

Cambodia New Vision

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Addresses to the 2nd National Conference on the Implementation of the Government's Political Platform for Social Development and Poverty Reduction



On March 15, 2001, one day after the closing of the National Conference, Samdech Hun Sen inaugurated a rural road in Srok Chi Kreng of Siemreap Province.

12 March 2001

Excerpts of the Opening Address

"... With the favorable conditions created by the 1998 July general elections, the Royal Government of Cambodia has achieved encouraging results in the implementation of the "Triangle Strategy"...

The first side of the triangle is the maintenance of peace, stability and security for the nation and people.

The second side of the triangle is Cambodia's integration into the international community and normalization with the international financial institutions.

The third side of the strategy is Cambodia's development through the implementation of the reforms in important areas: military and police demobilization, administrative, judicial, economic and fiscal

reforms, including stringent measures taken to improve sectoral performance, such as forestry reform, land management and recently the reform of the fisheries sector...

Between the first and the second national conferences, Cambodia has done reasonably well. Economic growth bounced back from 1.8 percent in 1998 to 5 percent in 1999 and 4.5 percent in 2000, despite the worst flood in 70 years. Inflation rates for the last two years remain very low and the exchange rates are broadly stable. The reform process in all fields has begun to lift off. The living standards of our people have improved.

The RGC has made massive investments in many projects, aimed at generating economic growth and ameliorating the well-being of the people using our own

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March 16, 2001

Remarks to the Press on the Cabinet Meeting Held on a Bus on Route One

"... I am very disappointed that after a period of 22 years in which I have contributed to the government of Cambodia, National Road 1, one of the important national links, is left in such a deteriorated condition ... Although the former State of Cambodia was in a feeble financial condition, Road 1 was never left constantly damaged like this ... I used to travel by a Russian 'Lada' car on this road, and it took me only 40 minutes from Phnom Penh to Neak Loeung ... As we see, today we have spent more than three hours on the same trip ... If the road near the capital Phnom Penh is in such a condition, how can we keep down the price of products in markets in the city, and what could we mean by reducing the poverty of the people? ... What disappoints me most is that aid of hundreds of million of US dollars has been announced, but look at the condition of the road ... it is far too deteriorated. It was with this in mind that I organized a Cabinet meeting on a bus today, aimed at finding a concrete decision on the spot ...

"... May I take this occasion to apologize to our people who use the road ... I trusted very much in my junior level officials ... It is now time for ministers of Public Works and Transport and Economy and Finance, and myself, to take responsibility as the principal financial officers in order to get the road renovated

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resources and funds mobilized from elsewhere...

The main topic of our second national conference is social development for poverty alleviation. Today, I intend to kick off the discussions and set tone for the conference by focusing on two main themes: social development and poverty alleviation...

The objectives of Government's social development policy are to promote the well being of the population as a whole in conjunction with a dynamic process of economic development... ensuring that people -- their capacities, values, and needs -- are at the center it.

In this spirit, I would like our discussants to pay attention to the analysis of the following aspects:

- 1) positive or negative impact of government policy implementation on the improvement of livelihoods of our people;
- 2) follow-up measures to address directly the needs of our people, especially the access to or exclusion from resources and the markets;
- 3) measures conducive to the improvement of health and the expansion of knowledge; and
- 4) measures aimed at improving the participation of rural communities in development process and the protection of our people's rights

... In our Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IPRSP), prepared by the Ministry of Economy and Finance in consultation with other line ministries and adopted by the Cabinet on 27 October 2000, we proposes a strategy for attacking poverty in four ways: promoting opportunity, strengthening capability, facilitating empowerment, and enhancing security...

In this context, the long-term Vision of the Government is to have a socially connected, educationally advanced, and culturally vibrant Cambodia without poverty, illiteracy, and disease. The Royal Government always adheres to the values

of social justice, human welfare and empowerment and will take nation-wide initiatives to improve the lives of all Cambodians and allow them to participate in community's work...

