



25 November 10—Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen and Lok Chumteav Dr Bun Rany with Senior Government Officials Mourned the 351 Deceased in Koh Pij Stampede (Kampuchea Thmei)

29 November 2010 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

- **Inaugurating Social Affairs Office Buildings,**
- **The Koh Pij Tragic Stampede and Coping Measures**

Post January-7 Development Process

It is indeed my pleasure to come and celebrate with all of you the inauguration of the new office building of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran Affairs and Youth Rehabilitation, which hereon I will refer to as the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA). I have noted with interest the development process of MSA in term of office building development. HE Ith Samheng, Minister of MSA, has mentioned thoroughly about the development process and historical fact with regard to the setting up of the office building of the MSA. Specifically after January 7, 1979 the work about social affairs commenced under the leadership of HE Nov Samom. It later became a Ministry and was led by HE Mam Sambun, to be followed consecutively by HE Koy Buntha, HE Do Sohan . After the elections (in 1993

which led to the formation of the Royal Government) MSA was led by HE Suy Sem and is currently under the leadership of HE Ith Samheng.

If we were to look back in this span of time, MSA has evolved through the leadership of five ministers and similar situation with regard to office building and facilities. In those days (the People’s Republic of Kampuchea and State of Cambodia) the Ministry of Finance which was under the leadership by HE Chan Phin was the only one that was situated in a rather big and better conditioned mansion. As far as many other institutions are concerned, many have not been that fortunate. The reason was not because there were no buildings available but mainly because of fear of being in quiet neighborhood and there were not many staff.

I may give examples that may clarify this. In provinces, offices of various ministries had occupied only apartment buildings. When I

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**17 November 2010 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Press Conference: CLV, CLMV & ACMECS Summits**

It has been years that I never meet with the press in this format. Today in my capacity as the Chairman of the (CLV, CLMV and ACMECS) Summits, I have the duty to make a communiqué about results of the Summits. I would like to welcome all pressmen who have taken their time to participate in this press conference. All of you have learned already that from 16 through to 17 November 2010, here in the Santepheap Building of the Council of Ministers, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam) hosts the 6th CLV (Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam) Summit, the 5th CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) Summit, and the 4th ACMECS (Ayeyawady – Chao Praya - Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy) Summit.

In general the CLV, CLMV and ACMECS Summits have been organized with an aim to review progress made in between summits as well as to set out relevant objectives for future cooperation. It is within this spirit that we have reviewed, discussed and evaluated progress on all fields of cooperation. We have come to an agreement on defining and setting out objectives of the cooperation in these formats, while laying out a number of measures and actual plans of actions.

The 6th CLV Summit has adopted a revising master plan on socio-economic development in the development triangle area of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam for the period between 2010 and 2012. Decisions have also been made on prioritizing a number of sectors, which include physical infrastructures, revised trade and cooperation scheme, socio-economic and cultural develop-

ment, industrial and tourism development, etc. Determination to speed up cooperation has been clearly reflected in the adoption of the Phnom Penh Declaration on Deepening of Cooperation in the Development Triangle Area, and the amendment of the Memorandum of Understanding on Special Preferential Policies for the CLV Development Triangle Area.

As far as the 5th CLMV Summit is concerned, (the CLMV leaders) have adopted a Declaration on the 5th Summit of cooperation among the four countries – Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, which is a reflection once again of our commitments in urging for cooperation in the nine sectors that we have given our agreement upon. Since financing is the most difficult challenge of all, the Summit has reached a strong determination in seeking for support and encouragement from development partners and participation from private sector in regional and sub-regional frameworks so as to speed up implantation of action plan and other important projects. Having said so, the Summit unanimously agrees that 16 projects are to be given priority for seeking support from development partners, especially from Japan, China, (Republic of) Korea and India.

In its 4th Summit, ACMECS leaders have adopted the ACMECS 2010-2012 Plan of Action as a roadmap for member countries to perform their roles in cooperation among themselves and with development partners. In addition to the adoption of the Phnom Penh ACMECS Declaration, heads of Governments of the ACMECS country members (Cambodia, (Continued on page 8)

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first set up the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I occupied former Ministry for Foreign Affairs' building and later because of its insufficient space and lack of residence along the riverside I have extended then Ministry for Foreign Affairs facility to former Faculty of Buddhism (which is across the street). In light of national developments, we have now returned the Faculty to Buddhist monks and got down to working out resources and building a new office building of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

It can be said that I (as Minister for Foreign Affairs) reigned the section along the riverside (of Phnom Penh) because there were no other people occupying the area. And in the present moment you all may be aware that the price of land in this area is roughly that of the land in New York. I should mention of a real practice that was quite common in those days. We (the state) offered a house for one person and his family to settle in. S/he and her/his family alone would not dare take up the building and settle. They shared it with one or two other families. This fact has created so many housing disagreements and quarrels up to the present.

So you can see according to my notice that Phnom Penh started and evolved from a place where there were almost no people to a city where there are crowded population. Our history of restarting work and life in Cambodia (after the fall of Democratic Kampuchea) has been unique. I have restarted the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with only three staff. After the 1993 (national reconciliation) elections I told people from other former Khmer factions that they were lucky as starting their jobs they had been provided with cars and other facilities for works. Let's imagine the time when as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I was entitled to a regime of 16 Kg of grain per month, in which 10 Kg was rice and another 6 was corn.

