

Cambodia New Vision

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21 April 2010 — Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen and the US Ambassador Carol A. Rodley at the inauguration of Counter-Terrorist office buildings of SNCTC (Photo: Kampuchea)

21 April 2010 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments) National Anti-Terrorism Committee: New Buildings

Today I am so pleased to have joined with all you to put into official use new buildings for Secretariat of the National Counter-Terrorist Committee (SNCTC) after the celebration of the Khmer New Year of 2554, and I would like to convey all the bests to our people and everyone present here. I am here in uniform number three of the Cambodian armed forces at the request of the military so as to convey the meaning to the event that we are celebrating today. Please do not take my uniform as what has been said by fortunetellers that the Tiger Year will bring about bad situation. My uniform is nothing to do with that.

I am so happy that today a new achievement at the cost of 1.6 million US dollars has been realized for the Secretariat of the National Counter-Terrorist Committee (SNCTC) as is reported by

State Minister HE Om Yenteng. I may say that investment in the field of counter-terrorism in the last few years has been huge based on both personal efforts of the Royal Government with help rendered by generous fellows, and from foreign partners who pay attention in the collaboration against terrorism. We have spent much on building the forces so as to respond to new situation that is evolving in the world.

For this place, the size of land is some 23 hectares. If we assume the price per square meter to be 100 US dollars, the total price would be huge. This is the third time that we inaugurate achievements here after last year we inaugurated the building built with help from Korean generous persons for use as residence and training centre. We wanted a national secretariat in our fight against terrorism with a permanent counter-terrorist force under the command of counter-terrorist special department.

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06 April 2010 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments) Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries: Annual Review

In addition to the prepared text Samdech Tech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia, at the closing session of the annual conference of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) gave some instructions and decisions thereof relating to various issues that are being selected and translated as follows:

I am so happy with successes that we have achieved together within the period from April last year to the present. As usual, I never skip

my presence for the annual conference of two ministries - 1) agriculture, forestry and fisheries and 2) Health.

As far as agriculture is concerned I am of the opinion that the year 2009 had been a successful year. HE Chan Sarun, Minister for AFF has just mentioned in his report that we have achieved an increase in total yield of rice. At a rate of 2.74 tons per hectare, last year we achieved the total figure of 7,170,000 tons of paddy rice.

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22 April 2010 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments) Provincial City of Siemreap: Waste Water Treatment System

... I am glad to have the chance to join with our people and monks in putting into official operation the waste water treatment system and drainage of Siemreap city that is coming out of great effort by the Royal Government of Cambodia with financial help from our development partner - Asian Development Bank. HE Tram Iv Toek, Minister for Transports and Public Works has just made a report to us all on the importance of the waste water treatment system from where de-polluted water would be released into the Tonle Sap Lake system.

I could recall that on August 2, 2006, I also inaugurated similar system in the province of Sihanoukville. It has taken us seven years to get the project here in Siemreap implemented. It has been rather too long and I urge that such a project should be expedited. The 18.2 million US dollar projects agreement was in fact signed on February 7, 2003,

which later two of the projects - development of an airfield in Stoeng Treng and Ratanakiri have been ticked off for lack of cost effectiveness. As for one other composed project, the road segment between Phnom Penh's Stoeng Meanjei and Choeung Ek, it is noted to have completed already.

However, though seven years we have waited, we have a new achievement now. The project is indeed aimed at solving waste water issue for the people in Siemreap city but also addressing issue of treating waste water before it is being released into the natural system of Tonle Sap Lake that is vital to our people's interest. The Minister of Transports and Public Works has mentioned already that the city of Siemreap is facing with two major issues - firstly, how to get rain water out when there heavy downfall and secondly, how to deal with wastes that are letting go into the a sys-

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That we have the Counter-Terrorist committee is a good thing but we also need to have a secretariat that will directly command and monitor situations relating to terrorism in the world. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all partners that are present here for the support they provided in building Counter-Terrorist forces whether in training and/or by materials in and outside the country thereby to help all-level officials of the SNCTC to gain knowledge and capability ranging from analyzing situation and intelligence to actual combating. Having said so, we do not leave out the role played by all armed forces - the army, national police, military police and the people - who always actively participate in national defense.

I am glad to learn that the Counter-Terrorist forces are being selected from the armed forces of Cambodia. As we are in the preparation for the formation of offensive force we also need to get a special navy force established to take care of matters in this condition. Again I stress it here that a national defense infrastructure does not depend solely on Counter-Terrorist squad but on what is called common forces of the people. We already have in place the people's national defense and national security infrastructures whereby the army, military police, national police and people and concerned competent authorities are all active in maintaining social security which up to now enables us to prevent terrorist attacks from happening.

If the above mentioned infrastructures were sloppy for any reason, terrorist or criminal attacks, though they may not be carried out by terrorist category groups, would harm our national security be it in the form of trafficking of drugs, sex or humans as well as other illegal businesses. Maybe I should elaborate a bit as to why we need to establish an Counter-Terrorist squad. As you can see

the showcase of the forces just now that for what they have done, not all forces could do the same, though it is true that there has elements of Counter-Terrorist techniques and methods in the trainings by the military police in certain different scales and forms. However it is not so simple to be handled by just anyone when it comes to a special case that we all have been shown here where explosive is being activated by a mobile phone and the hard part is when the squad does not have the number of men they need. For instance when the incidental case has many high buildings in its surroundings, there requires a hard and rapid decision as to where to detonate the bomb. How do we respond when the bomb could be activated any moment by just a call to the designated phone device or by a self-exploding device?

