 years already implement this policy of development. Fun- cinpec has been invited to join in the coalition Government in the belief that we will bring about changes for the better for our people.

Parties with too wide a gap in our political platform could not work with CPP. For instance, CPP is talking about building roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, water canals and reservoirs, etc, while others would want to spend money on luxurious cars, etc.

We soon will have (communal) elections and in the campaign different parties will bring to our people their promises. I do not start a campaign today but to warn our people of promise-making. CPP never makes a promise but it does only when it can do. Take for instance I never say anything about this University until I am sure of its development as the foundation is now in place.

Talking about education in Banteay Mean Chey, according to the report by HE An Sum, what impresses us is the fact that there 64 communes in Banteay Mean Chey and 624 villages with the total population of 664,014 people. With this figure we have 120 kindergartens, 394 primary schools in 64 communes and this means that there are two to three primary schools for each commune. We have here 56 junior colleges and 20 senior ones making in all 76 colleges and most of them are in the district of Mongkul Borei.

We have many now but we will have to do more. We do not speak empty words but the truth and the real change. We should follow the wisdom of Father Dong and Mother Chey as they set a condition that a road had to be built first before they offer their daughter for marriage. We have conducted changes from battle into development at what I call the "toad's pace." A toad's jump brings us one new thing, and if the toad continues to make a jump, new things will keep on taking place too.

As far as crop production is concerned I am grateful to the efforts made whereby the cultivation has reached 106.4% of the planned 200,000 hectares because we have a figure here of 201,200 hectares under cultivation. This year is expecting a food surplus of 20,000 tons. I wish to also send my best greetings to the people in Malay district and also wish them a quick recovery from water poisoning. The water has been sent to the laboratory in Japan for study.

A proposal from the district of Serei Sophoan for a bridge is welcome and after I discussed with Senior Minister for Finance and Economy, HE Keat Chhon, I wish to take this opportunity to announce the cornerstone laying for the construction of the Serei Sophoan 120 meters long and 7.5 meters wide bridge as well.

Today we have Governors from Siemreap, Uddor Mean Chey, Banteay Mean Chey and Pailin and I would urge all provinces bordering with neighboring countries to take measures in banning import of right-hand drive vehicles. Some of those involved have been removed, and there are more. If the rest continue to make mistakes I would not

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 4)
 others have grown fruit trees that provide already fruits. I warn about setting protection area that is raised to me by the Governor of Koh Kong province. The protection area was drafted since when the Khmer Rouge have not yet left the forest area, take for instance Daun Sam area.

In reality people already settled there. I ordered HE Yut Phuthang Governor of Koh Kong that there are two different issues - one, area covered by the Royal Decree, any encroachment upon the people's residences will have to be resolved for the people's interests, and two, reserved land for future increase of population that is proposed by the

provincial authority would be re-issued by a Royal Decree. Some people have indeed settled in that particular area with a house or other livelihood activities in place but they would sell the land and seek for other land opportunity.

This issue has to be carefully looked at. I understand your difficulties but I would urge you to put a stop to further logging, to confiscate illegally grabbed land and/or punish with a fine, etc.

We have done so in the province of Banteay Mean Chey where a group of experts have been sent to resolve land conflict, as a result, much of the land is being recognized and

returned to the people.

On Issue of Gangsters

After my reaction to issue of gangsters, the head of national police, the governor of Phnom Penh also issued their orders, especially on issue of Samurai sword selling in public.

If they were to prove being unable to resolve the problem of gangsters they should be replaced because they do not make efforts to smash them.

They should do the work everyday and not only when the Prime Minister is talking about it. If you do not know how to prevent violence from sword fighting among young-

sters, you should give your posts to others.

We have more from samurai sword fights to car or motor races.

I think this matter should not be reminded by the Prime Minister, Minister of Interior, National Police Commissioner, etc. at all.

