

01 July 2007 (With Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Releasing Fish into Natural Lake at O Tom, Takeo Province



01 July 07—Samdech Hun Sen (left—bending) and Madame Release Fish into the Natural System at O Tom, Takeo Province.

... I have a great pleasure to join you all in the celebration of this auspicious **5th National Fishery Day**. This event has been considered as a traditional event in Cambodia and is organized every year by the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (MAFF) to appreciate the value of fish as a significant source of food for our people from all walks of life. Taking this auspicious occasion, I would like to thank and congratulate the management of the MAFF for organizing this **5th National Fishery Day**, and also, I would like to pay my respect to the all Venerable Buddhist Monks and extend my greetings to all our compatriots, students and all level of civil servants who are here today at this joyful gathering for their warm welcome being extended to me in the celebration of this meaningful National Fishery Day. In this occasion, let me express my sincere appreciation to the Department of Fisheries of the MAFF for their close collabora-

tion with the secretariat of the National and International Ceremony Organizing Committee and provincial authority in their efforts to organize the **5th National Fishery Day** in order to promote the protection and conservation movements as well as the development of our invaluable and bio-resources, in particular to raise the awareness among all citizens, civil servants, government institutions and the private sector on the importance of fishery resources and to ensure its sustainable use and management.

As your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, students and all of us are well aware of, Cambodia is very rich in fresh water fishes and the Tonle Sap Lake, which has been existing for approximately 5000 – 6000 years, is the heart and breeding ground for those essential fish in our country. The production of our fresh water fishes is ranked 4th in the world after China, India (Continued on page 2)

31 July 2007 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Fine Arts Graduation & Diploma Awarding Ceremony

... I have a great pleasure indeed to learn about achievements reported by HE Tuy Koeun, Rector of the Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA). I wish to express my sincere thanks and high appreciation to the efforts of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MCFA) as well as the RUFA in making step by step development so far while taking this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to senior professors (of arts) for making every effort to transfer their knowledge to younger generation.

In this occasion, on behalf of the Royal Government, I wish to share with all of you graduates and your families the joy for the achievements you have made. On this joyous occasion I wish to share with you all some backgrounds in relation to RUFA. In 1918, RUFA was already a school and it developed in to be a faculty in 1965 in the time of Sangkum Reast Niyum (Popular Socialist Community) under the leadership of Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk. It continued to operate even under the Lon

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04 July 2007
Disaster Management & Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

... I am very honored and extremely delighted to join with you ... at the opening of the National Workshop on **“Disaster Management and Pandemic Influenza Preparedness.”** I ... sincerely appreciate and highly praise the managements of the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and other relevant agencies and authorities, including all levels of civil servants for their services so far as well as the Royal Armed Forces of Cambodia, National Police Force, National Military Police Force, Intervention Forces, national and international organizations and generous people for their intervention in rescuing and providing direct humanitarian assistance to

those victims affected by various calamities, timely and effectively.

I am firmly convinced that this two-day National Workshop is an important event to exchange as well as to share good ideas and experiences on disaster management, including pandemic influenza preparedness, HIV/AIDS and other diseases in Cambodia ... I would like to extend my appreciation to **WHO** and **OXFAM** for their close collaborations in arranging and supporting this workshop.

In addition, I would like to (Continued on page 8)

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(Continued from page 1) and Bangladesh. However, with respect to the annual fish consumption for each citizen, Cambodia ranks 1st because on an average, each Cambodian consumed around 37.5 kg per annum, more than two times compare to the average amount of 15.8 kg consumed by the people in the rest of the world. Fishes are the source of more than 75% of total protein that Cambodians received in general. Furthermore, we can consider the fish and other life stock as an essential staple food for Cambodians after rice. In addition, fish consists of lysine, vitamin A and calcium that rural inhabitants could get easily with little efforts and cheaply from near by rivers, ponds or lakes. Thus, we could consider Cambodia as the '**fish eating society**'. Moreover, after serving the domestic food requirement, Cambodia has a long history of exporting fish products abroad. And the fishery sector provides full time employment to around 1.4 millions of fishermen and to approximately 6 millions people in the fishery sector for related works such as part time fishermen, fishery product processing activities, boat builders, fishery equipment producers, fishery product retailers and other fishery related activities.

By understanding the value and importance of the fishery sector for its contribution to the national economic development and in fulfilling the needs of our people, especially those living in rural areas; our people have a long lasting tradition in protecting and preserving the al types of natural resources such as fish, inundated forest and other types forest, wildlife and mineral resources. Actually we can see the sculptures on the wall of Angkor Wat temple as the evidence.