You may agree with me now that there needs to have a well trained group of specialists who could solve this life and death situation while acquiring necessary skills like commanding a robot toy that is equipped with a camera that provides real image of objects on the scene to commanders whereby an evaluation will be made as to what type of object are they and what sort of tools and expertise could be used to deal with them. Commanders in this situation need to be wisely vibrant to a high level in addition to technology and tools in response.

Take for instance in the case that we do not have a device that could disconnect the call from the terrorist to a designated phone, what could we do in that situation? This would demand our response that is more than normal thought-over situation. If evacuation is coming into choice, how would one organize it? We all have seen here the case where such a terror call to the phone-activated bomb is being disconnected, but they have not yet shown us what to do when such a device is not available or could not be used. Take for instance,

dealing with a bomb as such. Before in a non-tech practical method we would bring in bags of sand to be place around it so as to keep shrapnel of the bomb from splashing while the bomb is being detonated.

In the show just now, with the donation from the US, the Counter-Terrorist squad used only the 16,000 US dollars armored uniform. That is why I said not all forces can just perform this duty. On another instance, a terrorist case on a plane, what are we going to do if we do not have a sense of what is the airport's setup and how is it being operated, and more how is the situation in the place in case? This kind of call could not be answered by just anyone but requires well-trained and sophisticated expertise. That is why we need to have this special squad setup - though it may not be a big force - that partly would eventually deal with the worst case scenario of such terrorized situation in defense of our people, revered national institutions and foreign friends and guests in our countries, and also a participation in the world fight against terrorism.

I would like to share with all of you that the (anti-terrorism) national strategic plan had prompted me three times to sit down and draft up the strategy. It was written by the Prime Minister's himself due to the fact that the scope of terrorist acts in the world is immeasurable. Cambodia may not be a target of terrorist attack, but we need to be prepared and vibrant while negligence would bring about unexpected cases. I may read you an introduction of the plan - "the Royal Government of Cambodia considers acts of terrorism a serious crime in the history of mankind as it causes politically motivated social turmoil that inflicts fatal incidents to mankind of all races, ages and places ..."

"... Terrorism is an international issue with universally controversial challenge that Government

the world over must collaborate in a common fight against those devils. Cambodia is not the most important target for terrorists judging from its geographical, political and economic conditions. However, Cambodia needs to be prepared by all means for fight against terrorism, which would partly defend its people's safety and also contribute to international efforts to avert terror from holding people in the world hostage of fear ..."

These are some of the definitions that we have come to on terrorism and the fight against it.

It is known to the world of the tragic terrorist attack in New York on September 11, in Turkey, in Spain, UK and Ireland, Indonesia's Bali and Jakarta. It should not be misunderstood that those incidents happened elsewhere and they would not in anyway come to our country. Think again, fear of being caught in a terror situation in a particular region causes tourist traveling to slow down at a certain rate whereby our economy for instance has had the impact from that as well. So it is quite appropriate and the right thing to do that we join with the international effort in averting this situation. As we have had the support from friends in this endeavor I would assure that Cambodia would not do this as a talk show but we have taken real actions and prepared all necessary measures that in case of need and based on level of necessity, our forces may take up partnering role with international forces in any Counter-Terrorist operations.

Cambodia is ready to join in all operations and already the case in point, Cambodia has been sending its de-mining teams to the UN umbrella operations in foreign nations - Sudan, Chad, Central African Republic, and we are in the preparatory stage for similar call to Lebanon. Some of you may raise a question as to why Hun Sen allow his son to take the risk to lead the squad. My answer is short: my son is for serving the

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 tem that will reach to the Tonle Sap Lake, which in turn would pollute the system and kill aquatic life causing drastic health and livelihood disastrous situation for our people.

In fact this is not particularly the case for Siemreap city alone but a common concern and challenge for all cities that are in developing stage. This has in fact provided us a clear indication between now and 31 years ago after the country was liberated from the regime of Pol Pot. In early 1980s we did not foresee these problems. As in the case of Phnom Penh, in the newspaper I read, a few days of no service by CINTRI – a wastes and disposals management company that is rendering service in Phnom Penh has left the city with unmanageable wastes and disposals that part of them have been thought or found to get washed into and block the system. Look, in 1979, it would not be a matter though we do not bother with the wastes for a month.

In Siemreap provincial city too, during the time of war between 1979 and 1985, no thought of waste and disposal management was in our mind but how to put up dams or barricades that would prevent Pol Pot's forces from infiltrating. The same could also be said about traffic accidents. When the country was poor, there were no heavy traffic because people traveled on foot and by bicycles and any accident that happened would be minor. At present we have too many vehicles and fatal incidents have been so frequent. During the Khmer New Year, traffic accidents caused 50 deaths and hundreds of injuries, though the figure is smaller than the previous year, still it is an alarming one.