Some people who come from abroad had not been able to appreciate

what they were offered and could not therefore judge as to how valuable that was. Because they earned things too easily, they did not know their values and therefore not practiced saving. Only those who have stood up from heap of ash would know how to appreciate their values. According to my notice, because they have earned things in the easiest way, they therefore do not know how to keep them. We can also compare it to thing like power, once you are offered with power but if you do not know how to protect it, you would tend to lose.

If all of us were to look back of the road we just traveled, we would come to agreeing that the situation has indeed changed. Today we all are working in air-conditioned room whereas a while ago we would be satisfied already to be working in a room with electric fan. There were two foreign persons representing UNICEF and CIRC respectively coming to see me in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs those days discussing about emergency situation and a plan to launch a rescue mission. Our conversation had taken place for a lengthy period of time in darkness because of the blackout.

A Horse Trading

Let me now return to the new office building of the Ministry of Social Affairs and various other office buildings of other Ministries. We have no other choice and means but to trade the former buildings with these ones. We do not lose anything. We have a new office location. The building and location here may later acquire higher prices than those of the old place too. We may say that a few small horses have been traded for a bigger one. What is more important is that they will be registered as state property. We have traded the Ministry's small and scattered buildings with buildings in one big location. The new location with bigger size may have greater value some time later.

Take a look at the former building of the Ministry of Trade, (former

Minister) HE Taing Sarim, who died already, chose the building himself. We then set up what we called the Trade Committee, which later became the Ministry of Trade. The building has then been administered later Ministers such as HE Ho Naun, HE Nhem Vanda, HE Va Huot and now HE Cham Prasidh. The Ministry of Trade now swapped to a new office mansion that is quite suitable as a workplace. However, I must warn you all that work efficiency is still key in swapping from old to new newly built buildings.

Bigger Offices, More Maintenance and Operational Costs

I would like to take this opportune moment to have your attention on one critical fact that bigger and better workplaces come with high maintenance and operational costs. In former buildings that were unsophisticated, rooms were air-conditioned by smaller units and/or electric fans. In new office buildings, bigger air-condition units are operated. This means that power consumption is high. For lack of saving and precautionary operational measures, some institutions may find themselves unable to cope up with high expenses. I must warn that the Minister and Secretary of State will have to bear the brunt of deduction from their salaries for unsettled electric bills.

If they do not agree or feel unhappy with this measure they may resign. I must talk it out loud so that all ministries will get informed of this. It is time to exercise and strengthen seriousness and be determined or the practice of requesting for the state (financial) balancing out for unsettled electric bills would go on. I already said it if any of them disagree, they may resign and I would approve the resignation immediately. Ministers who are here have heard me and those who are not here today may have heard it on radio or TVs.

Thrifty Exercise - A Must

I will continue to follow this matter up with the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Ministry

of Industry, Energy and Mines so as to figure out which Ministry is consuming the greatest amount of electricity. I may sound a bit unsympathetic but it needs to be so or things will not get better. We must exercise thrifty. Any request for a balancing out will have to be reviewed. Only documentation offices will need to be left air-conditioned. Public lights in the cities also will have certain hours or full operation schedule. As some lights could be turned off after busy hours at night.

The same manner will also apply for Governors of all 24 provinces. We will review as to which province spends the most on electricity. We also will review which province spends all budget allocated, and which spends less and saves some back for the state. It is hard to imagine of having the saved amount because even if it were so they would not declare it a leftover because they would rather keep them for covering any unbalanced amount in the later stage.

I may share with all of you a story from the time of the State of Cambodia. HE Tia Banh, who was then Minister of National Defense too, may have remembered when you came to see me especially for my approval of the Ministry's budget. HE Moeng Samphan was then General Director in charge of finance and was in charge of putting together budget of the Ministry of National Defense. I reasoned with them that for budget that is over hundreds of thousands or millions, there must be leftover balance. It cannot be a zero-sum balance of payment. HE Chhay Than, then Minister for Finance, was also present when I said they were 'good' at preparing a report and filing figures of budget expenses for the President of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister).

As a normal practice I had to have a report on how the current year budget was spent before approval for the following year budget was to be granted. I want you all to agree with me that there will not

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be zero-sum balance of payment (or spent-all balance). This practice happened about twenty years ago.

I may give you all another example of how much that we need to spend for maintenance of aircraft like MIG 21. For one MIG 21, there had been a request for 380 tons of fuel and we approved only 280 tons. With this amount, had it been used for fighting? No. It was only for training. It has got a timeframe to check engine and/or to test fly. It is because of all this that I do not make a swift decision to purchase fighters. I also have a second thought of them too. A decisive factor in battle to me would be the infantry forces. The fight will not be won or over when the infantry forces could not reach the target.

Breaking Silence on Stampede

I wish to take this opportune moment and forum to make my comments on and inform you all about the November 22 (tragic stampede) incident. As far as this incident is concerned I have not made further remarks after my last live statement at about 5:30 am (on the eventful day). I made three live broadcasts that night. My first live appearance (on TV) was at 1:05 am and without any prepared text. My second live appearance was at 2:30 am. My third one was at 1:30 am. What I am saying will not be in any way interfering with investigation results by the Commission (that has been established specially) to solve the incidental case. They will present their findings in a press conference this afternoon and declare closing the case on that matter.

I have kept silent and made no comments since then. I also said nothing on the national mourning day (November 25) because I find it difficult to hold my tears. What I am going to say here today should not be judged as interfering with tasks of the commission and the three sub-commissions to investigate the incident at all. I have the duty to raise some points for a better understanding of the issue

by national and international public.