More than two decades ago, after every Khmer citizen has survived the genocidal regime, we all have made utmost efforts and with high patriotism in fulfilling our duties to overcome difficulties for the cause of peace, national reconciliation, democracy and the rehabilitation and development of our country.

Up to now, we have achieved full peace that is the most important factor in the development process and series of successful elections such as the National Assembly election, Senate election and communal election which reflected the political stability and commitment of Cambodia in maintaining peace and social stability. I believe that this is the initial stage of development and starting from this point on we have made a lot of prideful achievements for the benefit of future development. In general, for the last three years, we have achieved high economic growth and reduced poverty.

The war in Cambodia has resulted in serious damages such as the lack of human resources and weak institutions that are the main obstacles to achieve the set targets. Managing the human capital after war is a very complicated issue due to the lack of trust, information, misleading propaganda, lack of knowledge and conflicting views. In that situation, the development must focus on healing loss of human resources based on building the people's confidence on the government. Hence, the policy was to urgently address the food security when each family lived in subsistence. Therefore, to meet their daily demand, most of rural people have utilized the natural resources in an unsustainable manner resulting in the loss and degradation

of national resources and environment.

In natural resources management, the government faced a tradeoff between strictly manage the natural resources and maintain the livelihood of the people. We clearly know that by allowing the people to have free access to the national resources will not result in an effective and sustainable national resources management, especially while the population increased to 14 millions and 80% of whom live in rural areas. Most of them are involved in fishery or other natural resources exploitation to meet their daily needs. The government also foresaw that the lack of knowledge and law enforcement as well as the people's awareness will accelerate the speed of national resources destruction. However, the people's daily livelihoods can not wait until we have strong and efficient institutions, thus we have chosen the people's livelihoods as the priority in managing the natural resources. This policy is not perfect, but we subjected it to the livelihoods of the people.

Given that the alternative employment is limited and our agriculture sector still relies on weather, Cambodian rural people make their living particularly on natural resources such as fishery and forestry resources, as employment opportunities in making revenue, food and safety net, i.e. to protect themselves from unpredicted risk and in case of emergency.

In the fishery sector, the number of fishermen has increased gradually due to mass-growing population, limited agricultural land, and less employment options in the service and manufacturing sectors. This surge in the number of fishermen, coupled with

limited capability to provide education on the usage of modern technology in fishery sector, and limited understanding of general public on the importance of natural resources, environment, regulation and the concept of sustainable development, trigger destructive effect on the fishery resource and other resources, are still the main constraints to achieving the policy of sustainable use and development of fishery resource an other natural resources in general. National research revealed that Cambodian natural resources have undergone dramatic changes for the last 5 years, especially fishery and forestry. The study showed that by 2010 there will be a soar in demand for bio-species in parallel with population growth rate of 2% per annum which going to require a great attention to conserve the ecosystem for the nation and people, particularly within 5 prioritized areas of *Tonle Sap Lake, Mekong River, Cardamom mountain range, northern and eastern highland areas*.

Having seen these key problems, at the end of 2000 the Royal Government of Cambodia has made reforms in the fishery sector by empowering the rural communities to manage and use fishery resources directly which is a better and efficient mechanism, that enable them to actively participate in preparing planning and development program at their local communities, by both being the beneficiary to and to be self-responsible in the management of those natural resources. So far, as an outcome from the fishery reform policy, we have allocated more than a half million square hectare of fishing lots for family-based fishing and established a total number of 509 fishery communities according to the re-

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(Continued from page 2) port made a moment ago by **His Excellency Chan Sarun**, Minister of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery. However, after the communities have received the right to exploit those resources, they still need the technical assistance to design the management structure of the communities in order to ensure a sustainable use of the resource and enhanced the livelihoods of the community they live in.

As we are well aware of, although the agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors are still under the great influence of nature, the improvement in irrigation infrastructure and the increased in the capacity of the people at all levels, especially farmers' capacity, we have enabled these sectors to constitute about 30% of gross domestic product (GDP), in which the fishery sector contributed about 30% to the entire agriculture sector. It is worth noting that the Cambodian economy has grown at averaged rate of 9.6% during 1999-2006. Besides, since 2004 it reached 11.2%. In 2005, the economic growth reached an unprecedented rate of 13.5% and was maintained at 10.4% in 2006.

