

## Reviewing Tourism Works

04 July 2012 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)



01 May 12 - Samdech Techo Hun Sen Welcomes Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra before the US-ASEAN Business Forum in Siem Reap Province (Kampuchea Thmey).

### Cambodian Dishes

(As for their point) I want to elaborate on issue relating to Cambodian dishes. We have got to be the one who start to disseminate our dishes so as to raise awareness among tourists. I have experimented it myself. I always ordered some Cambodian dishes in the menu when I throw a party for my guests to try and see if they like Cambodian dishes or not. When we go to foreign country, it is very rare that you are being served with anything that is not local dish. I would like to urge all ministries to host their guests with Cambodian dishes and music.

It seems that (some Cambodians) have been the ones who like to present (foreign) things to foreign guests. I have said on various occasions that presenting bands of foreign musical instruments like accordion, etc. is like trying to present foreign

guests with their own cultures. We also have our tools and we should play our tools for them. They are in Cambodian to learn about Cambodia. Let them see it. We should learn it from other countries as well, Japan included. Japan would not play western music and/or serve you with food from other cultures but their own. We should learn it from them.

I always check the menu that is brought to me for my official dinner with foreign guests. Take for instance, my latest dinner offered in honor of the crown prince Naruhito of Japan, I have Samlor Korko (a typical Cambodian fish and vegetable soup) as the main course. The crown prince mistook it for curry but I told him it was not. I clarified that curry may be identical for Vietnam, Thailand or Laos but Samlor Korko is exclusively Cambodian. I am so glad that the crown prince had it all  
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## Tenth National Fisheries Day

01 July 2012 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

### 10th Anniversary of Fisheries Day

My wife and I are so happy that we are here to celebrate - with the Buddhist monks, Muslim Hakim and Tuan from local mosques, people and excellencies, ladies, gentlemen, international guests - the 10th National Fisheries Day at Boeng Thom (Great Lake) of Rokar Khnor commune, Kompong Cham province. We will release some 50,000 fish and 100,000 lobster babies into the lake. With efforts made by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), the Fisheries Administration and the local authorities, we are celebrating this event at a place not far from my wife birth village and mine. I have a long and deep memory on my wife about this place. I will tell you later.

This is the tenth year that we have been releasing aquatic animal babies into the natural water system. In was in 2002, in the village of Krangyov that as part of its development, fish babies were released into the water system. We then go on doing that every year until we officially issued later a subdecree.

During the ten years that we release aquatic animal babies into the natural system, I was absent only in 2010 when I had the swine fever. I sent HE Yim Chhay Ly, Deputy Prime Minister in my place to celebrate with our people in Kompot province. Last year I

went to Svay Rieng's Vaiko river for this event while a fisheries reform commenced and came to final on March 8, 2012.

With these efforts we have been able to establish a national movement so as to help increase fisheries population through two means: (1) *to conserve the natural resources through the implementation of the Royal Government's deep and final reform on fisheries resources management* and (2) *to conduct aquatic animals farming through the release of fish and lobster babies in lakes and ponds digged by people.*

### Thanks for Protecting Boeng Thom

I would like to give my thanks and appreciation to HE Chea Sophara, Minister for Rural Development, for his effort to keep Boeng Thom intact. The fate of Boeng Thom has indeed been my concern as many lakes along the rivers of Mekong, Tonle Sap and Basac have been claimed by people as fields for cultivation. Having seen all that I have asked HE Sophara to look after the lake of Boeng Thom.

I thank the people of Rokar Khnor commune and those in adjacent areas for not claiming land in the lake. I have learnt from HE Chea Sophara about the lake of Boeng Thom before we made a decision to build with the Korean International  
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Cooperation Agency (KOICA) this huge dam to preserve water in the lake. It is so fortunate. If the lake were claimed, we would have lost a huge natural lake and people themselves would suffer lack of water for irrigation. It is also with this intact condition that the Ministry of Rural Development is able to convince KOICA to help develop the dam.

The dam is 4,780 meters long and four meters side on top, and has three water control mechanisms. The area under water is 108 hectares. HE Chea Sophara also informed me of the two roads that were built for people to travel to and from between villages and their farms. As we are native to these villages, I sent HE Chea Sophara, also from this area, to come assist people on the eastern side of the Mekong river along the national road 7. His area of operation includes Kroch Chmar, Peam Jilang, Suong, Tbong Khmom all the way to the district of Mehnot.

I am so glad that we could be able to protect the lake and I am urging people to make efforts to safeguard it. At the later stage, if we have more resources, we could also restore the lake's depth as well. As a matter of fact the dam that we built is for keeping water in the lake after the flood came and retreated. While being flooded, the depth of the lake is being reduced by leaves of all inundated forests. As far as this report tells me, the water from this lake is to irrigate some 600 hectares of land for both dry season rice and other crops.