In fact they should consider this as their day to day works. Indeed today's talk about issues of gangsters should be a final remind and I would also appeal for cooperation from parents and their supervisors in educating their children ...■

(Continued from page 2)
 hesitate to act.

(Continued from page 1)
 to why the Appeal Court ordered the release of the offenders captured from Chhay Huor Hotel. Though the same offenders has been arrested and placed in custody, the Royal Government should conduct a study as to why the person was being released before by the Appeal Court. The Royal Government has to sue for re-investigation of the previous case. We are in search for an appropriate explanation. What else do they need as proof?

It might be interesting also to know who is behind this guilty person as I sometimes hear they say that there were interventions from so and so. But I want to hear frankly from whom? Now we have to fight on the same issue. This has in fact been an insult to the plaintiff and in this case the Royal Government. I would urge concerned institutions to keep close pursuit to the issue and do not feel hesitant to bring the case to the Supreme Court.

On Cambodian Laborers to Foreign Countries

Cambodia has sent some of its laborers to foreign countries. If we were to have budget we would send an attaché to every Cambodian embassy to oversee the issue of laborers. People from the Ministry of Labor should be designated to this task.

In case of difficulties, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labor should try and cooperate so that our staff from embassies could be brought back for necessary training in relation to labor protection, which I would say is an alternative choice. Those chosen for this task could be councilors or chief councilors from embassies in countries there have been Cambodian laborers. These are two options that we must give consideration on.

Laborers and embassies must go to see one another and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be a contact point. The

Philippines sent out thousands of laborers every year, and some of them ended up in Cambodia - like musicians, etc. Cambodia sends its laborers to countries in the region whereas those countries send their laborers to other markets in the world.

On Future Tasks

I received a letter from the NCW concerning the lack of budget and means of transports. I have sent to the Ministry of Finance and Economy my request to increase the 2008 budget from 200 to 400 million Riels and in 2007 for a van and a pickup truck. I have discussed this issue with HE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in Charge of the Council of Ministers Sok An and decided that while incorporating the budget to 2008, the Royal Government issued for immediate needs the budget of 200 million Riels and purchasing two cars under the 2008 budget from the current reserve package of the Royal Government...■

I wish to also call on the Thais to help prevent smuggling of right-hand drive vehicles into Cambodia as in the past we discovered that some of the vehicles came with parts of human bodies i.e. there was a crime committed prior to getting the vehicles out to Cambodia. This could indeed increase car theft and crimes on the Thai side as well.

I would stress again the issue of tax collection. All imported goods should be taxed with a ten percent of the amount given to the collectors. Last month income from this exit has gone up to 18 billion Riels. I warn that I would not hesitate to remove you from your positions, no matter who you are. I designate you. So I will be the one to remove you too. The same is true that while people elect us, they also could remove us.

On that occasion Samdech Hun Sen offered a school building of six classrooms for the Primary School of Toek Thla and a school building of six classrooms for the Primary School of Mkak■

22 February 2007 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Interior's 2006 Stocktaking and 2007 Directive Setting Meeting

Presiding over the 2006 stocktaking and 2007 directive setting meeting of the Ministry of Interior, Samdech Hun Sen delivered a prepared address (which is unavailable in English) with the following selected comments.

On Co-Leadership

Before we abided by the consensus system, which I later discussed with HE Sar Kheng to abolish it. We have now removed the ranking system of first, second ... deputy governor to just deputy governors, whereas the Governor is the united commander.

We applied the consensus system at that time because we had the co-minister for Interior and as we now have removed the latter, there is no need for keeping the ranking system.

On Investment and Land Ownership

The Royal Government has offered the local government power to approve any investment projects up to 2 million US dollars but concerned institutions with their branch offices at the provincial and municipal levels seem to be hesitant.

Indeed governor of a province is powerful and soon we will have a law for a unified administration in which the governor is in fact the Government's proxy for each province.

It is therefore necessary and urgent that those institutions have to transfer in a timely manner their power and authority to the provincial government in relation to investment.