I would like to draw the attention of the conference to the following issues of crucial importance to all of us:

First, Government policies to accelerate pro-poor economic growth and internal integration of Cambodia are taken in order to trickle down this growth to all parts of the country...

Second, educational reforms are linked to long-term efforts to promote peace, stability, and common prosperity...

Third, contain disease, and alleviate suffering are key to the promotion of human welfare. We must resolve to eliminate the spread of major diseases to build a better future for current and future generations of Cambodians...

Fourth, poverty alleviation projects, especially attention should be paid to food security programs and agricultural reform.

Fifth, geographical targeting for poverty alleviation. For poverty reduction programs to be successful, it is necessary to target our limited resources to the most needy, and to use these resources in the most effective way.

Sixth, ensuring social equity and how to address the problem of widening income disparity, urban congestion, social dislocations.

Seventh, sound management and utilization of natural resources and the environment, which is crucial for ensuring a balanced and sustainable development.

Eighth, prepare a pro-poor trade policy as part of the poverty reduction strategy.

Ninth, develop an industrial and investment policy, especially policies to encourage microenterprises, small and medium enterprises;

Tenth, empower the communities and encourage the rural poor to participate in local development plans through the im-

plementation of decentralization and de-concentration.

Eleventh, draw lessons from the flood relief operations and formulate measures in anticipation of such natural disasters in the future.

The past efforts have paved the way for and established a momentum in Cambodia. However, the most important issue at present is how to ensure the continuity and sustainability of the reforms and takes steps forward on the path of these reforms... it (the reform) is the "life-or-death" issue...

The goals, policies and programs are not to please anyone in Cambodia or outside or to gain temporary reprieve from criticism. They are truly owned and accepted by the whole Cambodian people because we believe in them and we wish to adhere to them for the benefits of Cambodians today and those yet to be born. Therefore, if we fail we cannot blame anyone but ourselves...

14 March 2001

Excerpts of the Closing Address

"... In the past three days, all national conference participants have been listening to the speeches, clarifications, and debates on important topics related to the reform program and agenda of the Royal Government and the direction of this reform program for promoting social development and poverty reduction.

The issues cover reform and good governance, perspectives on poverty reduction, decentralization and communal council elections, the acceleration of economic growth for poverty alleviation, rural development and activities of rural road users associations, water/irrigation policy and the community water users, increasing agricultural production with links to markets, establishment of small rural markets, increasing rural credit, a trade strategy for poverty reduction, land policy, health services for the poor, food security, the role of women in rural development, education as the foundation, information technology, literacy, vocational training, agricultural education, employment creation in tourism, rehabilitation

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and development of infrastructure (especially the national road infrastructure), de-mining, labor markets, increasing employment through small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs), and so forth...

... In the two years since the election in July 1998, Cambodia has been through many changes, especially the demise of the Khmer Rouge's leadership organization — both military and political — and the integration of the former Khmer Rouge forces into national society, which has brought about a lasting peace for the first time in several decades.

Seizing the opportunity of peace, security, stability and territorial unity, which was achieved in very difficult circumstances, the Royal Government has been accelerating and will continue to accelerate implementation of the political platform, the development program, and the reform agenda, which have been advanced in the interest of economic and social development to reduce poverty as quickly as possible, which is its most important agenda...

... Because of the strong commitment of the Royal Government and the hard work and wholehearted support from the entire people, as well as the generous assistance and support from the external partners, Cambodia has achieved national reconciliation, peace and security, and political stability. The image of Cambodia on the international stage has been quickly restored, and Cambodia has been speedily integrated into the regional and international community...

... At the same time, although judicial reform is still very much lagging behind, the reform program of other sectors of the Royal Government -- such as fiscal reform, administrative reform, military reform, reform in forestry and fisheries, land reform and so forth -- has qualitatively deepened. In addition, Cambodia has achieved significant economic growth on a continuing basis in the past several years, while some countries in the region faced financial crisis and the entire region of Southeast Asia has been under downward pressure...