Many Great Successes and a Failure

I must say that from November 11 (Monday) through to 22 (also Monday) Cambodia has been noted with so many great successes but also a failure. An ancient Cambodian saying goes 'a hundred shiploads of good actions disappears because of one failed action.' What are counted to be successes?

Cambodia smoothly and proudly hosted leaders of Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and Thailand who have come (to Phnom Penh) for the CLV (Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam) summit, for the CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) summit and the ACMECS (Ayeyawady-Chao Praya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy) Summit.

Cambodia organized the most pleasant water festival for our people this year. Before November 22, there was only one incident that happened. A young boy was drown and died when he reached out to the colorfully floating display. For three days and two nights, the whole thing went well and under control. Last year the festivity, especially fireworks, was disturbed by rain. This year there has no such disturbance. The roof we put up over the tribune, from which honorary guests observe the boat race and other festivities, was not useful for that matter.

It should be noted that this year the largest number of people compared to previous years have come to enjoy the festival. I shared this with HM the King that it is not a crowd of people but a sea of people. The first night of the festival I did not step out of my house to see the festival but in the second night of the festival that we had to celebrate our respect for the moon I did. From my house I have cameras that give me the sights of Koh Pij and beyond, my judgment that a sea of people is a fact.

For the last day of festival we have

increased firework timeframe to forty minutes from usual set of twenty minutes. We have Cambodian fireworks combined with those provided and fired by Korean experts at interval. As HM the King returned to the Palace accompanying by Samdech Punnea Chakrei Heng Samrin and me, the Cambodian and Korean firework teams had their last sets together. I said it to HM that the Governor (of Phnom Penh) HE Kep Chuktema has made a great effort but he still has a few hours more (to keep thing under control). HM the King also gave his appreciation and praise.

Incomprehensive Situation Evaluation - Unanticipated and Tragic Misfortune

It had been anticipated that a little after midnight the festivities would come to a smooth and successful closing. Unfortunately, an event that (I must say it) is the most tragic and misfortunate took place since the time when the Pol Pot regime fell. Many people, as of the moment of speaking the number of death reached 351, died within a short span of time (because of the stampede). It is a tragic event never occurred (in Cambodia). Of course this kind of stampede happened in various countries like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, India, Germany, etc. of which hundreds of deaths have been recorded.

The question here is what has caused and led to this shocking tragedy for our people and nation.

I have noted that investigation and explanation provided has been framed to a situation of stampede and suffocation because of too crowded situation. I would leave this role for the commission to give its concluding statement. However, in a political framework I must have the guts to speak on a number of shortcomings that is relating to a general or macro condition of the situation.

The biggest mistake that we must consent to is *incomprehensive evaluation of the situation*, which is coupled with *unexpectedness* and therefore *carelessness*. These

are the points in common that such a tragic incident took place. We have not made a thorough evaluation of the situation while underestimating evolved situation. It was beyond anticipation and that led to negligence. It was because of absence of anticipation of the problem as such that precautionary measures have not been figured out and set forth.

It was indeed unanticipated that human beings could crash into one another like vehicles. If anyone could have thought of that and were to provide us with recommendation as to how to cope up with this human crashing incident with so and so measures, (and we did not take them seriously) as the Prime Minister, I would urge the whole Cabinet to resign. However, no one could have imagined this and even so when our people are coming to enjoy the festivity in the time of peace and in absence of terrorist threat of any sort.

As the bridge has proven no damages whatsoever by technical standard, the company that built the bridge and/or carry on the Koh Pij development is also not held responsible. Now, could we leave all mistakes for the dead? Phnom Penh Post has run an article with a statement by a niece (a way to address a young girl whose age is comparable to a niece) that this has happened because young men were trying to get close to and touch young women, and so on and so forth. Shall we place all the blame on the dead? That is ridiculous.

Again, I stay with my point that it has all started from *misjudgment of the would-be evolving situation*. I could recall that in the Cabinet's meeting on November 12, I urged a focus of attention and preparedness for rescue mission for boat rowers in case of sinking so that to prevent fatal drowning phenomena like that other year. As far as traffic flow is concerned I told (the Mayor of Phnom Penh) HE Kep Chuktema to keep an eye of the statistics of this year festival season compared to the previous ones as

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we have three new bridges – Prek Kadam Cambodian-Chinese Friendship Bridge, Prek Tamak Cambodian-Chinese Friendship Bridge and Prek Phnov Bridge – in full operation to relieve traffic congestion from the northern and eastern sections of Phnom Penh. We also have the overpass at Kbal Thnol in function to relieve traffic from the southern section of Phnom Penh.

As far as this incident is concerned, we conclude it has stemmed out from the fact that we have incomprehensively evaluated and underestimated the situation, which has led to short-sighted anticipation and negligence. It is my total reassurance that we would take all necessary measures to prevent this incident from taking place if it were within our anticipation.

No Sign of Terrorism, A Historic Lesson

In our effort to resolve this difficulty, HE Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Interior, HE Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in Charge of the Council of Ministers, together with concerned Ministers of Health, Social Affairs, and the Mayor have all taken commanding positions at office of the Municipality of Phnom Penh. When the situation got better they conducted a VDO conferencing with me. I have asked to come in person to oversee the situation but I have been denied and recommended to stay where I am as a commander. I think it was a correct recommendation and decision to make.