These are the evidences of great efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia regarding its policies on poverty reduction and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources and equitable share of economic prosperity by strengthening community-based management of natural resources. With the establishment of fishery community and its quality, fishery resources have improved. It is the starting point of participatory natural resources management from communities in a true decentralized fashion. And indeed, it can be consid-

ered as the achievement resulting from the fishery reform policy prescribed in the **Rectangular Strategy** of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

At the present time, we all have actively worked very hard to achieve production growth, both in terms of quantity and quality, competitiveness and economic efficiency in agricultural sector. On the other hand, the Royal Government of Cambodia has considered other sectors relevant to natural resources and ecosystem management, whereas the fishery sector is one of key prioritized sectors to be reformed. Taking this opportunity, in addition to the recommendations that I had raised during the Stocktaking ceremony on fishery performance on the 9th April 2007, I would like to provide additional recommendations for consideration and implementation as follows:

1. Prepare strategy for increasing the natural fish stock through various means such as protecting the natural environment around fish habitats during dry season and protecting the environment for fish spawning as well as encouraging a broad practice of releasing the fish at villages, communes, communities, schools, pagodas, hospitals and fishing lots. At the same time, we must try to establish more community fish's ponds and conservation areas at natural water boundary, community, and rice fields so that our country can become once again well known for a saying that goes "**wherever there is water there will be fish**".

2. Must promote aquaculture to become a nationwide movement for raising fish in ponds, BER and SORNG (Khmer traditional equip-

ments), canal and irrigation network, especially in rice field as a means to change the people's habit of relying on natural fishing methods to becoming fish farmers through traditional and modern aquaculture. We must also consider about the capacity and potential of aquaculture both at salt water and fresh water zones by encouraging more active private sector investment into the sector. Hence, there must be some kinds of aquaculture research institutions both at salt water and fresh water zones to conduct research and develop aquaculture in order to catch up with the neighboring countries and the world.

3. Must improve the management capacity, conservation, protection, and development of the fishery sector to comply with the **LAW ON FISHERY** which was adopted and promulgated since 2006 by strictly enforcing this law, especially by taking effective measures to stop large scale and serious illegal fishing methods such as the use of mosquito-net, catching small fish during rising water season, poisonous and all forms of electrocute devices.

4. Authority at all levels, particularly the municipal-provincial governor must take measures to prevent the anarchic looting of inundated forests and mangrove forests. Hence, all concerned authorities, must cooperate with one another with high responsibility and determination to confiscate those areas and return them back to the state because they are the life and blood of the fishery sector.

5. Must strengthen the fishery community and its management capacity. Here we must pay particular attention on empowering the rural com-

munity so that they can actively participate and increase their responsibility in managing their own natural resources by making the fishery community to become a production chain and fishery processing specialists following the principle of one village one product to meet market demand that allow them to earn income for improving their community livelihoods.

6. Must promote the awareness on the importance of fishery for livelihoods in order to embed the understanding and promote wider participation from the people by making it the most important work that need to be done constantly in all forms such as through TV and Radio broadcasting, songs, movies and short documentary films which I already recommended is currently being carried out by the ministry. In this regards, I would like the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery to cooperate with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to incorporate the importance of fishery sector in the national study curriculum.

In short, we have to participate together and consider that the effective and sustainable natural resources management must links to appropriate business practices and conservations, reforestation of the inundated forests and the fishery environmental protection. This work is important to sustain the lives of human, animals, trees and other biodiversities for the sake of current and future consumption. In this regard, the increase in the willingness, commitment and responsibility of all-hierarchical authorities, especially local authorities as well as the participation from local people through all kind of supports from relevant techni-

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(Continued from page 3) cal institutions is the obligation that we need to focus on under the shared vision of poverty reduction and sustainable fishery conservation.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank friendly countries, international organizations and all development partners that have actively participated in the agriculture development project, especially in the fishery sector that is the driver for development and poverty reduction of our people. I highly appreciate the achievement made by fishery administration during the last year under the close cooperation with local authorities, relevant institutions as well as the people in the fishery community.

Also in this **5th National Fishery Day**, I would like to appeal to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, Fishery Administration in particular, relevant ministries/institutions, local authorities and all levels of competencies as well as all the people to put further efforts to maintain our fishery resources in a sustainable manner. I would like to appeal to friendly countries, national and international organizations and development partners to continue to support and participate with the government in protecting the fishery resources for the benefit of Cambodian people toward economic development and poverty reduction...■

Selected Comments

... My wife and I are happy to return here to preside over this meaningful fishery day. This also is my fifth presence since when we started this event since July 01, 2003 in Kompong Speu province, on July 01, 2004 in Kandal province, on June 29, 2005 in Boeung

Sneh in Prey Veng province and in 2006 in Sihanoukville. I wish to thank the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as well as those related with the preparation for their all-out efforts in making this event happen in five provinces already.