Based on these outcomes and the favor-

able environment, combined with the poverty that Cambodia continues to face to a worrying degree, the Royal Government has unanimously decided to undertake poverty reduction as quickly as possible through sustainable economic growth and social development -- the most important agenda of our nation...

"... Poverty reduction requires time, policy preparation, planning, clear and sufficient program activities, with a degree of realism and political will in implementing and mobilizing all the forces of society in order to achieve the declared goal. In this respect, the Royal Government had prepared a poverty reduction strategy paper, which was approved by the Council of Ministers on 27 October 2000, and is in the process of preparing the Socio-Economic Development Plan II (2001-2005), which emphasizes the importance of poverty reduction..."

"... In combating poverty, the Royal Government has come up with three important strategies -- *first, economic growth of six or seven per cent per annum; second, a guarantee of equitable distribution of the economic growth between rich and poor, urban and rural, men and women; and third, the management and sustainable consumption of natural resources and the environment.* These strategies are put forward on the basis of the four important approaches: *expanding opportunities, guaranteeing security, strengthening capacity, and decentralizing power, with the principle of good governance as the backbone...*

... In order to achieve high economic growth, the Royal Government has adopted a policy of macro-economic stability through reorienting resources to sectors that have higher economic efficiency and integrating the economy into the regional and global economies. But poor people cannot take advantage of this economic growth if there is no equity in the national budget allocation and destruction of the environment is the result of such growth.

In this context, the Royal Government has put forth a realistic plan of action and appropriate government intervention to achieve better outcomes in sectors such as health and education. The Royal Government has also given priority to gender

development, clean water and sanitation, vaccines for children, fighting against HIV/AIDS, and preparing a social safety net to protect vulnerable groups.

The Royal Government has also given priority attention to social capital, which includes the social system and institutions that impact on development, and other action plans related to environmental protection... I wish to suggest strategies and policies of the campaign for poverty reduction and social development in a number of important sectors as follows:

1. Strengthening political stability, security and social order

Peace and security are the necessary conditions for development and poverty reduction, and development and poverty reduction are the most important factors for strengthening peace and security. These two issues are very closely interrelated and interdependent. Therefore, the Royal Government must be strongly committed to further strengthening peace, political stability, security, and social order throughout the country and to building a conducive and safe environment for the daily living of the people and an atmosphere of confidence for business and investment.

2. Strengthening macro-economic stability and increasing growth

Based on the strategy of a free market economy, the Royal Government has adopted the target of economic growth of six to seven per cent in the medium term, by maintaining inflation below four per cent and a stable current account, and by carefully managing external debt. In order to achieve this goal, the Royal Government has begun and will continue tax reform as the foundation for increasing revenue and improving the effectiveness of expenditure.

The key issues of the reform program are: strengthening public resources and forestry management, improving tax administration, implementing the administrative and military reform, enhancing the development of the financial sector, private sector development, and trade reform.

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The Royal Government is committed to reviewing the tax policy framework with the goal of increasing revenue, rationalizing expenditure, guaranteeing equity, and eliminating obstacles to private investment.

Economic growth is vital for poverty reduction because it provides the opportunity to generate incomes and resources as the capital to provide financing for poverty reduction. Continuing the implementation of the reform program at present can help create the conditions for increasing domestic savings and increasing domestic and foreign private investment in order to realize the goal of seven per cent growth in the decade ahead.

This requires maintaining macro-economic stability, continuing market reform, and implementing an outward-looking economic policy. It also requires the strengthening of economic, social, and political institutions in order to achieve better governance in Cambodia.

Coupled with more broadly based growth, the Royal Government has developed and will continue a plan of action which emphasizes providing larger financing to sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure as well as drinking water and sanitation for poor people. The Royal Government has worked very hard to facilitate the travel of poor people to markets through road construction, providing information, and the development of rural markets.

3. Agricultural development

Because 85 per cent of the people live in rural communities and 75 per cent of the poor are families headed by farmers, one of the strategies for economic growth with sustainable poverty reduction and rural economic development is to sustain agricultural development.