In my second statement I have made it clear on the point that *there is no sign that it is the result of terrorist act*. As there had been so many deaths in such a short time I doubted indeed if it was not caused by poisonous gas or any other means that could deem to be terrorist means of killing en mass. I have ordered for immediate post-mortem until I got a confirmation that there was *no sign of such killing means*. In that instance that

I reappeared for the second time (on TV) and stated clearly that there was no sign of terrorist act to assuage concerns of our people, investors and tourists.

Have those in the opposition thought of other consequences or secondary impacts from this incident? I have called for calm among people, investors and tourists for the sake of keeping our macroeconomics stable. Despite the fact that we have not got a stock market up and running yet, we must take a comprehensive measure that would ensure no upset situation in the exchange rate as well as impact to-be on stock and share. What happened could now be remembered as an historic lesson and experience for solving other cases.

No Resignation, No Punishment

The Royal Government as well as the authorities at all levels would give appropriate judgment to their shares of responsibility in solving incidental casualties and consequences. I have sought our people's understanding, and apologized. Some have underpinned the Royal Government of being incompetent and I say it is true that we were incompetent when there have been so many deaths. In relation to this, there maybe questions asked if there would be resignation out of this obvious incompetency.

Let me remind those who posed this question of the case of President G. Bush (Junior) when there was this September 11 terrorist incident on the twin towers in New York. The reason I have depicted this as an example is because those of you who have posed this question are normally pro American. What happened there (New York) was in fact preventable because there was warning of terrorist attack of some kind. When the terrorist navigated the plane to crash into the twin towers, had there been a resignation of the Mayor of New York or of President Bush or the Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld?

Samdech Kong Sam Ol, Deputy

Prime Minister, Minister of the Royal Palace (and President of National Committee for the Preparation and Organization National and International Events - NCPO-NIE), who had to fulfill a mission given by HM the King to deliver His Majesty's concerns and gifts to casualties of a mine incident in Battambang province, having learned of the tragic event upon his return, has asked for a consultation with me that he may tender his resignation from the post and duty as the President of NCPONIE. He already has his resignation letter prepared. I told him not to because no one is held responsible.

If someone could predict this and tell that this would happen and we (concerned parties) are not paying heed to what has been said or suggested, and if the bridge is forbidden for use and people have for some reasons been allowed to use it, then the Mayor (of Phnom Penh), the Municipal Police Head and concerned officials would then have to resign.

In the print media, I have seen elaborations on issue of resignation and punishment. They have made a point that so far there does not seem to be any removal (from positions or ranks) of officials on this stampede incident. I must affirm it to our compatriot that no one will be punished. As for those who committed harm or mistake, whether they are dead or wounded now, should be blessed by our good faith to go to world of serenity and to get better soon. There will be no punishment in both secular and Buddhist worlds.

Multi-Concerns and Multi-Measures at Same Time

I have heard many people making so and so comments of the situation. I would not reject their concerns as some of them have let out their screams because of shocks over the tragic incident. I have reserved my comments and make it out to you all today. We have been in a situation where we have multi-concerns to be addressed by multi-measures at the same time.

By this I mean that while we have

to solve the situation in one place, we also have to take precautionary measures to prevent nationwide chaotic situation that could be caused by shock of the incident. That would be even more dangerous. I would like to have your attention on one crucial point that when the incident took place, there were no less than three million people in Phnom Penh. If we were not prudent as to contain the situation and resolve the challenge in an appropriate manner, we could anticipated (shock may cause) more casualties because incidents as such may happen in other crowded places such as the park before the Botum Pagoda, the park before the Royal Palace, etc.

Destruction that could be caused by inappropriate apprehension and solution to the problem would be great and more inclusive. We have had to contain the shock and critical situation not only on the Koh Pij Bridge, but also in the whole Koh Pij (Pij – Diamond in English – island), the concert site of TV3, the concert site of Bayon TV before NAGA World Hotel, the concert site of TV9 before the Botum Pagoda, the live broadcast of SEATV from the Veal Meru (Royal Tilling Field) near the Royal Palace, the live concert of APSARA TV from the Democratic site, the live concert of TV5 at the Olympic Stadium, and various others, or otherwise it would have created a greater mess.

Normally I listened to local radio stations, as for radio broadcast from abroad I read the transcript or downloaded copy of their texts. Some people have made it a point that there should be a use of air rescue. I just wanted them to think again as to what sort of aircraft that they could think of in conducting such a rescue mission. We did use helicopter to rescue people, and HE Soey Keo is still alive now, from a crash. We had this basket to roll down and take them up. But that was a case of a few victims. How could we do that with so many victims that are packed in a heap like this?

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Mind you again, if we were to have helicopters up and hanging in such a rescue mission, what panic and shock could this cause to other people in the above locations I have mentioned above? The whole situation would elapse in Phnom Penh. It was so lucky that we could handle the situation, contain the incident and prevent it from causing further shocks to other sites. We must look into all aspects and take all factors of concern into consideration in making judgment and decision and that is what I call multi-measures to address multi-concerns at the same time.

Grateful Mutual Help, National Tragedy and Mourning

A question may be asked on the number of police forces who have been assigned to duty during the festival. There are over ten thousands of them but they are scattered to various targets and in light of such an incident they could not be summoned from their duty posts at all. As the situation evolves to a critical stage, as an immediate response, relatives, friends and passers-by have pooled their efforts and provided whatever helps they can to the victims. I must thank them from the bottom of heart that our people know that they must help each other in this time of need.

