

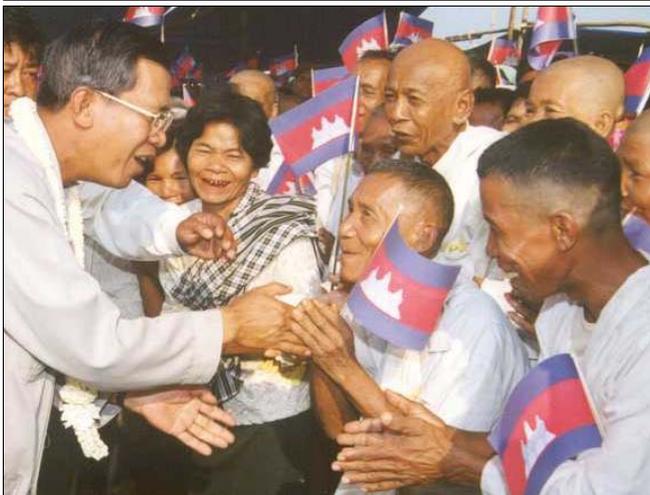
Cambodia New Vision

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February 28, 2002 (Extensive Excerpts) The "Fifth Government-Private Sector Forum"



On 25 February 2002, Samdech Hun Sen was greeted warmly by the elderly people during the groundbreaking ceremony to build roads and three bridges in Chhlong District of Kratie Province.

"... I wish to take this opportunity to make an overall assessment, take stock of the general developments in Cambodia, evaluate the efficiency of the government-private sector form mechanism in order to draw experience and improve our future performance.

Overall, during the last six months Cambodia has consolidated the foundation in all sectors with the view to ensuring economic take-off and achieving sustainable economic development. Economic developments in 2001 were generally favorable, but growth declined in the fourth quarter, owing to the deterioration in the world economic environment. Garment and tourism industries have become strong pillars of the Cambodian economy, despite the tragic events of September 11, which have had negative impacts on the short-term economic outlook in Cambodia. After the RGC making

considerable efforts, real GDP growth for 2001 is estimated at 5.3 percent compared to 6 percent previously projected, and inflation was 0 percent, the exchange rate was broadly stable and the international reserves continued to grow.

Fiscal performance in 2001 has broadly been good, with improved revenue mobilization and expenditure restraint to make room for financing the commune elections and to reach the targeted fiscal balance. Compared with the economic developments during the 1993 and the 1998 elections, during the time of conducting the 2002 elections we have maintained macroeconomic stability, reflecting the conduct of stringent monetary and fiscal policies and the confidence of the public and investors in the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). The commune elections that we have conducted recently will not
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February 03, 2002 — (Unofficial Translation) The Declaration on the Commune Elections

Since February 2, 2002, the Royal Government of Cambodia has noted that our compatriots as workers of both sexes who left their native villages to make their livings in Phnom Penh as well as in other areas have hurriedly returned to their native residences in order to cast their votes with pleasure.

On February 3, 2002, from early morning, in each and every voting station, our eligible voters, men and women alike, have turned out in large number to vote in a free and self-determination manner in accordance with their own will. During the voting day there has been an atmosphere of stability, security, without threats, pressure and violence that may affect the voting procedure, even though a small number of voting

stations have been suspended provisionally due to technical difficulties.

On behalf of the Royal Government and on my own behalf, may I express my great pleasure and appreciation for the conduct of the election from the beginning till the final success. May I express my appreciation once again to the National Election Committee (NEC), the Commune Election Committee at provincial, municipal, and communal levels, Sub-Committees on Security of NEC, all levels of local authorities and the armed forces for the efforts they made, physically and spiritually, in their responsibilities for the destiny of our nation through their active participation and safeguard of security allowing
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February 27, 2002 (Siemreap) The Inauguration of the Pansea Angkor Hotel

"... It is a great pleasure for me to attend the inauguration of the Pansea Angkor Hotel – a new edifice of the hotel industry in Siemreap. Today we all are witness of a new historical event in the development of tourism and hospitality industry on the land of Angkor.

Having listened to the speech of H.E. VENG SEREIVUTH, Senior Minister and Minister of Tourism and the report presented by Mr. ROBERT MOLINARI, Co-President of the Pansea Hotels and Resorts, I wish to commend and sincerely thank Mr. ROBERT MOLINARI and his colleagues for their support and trust in the policy of the

Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), reflected in their investments in the tourism sector. Today, Siemreap, a center
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only represent a forward step for democracy, but also promote further political stability and security in the country, which is vital for the private sector and the country's march toward sustainable development.