Last October, the city of Siemreap was flooded because of the Ketsana storm and it should be included as one of the weather threats as it may happens every other year. So it is important that we have to answer to the need for

relieving water from the city whereby cooperation among the Ministries of Transports and Public Works, Water Resources and Meteorology, Tourism and Environment together with sub-national level authorities and the provincial city of Siemreap would be an ideal mechanism to look after the matter.

It should be noted that one of the causes for water blocking in the city could be the construction and land leveling that block the waterway whereby water has no way to let loose but to fill over the road levee. Another cause of thought would be in fact the fact that we have so many hotels here and at times tourist arrival would reach a high number. In the Khmer New Year days alone, tourists to all destinations in the country have reached 2.6 million according to the report by HE Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism, and a major part of this figure came to Siemreap. So it is crucial that wastes and disposals need to be managed and treated before they have disastrous effect to the natural system. It should not be the case of Siemreap alone but for all cities that are in their stages of development.

Remember that we are in the process of advertising to tourists that Cambodia is the Kingdom of Wonder where the three slogans - clean cities, clean touring sites, better services – should be fulfilled in full and to maximum. We have up to 49 flights a day in Siemreap from various points and for the first three months of the year we have received over 68,000 foreign tourists and over 50% percent are coming to Siemreap. So it is indeed our task to keep up the good work and waste water treatment system is one of those achievements in this effort in relation to the Mekong system tour, for which a part of the income has been used to develop this system.

HE Tram Iv Toek told us just now that the system could in fact pump some 10,000 cubic meters

of water for a day but its capacity to treat the water would now handle only some 3,000 cubic meters per day. This has called for further consideration that with credit of 30 million US dollars from Korea to start a new project in the near future, the pumping capacity could be augmented to 13,000 cubic meters. I would like to thank the Asian Development Bank with its representative here for the Bank's financial support for projects in Cambodia and would hope that ADB continues to do so for other projects so as to expand the country's capability in defending its environment.

Taking this opportune moment I would like to give you some food for thought so as to make our city nicer and more attractive at a larger scale to tourists. Our objective is not only to cater to the arrival of over two million visitors but more. In this ambitious objective, expanding or building a large airport has also been one of our considerations. So far we have ticked water demand as a priority and Japan has done a great deal to help us with this. We are in the process of urging for investment on bring water from the reservoir at Baray for consumption demand in Siemreap city so as to relieve our dependence on underground water, which too much of it to be taken from would unpredictably cause consequences that one may not know off.

I also think that it is time to put an end to the situation of the road from the airport to the city of Siemreap is being infested with water convolvulus and other aquatic plants and I am sure the Governor and Deputy Governor of the province and city have seen that too. I think they are lacking ideas. Years ago, flood came all the way to some hotels' doors because of land leveling that blocks the waterway. I brought the case up and they build a drainage system to let the water go. When there is this Ketsana effect Siemreap continues to be long flooded. I think here is not com-

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 nation. He has to undergo the most difficult situation to be ready for duty call.

I would like to urge the squad to make efforts in implementing national strategy in the fight against terrorism so as to prevent and suppress any terrorist acts, and taking preventive actions before the terror's would be the best option and situation. Arrest or suppression claimed to be a victorious-operation after the incident took place, to me, is a failure already as terrorists could act. The real victory for me, in my capacity as the Chairman of the National Counter-Terrorist Committee and Prime Minister, would be to prevent any incident of that sort from happening at all. Efforts should be made to explain to our people as to how destructive and what could be the consequences terrorism could inflict on them and our nation and having understood that they would join in quelling them right from the start.

As we all have just celebrated the Khmer New Year, I would like to draw a note here that our people have been in joy for the celebration. Like the previous years, people went out of city to far away places in the country. Firstly, the country is in peace and security that traveling anywhere and any far would not be a problem. Secondly, the country's infrastructure has been improved that they could travel to tourist destinations where they could not go or access before. Thirdly, they could go this far because they have been better off than before in terms of resources too. I also have great pleasure to see that the armed forces along the border have had the chance to take turns to celebrate the New Year festivities with their families and people who have come to visit the temples at Preah Vihear. It should be noted here that while we are celebrating the New Year, the armed forces at the border are making sacrifice with braveness to be there ...©

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As for this year we have achieved a new figure of 7,580,000 tons of paddy rice from an average yield of production at 2.83 tons per hectare. According to the national development plan, the said figure is to be achieved by 2012 but it has been achieved as of 2009-2010. It is based on this achievement that we would set an achievement target for production at three or close to three tons per hectare.

It is indeed because of the success we now have a surplus of three million tons of paddy rice or about two million tons of milled rice after a certain amount has been reserved for consumption and as seed. In fact we normally export in the form of paddy but as long as export is concerned, whether in paddy or milled rice, it has made Cambodia a remarkable country as it evolves from food shortage to food exporting country. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China has been impressed dearly when I informed him about the rice exporting position of Cambodia when we met at Hua Hin, Thailand. I also told him about challenges Cambodia is facing in terms of marketplace and processing ability.

What is even more important here that I wanted to share with all of you is the fact that agricultural success has been able to help Cambodia in dealing with eventual impacts arising from the world financial crisis and economic downturn. I have said many times that we have to hold on to the country's economic pulse or literally we have to make sure that every Cambodian has good rice for their consumption.