The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Chan Sarun, because he noticed the low level of water in the lake, thought of changing the venue of fish and lobster babies releasing ceremony to Kompong Thom province.

After some discussion I asked him to do it here. Though the level of water at the moment is shallow, because the rainy season has come, I think they will be fine. In July 37 years ago there was also a huge rain at around 11pm at this place. I called it the Boeng Thom's love story. I caught so much fish that day.

### **Deep Fishery Reform Starts in 2000**

HE Chan Sarun has just reported about efforts to implement the reform of the fishing lot policy. I would take this opportune moment to inform some ten thousand people who are present here as well as people in the whole country once again about the fishing lot reform policy conducted by the Royal Government of Cambodia, which is in fact the realization of its deep reform policy started in 2000. I could recall one day when there was a huge flood in 2000 - we called it the millenium flooding - I went to Siem Reap province to oversee the rescue missions.

Accidentally the helicopter had a minor technical problem and we could not fly back. That night HE Tia Banh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense, HE Cham Prasidh, Senior Minister and Minister for Trade, Member of the National Assembly Sieng Nam came to see me and told me about people's sufferings in relation to the fishing lots. It was on that day at the Buddhist pagoda in the commune of Damdek, the district of Sotre Nikum, that I declared the reform policy on fishing lots.

The 2000 policy is to cut a large chunk of fishing lots from the state's control for people's use. In 2001 and thereafter, more and more and up to 56% of the lake areas have been cut out for people. Despite doing that we still

observe the need for more. I should remind you that in 1908, under the French colony, HM Preah Baat Sisovath decreed the establishment of fishing lots where, on one part, fishing contractors could fish exclusively and no one was allowed to enter their fishing zones, and on the other, fishing was allowed on the basis that all fishing tackles/tools had to pay tax.

Having observed further and noticed difficulties still among the people, we have proceeded to another stage of reform that in 2011 we took serious measures to combat anarchic fishing in the lake of Tonle Sap. We also ordered all fishing activities to halt provisionally in the same area. While doing that, people living throughout the country noticed that many more fish and fish species reappear, making them believe that they really benefit from the Royal Government's fisheries reform policy.

It is in this fact that on behalf of the Royal Government and the ruling Cambodian People's Party, I have started the final reform without backtracking from March 8, 2012 to abolish all fishing lots and there are to be no more exclusive and private fishing contractors any more. All fishing lots in Cambodia are for people to catch fish. Noting the decree issued in 1908, under the reign of HM Preah Sisovath and French colony, the reform is taking place 104 years later, in 2012, under the reign of HE the King Sihamoni and Prime Minister Techo Sen.

### **The Case of Peam Jilang**

As for this place we have a place called Peam Jilang. I learnt from asking around that the Peam Jilang fishing lot also was on the list. There was a story about Peam Jilang since the war time in 1970/75. Peam Jilang is located on the border

between the districts of Kroch Chmar and Tbong Khmum. Later they made Peam Jilang a new district, for which a few communes were taken from the district of Kroch Chmar and some from Tbong Khmum. It was the administrative border in the old day.

There was a time when the US army and the south Vietnamese forces were forced to leave the area, my army came down from the north and stayed in Kompong Trea commune. After that we moved to Sna Slab Pagoda of Boeng Pruol and Kompong Russei. Once day I went out to gather information of the battle field. I had no idea that at the time my deputy took some 70 men to cross the Peam Jilang bridge. Stopping the bike and asked where were the troops, people told me they went to have a fight with the fishery administration people.

The fishery administration head at the time in the district of Kroch Chmar was Mr. Tan. I was quick to get to the bridge and stop the march of some 70 men to get a fight with Tan. I probed what it was about and they told me Mr. Tan confiscated not only fishing tools of the people but also of the army. This proves that fishing with nets and hooks in Boeng Thom was not allowed and had to be punished. I thought the fishing lot of Peam Jilang was off the list already. It is to the contrary, it was on the list until the final reform policy came into place. I could not understand. It created our people lots of problem indeed.

### **The Final Fisheries Reform**

There was an ambiguous definition that in flood season, the fishing lot/area would extend as far as the flood goes. That was so problematic. With such definition, some pagodas

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inundated during the flood time had also become fishing lots too. In this final fishery reform policy, what we are trying to do is to extinguish the fire itself. We could not afford to keep blowing smoke any more. We could not allow the situation that stepping out of their homes, people found themselves right away in the exclusive fishing lots.

We decided to abolish all exclusive/private fishing lots and return them for people's use/fishing. People now can row their boats freely in the lake. There are no more prohibitions or arrests of people for trespassing in private/exclusive fishing lots. Arrest as such and on that ground is illegal. While giving all fishing lots for people's household fishing, and to be administered by fishing community, the Royal Government only keeps some 97,503 hectares or 23.50% of the whole fishing areas in the country. The whole area for people to fish is now 317,715 hectares or 67.5%.