Some suggested that water should be splashed or hosed on the victims (who appeared to be in suffocation and dehydration). This suggestion would even shorten lives of those who are beneath stacks of people. People could suggest anything and they could also do so if they chose too in the meantime. My only concern and suggestion is that one should not take advantage of the national tragedy or the corpses and tears of innocent people. I have cried and how many people that do not find this a sad and moved story? Tears came into my eyes whenever I flash my memory on it. I think we should aim for a solution better than trying to take political advantage of the incident.

It is indeed national tragedy. That is why some TV stations have skipped their live broadcast of other festivities. Planned boat races at Takhmao's Bassac River and the boat race ceremony in Prey Nokor Khnong (of Hluong Preah Sdech Kan – of Kompong Cham province) have all been canceled. However, we will go on with the organization and hosting of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP).

A Prophecy - Blood Heaps the Elephant's Abdomen

Taking inappropriate measures in shock would create further chaotic situation and deaths. What happened has been depicted by an old lady, as is reported in a newspaper, to be a (local) prophecy about when *'blood heaps up reaching the elephant's abdomen'* to describe a situation (that Cambodia will have to go through) before Cambodia reaches its peak (for good). There have been various predictions (about Cambodia and its people as a whole) and what happened so far, so to speak, seemed to be in line with those prophecies.

One of them goes 'Prey Nokor would fall, Phnom Penh would dissolve, Battambang (some versions goes Bangkok) would shatter, while Angkor Wat (at Siem Reap province) would rejoice.' That seems to have proven factual already. Another goes 'where there are homes but there are no residents, where there are roads, but there are no walkers.' According to our experience, this also has been proven factual under Pol Pot's time. 'A war that lasts as long as cooking shrimps instant,' has also been witnessed and that was the fight with (Funicpec's) Nhek Bun Chhai (currently Deputy Prime Minister) on 5-6 July 1997. Well that is just superstition but real life events seem to have coincide.

Four Measures to Take

We have given our ears to various recommendations and suggestions that are not attached to political agenda. Here followed I would like recommend four of the bests I

for your attention here.

Firstly, there has to be a comprehensive evaluation of the situation and there should be no room for any underestimation at all. From now every event, no matter if it were to take place in Phnom Penh or any other places, must be well planned with consideration given to every possible cause of incident. Events like race of oxcart, football, volleyball, concert, etc. will gather thousands of people. People's better living condition has brought about more human traffic to and from city and/or festive events. This must be a medium in measuring our anticipation and response.

Secondly, planning of action and force must be organized and controlled at various targets. As Head of National Committee for Anti-Terrorism, I learn of a logbook in which forces have been broken down and assigned with specific task to carry out. I have mentioned in my lecture on working methodology that it is primary to have a good and comprehensive plan, because it will serve the 30% share as a roadmap. Organized process of implementation of the plan shares another 30% in the course of action. Whereas one's ability to resolve force majeure or unanticipated situation is the remaining 40%.

Thirdly, there must be forces ready for such an intervention. Indeed we have some forces ready but the number could not match with the extent of the situation. We do not have sufficient number of ambulances so some victims have been brought to hospital with non-medical transport means that do not have basic equipments such as oxygen tank which had been compounding factor for tragic death. As stretchers were not there in sufficient number, most of the victims had been pulled out and were carried by hands. I think we have to have a technical meeting to address this issue.

Thing like stretchers must be available in large number and ready for all sorts of emergency

situation. Rescuing techniques that are necessary for saving human life like heart or respiratory resuscitations must be organized in addition to trainings that we have done so far for all forces in general, and also among the Cambodian Red Cross activists and students. More rescuing skills need to be provided so that we could be ready to deal with emergency situation and unpredictable consequences.

As we are all ears to good-intention suggestions and recommendations, I would like to warn our forces and relevant authorities not to take what could be seen to be extreme actions and/or in infringement upon civil rights. Appropriate measures must be taken in consideration of factual situation. We have more bridges now and a few more are coming on the way, so congestion and traffic flow management must be of immediate importance and action.

And **fourthly**, there have to be more way-outs or exits or emergency exits not only from places like Koh Pij but also from every buildings and development sites, like hotels, malls, and all big buildings, where crowd of people could be attracted and/or when emergency situation demands.

Koh Pij Will Go on

In line with what has been said by the Deputy General Secretary of NCPONIE, when asked by the media about whether or not that Cambodia continues to celebrate the water festival, I have a duty to reaffirm his answer that the water festival is the national event and there will be no such thing as taking it off our calendar because of this sad incident.

As far as the future of Koh Pij is concerned, I also have a confirmation to make for the public that its development plan will go on. I will throw a party for some 100 delegations of political parties from 57 countries on December 2 at Koh Pij. We will have to go on with normal services and activities such as organizing wedding parties, etc.

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Let's look at the Thai example in their efforts to bring Phuket, which was devastated by the Tsunami, to tourists' attention again. Thousands of people died and they spent so much money and efforts, including organization of ASEAN related meetings, to keep Phuket as touristic destination.

As I confirmed that Koh Pij will soon be open for business again, I would recommend Mr. Pong Khieu Se and the Mayor of Phnom Penh to meet and figure out their best measures for relieving the crowd safely with extra exits or way-outs of the site for future emergency situation.

Not for Political Advantage Please

In this tragic situation, I am sure authorities and people are shocked and grieved. I believe it is the same for political parties. I just wish that for some, may this grief be from their innermost feelings and not for own political advantage. I have no ability to shut anyone's mouth but I beg that they should not exploit for their political advantage over the corpses and tears of our people.