Our people may go without oil but they may not survive without food. It is in this notion that food security and also its access has to be guaranteed on the market. It is also a pride too that despite the impact from Ketsana tropical cyclone and flood from the Mekong River, we have been able to

guarantee food availability in the country without having to import from outside. We were able to help provide the cyclone and flood victims with our food stock and did not have to wait for foreign assistance. This is partly because we have been able to guarantee success in maintaining political and macro-economic stability that eventually help us deal with the crisis.

The Cambodian market had not been shaky in 2008 when I declared a provisional measure to suspend rice exports for two months. It did not mean Cambodia was food insufficient but it was a good thing to do when the world market had impact from rising high the price of rice. Eventually we had allowed for the people at the border to go on selling rice. But as 2009 passed we did not take that measure and the price of our rice in the market also has had its price stabilizing. The Royal Government understands its position as in between two inter-related facts – when the price of rice goes high, the rice farmers are happy but not the rice consumers and it is the other way around when the price of rice goes down. This issue requires a balance somewhere in the production-supply relations.

With the common success we thus far achieved in food production and export, I would like to take this opportune moment to express my sincere appreciation for the MAFF and the Ministry of Water Resources and Fisheries, both of which are providing services in relation to rice cultivations and irrigation systems that I always compare them as they both are one.

Today I am so happy that the conference also invites farmers who have made their best to be present and also to get rewards for what they have done in their rice cultivation. I also have visited, and I would suggest diplomats who are here present to go and see with their own eyes, the rice harvesting machines that are locally

produced. We also have on display some major rice seeds that are not just for show but some have been produced and exported too. I also would like to give my appreciation to our farmers, along with the research institutions, especially those who have been selected as the best rice cultivators according to natural intensive cultivation system.

As far as animal husbandry is concerned it is so impressed to see that our farmer Bou Kok Ho from the village of La Ak, Sandek commune, Bakong district of Siemreap who have won the prize. As for fish farming we have here a villager Van Bo from the village of O Pot, Ang Tasom commune, Tramkak district of Takeo province. I also give my best regard and appreciation to Mr Chhuon Saphan from the village of O Ambel, O Ambel commune, Serei Sophoan district of Banteay Meanjei for his success in putting together agricultural mechanized tools. It is also a great pleasure to address here Mr. Soen Virak village from Kansaom Khaleng, Jumrah Pen commune, Samraong district of Takeo province for agro-processing success. I am also giving my pleasure to others for their one way or the other in making achievements in agriculture. I hope that we will continue the movement to an increasing number of farmer's families and individuals from the current 104,000 households on an area of 58,000 hectares of land.

Aside from rice that Cambodia exports to the international market, rubber, soy bean, etc. have also been our major export items too. Our problem is we have not been able to master processing which if we could achieve we would eventually help retain value added and provide job creation for the country. However I would like to express my sincere thanks for efforts by the whole people of Cambodia, local authorities and relevant institutions, which the MAFF and Water Resources and Meteorology are

the prime institutions, in mobilizing successes in the field of agriculture.

What I wanted to talk about hereon is to bring to and share with you some concepts which are not new but are being taken from some of the visions from some one or two decades ago. First we have to expand the width of economic growth to a wider scale by further promoting agriculture. I remember that by late of the second term and before the commencement of the third term we started talking about expanding growth on the basis of reducing dependence on vulnerable sectors such as garment and tourism.

It was at that juncture that we have shifted our priority of the third-term Royal Government to that of hydrology, and so is the Royal Government of the fourth term. We have invested in irrigation system as a priority.

As we all see that when the economic crisis occurs the most vulnerable sectors have been garments, construction, tourism and services. However, we have achieved a 5% growth in the agricultural sector, which allows us to guarantee at a satisfactory level of food security. This has happened in line with what I always advise relevant Government officials to hold on to the economic pulse which is to guarantee that every Cambodian has good food.

We have also made other efforts in expanding the base for growth such as mining that is underway, some results of which have already been made used and contributed to the Cambodian economy already. For example, we have started already the production of cement, while we are discovering mines of gold, bauxite or we can say oil is included. I should also bring to your knowledge that as of the moment of speaking we have attained not even a single drop of oil yet but

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there has been a live discussion about corruption since 2002 and 2003. I have asked for their understanding that maybe it is a good thing to talk about searching for money rather than about how the money should be spent, when we have yet to make sure that there is oil. As of now we have allowed Chevron to produce oil by late 2012 or the contract will be terminated.

Maybe we should leave the mineral resources alone and focus our discussion on agriculture, which has always been there as a potential sector of Cambodia. Without making use of oil, gas and other natural resources, the Cambodian economy has scored a growth of two digits for four consecutive years before the time of financial crisis. We may have the attention of our friends and concerned institutions that they have been achieved when Cambodia exercise logging ban and no tax imposed yet on cultivation land and fishing lots.

So it is obvious to everyone of this potential. We need to strengthen and expand our economic base from agriculture and by saying that I do not mean that we solely depend on rice alone. You must agree with me that we have many other items such as rubber, coffee, cashew nut and various other industrial crops. Also included is the potential for animal husbandry. All could be well developed into strong basis for our economy.