As for the 97,503 hectares of conserved areas fishing will not be allowed to anyone at all – whether state or private. They are meant to be places where fishes are bred and reproduced before they are big enough to get out into the natural water system to be fished by people. Take for instance, the lake of Boeng Thom, it could be a conserved area and more of fish species and lobsters would be released for regeneration.

The fishery reform policy this time is final and we are applying the fire-extinguishing approach. We no longer blow smoke. As far as the conserved area is concerned, people could travel in and out of the place but fishing is not allowed. We all must pool efforts to keep and protect the lake for our

benefits. All sorts of illegal fishing must be prevented.

### More Fish and Fish Species Reappeared

While implementing the final reform policy in fishery sector, I noticed there are positive repercussion to people's living condition. I learnt that people are happy that they see more fish and fish species reappear. They claim to see more or less as many fish as in the old days. This brought me to my old day memory that people placed a large bamboo-woven basket full of trashes into the river in time of northern breeze. At around 2pm or 3pm, when the river dolphins appeared, people pulled their baskets out of the water (with fish caught inside).

### All About Fishing Tools

The other day I met with HE Nao Thuok, Chief of Fishery Administration and asked about measurements set for certain traditional fishing tools. For some unrealistic measurements he referred to the law from 1956. People who wrote the law could have been unknowledgeable of various kinds of fishing tools. They could have been the French to write them too. What the fishery administration did concerning the measurements of the tools could be called act of dogmatism. As we are in the 21 century, certain things need to be readjusted.

I saw in an interview the other day that some fifty meters of net only is allowed. I see less destructive effect in instantly laying net than dragging ones. Please do not be too strict with the people. I also urge no restriction to number of fishing hooks as 100 would be too little. These are some of my ideas. By and large *I am making it clear: please change your habit from being strict with people but loose with*

*contractors*. That is not going to be what I am looking for.

What I have been saying is not to discredit HE Chan Sarun, HE Nao Thuok and the others, but to remind all of us that whatever we are doing, we must be realistic to the challenges that our people are facing. I learnt from HE Osman Hassan (a Khmer Islam member of the National Assembly) – and I thank him very much for it - that despite cutting fishing lots to the people, they still have problem of paying for fishing tools too. I probed who took the payments? It is the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries – so he said. Probing further, the policy was issued and enforced when May Sam Oen from the Funcinpec party was the Secretary of State for MAFF.

### People Own Natural Resources

From now on, people all over the country, no matter where they are, are true masters of the country's natural resources. It is in this objective that we establish (fishery) communities and invite them to take training (about their roles and duties) conducted by the MAFF with the supervision of Deputy Prime Minister HE Yim Chhay Ly. However, while strengthening the fishery community, let me remind that *those appointed to be heads of communities must not misuse their appointments by rights to allow private contractors to fish in their community's fishing lots at all.*

People must keep an eye on and debate with them – heads of fishing community, communal councilors and commune heads included - to make it right from wrong if they were to make inappropriate use of the lakes. People must take part in preventing all sorts of abuses

of rules and regulations. One way of doing that, people have to be strong and opinion sharing.

### Seven Requests

I would like to take this occasion to reaffirm what I have said and requested on March 8, 2012 when I declared annulment and abolition of all freshwater fishing lots while returning them back to people. The seven requests I raised asking for people's cooperation are:

(1) *Refrain from using illegal fishing tools forbidden by law.* Forbidden fishing tools include specially electrocution and small hole nets. Electrocution is a very dangerous way of catching fish as it would lead to depletion of our aquatic animal resources. I am begging our people not to use this kind of tools to catch aquatic animals.

(2) *Refrain from catching fish in the forbidden period.* It is at this time of the year (July). However small scale fishing with hooks can go on. However, if you can, refraining from doing it will allow fish to recuperate as they are now in their egg time. We should wait till the cold breeze comes from the north to catch them as their babies are grown up fishes. We may eat one fish full of eggs now but we will have tens of thousands of them if we leave the fish to recuperate.

(3) *Refrain from deforesting inundated forest while helping regrow them.* I am so glad that people here do not engage in deforesting inundated forest. Wherever we can, more inundated forest must be preserved and replanted. If we were to destroy the inundated forest and to replant it, I think that does not make sense.

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In the recent few days we have discovered a situation that should not have happened. I already passed the report to Deputy Prime Minister HE Bin Chhin. HE went to the area in the district of Stomg of Kompong Thom province. There was this incident that permission was given for the deforestation of inundated forest in the forbidden Zone II. That is disastrous. We all are growing trees, HM the King is celebrating the Arbor Day on July 9, but they destroy the inundated forest.

The same is true as we release fish into the natural system, but they fish in forbidden period. This is what I call plus one and minus one which would give us nil. Today we let some 50,000 fish babies into the system and around the same figures are released every year, so we should do our best to protect them from disastrous fishing methods.