There has been a leaflet in Poi Pet of Banteay Meanjei that all happened because the Royal Government (of Cambodia) planned this (incidental) killing. How could this be said? I think you may understand that only those who wish to discredit the Royal Government could have thought of this way of downfalling us. Every Government would never wish to confront with tragedy of all sorts as it would mar its credibility and leadership.

Somewhere in Kompong Speu, someone has said it to the people that this incident happened because the people have chosen wrong political party. They have been so unpredictable in their manner. For those who have said so have denied the reality that because of so many good people it has, the Cambodian People's Party has had the support from the

majority of people, and 90 seats in the National Assembly clearly illustrate that.

Have they thought about whether they could do one bit of what we have done to cope with the situation? I think it would be in their best interest if political parties take their time to visit and share hardships with our victims at hospitals rather than making irresponsible comments and criticism and/or spreading leaflets.

In relation to the contribution funds for the victims, it is also an insult when someone has said that 'it would be good if only 50% of what has been accumulated could reach those intended for.' What have they thought of us – A thief? Are we too desperate for money? Or are they jealous with the fact in circumstance like this we could raise fund to help our people? Instead of doing so they should be content with the (voluntary) contribution fund which will be used for good faith.

Bayon TV, CTN TV Rescue Fund Raising and Distribution

It was a great effort by all to work on the registration and management of our people's voluntary contributions by the Bayon TV and CTN TV stations. Because their staff fainted out after an intense contribution period, the Bayon TV has called off their scheduled live boxing and concert.

The two TVs have done a great many things from their parts to help with the situation. They not only organize fund raising to help our victims but also clarify on the spot a bad-motive propaganda which worsens heart and mind of the people in that respect.

I have mentioned here and there and now I have to make it public once again that for every death from the stampede at Koh Pij, there will be contributions of 200 USD from HM the King, 200 USD from Samdech Ov and Samdech Me, five million Riels (about 1,219 USD) from the Royal Government, 1,000 USD from the Development Company

of Koh Pij. This has brought them to a sum of 3,771 USD. We have figured out the establishment of bank accounts with ACLEDA Bank because of its local branch network with the help of HE Ith Sam Heng, Minister for Social Affairs, so that the fund provided will be safe and accessible for them any time.

About 12,000 USD for Family of the Deceased

This effort will also allow us to have a way of transferring money to each and every account an additional sum which, I am sure, will not be less than some 9,000 USD more. According to my calculation, each family of the death will receive 12,000 USD. The additional fund to be accounted for each death, provisionally, by the CTN Fund of some 850,000 USD, for 351 victims, each family will receive 2,400 USD. The contributions of 500,000 USD provided by the Government (of the People's Republic) of China and some more from the businessmen and various other sources, we could set aside 1,700 USD more for each family.

Let me report to you about other foreign contributions from personal and institutional capacities in which 50,000 USD has been received from the Chinese Red Cross, 150,000 USD from the Investment Community of Vietnam, 100,000 USD from Dr Handa, a Japanese, of the University of Cambodia, and 100,000 USD from a Head of State of a state that is a member of the Federative States of Russia.

The Bayon TV Rescue Fund (for the victims of Koph Pij Bridge Stampede) has raised 2,455,547,700 Riels and 1,250,185 USD. For each victim there will be a contribution of 6,995,862.390 Riels more and 3,661.78 USD more. I have ordered that distribution fund will have to be allocated for each victim according to the contribution fund status – in Riel and also in USD. For those victims whose families are residing in Phnom Penh, because my daughter is in

her late pregnancy, they are requested to come to Bayon TV to get the share, which they either take home or keep in a bank account.

The amount of contribution, if we put it in the general picture and taking into consideration of the GDP status of our country, about 700 USD per capita, a raise of over two million USD in just three days has been an astonishing result. I am sure there are people who could not make cash contribution but also have been motivated by the feeling of sadness and wanting to help too. I feel so grieved and lamented when I heard a brother whose child died in the incident and said 'my dear child, you are so honored that Lok Chumteav has come to our house.' What the gentlemen had said will always be with us.

Follow-up Activities

All local authorities must continue to keep an eye on the victims' family to see if they are in desperate poverty because of the situation in which family is losing their breadwinners or orphans to be looked after. We must make sure that this incident will not lead to school dropouts by family members of the victims. Again I have to have all concerned authorities to take these follow-up activities seriously.

There may be questions that the funds have been divided and given to the deaths of 351 victims, so what if there will be more who would die during the course of treatments? We do not wish for them to suffer such a fate but if ever that is the case I will be interceding with personal contribution. However, the Koh Pij Development Company will not allow me to do, I am sure.

Our joined efforts have strengthened us in solving this tragedy. Let me assure the souls of those who have died that their families will not be left stranded. Millions of Cambodian people are with them. The Royal Government of Cambodia and its responsible (ruling)

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party, whom they have supported, are with them. Your families will be well looked after and I would assure your souls that you could rest in peace and return to reincarnation so as to see and witness the development of the land of Angkor.

This tragic incident will not be forgotten. We will set up a place in respect for your souls. Your photos will be laced and names will be carved. I must assure the public that the shrine will not be built by the Bayon TV and CTN TV Rescue Fund, but my daughter, Okhna Kit Meng and Okhna Pong Khieu Se, and I personally have already been prepared for that.