In early July, normally we have two events to celebrate - the National Fishery Day to set the fish free in natural waters, under my presidency, and the National Forest Day or tree planting day to be conducted under the auspices of HM the King. The two events are being designed at this time to take advantage of rainfall for releasing fish and for growing trees.

According to the report by HE Chan Sarun, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), though fish culture has not provided us a similar amount to those provided from the natural facilities, the catch from this source is on the increase as well.

I am so glad that thanks to efforts made by MAFF, especially from the Fisheries Department and local authority, actions to prevent fishing offense as well as clearing inundated forest have brought about a good increase of fish - especially small species while there noted a decrease in the population of bigger species. ... I have mentioned many times the Royal Government's late reform policy vis-a-vis issue of fishing lot in 2000-2001. Since

mapping of fishing zone by the French colonial authority in 1927, there had never been any reform done whatsoever.

We have discovered problems in relation to this issue. In 1927, areas mapped by the French were deep water zones, which contained a large population of fish enough to

feed then small Cambodian population. Those who caused destructive effect to the fish population were in small number too. But in 2000, we have a population of 12 millions whereas our fish zones have gone shallower, and there are more illegal fishermen.

We also notice problem between those who fish and those who cultivate rice. Fishermen want to let water out of the reservoir for fish catch, while rice farmers need water in reservoir for cultivation. We have learned the problem and finally decided to cut a size of 56% of the French mapped fish zone so as to get this issue resolved. I seem to have received no complaints or request for resolving issues in relation to conflict between fishermen and rice farmers anymore.

Though the state loses income from cutting this size of fish zone still the benefit goes to our people. However, depending on fish from natural system alone would not meet the need of an increasing population, at the birth rate of 2.4% at all. We are facing with problems of silt sitting on beds of rivers, canals and also illegal fishing and deforestation of inundated forest bringing about problem of losing more population of fish due to destruction of fish breeding space in the natural system. We have to take matter for granted or we will have less fish for consumption need for our generations to come.

I would argue that it is not sufficient to depend now on natural system for fish protein because of the aforementioned reasons. We have made a constant development in terms of rice cultivation and provision in face of increase of human population. We have attained a surplus volume that

an export of 1.5 million tons has been noted. Efforts are being made to increase further volume of rice export. Food security in terms of rice is not a problem anymore but it is in terms of protein - ranging from fish to other meat.

Taking this opportunity I would like to place my order to all concerned border control institutions to ban all imports of pork and birds - chicken and ducks, etc. as we are now facing resurgence of bird flu and toxic pork. We have also place warning for snakehead fish (Trey Chhadao) culture, which consume other species for living.

Most of all we have learned recently of a new game in relation to illegally grabbing land from filling lakes that are in the state's possession. This happened in Phnom Penh. I called to the Phnom Penh Mayor and also talked to the Judge whereby I told him that he had infringed upon the Government's power completely.

The case is about the lake Pong Peay in which a size of 157 hectares has been designed to be state's property. It could not be given to anyone at all unless there is permission from the state. What they did was to claim the land and then fought one another for their land's rights in what they seem to make us believe a conflict of interest. No matter who would get the court's decision to win or lose the case, they would be entitled to the land they have claimed. I warn this responsibility of protecting the state assets to mayors and governors of the city and provinces.

There could be a collusion between A as plaintiff and B as defendant. Whatever the

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(Continued from page 4) court's decision may be the state will lose its land asset. I would give no heed to such a decision because I have to protect the state's property and they have no power to decide on such a case. This is a new game and they act as if they are in conflict of interest. Their way of getting this case involved in a legal procedure could have misled our justice police to enact the court's decision for their sakes as well. I wonder whose land the court has decided this side gets 60% and that side gets 40%? Take environmental issue into consideration, they filled about 30% of the lake and this would indeed cause negative impact on fish population and recuperation.

In relation to the above matter we have to do two things together 1) to conserve available and existing fish and 2) to release fish breeds into the natural water system, and to increase fish culture activities.