I have an idea that maybe we should swap positions between Ministers and provincial or municipal governors as I used to say that a provincial governor used to have a big power and when s/he is becoming a Minister, s/her also behaves as if s/he is still power-rich as provincial/municipal governor.

Maybe they should swap their position for a year. A provincial governor may not be able to perform the position of Minister or vice versa because it requires different skill and expertise. There is a need for coordination in relation to power and authority.

In fact I do not want to limit the approval limit of 2 million US dollars to the provincial investment authority but this could be a starting amount. I would consider the possibility of providing approval rate to a bigger amount.

However, with such a small amount to start with, it is noticeable that we are in a state of indecisiveness, whereas only 30 projects have been approved so far.

Another matter of concern is land conflict and I have raised this issue in the stocktaking and directive setting of the Ministry of Environment once.

I do not believe that the provincial authority is not aware of deforestation or land grabbing in their geographical administration.

I would urge all institutions concerned to give inspection to the issue. A survey needs to be held. Some people just put some fences and declared themselves to be owners but

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 8)
 one more bridge to be built at Ta Khmao town of Kandal.

I raised this matter to HE Prime Minister Wen Jiabao when I attended the Sino-ASEAN Summit in Nanning and I could recall that HE Wen Jiabao said to HE Ambassador to Cambodia that "you are Ambassador for Cambodia and not for China." I told him that 200 million US dollars is not up to what we need yet. I requested for another 200 million US dollars which will be used to build the NR 10 which has now become the NR 57 from Battambang to Pailin and through to the border with Thailand, another 28 kilometer road from Sen Monorom to the border with Vietnam, the part that connect the NR 8 to the NR 7 which is about 27 kilometers, and a bridge at Ta Khmao over the Bassac River. He took my request and promised that he would give it a consideration.

In the ASEAN + China Summit in Cebu of the Philippines early this year HE Prime Minister of PRC Wen Jiabao told me that the PRC agreed to my request for another 100 million US dollar loan. I just talked to HE Ambassador of PRC that we would have to address these projects as a package of 300 million US dollar loan. As for the construction company here, if the negotiation permits they will have to go on building the next 28 kilometer part between Sen Monorom to Dak Dam on the border with Vietnam. The Shanghai Company which will take the construction of the NR 8 would be given the project of connecting the road to Punhea Krek district of Kompong Cham on consideration that they have their construction machines and materials already in place.

We also have to look for a company to build the NR 10, and a company to build the bridge over Bassac at Ta Khmao.

The project we celebrated its opening today is one part of the whole package of 300 million US dollar loan on communication and transport infrastructural development. The military engineering team (MET) had fulfilled its mission at a critical stage for the Royal Government in improving the laterite road between Snuol and Sen Monorom and we had inaugurated it once in 2003. MET was sent to work here for the fact that this area was full of UXOs left from wartimes. Especially as Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk had gone into jungle in this area, bombardments had been intense. HE Soey Keo led a battalion in defence of Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk - who at the time was the head of the Front against the US - from this area through to Siemreap.

Bombardments of Ho Chi Minh trail had led to exposures of UXOs - bombs of various types. The area of 2,142,400 square meters has been cleared and 692 pieces of unexploded ordnances had been destroyed. In this regard thanks go to MET and its principal financial officer for disbursing fund so that the clearing work is fully performed. In the course of doing we have used only our fund and all of our funding have come to assisting bridges and roads construction. This is one way of redistributing fund from the economic growth. Some countries have expressed their concerns and we accepted it as good advice but we are not that stupid to divert funding for roads and infrastructural development to

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)
purchasing new cars, etc.