While this performance for 2001 is encouraging for us, we also notice the continued downfall in new investment approval by the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC). Indeed, the decline in new investment approvals can be observed throughout Southeast Asia, which has experienced this outflow of funds since the Asian financial crisis in 1997. However, it is worrisome for all of us. In this context, the Royal Government believes that a number of measures taken since the fourth forum, coupled with the deepening of systematic reforms including the enactment of laws and regulations related to trade, business, the amendment to the Law on Investment (LOI), the adjustment made to make the Law on Taxation consistent with the LOI should improve the environment and make Cambodia more attractive for investment, trade and businesses. Taking this opportunity, on behalf of the RGC, I appreciate the constructive contribution of the private sector to draft the Law on Corporate Accounting and Audit, prepare the amendment of the Law on Investment of the Kingdom of Cambodia, which will enter into force in the near future. I believe that not many countries would allow the private sector to discuss with government's bodies laws and regulations governing the rules of taxation and private sector activities like in Cambodia. In this sense, I wish to reconfirm our commitment and strong will to cooperate further with the private sector in order to strengthen our partnership and establish favorable environment conducive to investments in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

As reflected in the report presented by H.E. KEAT CHHON, Chairman of the Council for the Development of Cambodia, the RGC has strengthened the mechanism of the 7 working groups, which were established in January 2001 in order to effectively allay investors' concerns and reduce their difficulty. I have learnt that some working groups did not meet on a regular basis, although some did like in the case of the Working Group on Legislation, Taxation, Governance and SMEs, since most of the issues related to legal and financial aspects. Indeed, it is time consuming to have such a working group mechanism. At the same time, I have noted that this mechanism allow us to adopt a number of measures aimed at facilitating trade and strengthening the environment conducive to investments. This mechanism allows us to exchange views and experience, ensure a transfer of knowledge by promoting communications and seeking joint solution to various issues.

Therefore, we can say that in 2001 we have achieved encouraging results, although some problems still persist. We should continue our detailed discussions today and in the future of the concerns expressed by the business community, regarding the overall environment conducive to private investment and business activities. This includes a legal and institutional framework, infrastructure (water, electricity, roads and telecommunications), human resources, efficient domestic and external markets and continued efforts to combat smuggling. Indeed, government's systematic and systemic efforts are required to achieve these objectives.

As you are aware, to address the concerns expressed by investors and the business community regarding price competitiveness between domestic products and smuggled goods, I myself decided to establish an inter-agency cooperation to combat

smuggling, detailing requirements and practical arrangements at both central and provincial levels among the Armed Forces, the Military Police, the Police and the local authorities to assist the Customs and Excise Department in preventing and cracking down on smuggling. I take this opportunity to issue this public notice to relevant government bodies and agencies to carry out effectively the order of the government No 2 dated 19 December 2001 on the Measures Aimed at Preventing and Cracking Down on Smuggling, as it does not only result in substantial loss of revenue, but also undermines investment and business climate in Cambodia. Indeed, at the same time we should recognize that the key to resolving this problem is to strengthen customs and tax administration, which is the government's priority intervention over the medium term.

To achieve gradual reduction in electricity tariff, the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy (MIME) has carried out a Strategic Plan for the Development of the Power Sector, which envisages step-by-step installation of a national grid linking Cambodia's power transmission system with those of our neighbors. Moreover, the construction of the Kirirong Hydro-Power Station under the BOT contract will be finished in July 2002. The construction of such hydro power station is capable of supplying low-cost and reliable electricity.

You might have noticed and seen the attention given by the RGC to the development of infrastructure and other tourism-related facilities by our the campaign launched last year to rehabilitate and improve physical infrastructure, especially roads and bridges in strategic areas of the country, which constitutes the lifeblood of our economy. As the Head of the Government, I have given high priority and special attention to this area of work by embarking on a cam-

paign to build road and bridge infrastructure, which I call the "Locomotive Strategy" for economic growth. In 2001, I officiated on many occasions the groundbreaking ceremony for the rehabilitation and construction of roads and bridges.