In the past decade, Cambodia had economic growth averaging more than 4 per cent per annum, but agricultural growth was only a little more than 2 per cent. This slow pace of growth in agriculture also indicates the potential for promoting growth in this sector.

The potential of agricultural growth can be achieved through: (1) *development of irrigation systems*; (2) *increased rice production and productivity*; (3) *improvement of the cultivation system, including expanding the number of crops*; (4) *expanding and improving livestock and animal husbandry*; (5) *expanding the management and utilization of appropriate technology for fish farming in the rice paddies and fish farming in general*; and (6) *development of agro-forestry*.

The small irrigation systems that are managed directly by farmers are a good opportunity because Cambodia has 4.8 million hectares of arable land that has underground water or rivers and creeks available. However, the irrigation system must develop at the same time as improvements in services and works to support irrigation and other important agricultural factors, such as the special program for guaranteeing food security, which has been supported by FAO with the goal of maximizing the advantages for developing the irrigation system.

The Royal Government has put in place plans to increase sustainable forestry resources. The plans include preventing crimes, making arrests, and eliminating as well as monitoring illegal activities. The monitoring of illegal logging is coupled with the plan to protect forests and mobilize the potential resources of the forestry sector. The forestry sector is one of most important resources for reducing poverty.

The Royal Government is currently drafting a forestry law, with the technical assistance of the Asian Development Bank. This draft law will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for review and approval in the near future. The Royal Government has a policy of reducing the poverty of the people through expanding means and assets so that they can benefit from water resources.

The Royal Government has eliminated or reduced fishing lots in order to give them to poor people so that they can fish in the traditional way without charge in a number of areas, in order to distribute economic growth with equity.

4. Infrastructure development

The lack of infrastructure not only im-

pacts on the pattern of growth but also worsens the poverty situation, because it prevents people from obtaining health and education services and increases the burden on women. Moreover, infrastructure development is crucial in the context of trade liberalization, providing access to markets for poor people.

Improvement in infrastructure coupled with the poor receiving credit, education, and health services will allow the poor also to contribute to development.

The important priorities in infrastructure are: the establishment of an efficient power system, rural electrification, improvement and maintenance of the national road system, potable water, hygiene, strengthening of the telecommunication system, and a master plan for urban development, etc. Agricultural infrastructure is also important in reducing poverty.

This includes rural roads, irrigation, capacity building in agricultural research, agricultural inputs and the transfer of technology and know-how.

5. Water resources management

The highest priority in addressing the cause of poverty and in improving the living standards and food security of the people is to increase the provision of water and infrastructure in urban and rural areas.

Rehabilitation of the irrigation system is crucial to improving the agricultural productivity that will impact positively on food security in rural areas. Therefore, the objective of the water resources policy is to irrigate 16-20 per cent of rice-cultivating areas over five years, 1999-2003, strengthening capacity and ownership at the community level through the establishment of water users' associations.

The Royal Government has placed emphasis on the establishment of a reliable data management system that would provide the basis for the formulation of plans and strategies in water resources development, namely irrigation, hydropower, water provision, flood control, and environment protection.

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In this sector, the Government plans: (1) to establish detailed data of the water sector; (2) to formulate strategies for investment; (3) to develop an institutional framework for operation and maintenance of the irrigation system; (4) to formulate an action plan related to national policy on water resources; and (5) to strengthen capacity in project design and implementation.

6. Promoting rural development

The Royal Government has adopted a rural development strategy based on a bottom-up, integrated, participatory, and decentralized approach. Institutional reform and the policy of providing water in the villages, rural roads, and maintenance of rural infrastructure, which have created employment, are being implemented through public investment projects.

The Government has given priority to job and income generation in rural areas in order to reduce poverty and restrict migration to urban areas to a manageable level.

The Royal Government planned to decentralize both administration and finance in accordance with the Communal Council Law.

We scheduled communal council elections in early 2002, as a result of which the communal councils will have their own funds, including fiscal and non-fiscal revenues and grants from the central government.