Redistribution of benefit from economic growth has been serious or otherwise we could not generate a two-digit growth. Thanks to the fact that we have peace and national reconciliation that we could generate social and economic development as we have today. Nothing could be done when war exists. Therefore peace and national reconciliation that we have brought about should not be disturbed by whoever it may be and they should not be forgiven at all. No one could talk about human rights when bombs kill people everyday. As long as people have no lives how could they claim their rights to life, to have a political party, to talk about democracy? We have come to this stage because we have a correct leadership and the efforts made by our people. The two factors could not be separated. Average economic growth between 1999 and 2006 was 8.9% after the country secured a complete peace through the win-win policy in 1998.

In between 1999 and 2003, average growth was recorded at 4.5% and in 2004, 10% while 2005, 13.4%. In 2006 we have achieved 10.4% and the rate will be readjusted because we will have to make an evaluation once again in May and again in August and we will see that it will not back down but go up. Where have they come from? The two digit growth is achieved because we have a better state of infrastructure which is benefiting the rural area as well. Would one leave rural infrastructure out of criteria to be considered an equal redistribution of economic growth? The amount of money spent for upgrading living conditions in the rural area is big but

some people are making false remark against us.

Yesterday I read an article that Cambodia by early 2009 might have doubled its current revenue from oil while Hun Sen and his Government would not listen anymore to the West. So they say the West is giving Cambodia's their advice. The article also mentioned about competition between China and the US in search for oil interest in Cambodia. Cambodia would only ask for equal rights among partners as we did with China. China is a big country with its population of 1300 million but it has performed as equal partner with countries of any size. Take for instance, as providing 200 or 300 million US dollars China never tells Cambodia for which roads or bridges to be built.

Integrating rural and urban areas is important as one could not integrate politics and administration while neglecting such a gap between rural and urban. People in rural area would consider the central Government gives no care for them and this would in the end lead to insurgency or/and even secession. Demand for autonomy in some countries has appears to be taking this course. Here, we will have what I call "Pancha Road or Road of Five Directions" from Snuol to Kratie, Mehmot, Chhlong, Mondulkiri, and the border with Vietnam. Cambodia is working on a request to Vietnam to asphalt the road from its border with Cambodia to Snuol as well, and also to provide electric transmission to Snuol.

The people in Snuol and Mehmot will have better and cheaper electricity than in Phnom Penh. I used to mention that a country would develop on the basis of four

factors - water, road, electricity and human resources. The four factors are still relevant today. Eventually, building new concrete bridges in place of Bailey bridges we will have to relocate them to place where there is a need for them. I would suggest to the construction companies to adopt the Shanghai standard... The Shanghai Company will work on the NR 8 while this road will be built by China's Road Construction Company. They should compete for a better quality and if Cambodia got more loans they will have to come to work again...

In the event of the coup on March 18, 1970, on March 23 Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk appealed on Radio Beijing to his children to go into marquis. On April 4 I contacted with the resistance forces and I have numerous choices at that time. I could stay still, or join the marquis or go to Lon Nol. But as I realized that there was this foreign invasion and toppling of the throne, I decided to go to resistance forces. I have three brothers and three sisters and I decided that I join the marquis and no one learned about my decision only my father... After a ten days training I was sent with my unit to fight Snuol battle.

After the event I was promoted to head 36 soldiers. I stationed in the rubber plant area and at that time I noticed that about 70% of the rubber workers were Vietnamese while our rubber workers today are all Khmer. In May the US and South Vietnamese forces attacked Cambodia. The market was on fire because of bombardment and the new recruits of 36 in my team fled and I had with me only 16 of them. We ran across the forest to a village called Anhchanh and all

houses in the village raised white banners to ensure that the US would not bomb their houses. We had lunch offered by the villagers. As of now I have approved a request for building a road to the village of Anchanh. Not long after the US plane bombarded the bridge of Chhlong as I traveled to and from across the Chhlong River frequently - twice a day. It would be excellent if the US build this bridge for us in return. As far as the US forces are concerned it was a good thing that no matter who you are as long as you raised your two fingers in a V shape they dropped you cigarettes, sardines, etc.