Maybe I should share with you a vision I have about more than twenty years before on changing our extensive development method into the most intensive one. By that I mean we should increase the capability of the existing cultivation land in increasing cultivating patterns and producing more. Intensive cultivation has been widely extended to our farmers and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has taken the lead in this activity and the most successful story has been

those from the district of Tramkak of Takeo province.

Seed and fertilizer are the two major factors in relation to soil condition. Just now our villagers here told me of a new seed “Phka Jan Sen Sar” that they have obtained from Put Sar commune in Kandal Stoung district of Kandal province. I told them I know where it is and I used to spend time there to oversee an operation to provide water for water-shortage rice fields in 1994. I even have written a song about the event there. In Cambodia it is required that you know a lot of things and stay close to farmers. At that particular situation it was so depressing that we had to ask for some farmers, whose rice fields are close to the main canal and water pump provided by the state, to give a break to their water pumps so that those with their rice fields far away could get a chance to get water that would otherwise not get it.

So what else to talk about going from extensive to intensive farming? We all may have understood a traditional way of calculation by our farmers that for a family of four or five people has to have at least a hectare of land and if the household doubles, they simply need to double their area of cultivation. If this is still the way we are thinking now, we may have to chop off trees and reclaim more land leading to further internal migration for new land. By intensive farming, we have to increase the land’s feeding capacity for four or five to the double or treble figure.

Land where we used to cultivate only one crop or one time of cropping should be changed to multi cropping pattern and/or culturing for more than one time. Now we have achieved a yield of 2.8 tons per hectare for rice, what if we could increase the yield to 3, or 3.8 or 4 tons per hectare and what if we could do it more than one time? In Vietnam they have pushed their yield ceiling to eleven tons per hectare. I do not

ask you to go that fast because in Cambodia we used to have a bad experience under Pol Pot’s collective concept.

We have two different rice varieties here, which are the rainy-season or long term rice and those of dry season or short term rice. We have made a breakthrough in pushing the yield of dry season rice to some four tons per hectare but for the rainy season rice, the figure is still not satisfactory. As a result of this it is required that our farmers change their work habits and also their seeds. Seed is in fact a crucial matter taking marketing aspect into consideration. We may grow anything but not everything would go well in any market.

I visited Kuwait and they served us rice coming from India. This means they are used to Indian rice variety and taste. So we have to find out if the Indian rice variety could be brought and cultivated in the Cambodian soil and ecological condition. Would India agree to let us grow that kind of rice that belongs to them since it is their intellectual property? Here though I beg for a focus on expanding feeding capability of existing soil availability while preventing activities for new land from reclaiming and deforestation. This technique should also be seen to use less labor than extensive farming technique too.

Because of the right type of seed production and selection technique we have applied, now we could lessen the amount of seeds to be used per hectare either in transplantation or sowing. Where we used some 70 to 100 kg per hectare of transplanting rice field, we now use only about 12 kg. Where some 100 kg to 400 kg of seed is used for sowing rice field per hectare, now the number has been brought down to just 50 kg. This literally means our farmers are saving money on seeds.

We also have to look into issue of processing for export and for serving local demand in replace-

ment of imported product. What happens to us is like what our ancestors used to say “where there is gold, but there has no paper to wrap it.” We have up to three million tons of rice in surplus that can be used for export but because of limited capacity of our rice mills and warehouses, we have been able to provide only a part of the surplus for export as for the rest have been exported as paddy rice to Vietnam and Thailand.

When we export rice in paddy, we lose jobs for our people, as well as broken parts, rice brand and husks. That is why we now have encouraged our people to build new milling capacity, warehousing and purchasing capital. The state has had its share of capital provision but it is not big enough for the job to be done so private sectors have been encouraged because we now have markets, especially those in the European Union that are ready for our products. We are anticipating that demand for rice will surge so it is important to get our export capacity ready. Regionally we also have an expression of interest in importing rice from Cambodia to the Philippines as well.

Our capacity though could not answer to a prompt demand for like 200,000 tons or half a million tons because our speed to get our rice milled is still slow. As you can see that if we could attain all these capacities, because it is a huge job market for our farmers, we do not have to export paddy rice without milling them to other countries. Price is also a determinant factor because our farmers would be discouraged when they could not sell what they have produced. Food production would be less likely to be affected by drop of prices in the future.

Again it is our priority to continue with industrial crops and here it is important to promote rubber planting because as of the moment of speaking, comparing to 1998, we have increased rubber
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production to about 20.4% or about 86.61 per cent of the strategic plan for 2015.

According to the plan, by 2015, we plan to grow some 150,000 hectares of rubber and now we have already had 129,920 hectares under rubber. We may exceed our target by 2015 because in 2010 we plan to complete some 20,000 hectares more. Along with its price going sky high to about 3,000 US dollar per ton, it is now known to us all that rubber could grow on any soil condition, as long as you have the right species. It has been known to us for a long time now that rubber would grow only with red soil.

I also would like to give my sincere congratulation to the discovery of various techniques in husbandry of animals such as fish, lobster and crab, which also include sea crab. I am glad to see that our students are benefiting from research lab provided by JICA (of Japan) for practicing and perfecting the techniques of incubation of lobsters. It is a good thing that now we have the ability to make use of innovation and technology for that matter.