By conserving we mean to maintain inundated forest, bring to justice actions of clearing forest offense, curbing illegal fishing, especially at the time of recuperation. By releasing fish into the natural system and culturing fish, we wish to increase our fish reserve both in natural system and in wherever ponds that they may live.

It would in the end increase fish catch for coming generations. Technically, we can breed not only fish but also lobsters with help given by JICA. We now have 87 fish-breeding stations. I wish to give out six recommendations as follows for consideration:

1) Strategizing for an increase of fish stock in natural system under all forms whereas actions should be taken to pro-

vide protection of environment, rivers and lakes, where fish recuperates, and shelters during the dry season. We should also increase efforts in making bigger ponds for fish culture as well as strengthening fish culture in natural system, fishing community and fish culturing along with rice in the field...

2) Culturing fish should be upgraded to national movement in both advanced and traditional methods. We should seek to encourage private investment in this sector. I see there is a need for an Institute for Hydro-culture Research both inland and sea water. Take Vietnam and Thailand, they have respective population of 80 million and 60 million but they have been able to provide them with sufficient fish and also for export...

3) Increasing work efficiency in managing, conserving and developing fishery resources according to the law on fisheries that was adopted by the National Assembly in 2006. Effort must be made to reinforce law abiding mechanism in relation to fisheries...

4) Taking measures at all levels to curb anarchic inundated land grabbing and mangrove forest whereby involved competent authority must confiscate and record them as state's property. Inundated forest is indeed vital for fisheries and it demands all-out attentions where four ministries are concerned - MAFF, Environment, Water Resources and Meteorology, and Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction...

5) Strengthening fishing community and increasing their participation in management. We should focus on empowering the fishing community

so that they could actively participate and increase their sense of responsibility in managing natural resources by themselves. Each fishing community should itself be prepared to become a production and processing unit along the line of one village one product (ovop). People living around and in Tonle Sap Lake should consider fish resources in the lake their own resources, for we need water for rice but also fish for protein...

6) Raising awareness of importance of fisheries in relation to livelihood so as to seek wider participation on a regular basis. We have done some good TV spots and I know that more is on the way. I wish that the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports include this awareness services in their curriculum so as to raise our children's awareness in relation to this matter.

On that occasion Samdech Hun Sen offers a school building of six classrooms, a skill training hall plus 50 sewing machines and five computers and accessories to the Junior College of Hun Sen-Choeteal, a school building of six classrooms for the Junior College of Daun Keo, a school building of six classrooms for the Primary School of Barai, a school building of six classrooms, a director's office and a skill training building equipped with computers and accessories for the College of Por Ambel, a school building of six classrooms for the Primary School of Cho Neang Pa Em, a school building of six classrooms for the College of Prey Tub, a school building of six classrooms for the Primary School of Hun Sen - Prey Pha E and a school building of six classrooms for the Primary School of Thmor Phos.■

(Continued from page 6) and related agencies which are the members of NCDM must actively participate and closely cooperate with the NCDM to implement their duties commissioned by the RGC for disaster management in all scenarios across the country in the process of preparing for prevention, response and restoration for the universal pandemic influenza. Organize meeting and dissemination on the management of bird flu and its global spread to raise the awareness among officials in preparing and being ready to respond in case of disaster. All involved institutions must appoint the focal officials to coordinate in planning the responses to the effect of the spread which would spill over to its field and the intervention plan to help the victims and effected communities. Report to the National Committee for Disaster Management on all activities in order to facilitate the implementation and cooperation.

Indeed, we cannot totally mitigate the disaster, but we have to do what we can to prepare for it, for instance, flood, drought, bird flue, HIV/AIDs and other contagious diseases in order to reduce its impact. However, the human made and nature made disasters have been occurring increasingly in the world, especially in the Asia Pacific region, which resulted in the loss of human lives, and public properties. Because of the frequent changes in the weather conditions, we have to always be alert and monitor the disaster warning signals as it is the obligation that we all can and must do in order to participate in poverty reduction as well as for the restoration and development of our people with high responsibilities and prevent the loss of our people's lives...■

(Continued from page 8) ture in provinces, cities, districts, khan, sangkat and communes. Thus, all ministries, institutions, local authorities, and other related institutions must provide further cooperation and support to the National Committee for Disaster Management to rescue the lives of people and animals, and assets timely and effectively. NCDM must prepare the policy framework and management strategy and to strengthen its structure to ensure a transparent and successful implementation of disaster management mechanism in Cambodia.