The US forces brought water by plane; the soldiers undressed themselves and bathed in the water sprayed down from the plane. The US spent a lot of money to make war in Cambodia and most of the bridges were damaged by the US bombardments. The commune of Choeung Thnu or now called Pi Thnou (December 2) was the place where we established the Front to fight against the Pol Pot regime...

Samdech Hun Sen on that occasion offered two school buildings of twelve classrooms, a director's office of two rooms, a sewing training building, school fence, computers and accessories to the Hun Sen - Snuol High School, a school building of six classrooms to the Primary School of Snuol, a school building of five classrooms to the High School of Cham Kar Kao Su, a school building of six classrooms to the Primary School of Mean Chey, a school building of six classrooms to High School of Svay Chrus, a 14 kilometer road between the villages of Ta Ngan and Anhchanh. ■

04 February 2007 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

Building NR 78 — Ratanakiri's Baan Lung and O Yadao

... Today I have a great pleasure to be with all of our people in the province of Ratanakiri to officiate the groundbreaking ceremony to build a segment of the National Road (NR) 78 from Baan Lung to O Yadao on the border with Vietnam. I am pleased that we have with us today HE Truong Vinh Trong, Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam and diplomatic corps and national and international guests. Construction of the segment is a major contribution and means for the area's integration within the national as well as the golden triangular framework - which consists of Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos.

HE Minister Sun Chan Thol has mentioned the technicality of the road construction, the cost as well as the amount of time required for the project. So did our guest HE Truong Vinh Trong.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciations to efforts made by the Ministry of Transports and Public Works, the provincial authority of Ratanakiri as well as those of the people living along the projected road between Baan Lung and O Yadao, without those contributions this project could have been difficult to get to this stage.

I wish to take this opportune moment to express my sincere appreciation through HE Truong Vinh Trong to the people and Government of Vietnam for working out favorably for this segment of the road for Cambodia. Indeed Vietnam is in need of loans and grants from foreign countries as well.

However, as a token of friendship and understanding of our

people's hardships from lack of the road, Vietnam sets aside a sum of fund for the construction of this segment of NR 78. I would take this time to request to Japan, whose Ambassador HE Fumiaki Takahashi is also present here, to cut no assistance to Vietnam on this ground.

I am saying so because I used to go beg for loans from countries in the region and I was told by those countries that because they also are loan-taking countries, therefore giving loan to Cambodia at a low interest rate would result in reduction of financial assistance from Japan or ADB. Some of those countries would give Cambodia its high interest loans or commercial loans and not low or concessional interest ones.

I have indeed requested HE Pham Van Khai former Prime Minister of Vietnam for a long time if I may recall it was since 2002 during his visit to Phnom Penh for an ASEAN summit. Studies have been conducted and we signed an agreement in Hanoi during my visit there on October 10, 2005.

It took us from 2005, 2006 to 2007 to get the project started. The project has entailed decisions by two Prime Ministers of Vietnam - Phan Van Khai to Nguyen Tan Dung. As is said by HE Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam, I have urged the project to get started when I attended the summit in Dalat, Vietnam with the argument that it is an important part of the development plan for the golden triangular border countries - Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos.

I wish therefore once again to take this time to thank the

Socialist Republic of Vietnam for sharing of their resources at the time when they are also in difficult situation. I first came to Ratanakiri in 1982 with HE Soey Keo and I noticed that all roads in the city were dirt roads big enough for just oxen carts. The province was established in 1959 by Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk and in the year 2009 we will be able to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its establishment.

The provincial town was at that time located at Lum Phat and now we have it in Baan Lung. With help of HE Bu Thang, HE Soey Keo and HE Kham Len, a master plan for the province has been prepared and as you can see their plans cover roads of a width of up to 30 meters, larger even for those in Phnom Penh.

Once again I came in 1990 at the time we put into use the electric power plant at O Chum and the trip covered at that time three provinces - Mundulkiri, Ratanakiri and Stoeung Treng. The road - though was small and in bad condition - has been the main supply of goods and food from Vietnam to Ratanakiri and Stoeung Treng and other areas.