We are now quite successful if I may say in narrowing down the gap between research and production where before it had not been this short due to bureaucracy and insufficient concern provided in disseminating technology. We have shortened the process from research to disseminating research findings and to production among our people, whereby confidence has been created for the fact that everyone sees that the result is at hand.

However, no matter what we do to cultivate or to promote animal husbandry, one has to avoid touching the Tonle Sap Lake and I stress it that this is definitive. In one of our correspondences, Deputy Prime Minister Keat Chhon must have received my letter already and the Governor of Kompong Thom, HE Nam Tom

also has written a letter to me expressing his support to the decision of the Royal Government. It was about a short-term interest that may neglect disaster that it may impact our inundated forest of Tonle Sap Lake in the future. I declare the area untouchable. Based on a report by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, I have sent in a mission from the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology to do an investigation concerning a proposal to eliminate a number of water reservoirs for cultivation.

We have now come to a set of measures that a thorough study needs to be conducted in relations to those reservoirs or basins that how many circumferences need to be established, where the first one should be reserved for what purpose, the second for what and what level of prohibition needs to be placed on the third zone. The other day CDC discussed issue of investment in the above mentioned areas and came to a consensus that investment would be permitted in principle on so and so conditions.

I have given them my opinion that there is no need to mention conditions but to ascertain that investment is not allowed as long as the case is not clear. It is good to say today that it is expected to achieve a yield of three or five tons per hectare for the time being, but what sort of impact would have us to suffer in the future?

We risk becoming a victim in face of the country's history if our decision leads to shallow the Tonle Sap Lake. I would not allow for that to happen and you may want to wait until my term ends. However, even if I am not a parliamentarian, as a citizen I will continue to uphold my position against the idea of building a water reservoir in the inundated area. It is true that in 1986 I encouraged our people to transform areas that were under floating rice to be dry season rice cultivation areas but the idea does not call for

the transformation of deep lake in Tonle Sap.

You may remember that from the Stomg Buddhist pagoda I told HE Nam Tom, the Governor of Kompong Thom, that I would not agree to his demand for digging of canals around the Tonle Sap lake and setting up villages along them. So all basins built need to be dismantled and the Ministries of Water Resources and Meteorology, and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries will have to look into the measures to dismantle them.

I may ask for the attention of all provinces that are bordering with the Tonle Sap Lake as we all are taking historic responsibility for the country's future here. I may have your attention on some of my personal observation. Behind my native commune there used to be five huge lakes but they are no longer there now.

Every years flood brings silt from the river to fill up the lake which is already in heaps of dead leaves of inundated forest. Under Pol Pot's time, as the level of water in the lake was shallow, they mobilized people to grow dry season rice. While as of now there are no more deep lakes and there are no more fish too. I am sure if we allow this to repeat here the Tonle Sap Lake will shrink and suffer similar fate. I would not give my approval to whatever argument proposed by any stakeholder at all. Water is a major concern that any decision to be made has to have a thorough and insightful discussion.

Towards the Mekong Summit, many public opinions voiced their concerns and criticized China on the fact that the level of water in the Mekong River is getting low. In fact the part of river in the province of Yunnan of China there has had no water. We should not blame China alone on this. Whether the level of water in the Mekong River is low or high should depend on the amount of rain, which is indeed is relating

commonly to the world climate change condition as a whole. I do not defend China but I think justice should be upheld here.

I told the Laotian and Chinese delegations in separate meetings that in Cambodia not only from the Mekong River but water from the well also dried out. Prime Minister of Thailand HE Abhisit Vijjajiva said to me that places where rice could be grown thrice a year has now been degraded to only twice cultivation a year. And the reason is for the fact that there has not had water for irrigation.

How can one blame so and so on the matter as Myanmar, China, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam all suffer from the drought? People blame China for building the dam that prevents water from coming downstream, but what can one say when China's dam also holds no water? It should not be a proposition just to make matter worse.

All I am asking in the Summit was that every country members must not divert water from the Mekong River basins to other areas and as long as this is respected, the projects for hydroelectric dams would not take the water anywhere at all. However, if water is being diverted to outside the basins (of the Mekong River) we then will have problem.

Under Pol Pot time there also was an idea to dig a canal that runs through Jamkar Dong (Phnom Penh) through Kandal province and to reach the sea at Kompot so as to prevent the water of the Mekong River from flowing through to Vietnam. Again in 1995-96 the idea was brought up again and I always take an opposition stand. That is why I have made it clear that some Cambodians, not me of course, also have a bad idea. If the idea of digging such a canal was to be implemented, not only Vietnam will be affected, but the province of Kandal and Prey Veng of Cambodia

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would also suffer major consequences.

Again let me warn you of short-term gains for long-term losses. We should uphold two prong strategies of developing while conserving together so as to guarantee that our development will be sustainable. I also order relevant institutions to inspect fishing activities where there have been reports of improper fishing manner. I also ask for the attention in taking a long-term vision in relations to fish culturing and processing to meet higher demand for local consumption and also to get an orientation for export when local demands are sufficiently met. I have placed a strict instruction and order on barring import of chicken legs from foreign countries.