The communal councils will have the power to decide all matters related to their community development. In this decentralization process, the challenge is financing and local government capacity. Therefore, the approach in this process has to be gradual and appropriate to the means available.

7. Land policy

Land policy will focus on distribution, management, and administration. The core program of land reform includes: a national land development policy, improving the state's land management, initiating the land registration system, taxation re-

form, creating the legal framework for property rights, and also the creation of a master plan, while setting limitation of regions for provincial, cities, national (authorities), and development of rural area.

In the medium and long terms the Royal Government of Cambodia will solve these challenges through these legal measures and implement the new land law as well as registering land at the national level, which will guarantee property rights, which in turn would cut down land disputes and assist in the management of land, natural resources, and state property.

The classification of land usage is crucial for setting other types of land boundaries, such as (permanent) national forestry and fishery (areas) and agricultural land, which support the poor, who then can receive the land and work to strengthen land ownership and traditional fishing rights.

8. Social security and micro-finance

The Royal Government's policy is to reduce the suffering of the people by strengthening their capacity to withstand an external crisis and to maintain stable living standards.

Presently, we are concentrating on establishing social security through providing credit for any activities which generate income, enhancing food security, providing health care services and education, creating jobs through rural development projects, developing insurance against natural disasters such as floods and droughts, improving environmental work, and de-mining.

In providing credit, the Rural Development Bank will be the leading actor in encouraging micro-financing institutions and NGOs, particularly those directed toward the poorest of the poor.

9. Health-care policy

The priorities in improving health care services to the poor are: connecting the basic health care services to the general population, specifically to children and women who live in regions lacking these services; effective expenditure on public

health for the benefit of the poor and with the creation of a formal payment system, which in principle exempts the poor from payment; and a constant development program providing important medicine to the general population, especially the poor.

Within the framework of the Priority Activity Program (PAP), since May 2000 the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Ministry of Health have begun to decentralize financial management to provincial and district financial managers, by giving them more flexibility in procurement procedure compliance.

The allocation of funds by the funds management center and the implementation of the new funding procedure will guarantee that the funds will arrive at the destination, increase the speed of distribution of funds, and provide the ability to the funds manager to plan ahead.

The spread of HIV/AIDS in Cambodia requires our utmost attention; it is a threat to the sustainable development of the country. An estimated 180,000 people or 3.7 % of the working population (15-49 years old) are infected with HIV. The heavy burden of caring for patients and of mortality has increased the burden of poverty and debt.

In combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, the Royal Government implements the national strategy on prevention and closer monitoring of AIDS. This strategy focuses on prevention and public education by stressing condom use. This plan demands strengthening the important duty of local authorities and monks to enhance public awareness of this contagious disease.

We must, therefore, take immediate measures to extend and expand the HIV/AIDS program, especially in rural areas and among families headed by women, and children with HIV/AIDS.

10. Educational policy

The priority of the Royal Government in education is to carry out the principle "education for all" to the level of grade 9 by the year 2010. The Government will provide all students equal access to edu-

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cation and quality of learning, especially young girls.

The Royal Government will promote equitable access for boys and girls. The Government will give priority to the poorest students to enter secondary schools. Meanwhile, the Government encourages the involvement of the private sector.

The Royal Government also places priority on strengthening the legal and regulatory framework to ensure educational quality and monitor outcomes at every level. We recognize that current expenditures are not sufficient to meet the objectives of this policy. However, we plan to increase the budget twice over the next three years to ensure improved implementation of this policy.

The increase in the education budget indicates clearly that the Government adheres to its pro-poor policy. For instance, the strategy is to reduce direct and indirect payments by students and parents through an increase of teachers' salaries.

The other strategy is to increase funds for school operations and functions by allowing the provincial and district authorities, and especially the schools, to run their own budgets.

This will help to increase the number of enrolled students and improve the quality of education.

11. Governance and administrative reform

The ultimate goal of the administrative reform is a neutral, transparent, and competent public administration. This administration has to be an effective partner in development with the private sector, the donor community, and civil society, and be able to deliver public services in an efficient and accountable manner.