(4) *Help protect reserved areas, providing information on crooked officials and people whose actions would destroy the reservation also counted.* This role should be performed not only by the fishery administration or competent authority but also the people in the fishing community themselves. This is your natural resources and they are for you who reside and depend your life on here.

As of now we have numerous mechanisms – at the communal, district levels and also the antigraft authority. You may in some cases send the paper on crooked officials to the antigraft authority so that measures can be taken to counter their counterproductive actions.

(5) *Refrain from using lakes/water ways for other purposes than fishing* – such as growing lotus, leveling land or placing

some buildings, etc. In the district of Pearaing of Prey Veng province, there was recently a case that people planted lotus in a whole lake. As far as this is concerned, for this area, please look after the lake and do not let it become lotus planting area. It is simple that once the lotus population grows, the fish population will decrease as fish without scales could not reside in it.

(6) *Refrain from having conflict with one another or between fishermen and dry season rice farmers or between neighboring communes, districts or provinces.* People from anywhere can fish. We must share the resources. They are for everyone. So far, the conflict of interests between dry season rice farmers and fishermen in some instances have been resolved. Each village will have to come up with its own decision if they want to fish or to keep water for dry season rice.

Some may want to keep the water for rice farming in the dry season as in some places they could cultivate twice. So it is up to you to decide. I urge that people from Roka Khnor, Tchhouk, Poes, Jumnik, etc. could come and fish. I may share with you a story of how people treated each other as far as fishing is concerned in the past. In Peam Kohsna there are quite a number of lakes – Tropeang Raing, Ta Lok, Ta Pa, Ta Boeng Mie and Tropang Jrei. People in Kroch Chmar and Svay Kleang do not have many. So people from Kroch Chmar went to fish at Peam Kohsna, which is across the river.

People in Peam Kohsna discriminated against them and did not want them to come fishing in their lakes. Later, the commune heads resolved it and people from either side could fish. As for these fish and lobster babies we released

today, they will grow up and swim all over the place. They do not have a brand that they come from Roka Khnor's lake. They are like human as they may go wherever they want to, while people can vote whichever party they wish to.

(7) *Join in the July 1 Fishery Day and actively promote aquatic husbandry, mainly fish and preserve large fish species.* Today we all are gathering here to celebrate the National Fishery Day - July 1 and this event will be a celebration we will organize every year. What we are doing now is just one event where the Head of the Royal Government is present but we also have numerous others, as reported by HE Chan Sarun, that urge our people to engage in fish farming.

Aquatic husbandry, mainly fish, has grown in numbers and quality. Every year we produce tens of thousand of fish from farming. Last year, we caught 72,000 tons of fish from among 61,000 families who engaged in aquatic/fish farming. They raised all sorts of fish and lobsters too. We also note 267 places where people breed 130 million fish/lobster babies every year. We also have some 738 shelter areas for fish population residing in the rice field, which grow four or five times.

#### **Population Growth and 2012 Flood**

We all must note that there is a strong population growth in our country. In 1908, under the reign of HM Preah Baat Sisovath, the royal decree on fishing lots and fishery management was issued at the time when the country had many deep water reservoirs and smaller population.

As of now, those reservoirs/lakes are getting shallower where less and less number of fish could reside. On top of

this, the trend of population growth is on the opposite. For instance, in real figure, in 1908, our population had over one million only. Now, we are recording some 14 million people. The population is taking a growing trend. I have nothing to say on this since I have four kids in four years too.

This year we may have a huge flood again. We must get ready for it. Usually, according to observation, flood in the year of dragon would be threatening. Early prediction has it that in Phnom Penh, this year's flooding could reach 10.5 meters, while last year was 10.71 meters. You may note that the level of flood recorded in Phnom Penh would tell us how threatening the flood could be.

For instance, we may predict an average flooding if the water in Phnom Penh reaches 9.5 meters and if it goes up to 10 meters and above, the flood will be threatening. We must get ready. One thing that has been a hard issue to deal with is grass eating animals. Like in the last flooding, it was hard to help the people but even harder to see that people could not help their animals in terms of grass.

#### **Boeng Thom Love Story of Thirty Years Ago**

Since I am here at Boeng Thom, maybe I should tell you a story of some thirty years ago. I was wounded on April 16, 1975. I was sent to the region III hospital in May. My eye was blind already then but they did not take it out yet. Telling you this I am obliged to thank a soldier who formerly under my rank and order. He died already. It was because of him that my wife and I became life partners. We never see each other but things finally happened.

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The soldier then was hospitalized in Kroch Chmar in 1973/74. When he returned to the barrack, he told me that his sister-in-law (he meant my wife) sent me her regards. When he came to the hospital, he called my wife (then staff in the hospital) sister-in-law. In fact both of us never see each other. One day, because the matter was getting more complicated, I urged my former boss, who was then deputy commander of region V to help me find Bun Rany to resolve the matter in March 1974.