Now we all have seen that the situation has changed and the fact is that we have achieved peace and national reconciliation. Cambodia evolves from being under many factions' control to one country one administration. Our win-win policy brought about Cambodia's national reconciliation. This is achievement that we have to safeguard, as we all know full well about our leaders - who know how to split but do not know how to unite.

Uniting is a tremendous job. I am now over 50 and when I

first started my struggle I was 25. So we have to be clear that the Coalition Government's partners - CPP and Funcinpec has to raise high the banner of national unity. Secondly, uniting a country only in terms of administration and politics is far from sufficient. That is why I have put out a policy for domestic integration while making efforts for external one as well. It is in that instance that I started the policy of renovating communication which is primary condition for development.

In this respect, now we go along the distance between Phnom Penh and Ratanakiri on the road of 600 km - instead of formerly traveling first to Vietnam and from Vietnam side entering Cambodia. I used to say that when we have road we have hope. Take for instance trade volume between Cambodia and Vietnam may have to reach 2 billion US dollars from the current volume of over 1 billion US dollars. But we need to have road connection so that goods transport faces no obstacle.

We have to have a vision that any products from this area would take a long time to get down to Sihanoukville's seaport but it would be easier to get to Gia Lai in Vietnam side. This would cost us less. I used to compare Cambodia to a dragon, where the part of roads that we are building today is in one of the dragon's leg. Its head lies at Sihanoukville, while its tail is placed at the border with Cambodia and Laos at Tropeang Kreal, and its chest is to be lying over Phnom Penh.

We now have money to build the segment between Baan Lung and O Yadao at the
(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 1)
problems in its urban development while more need to be done to relieve the problem of traffic congestion... We have accumulated almost sufficient fund to cover the cost of building all needed roads - NR 8, NR 78 and NR 76 - and yet the NR 68.

As far as efforts for the improvement of traffic in the capital of Phnom Penh are concerned in early 2003 and 2004 I have come with Governor of Phnom Penh HE Kep Chu Tema and Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology HE Lim Kean Hor to observe the situation here and we have come to a conclusion that this part of the city has to be connected to the NR 2. But because of limited size of budget we have not fulfilled this project yet. On another front Cambodia has a large rural area compared to a small size of urbanization. The city's vicinity to every direction is indeed rural. Facing with increase population and industrialization as well as agricultural sector or tourism, a study needs to be done as to which part of the capital should be enlarged.

The construction of the Prek Chrey Bridge would indeed be a benefit for those who pass this road to and from Phnom Penh from the village of Prek Chrey but also the provinces of Kandal, Takeo, Kampot and Keb City.

The road provides better means for transportation, creates jobs, and jacks up the land price (from ten US dollars per hectare to between 15 and 25 US dollars per hectare) as it will develop into an industrial zone.

Under Pol Pot they said that if they won they would provide everyone a job and it did hap-

pen where from old to young no one was free from their labor. They abolish the gap between the rich and the poor by demolishing the rich to make them equally poor.

Even in rich country like the US, where they also have poor people, they never take from the rich to give to the poor. They promise to provide jobs to the poor but when companies make a loss they always downsize their laborers, take for instance Boeing Company. It is absurd that we now hear again some people who campaign with similar argument.

We accept that there is still a gap between urban and rural areas, though we have achieved a growth that brings down the poverty rate of 100% to 34%, and the people's living condition is better improving.

Average distribution of income per capita is marked at 500 US dollars, whereas those in Phnom Penh would earn 800 US dollars and probably in some rural areas only 250 US dollars. The average income per capita for the whole country has been marked by the Ministry of Finance and Economy as over 500 US dollars, while the Institute of Statistics published an evaluation of 519 US dollars, which is a small discrepancy between the two.