Experiences of neighboring countries indicate the close linkage between the improved quality of public services and the acceleration of economic growth and poverty reduction.

This administration is also a key factor in

successful implementation of the reform and action programs of the Royal Government.

The administrative reform is being conducted on four axes: strengthening the rules of law, good governance, human resources management, and priority group establishment.

After having succeeded in counting civil servants and computerizing the payrolls at the central administration, the RGC will continue the reform program as follows:

- 1) *Preparation and adoption of a legal framework for public service management;*
- 2) *Formulation and implementation of a strategy for the establishment of priority groups;*
- 3) *Continued functional analysis of government ministries;*
- 4) *Preparation and implementation of de-concentration and decentralization;*
- 5) *Preparation and introduction of a new remuneration system;*
- 6) *Preparation of a human resources management master plan.*

The RGC is committed to rigorously implementing de-concentration and decentralization in order to ensure the devolution of power from the central to the grassroots level. The RGC expects that the forthcoming commune elections will contribute to further strengthening democracy and improving the efficiency of public services at the grassroots level. I would like to assure all donors that the RGC has a strong political will and commitment to complete this program as scheduled.

The RGC is conscious that good governance is a *sine qua non* for promoting social and economic development and sustainable social equity.

The RGC has prepared a Governance Action Plan (GAP) that identifies governance reform measures where action will be critical to Cambodia's development over the near and medium term. This involves five intersecting areas:

- 1) **Judicial and Legal Reform:** improving the legislative process, promoting dissemination of laws and regulations, developing a legal framework for the private sector, developing human and material resources and infrastructure, enhancing the integrity of the judiciary, and meeting the private sector's needs for the arbitration of commercial disputes;
- 2) **Fiscal Reform:** streamlining customs control, combating smuggling, developing a modern customs administration, improving VAT refunds, undertaking a comprehensive reform of investment incentives, ensuring integrity of the budgetary process, improving performance of spending units, strengthening the public investment management program, and enhancing the banking system and the management of state assets and natural resources;
- 3) **Civil Administration Reform:** rationalization of the employment structure, review of remuneration and establishment of a management system, enhancing productivity and motivation, reinforcing transparency and participation, ensuring a close link between administrative and financial decentralization and developing human managerial and human resources at the sub-national level;
- 4) **Anti-corruption:** setting ethical standards, enacting special anti-corruption legislation, enforcing the sub-decree on public procurement, strengthening enforcement and scrutiny, and beginning operations of the National Audit Authority; and
- 5) **Gender Equity:** promoting respect for women's and children's rights, addressing the needs of women and children, recognizing the important contribution of women to society, and encouraging women's leadership.

The RGC recognizes that without credible actions in these areas, the basic virtues of good governance will not take hold in Cambodia. However, the GAP is very comprehensive, thus requiring prioritization, establishing a checklist, costing projects, and setting concrete schedules to

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facilitate implementation and monitoring.

Moreover, we should select low-cost projects that can be implemented immediately.... I would like to take this opportunity to repeat the seven imbalances that I raised in previous gatherings... They are:

- (1) Solving the imbalance between supply and demand, with emphasis on food, potable water, clothing, shelter, education, health care, and transport.
- (2) Solving the imbalance between budget revenue and expenditure.
- (3) Solving the imbalance between export and import, that is, the trade balance.
- (4) Solving the imbalance between monetary supply and production and services, which means to maintain macroeconomic stability, to contain inflation, and to maintain the purchasing power of the Riel.
- (5) Solving the imbalance between the needs of civil servants and armed forces and low salaries, that is, to try to increase salaries, based on fiscal ability.
- (6) Solving the imbalance between the growing supply of labor and labor demand.
- (7) The last point but the key one is solving the imbalance between the need for development in all areas and the need for human resources development.

The seven imbalances are intersecting, which requires us to think about them and seek solutions with every breath and address them over the long term and continuously.