While in the hospital of Kroch Chmar, I went to visit a relative at Prek Jam. She fried banana for me to take back for my commander. I got to the hospital late. It was rather dark already. I saw a girl (my wife) sitting writing something at the desk. I stepped in and asked "sister, do you have any idea where my commander goes?" She told me she saw him going to the river. I went in the room and dropped my backpack. Coming out I bumped into her having a kerosene lamp in hand again. I asked if she knew which one is "Rany". She told me "Rany has gone fetching water already."

That was the first love. We do not know each other. I came downstairs. I met with a nurse. Her name is Mom. I asked "Nurse Mom, which one is Rany?" She replied "the one you just asked." I was surprised but I could not remember her face at all as I did not look right on her face then. Night came, and we had a meeting to resolve misunderstanding. On my wife's side there was Pren, Chhun Leng and Khemara. On my side there were my commander and me. There were three kerosene lamps on the table. While the discussion started, I peeped at my wife

and thought to myself "Oh my, if I only knew she was this pretty, I would have asked her hand right away."

The issue was resolved and it was already over 10pm. From Kroch Chmar to my base at Boeng Pruol is a long road and traveling at night was not a good thing to do then. We decided to ask them for a place to stay overnight. They brought us two blankets. I only knew later that my wife's blanket was accidentally given to me. After we got married that I saw it was the blanket that she gave to me at the hospital for that night. I went to my place but always wanted to come back.

In one of the Khmer New Years, I came back to see her. She was not there. I crossed the river to Peam Kohsna and I saw her briefly near the Ta Duong river. I then decided that I must ask the "organization" (Pol Pot's senior level decision makers) for permission to marry her. My commander then said not to marry yet and wait till the country is liberated. When the country was liberated, I had one eye wounded and I also got the news that she already got married. It was not true. I was sent to the hospital of Tchouk and I sent my sister as a messenger to ask for her biography.

I was hospitalized in village III and my wife lived in village II. I did not know her house. I then asked everyone came across. Someone then told me where Rany's house was. Her father was sitting preparing sticks of bamboo for making fishing tackles. I went in to meet him. He had no idea that I love his daughter. One fascinating thing was that one day she went from Tchouk to Rokar Khnor and brought with her three chicken to the hospital there.

Let's think a young girl carried three chicken to give to a young man in the hospital, how do you conclude? It was not at her hospital but at the hospital that I satyed. Who is in love with whom then? (The late) HE Men Chhon, who also stayed in the hospital with me, asked who that was? I replied "she is my future wife." There was a sad case involved. My parents and brothers and sisters are on the other side of the river, where the regions 203 and 304 are divided. My parents could not cross the line to ask her hand for me. I then decided to go with a colleague.

I dared not say much with my parents in law. I came downstairs to meet her personally. She said she agreed. However, my father in law was so worried about the wounded and blind eye, which, he was afraid, could bridge to another one. I hesitated and was indecisive whether I should or should not marry her in this state of uncertainty. I was surrounded by two issues – the country sunk into disaster as people in the city were evacuated and I was accused by another security staff, when he was beaten, to be a two-star general (of the Lon Nol army). It was just a matter of time when I was going to be arrested.

The other point, last but not least, was my eye sight and the Boeng Thom love story. Though my wife then agreed to marry me I had a hard time making decision if I should go on with it. I thank her very much for having married me till today without a slight thought about my eye-sight handicap.

As for this lake of Boeng Thom is concerned, when I returned home, there was a huge rain before I got to the hospital. It was around 8pm. People said with such a big rain there would be a good

catch of fish at Boeng Thom. With two male and two female colleagues, with three fish basket traps and three bamboo baskets to keep fish in, we caught a lot of fish that night.

### **Thanks Youth Volunteers and Ready to Hand Out Primary Ownership Titles**

Please allow me to take this opportunity to thank now over 700 youth volunteers who have been staying and working at the local levels in seven target provinces – Kompong Cham, Kratie, Ratanakiri, Mondulakiri, Kompot, Banteay Meanjei and Battambang. I have been calling to all target groups to find out their conditions and situations. Besides what we have prepared for them from Phnom Penh, we have had to provide also mats, batteries and/or electric generators. It was also a good thing that the province of Ratanakiri bought and provided the electric generators to the youth groups.

I am so grateful to grandfathers, grandmothers, uncles and aunts, brother and sisters for allowing their children to go on this historic mission. I would follow them up and look after them. Tomorrow another team will depart. As far as this mission is concerned, HE Im Chhun Lim, Senior Minister and Minister of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction and HE Sar Chamrong, Governor of Kratie told me that at Sre Jar, people already measured land among them. That would make the job easy. Once the people agree on their land borders among themselves, issuing titles of ownership would be quick and timely manner.