Second, Establish an early warning system, disseminate and educate information to the public. NCDM must efficiently cooperate with specialized institutions and modernize the early warning system in order to inform the public about warning signals timely. Timely dissemination of information regarding the signal and magnitude of disasters is a very important factor in reducing and mitigating the effect of disasters on people, animals, properties as well as country development. At the same time, NCDM must provide more educational programs and trainings through educating related ministries-institutions and local communities about the preparedness for disasters and taking a wide variety of measures to mitigate or reduce their impacts.

Third, NCDM, related ministries/institutions, and the horizontal disaster management institutions at municipal-provincial, district-khan, commune-sangkat levels and specialized agencies must take measures to educate the public and be prepared in taking actions to reduce the impact of disasters and to prevent them from occurring. These pre-

ventive measures include preventing the community from settling in unsafe areas, improving and upgrading the construction's quality and unsafe electrical system, transporting and storing oil and gas in appropriately and at crowded places, building houses on the river banks, lake and canals. At the same time, we must take actions to preserve and develop our valuable and important ecological system in a sustainable manner since it is the natural barrier for storm, flood and drought.

Fourth, NCDM must organize an emergency rescue system, protect and redevelop communities to coordinate and participate in the emergency rescue mission. In that, the Cambodian Red Cross, Royal Armed Forces of Cambodia, National Police Force, National Military Police Force, Intervention Force, national and international development agencies, NGOs, and generous national and international people have very important role according to their responsibilities and duties to provide emergency aid to the devastated communities.

Fifth, In times of disaster, local authorities at all levels and the horizontal disaster management institutions in charge must take emergency rescue actions such as search and rescue, transport victims to a safe place, distribute food and clean water, provide accommodation and security, health services and other prioritized needs to victims. In case of emergency, authorities at the national level must take immediate actions using all means and measures and employing all existing resources. We need cooperation and kind assistance from international communities and agencies as well as from friendly countries.

After the emergency rescue actions have been carried out, we must rehabilitate the livelihoods of our people who are victims and rebuild the infrastructures at those affected communities such schools, referral hospitals, wells and ponds in order to bring lives back to normal. In this spirit, our workshop must seek further new measures such as conducting a feasibility study on the ability to establish the agricultural yields insurance system or a rescue fund for victimized communities.

Sixth, Implement human and animal pandemic influenza programs in addition to flood, drought, fire, traffic accident, storm and AIDS. At the present time, bird flu caused by a virus called H5N1 has threatened the lives and livelihoods of our people. For the last 3 years, Cambodia has been combating and managing bird flu among human and animals. It is true that the virus H5N1 has claimed 6 lives so far, and the outbreak of this disease among birds is still happening at rural communities for example at the southern provinces of the country.

Seventh, We must be prepared and responsive to such incident of a plane crash that we encountered last week and that occurred in 1997.

In the present time, Cambodia and many other countries in the region and the world are joining together to fight against the threat of bird flu's virus because there is a growing concern that the H5N1 virus can be transformed into human's influenza and spread across the globe, seriously affecting human lives and impede the whole society. If the H5N1 virus can actually transformed itself into human's influenza and spread across the globe, it will seri-

ously and inevitably affect human lives and the socio-economy. By then, public services delivery at the local level will be disturbed and the whole economy will be affected and impeded by the serious lost of human capital. This concern resulted in a joint effort to combine the management planning on human's health and animal's diseases with the inter-ministerial planning and by linking to the information planning, dissemination and communication.

During this last period, the close and active cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry and the Ministry of Health and the supports from the United Nations in Cambodia has led to the successful establishment of the national draft plan on the management of bird flu and human influenza which is a result of the Royal Government-United Nations' joint planning on the combat against the global pandemic influenza signed ... on December the 16th 2005. There are three main components exist in that joint planning:

1. *Animal's health plan and the contamination among animals of MAFF.*
2. *Human's health plan and the spread from animal to human being of MAFF.*
3. *Inter-ministerial cooperation plan of the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM).*

The whole plan must facilitate the implementation of NCDM under direct leadership of the chairmen in order to exercise the national measures on the prevention and preparation to fight and respond to the global spread of the disease by chance. In this regard, all the Royal Government's ministries/institutions

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Nol's (President of the Republic Khmer) period.

In between 1975 and 1979, the faculty was not operational. It shared the same fate of heavy destruction without hope of sustaining and developing culture so to speak when we were all subjected to death. As you all may know that we have re-opened this faculty in 1980 thanks to the efforts made by the late Minister of Culture HE Keo Chenda and his successor HE Chheng Phon.