Now let me go into a hot issue relating to suppressing illegal logging activities. There is no need to talk about why we have to protect our forest anymore because my recommendations and instructions have been replayed everyday on TVs with a running subtitle while offenses of forest crimes are still here. What does that mean? An understanding has now come to an end and there can be no more forgiveness.

It has been our remark that forest offenses take place when the Government is fully engaged in doing a particular job. Take for instance in 1998, logging of all kinds including also rubber trees took place while all political parties and the Royal Government were busily preparing for the elections. In 2000, when there was this millennium flood, illegal logging also recurred and IT IS also true when we have been busy with border issue with Thailand. As of this moment we do not have anymore illegal logging activities.

I would like to take this opportune moment to express my respect and appreciation for the armed forces especially the military po-

lice and police forces because of their reactions and order-takings I could well estimate level of their faithfulness to the Royal Government of Cambodia and also how rapid their implementation could be after I issued order. It has been encouraging that all armed forces have acted simultaneously. After my call, all forces –military police, police and military forces have reached targets. It has been indeed a large operation under my direct command and in some case I did not even call the Governors of the provinces but directly to the commanders of forces in all military regions.

In fact enforcing the law has been quite hard as I have to take a decisive stand. Take for instance the case of General Jia Mom's son – in relation to illegal logging - I have asked him to be brought to justice or his father would be stripped off his positions. It is a matter of leaving a model of law enforcement here. I told General Jia Mom I have no choice. Now the case has been solved and I have asked HE Bin Chhin, Deputy Prime Minister, to oversee the matter in collaboration with the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Justice and Anticorruption unit.

It has been a disappointing case compared to previous operations. Usually reactions from the Forest Administration have been that the court and the armed forces did not quite cooperate in those operations but this time when all related institutions are actively involved, there was a lack of participation from the forest administration that is legally empowered to act. So I have to take my definite stand. Before I go into my decision on this issue let me clarify the case of logs confiscated. Not all of the logs are illegal and there have BEEN in fact five kinds of logs that are legal. What are legal logs?

Those LOGS that are cut with the permission granted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in order to supply for local demand for building homes,

pagodas, etc.

Those logs that are cut from area of economic land concession so as to give land to companies. We do not give them the forest. In order to grow whatever they wanted to they have to cut of forest, and they have to pay for the Government in value of standing trees,

Those logs that are cut from areas that hydropower stations are to be built – for instance the Komjaj, Atai and Russei Jom Kraom hydropower dams,

Those logs that are allowed to be imported because the Royal Government prohibited tree chopping a long time ago so some companies need to bring them in for furniture manufacturing for export, and

Those logs that are allowed to be chopped for the making of a rowing sport boat or Touk Ngor but the authority has to be vigilant that some has used a sheet of paper of permission for repeated trees chopping and transportation.

So these above are legally recognized and as the head of the executive power I will accept these kinds of logs to be legal. I would also need to argue on a point that I would not allow anyone for whatever reason use a permission to build a hotel or home to justify any illegal logs confiscated at all. In one of the VDO link meeting I instructed the Governor of Siemreap, HE Su Phirin, to check so and so places and he said those logs are stored for building hotels. I would not concede that justification. If you have the permission to build hotels, the permission of that sort could not be used to justify logs that have been illegally chopped at all or we will have the whole forest depleted.

In another instance while we are moving on with the campaign, some may startle our people or even threaten them because of the amount of woods they have saved for years for building their

homes. I urge the head of military police and police forces to oversee this matter. If anyone went this far s/he would be in handcuff. You may know that it is customary in our country that our people gather savings and purchase woods piece by piece, and it could take years, before they could build a home. It is an inappropriate action where they neglected the large scale illegal loggings but harming our peoples as is mentioned earlier.

However, some logs, in time of suppression like this, might also be brought to various people's homes for disguise and in that case it is not difficult for our officials to judge of their value. I would therefore urge our people not to allow those crooked taking hide in their homes or villages. I also warn our officials not to get involved and not to perform inappropriate duty in violation of our people's rights. I would urge that anyone with illegal logging business should inform and/or give the logs to the authorities. This operation would gauge the fact that I wanted to know who would be stronger among the two – legal institutions and enforcement or the offenders.

The second issue is the fact that there is this move of startling people that so and so head of police, military police would be arrested. Before an arrest is being made there must be a thorough investigation and a firm proof needs to be established. The judicial system is entitled to issue an arrest warrant. But there have been some cases, for example a recent one at Viel Veng, I have ordered it myself. In that arrest, the Head of forest administration, Ty Sokun, had made an intervention to me and even made accusation on the competent authority. I wrote back in red to him that I am the one who ordered the arrest and what would be the result let us wait and see the decision from the court. This is a case that I used to say, to order a thief is to arrest another thief, there would not be a

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good result.

There have been cases in Koh Kong and Kompong Cham too. I am asking Ty Sokun to call Mr. Nho, who has escaped, to come back and I also ask Mr. Nho to return and I would let him go free if he could tell me who had leaked the secrecy of my arrest instruction on Teng Trai. It seems Mr. Nho told Teng Trai to escape and asked for Ty Sokun's advice if he has to escape too. Ty Sokun allowed him to escape so I am asking you to ask him to come back. I wanted to know why the arrest instruction was no more a secret, was it because of the court officials or the military police officials?