What remains to be followed is the effort to provide treatment and care for those victims who are still alive. I must ensure that every victim is well treated and given medical care seriously. Let's now look and evaluate the situation of the victims. If local medical facilities are not sophisticated for treatment of internal injuries, I would recommend further consideration for evacuation for treatment abroad like in Vietnam or Thailand. We must do everything we can and the Royal Government will cover their treatment bills both locally and abroad.

Thanks for Personal and Institutional Efforts, Foreign Leaders and Embassies

From the bottom of my heart, my great thanks go to the effort made by persons and relevant authorities in solving the situation. The medical staff have proven to do their very best too. Minister of Health, HE Mam Bun Heng has showed the best of his ability in taking up responsibility, and through him I would like to convey my gratefulness to staff of all hospitals for providing care and services in this situation.

I also thank the civilians and monks whose contributions have allowed us to do many things to help the deceased and their families. In 2000, we had that situation of millennium flooding in which

our people also pooled their contributions to help those in need. The same gesture has been proven factual for the effort to defend the border territory. However, the contribution this time, in resource sharing and in mental help, has been even more so.

I have the need to express on behalf of all the victims our gratefulness for the helps and considerations given and expressed by HM the King, Samdech Ov, the King Father, and Samdech Me, the Queen Mother, as well as those by President and members of the Senate, President and members of the National Assembly, all political parties as well as the non-governmental organizations.

I also thank fervently all TV channels for their tireless efforts in broadcasting live my statements and rescuing missions. Particularly, the Bayon and CTN TVs have rescheduled their pre-planned programs so as to vibrantly report and mobilize people to help with the fund to rescue and assuage hardships for the bereaved families.

Please allow me to seek the understanding of our people, especially the suls of the deceased and their families, for the difficulties that the Royal Government has had to deal in such a tragic moment and situation.

I also would like to take this opportune moment to express my sincere gratitude for leaders of so many countries for spending their time to express their condolences to HM the King, to the Prime Minister and to Minister for Foreign Affairs. The United States of America has shared their condolences through the statement of the Secretary of State. President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao of (the People's Republic of) China also shared with the Cambodian people their condolences and sad feelings.

Also, I thank for messages of condolences that are coming from international organizations and foreign embassies...☐

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border water for irrigation. These are to be discussed on a bilateral and multilateral level. It will take time.

AP: Has ACMECS expressed any concerns about the hydroelectric dam (in China) that has been threatening countries in the lower Mekong? Also about political development in Myanmar; has HE Thein Sein told Samdech of the release of Aung San Sukyi?

Let me confirm that the ACMECS summit this morning did not discuss about this issue of **hydropower dam**. However, I wish to have your attention on this issue that when Cambodia had this (rain) flood at Takhmao (a district of Kandal) and Phnom Penh, was that caused by the hydro power dam? ...

Maybe some facts could help you out. In 1998, I do not know if you all could remember, the level of water in the Mekong River was 7.8 meters, one of the lowest ever recorded. At that time China has not yet built its dam. In 2000, at the juncture of two rivers (the Mekong and Tonle Sap) the level of water was recorded to be 12 meters high. Phnom Penh was under threat and we termed the situation as the millennium flood. Again this year we have one of the lowest levels of flood. Have all these been the cause by hydro-power dam? They may not be so and climate change is the world's common situation.

As far as **rivers** are concerned, whether there is more or less water is defined by the amount of rain each year. I do not defend China and/or Laos PDR who are building electric dams upstream of the Mekong River. I also do not talk in favor of the Royal Government's approved projects for a hydropower stations. But we all could reason that when there is more heavy rain there will be flood and on the contrary there will be drought. I therefore suggest that everyone should not try to be extreme environmentalist.

Take for instance, yesterday, in my negotiation with the Vietnamese (delegation), I have brought to their attention the contract in which Cambodia purchases 200 MW electricity from Vietnam for the supply for Phnom Penh. As far as the stated amount of electricity is concerned, only 120 MW of electricity has so far been provided. I have suggested to the Vietnamese (Prime Minister) to increase the amount so far provided to at least 170 MW. The Prime Minister of (Vietnam) said to me it has been quite difficult for Vietnam to do so because there is not enough rainwater in the reservoir. This situation has made it hard for Vietnam to provide electricity for their need too, not just for Cambodia. He told me that he had to explain the situation to the (Vietnamese) National Assembly on the cause of lacking electricity. However, Vietnam assures us that 170 MW of electricity will be provided on Cambodian demand.

The **release of Aung San Sukyi** is in fact not a subject that I should bring up with HE Thein Sein at all and HE Thein Sein also does not have the obligation to report to me about it too. He is head of a (sovereign) Government.

CTN: Viewers must have seen the Thai Prime Minister HE Abhisit Vijijsiva who also participated in the ACMECS summit. Will Samdech meet with Abhisit? If you do, what are you going to talk with him?

Thank you for this question... HE Abhisit will continue with a working visit for this afternoon. There will be a bilateral negotiation to be followed by signing ceremony of ministers of the two countries on visa exemption for holders of normal passport. The working visit is encompassed with signing ceremony and a banquet organized by the (Cambodian) Prime Minister of the host country in his honor... This is now time for improvement of relations, seeking way of deescalating conflict while expanding solution and cooperation not only in bilateral but also multilateral frameworks...☐

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Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam) also conducted a meeting with the ACMECS Business Council, in which they agreed to the proposal (from the Business Council) for the strengthening of ACMECS institutional capacity and encouraging active participation of the ACMECS Business Council in the implementation of ACMECS's Plan of Action, particularly under the initiative of Governments-Private Sector Partnership, in order to ensure maximum and effective use of all the potentials of the existing business and investment opportunities in member countries ... In this sense, we have noted with satisfaction that the CLV, CLMV and ACMECS cooperation frameworks were incorporated into the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity that was recently adopted at the 17th ASEAN Summit in Hanoi ... These are some of the points that I feel are important for you to learn about the Summits and their results. I still have a little time left to take up questions, if there are any.