What we should do is to intensify investment and ensure equitable redistribution of the economic growth or in other words to provide what is needed in the rural area so that it could make progress. Roads, bridges, water canals, schools, hospitals are important factors for providing help to the poor. As for Cambodia there are more people than jobs created and what are we

to do? Are we to sit in office?

Everyone has to have an obligation. Take for instance Crown Prince Harry of Great Britain has a military obligation too and he may decide to go to Iraq.

Creation of jobs and functions are two important and relevant elements. Last week the Cabinet convened a meeting on social security fund under the Labor Law. Government officials, the armed forces retire and they get their retirement pensions. We are now in the process to make our workers assured that when they stop working they also are covered by a pension scheme.

And we have to start from social security fund following by health security fund and then pension. Once again when we have this road and bridge built we solve not only problem of traffic but also other areas of activities that impact on life. People could improve their vendor restaurants etc. I wish to praise the Municipality of Phnom Penh and the Engineering Department of the Ministry of National Defense for carefully and quietly conducting the study on this road and bridge construction.

As we know more tourists come to Choeung Ek more than they go to Wat Phnom. Choeung Ek's genocidal site is not just for tourist to see but a proof of genocide and it should serve as legal evidence for the trial of Khmer Rouge regime. We'd filmed and took photo of the scene of skulls and transmitted to outside world, and in order to defend those factions that occupied the Cambodian seat at the United Nations, it is said that those skulls were artificial. Without these evidences it would be difficult for the trial

process of the Khmer Rouge.

This year we may be able to cross here temporarily and we should rehabilitate a small bridge on that side and make it bigger too. Along with ensuring quality and fulfilling all recommendations, I would recommend a re-evaluation of the project cost as it was discussed when fuel cost was high. It has gone down now. As far as this development is concerned some politicians have spread false information that the price of fuel has gone down thanks to demand of so and so head of political party.

It is an absurd remark. The Royal Government subsidized about 9 million US dollars a month when the price of fuel had gone up from 25 US\$ or 30 US\$ to over 60 US dollars per barrel. When the price of fuel went down I asked the Minister of Finance and Economy to tell the fuel companies to lower the price. However, some companies make their stock of three month extra and they bought their supply at a high price. Therefore forcing them to lower the price suddenly is uneconomical for them.

I would search for companies who in the previous electoral campaign said that they would bring the price of fuel down to 1700 Riel per liter (4000 Riel to 1 US\$) and another party that competed with a better price of 1500 Riel per liter if they won the elections. I think it is a contradiction to the world economic trend and they should try not to lie or to make empty promises.

I am glad that today we have the presence of leaders of Funcinpec's President HE Keo Put Reasmey, General Secretary HE Nhek Bun Chhay as well and this is good for our country...■

14 February 2007 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

Building the National Road 76 to Mondulakiri Province

... It is indeed a great pleasure that I came back again to the district of Snuol to join you all in the construction ceremony of the 127-kilometer NR 76 that connects the district of Snuol and the capital of Mondulakiri Sen Monorom under the concessional loan from the People's Republic of China and the counterpart fund from the Royal Government of Cambodia. Taking this opportune moment I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Public Works and Transports and the Ministry of Finance - both of which have actively worked in accordance with my recommendation and those of the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China (PRC) Wen Jiabao to expedite the use of the 200 million US dollar loan.

Aside from this project, the 127 - kilometer road from Snuol to Sen Monorom, we have other projects that are being implemented under this 200 million US dollar loan. We will launch the construction of the NR 8, which is a new road that was initiated recent years ago and the constructions of two bridges over the Mekong River at Prek Tameak and another over the Tonle Sap River at Prek Kdam. The fact that we have come to achieve this much in just one year means that the Chinese Ambassador and related institutions and companies have been working hard.