As far as the lake of Boeng Pram in Battambang province is concerned, I heard from our youth team there that there was

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expressing his willingness to get to know what it was typical Cambodian dish. Samdech Kong Sam Ol, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Royal Palace also served the crown prince with more Cambodian dishes while he was in Siem Reap province.

That he enjoyed them too means our dishes are not that bad.

Now let's start from the state institutions to raise the awareness of Cambodian dishes among foreign guests. As for tourists, it is up to them to choose what they want but it is our obligation to present them with what we have. I am sure we can do that.

I am taking this opportune moment to express my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Culture and Fines Arts for its efforts to organize Cambodian art program for the Japanese crown prince. To the liking of guests, we presented various kinds of Cambodian drum.

While watching the presentation, the Japanese crown prince asked me which drum is used for what occasion. We also used local Islam drums in the presentation. In our folk dance to welcome guests, a large number of drums have also been made part of the composition. I told him of a small drum that Cambodians used in wedding party and Ayai (extempore singing and exchanging of lyric, usually between man and woman).

Talking about this, we also have many more abstract art objects and performances to be considered as world heritages. Cambodia has got Yi Ke (a kind of local theatrical performance) and Japei (soloist), Ayai, etc. which are typical Cambodian. As I said earlier, I have instructed more

than half the menu the Cambodian dishes and the Cambodian music band to play in honor of the guests too. Do you not notice that some tourists also bought as souvenirs some of the Cambodian drums too.

### **Safe Driving of Tourist Buses**

As far as this point is concerned, HE Thaong Khon, Minister of Tourism also brought up just now about the intergovernmental instruction reached between the Ministry of Public Works and Transports and the Ministry of Tourism, let me also remind you about what I said on June 7 at Banteay Meanjei province during the groundbreaking ceremony to build the NR 56 on issue of driving safe of tourist busses.

It is noted that lately there have been various accidents concerning the tourist buses in Koh Kong province, where one Russian tourist was killed.

It is my intention that effort must be made to pay attention to preventing traffic accidents not only for tourists but also big buses concerned. All travel and transportation companies must be responsible in choosing their drivers and other matters concerned so as to made driving safe. We have assured safety from terrorist actions but we also have to made it work as far as traffic safety is concerned.

As we have lately frequent accidents of busses involving those carrying tourists as well, it is urgent that we have to pay greater attention to this matter. On TV, I saw today, there was a serious bus accident somewhere in Thailand and one Indian was killed while a few others were wounded. We must ensure safe driving not only for foreigners but also local tourists.

### **Local Tourist Also Important**

While we are trying to attract tourists from abroad, we should not overlook the importance of local ones. Cambodians now have more money so they wanted to go visit various places. Take for instance, we can take note on the interrelatedness that the Bokor Resort has on provinces of Kep and Kompot. As of the present, there is only a 400-room hotel up the Bokor Mountain Resort. Since there are more and more people going to visit the place, this number of room is not sufficient.

As far as I know some 1000 rooms are under construction and 4000 more are in the pipeline. However, while waiting for the 1000 rooms to be ready, many visitors have come to the place only to enjoy the setup and come down to take a rest and enjoy the good food in hotels in Kopmpot or Kep. I call this the interrelatedness effect or a repercussion. This has further developed local tourism. In addition to that, because of better infrastructures in place, local tourists can also visit provinces of Ratanakiri, Mondulkiri and Stoeng Treng, etc.

According to some studies, local tourists spend even more that those from abroad. It has been the case so far that while tourists from outside have been affected by crisis, the local tourists are keeping the flow in tourism and related sectors.

Along with this our people also are gaining knowledge and understanding of their own country from visiting one region to another, and while appreciating the natural wealth, they will take part in conserving it. These are very critical points to promote and ensure the development of

tourism in Cambodia.

### **Finding Markets for Local Products**

I have followed with due consideration and thought on issue that people raised in various discussions and recommendations by politicians also included, about finding markets for local products. I doubt it what they know the Royal Government is doing.

By attracting more tourists to visit the country is one way of find markets in that matter. It allows chance for people to sell and increase their production but also to provide them with works. How could they preach about market seeking in words but empty actions while the Royal Government has been doing it all along? Look, we have numerous hotels now. Though we may need more of them to be built, the existing number of hotels have been targets for local supply.

Have they noticed, how many hotels and restaurants that are consuming local products? Of course things like butter must be imported but various products are being supplied locally. Some of the local products have now become the likes for both local and foreigners. What we need to do now is to improve quality of our products and also increase our ability to sufficiently supply to the need in tourist sector in the country. In deed tourism has a strong interaction with people's income through availability of works and markets.