We had numerous difficulties in the sphere culture and I would later clarify what culture means so that prevailing misconceptions on this University could be cleared. As is reported by HE Tuy Koeun, we re-started this cultural education from mobilizing those with knowledge of fine arts to set up a school. We first called it a School of Fine Arts and many names thereafter. I kept in my mind the year 1988 when we came to a period that we had to decide whether to upgrade it to be a University or not.

In 1980 we upgraded it to be a University with core curriculum of sculpture, circus, dancing, music, drama, archeology, architecture, etc. Questions arose as to how we go about recruiting human resources for this job while problems also distracted us in areas of materials and technicalities, etc. We had at that time what we call the Propaganda and Education Central Commission (PECC) which was in control of the Ministry of Culture, Education, Media, etc. Minister of Culture HE Chheng Phon and his deputy HE Hang Chuon came to see me on their proposal to upgrade the school to the level of University.

Then PECC hesitated but in my capacity as the Prime Minister I agreed that it was about time to get that job done. We turned to the method of those who know much teach those who know little and they will teach those who do not know. Thanks to those decisions, commitments and efforts of everyone involved, we have come to today's achievement. The school has now been conferred a different name but it certainly has been evolving a long period that we all have remembered.

I wish to take this opportunity to affirm that there has been misconception that the School of Fine Arts is doing training only in dancing and singing. It is not that simple. I have just talked to HE Im Chhun Lim Minister for Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (MLMUC) to study the possibility to recruit some of specialists in architectures and urbanization for its works.

As you know we are in the process of removing illegal construction of Long Cheng villa and I am sure the actions have been taken as I am speaking here. So RUFA's graduates are in great demand. You all see that we have thousands of temples that we have to take care of and today as I see we have 72 graduates in architecture and urbanization. They have finished their studies that will be of great help in relation to construction, where modernity and identity has caught our attention the most.

So it should be noted that there are many things that RUFA is more than just dancing and singing. In fact RUFA had in the recent past been under control of a lady who is an out-of-wedlock partner of a

leader and wished to do in her partner's authority whatever she liked to. Facing this problem power abuse, I have pushed constitutional amendment so that the Royal Government could get itself off the control of that lady. I should not mention her name because we all know her.

In relation to this, I would consider this a message to all institutions that if your spouse is a Minister, you are not in any way to influence his/her decision or make decision on his/her behalf. In our experience, an out-of-wedlock partner of a leader has incapacitated the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, especially in arts. In this sense, all district heads or ministers, their spouses are not in any way their substitutes or they risk being removed from positions. To be frank, what happened in Cambodia concerned mostly illegal partners while legally married partners seem to never bother their spouses' affairs.

As of now we see that the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts as well as RUFA has to continue to pay attention to orientate human resource training to quality while putting in place norm for setting criteria for examination, curriculum, final exam mechanism, etc. In order to achieve this goal, players involved that are the Ministries of Culture and Fine Arts, Education, Youth and Sports will have to abide by the norm set by the Accreditation Committee, and perhaps other institutions related. What we aim is to get to a point that graduates from this University will become professors who can then take over the tasks.

We should try and focus not only on conserving but also developing of Khmer culture

and arts as we have human resources trained by the University and other programs administered by the Ministry and the University together. Take for instance construction in Phnom Penh would later have skyscrapers so they have a big role to play in the future. What we concern most is the Khmer national identity. We have to conserve what was left from our ancestors and it is indeed important to get a sense of originality or we would risk losing our identity.

We have countless originals of Khmer arts to preserve ranging from carving tones, to different forms of artistic performances - Ayai, Yike, Lkhaon, etc. I wish to take this chance to express my sincere appreciation to efforts made in retrieving various dances from Oral area, etc. That is very grateful. I wish that senior arts experts be brought in for consultation on various art issues and we should try to incorporate what deems to be useful into curriculum. We should also encourage candidates to take part in contest of Khmer music in all TV stations.

Today's decision to remove illegal construction in the lake of Tamuok should be yet another warning bell after we have dismantled the house built in the Toek Chhou water system and a house in the water reservoir of Preah Sihanoukville. We have talked a lot already. We have now removed Governor and Deputy Governors (of Kandal Province) and we may do the same for Heads and Deputy Heads of the Districts of Muk Kampul and Punnhea Loeu. This is a warning to other provinces and districts throughout the country. If they have given any lakes for private development, they'd better take them back. The Min-

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(Continued from page 1) express my gratitude to the Cambodian Red Cross for its intervention to rescue the victims, and the poor and to build army bases for the Royal Armed Forces of Cambodia. These activities play an important role in sharing the RGC's burden as well as preserving the well-being and safety of the Cambodian people.