2001 is a turning point for the people of Cambodia, paving the way for the development of our country in the new century and new millennium. This is a turning point where Cambodia has emerged from warfare and prolonged conflict and is entering the stage of laying the foundation for a prosperity, dignity, and strength that we have never enjoyed in the past...

20 March 2001

Quotes of Comments at the Launch of a New Building for the National Center for Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control

"... I wish to recall that last year, in his official visit to Cambodia, the late Prime Minister of Japan, H.E. Keizo Obuchi offered the Royal Government of Cambodia two billion yens as out-of-project grant...

... This year, the RGC is grateful to receive the fifth out-of-project grant of another two billion yens... and I hope that the Japanese Government will continue to provide us more in terms of projected donation in the forthcoming June-CG meeting in Tokyo... I am going to participate in the meeting...

... Thanking the Construction Company for its report on the construction... It is a great honor and pleasure for me that with HE Masaki Saito, former Ambassador of Japan, we have presided over the opening of the construction site... It is equally important today that with HE Ambassador of Japan, we are inaugurating and launching the building...

... In response to the request concerning four water affected buildings raised by the Director of the National Center for TB and Leprosy Control, I instruct the four buildings that are inundated are to be upgraded... I would like to declare today that we have to place the National Center for Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control (NCTLC) in the priority of program activity so that it enjoys direct access to financial resource...

... I have spent about half of my life for the peace making in this country... within

"... The sustainability and the acceleration of the reform and development programs are the question "to be or not to be" of this nation in this new century. This is done for the sake of the whole country and its people, not to satisfy, nor under the pressure of, any person or organization or country. If this reform fails, we ourselves are responsible for the failure, and there is nobody else to blame...

"... The national conference is an important forum for building national consensus and unity, as well as for gathering and

the period of twenty two years I have made, as part of others, a humble contribution together with people in Phnom Penh and finally with the win-win policy to establish peace throughout Cambodia... (As we now have achieved peace) I wish to devote the rest of the time to transform the country into one with development in which health is one of the prioritized areas in the political platform of the RGC...

... (In this objective) I would like to make known today (to all of you) that I have prepared and arranged for the Headquarters of the General Staff to move out of the capital and to leave its (current) place for building a new hospital...

As the project has already been passed on to the Japanese Government already... I wish that the Government of Japan would give a positive consideration to it... Taking location into consideration, this facility is quite appropriate for access from all directions of the Capital and its suburbs...

... With regard to TB treatment, I would like the media to give more time for TV spots educating people about TB -- its impacts and prevention... Though we will be announcing a few days later the completion of the first phase of giving vaccines to children for the prevention of poliomyelitis...

... Aside from the fact that we have to increase the education on the prevention of HIV/AIDS, TB is also a real matter of concern for Cambodia..."■

synthesizing the intellectual capital of the nation, which will become a strong and determined driving force on the way to strengthening peace, political stability, security, democracy, respect for human rights and poverty reduction...

"... This forum is also a good mechanism for disseminating government strategy and policy, promoting its understanding among leaders, civil servants, and the whole population, and helping in its smooth implementation..."■

21 March 2001

Quotes of Comments at the National Workshop on "Orientation on the Royal Government's Seila Program for 2001-2005"

"... Today, based upon the legal framework that the Prime Minister has the rights to announce the date for the election, I have given my signature to take Sunday, February 3, 2002, as the electoral date for the Commune leaders. Having set the date like that, we have eleven months for the preparation making the election the most acceptable... Today's evening, the media will publicize about the decision on the selection of February 3, 2002 as the Commune Election Day... Taking this opportunity, I would like to make an appeal to all section and level (of concerned competencies) to help create a neutral political atmosphere and security for the election... We all must try to make it (the election date) a ceremonious day of the whole population... The Cambodian people have all their rights to choose whatever political party and/or whomever they satisfy..."

"... May I recall (to all of you) that prior to the election in July 1998, on August 18, 1997, I had from Sihanoukville declared eight point security measures aimed at creating a neutral political atmosphere and security for the elections, whose outcome has brought about the current coalition Government... And today I have declared the Commune Election Date from Kampong Cham... Therefore, from now on, we have February 3, 2002 recorded as the date for the election... May the donor countries take position in providing assistance to the process..."