I do not understand when some dignitaries continue to talk about what they termed as finding markets. Have they thought that it is a simple thing to do to export Cambodian rice to Japan? It is not that simple. No country could break into Japanese rice market because

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the Japanese rice tastes great. On the other hand, they also have the need to protect local markets for their products as well. One way of doing that is simply to place phyto-sanitary measures on them. In Los Cabos, at the G20 Summit, as rotating chair of ASEAN, I devoted my intervention speech on issue of protectionism and trade facilitation.

In the world, subsidy is a major issue. You may ask if export rice to a foreign country is a simple thing. We may have lesser problems to export rice to countries in ASEAN, such as Malaysia, Philippines, etc. than to countries in Europe or Japan. However, there is one critical thing here that we have to keep in mind. Those foreigners while visiting Cambodia never bring with them their rice. Definitely they will have Cambodian rice. And that is what I term “exporting to local market visitors” and this is a major component of what finding markets for local products. Please do not only think of exports that cross the border.

### **Greenbelt around Tourist Areas**

Let's talk about chicken farmers. As of the moment, there has been almost sufficient supply of eggs in the whole country, thanks to progress made in chicken farming. However, we are in dire need for beef because the beef quality we have is not up to the standard required by five stars hotels.

That is why we have the necessity to promote cropping and raising animals to answer to the requirement for high quality cereals and meat as well so as to lessen amount of import and increase local ability to export locally. It is correct that we have concluded that there has to be a greenbelt around every tourist destination – local

or foreign alike.

With that achieved, people will benefit greatly from services required to provide for tourists everywhere. Products do not have to find their ways to Phnom Penh, Siem Reap or Sihanouk provinces. Let's grow in the greenbelt next to where the tourists are. Take for instance, I suggested for the Prong soup (something like the Samlor Kokor) when I visited Mondulkiri. The provincial authority was kind enough to cook it for us. I did not have chance to taste it for thirty years. So we must raise poultry and animals, and grow vegetables for local hotels and restaurants.

### **Visa Exemption Must Be Reciprocal**

As is said very often that tourist sector interacts with so many fields. By tourist definition they said that one tourist is creating jobs for 2.5 persons. Take easy example, upon arrival, a tourist visa would earn the state 20 USD. There was a request by HE Thaong Khon that we should waive visas for the (ASEAN) + three nations. According to reciprocal principle, if it exists, we have to implement it. However, because there have been so many requests, I may have to elaborate on that.

I would urge our officials to look into the whole forest rather than just singling out each tree. If we were to waive visa for one of the (ASEAN) + three nations, what do we have to do for the other two? Shall we waive for all of them? When we go to their country, they would charge us more.

If we were to waive visas for the (ASEAN) + three nations, what shall we do for countries in Europe? We would end up in losing state income from visa. So let's look into the whole national income not just

tourist sector. I have to think about that because it is concerning the gain and loss of national income.

We will allow that based on principle of reciprocation and not otherwise. Among all (ASEAN) + three nations, if they agree to do it likewise, we would also agree to do it. You may make a simple calculation that one million or three million even is multiplied by 20 USD.

### **Make More Tourists Come**

I would just suggest that our people who are trading in tourist industry refrain from cheating in price. There has been this case in the past that they come only once and never come back again. We must make them want to come back again and to bring more, like family members, with them. To attract one tourist to come is hard but to make this tourist come back again, and to bring along more of his/her friends/family members is even harder. So I urge that, as part of the campaign to get the tourists come back with more friends and family members, our traders in this business should exercise honesty in their businesses.

Though I am not a trader or trade specialist, I should share my thought that we must do whatever we can to keep the tourists come back and to bring more with them. We should not scare them away because of cheating in business.

### **New Actions on Existing Land Policy**

Please allow me to take this chance to speak a little about the land measuring operation which has commenced last week. We already have some 700 youths to help measuring land for people in eight provinces. More will leave tomorrow to Kompong Chhnang,

Kompong Thom, Preah Vihear and Stoeng Treng provinces. The mission also consists of drivers and some 100 military medical staff. We will have to deploy more youth volunteers to the provinces of Siem Reap, Uddar Meanjei, Pursath and Koh Kong. We therefore have 35 new groups of 400 members in total ready then.

I am so proud that our youth volunteers have taken up this historic mission. I thank the provincial authorities for their welcoming gestures to the youth volunteers. The Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction led by Senior Minister HE Im Chhun Lim have done a great deal of works with the sub-national authority so as to sort out difficulties regarding the works to be fulfilled.

I also extend my thanks to all places where the youth volunteers have been welcomed. I urge strongly that efforts must be made to prevent illness and treat our youths who have had health problems.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again express my sincere thanks to the parents and/or supervisors of the youth volunteers who have agreed and supported their decisions to help the country fulfill such a historic mission.

I thank the local televisions like CTN, CNC as well as those of Bayon for covering and broadcasting activities concerning this operation as one of their prioritized news. It is simply not the same as far as living condition is concerned from one place to another.