Kyodo: *CLMV projects have gone down from 58 to 16 prioritized projects, that is four projects from each member country. Could Samdech (Techo Hun Sen) elaborate the four projects that Cambodia hold on to? This morning Samdech stressed that ACMECS countries have got abundance of rice, and I wish to know whether issue has been discussed as how to follow up?*

Thank you for the question that is relating to the trimming down of projects from 58 to 16 prioritized ones within the CLMV framework. This has stemmed from the reality that we could not work out the financing issue. We have so many projects that could not be fulfilled all at once. It is in this reality that each country has made effort in prioritizing projects to four from each country. I would like you to pursue with (Minister of Trade and in Charge of Development Triangle Area of Cambodia) HE Cham Prasidh on that.

With regard to rice and relevant cooperation issue, I wish to reiterate the initiative to establish what is to be called Association of Rice Exporting (Nations or Countries). As is known to everyone, the ACMECS country members have controlled some 45% of rice supply in the world market. Negotiation on the initiative has been conducted since 2005, but a proper mechanism has not yet been agreed upon. However, in reality, some forms of cooperation have apparently come into operation. What remains to be done is for our ministers to work out the differences so as to reach an agreement on the plan of action, the framework and mechanism for coordination among ACMECS country members in relation to food production and rice export. I think there is enough time for ACMECS Prime Ministers and relevant ministers to work out an agreement for such a mechanism to take shape.

I would like to take this opportune moment to reiterate that in case where such mechanism is in place, it will not be operating in a system like OPEC (Oil Producing and Exporting Countries). ACMECS aims to set up rice export association for the sake of sustaining food stability in the world, or at least in the region where destructions caused by natural calamity such as drought and flooding has been frequent for climate change. We will not take advantage (of the fact that the world or the region is in short of food supply) to increase the price of rice and other food-stuff at all. This should be reassuring and addressing concerns expressed by some countries that are not capable of producing food.

CTN: *Has there been any discussion in the CLMV Summit about political development in Myanmar after the country's release of Aung San Suki and elections. Would ACMECS consider expanding its membership to China? Was there any discussion about climate change? Will the idea of establishing Association of Rice Exporting Countries continue?*

As far as *political development in Myanmar* is concerned, the CLMV Summit welcomed the success of the elections in Myanmar. As for me I not only extend my congratulation to the Myanmar elections in general, but also congratulate the Myanmar Prime Minister HE Thein Sein (who is here for the CLMV and ACMECS summits) for the great victory his party has achieved and hope that (Cambodia) will work with the new Government (that is to be established) after the elections. In fact there is no discussion on political matter in this forum but one may know of the common position of member countries of ASEAN as well as of CLMV.

On your question about *whether ACMECS will include China* at some stage, I must say that because ACMECS has more or less similar setup as the Greater Mekong Sub-region, maybe there is no need for an inclusion of (the People's Republic of) China into this forum. ACMECS mechanism, the same is true for CLV and CLMV, which is inclusive in the integration project of ASEAN, is in fact like a partial mechanism of ASEAN. ACMECS is therefore what it is now. There is no plan for expansion of membership.

Climate change has been one of the central issues that the Summit has touched on. The issue has been raised in opening address as well as in our discussions. I have rendered my support to measure of establishing an early warning system or mechanism proposed by the Prime Minister of the Laos PDR for the sake of dealing with disaster management within ACMECS region. The CLV summit has also drawn attention of its members on this issue. This morning, the ACMECS summit once again has made the issue a matter of urgent consideration. We have agreed to leave the issue for further discussion by relevant ministers so as to achieve a coordinated flow of information and mechanism.

I also have proposed for consid-

eration by member countries on the initiative for a cross-border disaster management. According to the experience (of disaster management) in 2009, because of a good cooperation with Vietnam and Laos, information has been provided to Cambodia and disaster has been evaded from the lower part (of the Mekong region). In 2010, we have a good cooperation with Thailand that information about flood coming from Thailand into Cambodia has been shared with Cambodia. Because of knowing in advance of the situation that is going to happen, we have been able to reduce the flood effect on human lives.

I have raised this issue of establishing a cooperation mechanism for cross-border rescue. Climate change is not restricted by any boundary and causes unlimited impacts. Last year flooding in Ratanakiri gave us an experience that when parts of Cambodian territories were flooded and the local authorities and rescue operations could not reach the victims from the Cambodian side, a proposal has been made to Vietnam to help rescue our people from the Vietnamese territory. I am sure this issue becomes a topic for further discussion. The idea is when the area is under any disaster threats, rescue mission and cooperation should be conducted from whoever and whichever side rather than being restricted by border jurisdiction.

Again your question about the *Rice Initiative*, as I have said in my earlier answer that the (concerned) ministers will have to carry on, I would also like to add that the initiative will go on. The ASEAN integration will be a reality in 2015, though there may be different speed in implementing the plan, but production, management, distribution, and marketing will definitely be in a different situation. In production we will collaborate in research, seed selection and sharing, cooperation in use of fertilizers, insecticides, etc. We may also put in picture possible cooperation on issue of cross-

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