This workshop is being held at the time when Cambodia is enjoying peace and political stability, and at the middle of the rainy season which is favorable for early-season harvesting. At the same time, we are well prepared to prevent and curb the impact of any calamity or disease outbreak such as bird flu, which is occurring in the world, especially in Asia Pacific, and Cambodia has also experienced this problem. Recently, based on my recommendations, the head of the National Committee for Disaster Management and its staff have already created a plan to publicize preventative measures to people living in all provinces-cities, districts-khan, communes-sangkat and local communities. This scheme aims to prepare preventative measures and minimize the impact of calamities.

In particular, with regard to the forecast of the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology, the Mekong's water level might reach 10.45 meters. This is just only a forecast. However, we must be prepared to intervene timely as the effect of the disaster always resulted in negative impacts to the socio-economy. Obviously, we already knew that flood and drought in 2000-2001 were more severe than ever but we could still handle those problems successfully.

On 26 December 2004, the

Tsunami took place and subsequently, gigantic natural disasters such as bird flu outbreaks and other diseases occurred in developing and developed countries and they have not been properly and successfully addressed yet. This means that the effect of the disasters can destroy public wealth and infrastructure instantly but the reconstruction process can take a very long time to finish. Fortunately, Cambodia is located in a favorable geographic location and hence, exempted from the above mentioned disasters, but this does not mean that we are careless or unprepared to manage any calamity.

For instance, we have successful experiences on controlling and curbing the year 2000 millennium flood disaster which was the worst flood disaster in the history. During the year 2001-2002, we have succeeded again in dealing effectively with flood and drought disasters for 3 consecutive years. In addition, we should remember that in 2006 Cambodia proudly hosted the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise successfully in *Takhmao town, Kandal Province*. This exercise was conducted with the purpose of enhancing the capacity of the rescue mechanism, and we should continue to do it in the future. Since the mid-2003, some countries have faced a new pandemic threat, namely Bird Flu (Avian Flu). This disease is originated and produced greatest impacts in some countries of South East Asia. Until now, WHO estimated that there are 189 death and 310 infection cases worldwide and 90% of the cases occurred in South East and East Asia region in which Indonesia has been experiencing the most severe impact. It is wise that there will be a

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We have talked a lot in the framework of the Royal Government and we have the support from the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Cambodian People's Party. We will take more serious actions in the future. Some people, due to their past political affiliations and now become officials in the Military Police (PM), etc., have been involved in the case. As far as the lake of Ta Muok is concerned, there is a proposal for building a recreation area and the proposal was granted with a specific agreement that the lake should be preserved and deepened. What they did was the opposite. They fill the lake with soil. One may ask me why this matter is not brought to the Court. I would say this is a battle we lost and now we retake it. There is no need to involve the court. If were to go to the court, we might instead legalize them on what is in fact does not belong to them in the first place.

I would urge all Ministries

related to keep abreast with this situation and I would urge them to act in their capacity in dealing with this violation. I warn that, throughout the country, all matters relating to similar issue will have to be addressed. We have to take actions in accordance with the existing Law on Water Resource. We will base our action on the map. We do not deny the fact that some water course may have dried out or not deep anymore, and if they are seen to be no longer appropriate as a natural lake or deep waterway, we then may consider providing permission for development.

The Government or State would not hold itself accountable for breaches of any land deal that falls in this case. They may have to study the Law on Land. The Law offers punishment between one to five years' imprisonment. I would say that investigation has to be conducted to find out if there is ownership of that sort provided to anyone by the authorities concerned. They should be quick to revoke those ownership titles. It is best that the one who issues the title revoke it. I think what we do is for the country and people's interest. I am not afraid of being criticized...■

signing ceremony tomorrow on the Cambodian National Plan for "Bird and Human Influenza" between the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Health and the National Committee for Disaster Management, with cooperation from UNDP and WHO, under the presidency of H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Sok An... I would like to provide some recommendations as follows:

First, The National Committee for Disaster Management

must expand and strengthen disaster management works by acting as the central institution and cooperate with related ministries and institutions, Cambodian Red Cross, national and international partner organizations regarding the management of disasters caused by human and nature. In addition, in 1995, the National Committee for Disaster Management was established and played an important role in disaster management by setting up hierarchical struc-

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