In Kompong Cham, the competent authorities have checked seven warehouses and only six was reported. Why was that so? Was not it because someone had been bribed? When our officials conceded to request by people in legal issue to escape, who do I arrest then? Who do I depend on? It is not a laughing matter.

Another one in Koh Kong, as of the moment of seeing each other, he was to go to Vietnam. I am calling all of the people involved to come back because you can never escape the whole of your life. See what happens to Heng Peo. He ran to Singapore and Malaysia but finally we brought him into Prey Sar prison. There are six stated offenses that in violation of one or many or all of them a forest administration responsible person needs to be charged and if anyone of you does not have a problem with those offense clauses you should not be worried.

All confiscated logs would be put for auctions and the Cambodian People's Party that may need wood to build its museum also has to join the bidding. All will be up to the court to decide. There has been a lady where in her case she has to be charged on many counts. She colluded with some-

one to get a concessional land and keep it as a stocking area. Logs brought from there would come to her and she would sell it to a third person. These logs will be confiscated and she will be charged of crime according to forest law. They cannot base on any reason to justify their guiltiness or we risk losing forest in Cambodia.

In another case at Trapeang Prasat, the Chief of General Staff was almost brought into complication. I would urge the authority of Banteay Meanjei should oversee the Governor of Trapeang Prasat district as to why an official at the district level would offer land to military officials with an initial as "Chief of Staff" and it was mistaken to mean HE Pol Saroeun. It was in fact the General Logistic Staff. A plot of land has been claimed and a wood processing has been established with a lady in nickname "Yiey Map or Fatty Mama" has been reported to have cutting woods on some 80 hectares. HE Bin Chhin, Deputy Prime Minister is now in progress of filing a report. She (Yiey Map) was reported to be rude as she even threatened our officials with rank stripping off.

As for my decision to remove HE Ty Sokun from the Forest Administration I have observed that he is no longer effective in resolving problem since the first day that I talked to him on phone. I was so disappointed that while on the front at Kompong Cham we were so busy, on my call at six in the evening he was in Uddar Meanjei province. He then allowed Mr. Nho to escape. So I am sure that it is now time to change the head of forest administration because Ty Sokun could not effectively fulfill his position anymore. It is a big mistake and if the replacement could not perform his duty still, the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries may have to be asked to leave his position.

HE Ty Sokun is now being transferred from Head of Forest Administration to Undersecretary of

State for Agriculture, while HE Chheng Kimson will take over the post. Ty Sokun should not be upset but consider this a lesson in life and try and work harder. I also need to have a secretary of state of agriculture to oversee the matter and report it to the MAFF.

I would also take this opportunity to make clear that as far as the term "Royal Government Delegate (RGD)" is concerned, it does not mean that automatically you are permitted by law to report directly to the Prime Minister at all. In the Ministry of Trade, we have RGD to be placed in charge of CamControl and in the Ministry of Economy and Finance there also has RGD is in charge of customs and tax, excise, and treasure. However all of them do not have the rights to report directly to the Prime Minister but only with the approval of the Minister.

To make it clear RGD position is under the supervision of Minister and anyone with this rank should not mistake it to be above the state secretary or under-state secretary and refuse to take their supervision. Minister is the Government member who takes up responsibility before the Prime Minister and is answering to the Parliament. I would ask our armed forces and competent authorities to fulfill their tasks and I also would like to assure once again that this is a message for all no matter who you are and who you are working with, the family of Hun (Hun Sen family) is also included, we will not allow for a culture of intervention at all. I also expected suppressing activities to go on like continuous rain.

We must defend the forest/law as it is to defend our nation and race. Soil and forest are two of a kind as they live together. An invasion of one is for both so we must improve our management and law enforcing manner. Because the forest administration structure seems to be complicated, a restructuring could also be done.

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plicated as in Phnom Penh but Phnom Penh has been able to put some of the major obstacles behind now. I must admit that the Poi Pet city management deserves to be appreciated. With vision and initiatives, former commune of Poi Pet has become a new city with concrete roads built with the 50+50 formula and in many instances people built the roads with their own resources. Phnom Penh has had this formula implemented for smaller roads diverging from main roads and I know that the formula is being observed here in Siemreap as well.

After the Khmer New Year, I would make some remarks that now some advance rain has come to some part of the country that grass has grown for animals but there are places where rain has not yet come. I would therefore urge our people to continue to take precautionary measures in prevention of fire and wildfire and also from lightning. We also need to take extra precaution too as one of our people just died from bird flu, making the total number 8 dying from the disease. Having said so I also urge our people to get ready for the next cultivation season which starts in somewhere in the third week of May... ©

As of now the forest administration is like a small state that one may not know who is who, and who does what. I also warn Minister of Environment, HE Mok Mareth, of his officials as I have reports that in order to get a piece of log out of the forest to destination, they had to chop five trees because extras would be a bribe for environment, a small number of crooked military police, police and forest district officials. I urge military, military police and police officials and all level of government and state institutions to concentrate effort in fighting with these offenders so as partly to defend the honor and dignity of the armed forces... ©