"... What is really important for me is that Cambodia will realize an election that is judged to be free, fair and acceptably just without any discontents... Let's take it as a ceremonious occasion... Hence, I wish to declare solemnly that I would not swap my political career with a position of a commune head for any one at all... I will give the best wishes to whomever, from whatever political party, for their victory... Only those whom the people like will get elected. If they wish to be elected by the people they have to be good personalities..."

"... Having contributed to the establishment of peace, creation of liberal and pluralistic country as well as a democratic culture, I will never step back (from the goal) because of the winning or losing (of

position) of any one from whatever political parties... In its meeting of the central committee every six month, CPP members widely discussed the issue of keeping alliance with Funcinpec. In its national congress and the twentieth anniversary of its foundation, Funcinpec also had actively discussed the issue in context of the forthcoming commune election. This does not in any way mean that both parties merge the list of candidates but collaborate to organize the election in a peaceful atmosphere free from conflicts... I wish to add that we should have a culture of those who lose welcome and give their best wishes to those who win, while those who win would console them in return and let them go on with their works... This should be seen as a democratic process in which the result of the election is recognized... The Funcinpec-CPP alliance aims to threat no political party. It has and is existing in the current coalition government as a leading factor for stability for the Kingdom of Cambodia... Therefore, I always welcome all political parties to participate and compete for positions in the Commune Council on February 3, 2002..."

"... Despite the fact that Cambodia had gone through a heavy flood in 2000, Cambodia is committed to go on with the commune election and all its reform will continue to gain momentum... Yes, we have budget constraint but we will exercise all our strength to continue the democratic process in Cambodia... It is also true that some people gauge that Hun Sen would not want to have a trial of the former leaders of the Democratic Kampuchea (DK)... But they are shocked and withdraw their support from the law to try the leaders of the DK in face of a fast adoption of the law by the National Assembly..."

"... The requested revision (by the Constitutional Council) on the point about death sentencing will be reviewed and sent to the National Assembly again soon... As far as the trial (of the former leaders of the DK) is concerned, having financial support or not, we are committed to the trial to take place..." ■

The March-2001 Speeches
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01/03/01	Wildlife Control & Management
06/03/01	Promoting the Return of Cultural Assets to Their Countries of Origin" and Comments
12/03/01	Opening Address to the 2nd National Conference
14/03/01	Closing Address to the 2nd National Conference
16/03/01	Remarks at the First Cabinet Meeting to Be Held on a Bus
20/03/01	The Launch of a New Building for the National Center for Tuberculosis
21/03/01	Orientation on the Seila Program
22/03/01	World Day for Water and Meteorology
27/03/01	Annual Meeting of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery
28/03/01	The UN Emergency Relief Response to the 2000 Flood in Cambodia

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and constructed ... I have already declared that in this term of government, I will focus on road renovation and building... If the section of (national) road from Phnom Penh to Neak Loeung is not being renovated and constructed, I think that at the end of this year the whole Cabinet, including myself, should resign ... We all are responsible for having left the road seriously damaged and for waiting only for foreign aid ... while leaving our people with such a hardship. I wish to inform you that today the Cabinet meeting decided as follows:

Firstly, the road has to be renovated provisionally before April 13 (the first day of the Khmer New Year) by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport ...

Secondly, a competitive tender must begin for the road to be built at least to the Japanese standard of Road 6A, if not the standard for highways ... The road length of 80 kilometers should be split among three companies ... Within two months, the construction machinery should all be present on site ... Taking financial issues into consideration, the renovation and construction costs will be borne by the national budget ... The ministers (for Public Works and Transport and Economy and Finance) and all of us have taken the decision to heart ... They have to work together to complete the project... I take this opportunity to declare that from now on, all national roads within 80 kilometers of Phnom Penh have to be renovated and kept in good condition ..." ■