My wife has been calling to almost all of the groups and this morning, while we learnt that in Mondulkiri province our youth volunteers could not get out to work because of heavy rain. We also found out

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that those working in the same mission in Kompot province had to walk from mountain to mountain.

It has been proven that two pairs of clothes for each of them are not enough. We have to provide everyone with one more. While sending these youths out for the mission, someone said s/he is concerned that the mission and the selection of youth for the mission could result in political discrimination.

I respond to such a remark by telling our youth volunteers at Koh Pij Exhibition Centre that they must refrain from asking people whom they serve as to which party they support or vote for. S/he accepted that my instruction is good but s/he was still concerned about the fact that these youth volunteers are in military uniforms. What a/he just needs is to make it all a fuss.

Does not s/he know that to cope with condition out there our youth volunteers have had to be in durable uniform? They have to walk in thorny bushes and forests. They are not walking on paved road. Despite that much we have thought out, we still forget to provide them with mats and more cooking pots are needed too.

From various calls my wife made, especially the female youth volunteers from Kompot, I am sure that they would learn a great deal from this mission. According to my experience, to provide logistic support for the youth volunteers with this mission is harder than doing for military. The key difference is the military is concentrated in one place and this mission carries out widespread actions.

### Historic Mission

I told HE Im Chhun Lim last

night that even if we will have to deploy 5000 youth volunteers, now we have 1,100, we are going to do it as long as we can provide our people with land ownership titles.

We have many more youth volunteers available. However, for the province of Uddar Meanjei, I would urge the provincial authority to discuss with General Kun Kim, Deputy Chief of General Staff, as he already got some 300 youths from Kandal province to help them with similar mission. I also called governors of Siem Reap and Preah Vihear to find out about their situations too.

There has a newspaper that was running a story accusing heads of so and so military divisions concerning land issue. The military has demanded they run a correction. I would urge the newspaper to do so or they would face with penalty as defined in the press law. For now we have 126 teams from the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction in the field so we need to come up with equal number of groups of youth volunteers. As of now we have 1,500 volunteers and about 1,600 including drivers.

It is understood that some of the volunteers will have to come back to school to finish their school's works and assignments and we in this case have to get our replacement team ready too. However, according to our preliminary assessment, for the initial campaign, the mission could finish the task of measuring and providing primary land titles. Those who do not have school engagements would go on. We understand that it is hard to implement this mission in the rainy season but we also understand even better that there is no choice better than getting to work now.

Next Friday there will be a meeting to listen to the reports from all missions. It should be noted also that in provinces of Siem Reap, Preah Vihear, Kompong Chhnang, etc., while waiting for the arrival of youth volunteers, they already started measuring lands too. I urge that heads of the youth groups will be invited to the meeting on VDO Conference so that we can talk to one another about the job.

For those provinces where the youth volunteers have not been able to come, the provincial working groups, led by provincial governors and provincial offices of land survey will have to commence their measuring job as well. We also need to speed up the process of giving out primary land titles to our people.

I should note that our youth volunteers would experience different tastes in life this time and what you have done is a great contribution to land titling issue, though it is not land reform. Some countries in the past sent youths to the countryside to introduce land reform policy. The mission that our youth volunteers are engaging in this time is historic one and solving land titling issue for the people.

You will have much pride in your life as you have made contribution in providing proper and safe land ownerships for the people. The land titles that we are providing our people this time will not be for one or two but tens of years to come. As you know that we will of course engage in land titling in other areas as well but first we have to target three types of land – forest land concession, economic land concession and state land that is illegally occupied.

You may imagine that these places will become tourist destinations as we are going to set

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a piece of land on which three families claim their ownerships. We could not waste time there but move on to other places. In that case I would urge people to resolve the issue among themselves or in any case they may have to go to the court. The state in this mission is going to the place where there are problems concerning state property – forest concession land, economic concession land and the state land where there are illegal occupations. As far as land in conflict between people and people, they have got to resolve among themselves or in court.

Please allow me to make an appeal to our people that if they wish to have their land measured, they have to resolve their differences as far as their shared borders are concerned. I have made it public already that once any one village is done with measuring, I would come to preside over the hand-over of primary land ownership titles for our people. I knew that people of Roka Khnor have gone and claimed land at Kanjor, like purchasing land from KASOTIM, etc. I do not know who and how but as long as you have grown rubber already, land ownership titles will be issued for you.

Well, that should be all. In September this year I am not sure if I could make it to the UN General Assembly or not. It all depends on two things – 1) my father's condition and 2) the flood situation...■

up, after cutting out of forest land concession, one forest community for villages. They will serve the purpose of ecotourism. After coming from Mexico, HE Mok Mareth, Minister of Environment, proposed the establishment of Green Council. I agreed and we really have to make it green and not just in words...■