Let me take this time to tell you a little about the background of this project. We have under the Japanese assistance renovated the NR 7 from Phnom Penh to Kompong Cham, from Kompong Cham crossing the Mekong River by the Kizuna bridge to Thnol Totoeung. We have renovated the part between

Thnol Totoeung and Mehmot in 2000 - shortly after the flood. Another project had been put into implementation from Kratie to Mehmot using the funds provided by ADB and OPEC. From Kratie to the border with Laos a new bridge over the Sekong River and more at the total length of 2000 meters and 200 kilometer road are being built with the fund provided by China, and they are almost complete now. We may have the inauguration ceremony to launch in early 2008.

It was an opportune moment that the PRC's Government declared at the ASEAN Summit with China and the East Asian Summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2005 that it was prepared to offer 5 billion US dollars as loan to developing countries at a concessional interest rate or export credit. PRC has made it clear in the following visit of the Prime Minister of China to Cambodia that PRC is setting aside 200 million out of 5 billion US dollars for Cambodia. I said to my colleagues that all of the money will be used for nothing else but bridges and roads.

As HE Prime Minister of PRC said it I pointed on the map right away that so and so amount will go to so and so projects - NR 8, the Prek Ta Meak Bridge, the Prek Kdam Bridge, etc. PRC has made further promises during the visit of the Cambodian delegation to the PRC and because of this generous understanding we are able to get the project started today. We learned that 200 million US dollars is far less than enough as these projects have cost 195 million US dollars already and we feel the need for

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 6)

border. We need further assistance so as to build another segment of 129 km between Baan Lung back and O Pong Moan. I proposed it to HE Wen Jiabao, the Prime Minister of China and he said that let's wait till we finish the NR 7. On February 14 we will set the ground for building NR 76 from Snuol to Sen Monorom of Mondulakiri and we will have another 100 million dollars for the road from Sen Monorom to Dak Dam.

The connection will allow the three provinces - Ratanakiri, Mondulakiri and Stoeung Treng to be competent partner provinces with three provinces from Vietnam and three more so from Laos in the Triangular Development of the region. I have a vision that by 2015 or 2020 the northeast areas will become a new economic pole in addition to Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville and Siemreap.

This area is potentially rich with natural and mineral resources and agro-industrial crops. In this instance I would appeal to CIENCO I and concerned partner companies to be strict with the road standard to guarantee a long lasting road quality. I would also take this auspicious time to express my sincere appreciation to the military engineering groups for making efforts to clear off mines from the areas so as to provide safety for the project implementation.

Also, as we have the presence of HE Truong Vinh Trong here, I would seek Vietnam's consideration in providing Cambodia with electricity and investing in transmission line from Vietnam. When Cambodia has the potential of producing power in the area, we could negotiate selling power

back to Vietnam. Secondly I would propose through HE Truong three more proposals to HE Prime Minister of Vietnam - 1) a road from Hoa Lu of Vietnam to Snuol district 2) from Dong Thap through to Banteay Chakrei to NR 1 and 3) a road connection between Long An and Svay Rieng.

I may recall that I also mentioned about the possibility of building a bridge at Chrey Thom of Kandal province as well. As far as I know in Ratanakiri, investment has yet to be made in providing access to clean water as of now we have only water from the wells. I would urge companies to mull investing in this project as I think that it does not cost much to do so.

This could be a good investment for the fact that we have an increase in the number of tourists to the province in 2006 and those hotels and/or guesthouse would see this as their immediate needs. Just now I have news that HE Kep Chu Tema, Mayor of Phnom Penh and formerly was Governor of Ratanakiri agreed to build a new theatre hall for the province.

I would on this occasion say to HE the Japanese Ambassador that the Triangle Development Plan is lucky to have an established mechanism at the top level of the three countries with Prime Minister of Japan and which has been working from 2004 in Vientian, 2005 in Kuala Lumpur.

Together with the top-level mechanism, we have been able to get the job moving by establishing another level of discussion at the Foreign Minister level. Cambodia has indeed more roads to build and about ten of them I could mention here that we have no money to build yet...■