By implementing this "Locomotive Strategy" in the near future Cambodia will have a sophisticated road network that helps to open up and link Cambodia's economic and tourism opportunities within the country and between Cambodia and other countries in the region. With adequately developed physical infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, the transportation of goods and services will be facilitated, further releasing the potential of the Cambodian people and our economy. Indeed, we need more resources in order to achieve this goal and Cambodia is fortunate to get generous assistance from international partners to supplement our meager budget resources. I hope that our private sector partners have clearly identified the enormous needs of Cambodia in this sector and get prepared for actively participating alongside with the government in this endeavor.

The RGC recognizes that there is a significant correlation between effective legal and judicial systems and sustainable economic growth. Legal and judicial change is necessary to support the evolutionary process of social and economic change. The RGC is conscious that the market economy cannot be developed without adequate legal underpinnings. Our efforts therefore are being concentrated on putting in place basic elements of the legal framework to underpin the development of a vibrant market economy - laws on property especially the Land Law, the creation and winding-up of business entities, contract and a fair marketplace, banking, tax, investment, corporate accounting and audit. Moreover,

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since it is necessary to create and ensure a favorable environment for private sector development, the RGC strives to create and enforce a transparent legal framework with clear rules of the game for eventual dispute resolution. In this sense, the Council for Legal and Judicial Reforms is drafting a Joint Master Plan for Legal and Judicial Reforms, which will become our national agenda for reforms in the near future. Indeed, a lot remain to be done and it requires close cooperation between the RGC, the Parliament, the courts and all our external partners, who always want to see Cambodia's judicial system independent, impartial and professional.

... On 26 February 2002 I delivered an address to the closing ceremony of the annual conference organized by the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy to review the achievements in 2001 and consider the corporate plan for 2002 and 2003... In the future, apart from developing the garment industry the RGC will give priority to the development of other labor-intensive industry, such as toy, foot-ware, assembly of simple electrical and electronics appliances for domestic and industrial use. The RGC will continue to attract technology and management transfer. In this sense, the RGC has set out policy to increase Cambodia's international competitiveness by focusing on development and improvement in physical infrastructure to effectively respond to the increasing needs for basic services, such as water and power supply, low-cost financial, information and telecommunications services. Overall, our industrial policy will be concentrated on seven main points:

First, continue to develop labor-intensive industry, such as garment, toy and foot-ware industry;

Second, promote the development of agribusiness by strengthening legal framework for longer-term land management and providing incentives to establish factories to process agricultural products, such as cotton, jute, sugar, palm oil, cashew nuts, rubber, cassava and fruits;

Third, develop industries based on the utilization of basic natural resources, mainly by processing the existing natural resources in the country such as fish, meat, cement production, brick and tile by using technology and sustainable sources of energy;

Fourth, promote SMEs, micro-enterprises and handicraft by providing micro-finance, streamlining procedures, providing marketing services, training on production techniques, management and supplying information on sectoral development;

Fifth, encourage the transfer of technology and diversification of export products by promoting the assembly of electrical appliances and electronics products for domestic and industrial use and improving product quality. It is necessary to establish a system of quality control of export products to meet international standards and enforce the intellectual property laws.

Sixth, establish industrial and export processing zones by developing infrastructure, improving service quality, streamlining procedures and encouraging investments. These zones can be established in the outskirts of Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Banteay Meanchey or Koh Kong. The RGC will take action to build road network, develop power and water supply, ensure waste management and environmental protection, provide education and vocational training, upgrade health services, establish warehouse and reduce customs procedures, etc.

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the elections to take place in a very good environment.

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to all political parties for their active campaigns in seeking for supports from our people based on law and democratic procedure. Even though the elections have come to its closure according to schedule, we still have more work to do and will continue till the National Election Committee officially declares the results of the elections.

In order to strengthen legitimacy, to promote dignity and national honor, and for all political activities to proceed in a transparent and sincere manner, on behalf of the Royal Government and on my own behalf, I wish to appeal to the authorities of all levels and the armed forces to continue to enhance constant vigilance and take all measures for the sake of strengthening stability and security.

Every efforts should be made in preventing threats, violence or revenge by any individuals in post election period so as that human rights are guaranteed and promoted. I am making appeal to all political parties to take patience to their utmost and recognize with pleasure the results of the elections, without causing conflicts. Both those

Seventh, increase the production of goods for import substitution to some extent by encouraging the development of paper, chemical industries, such as the production of fertilizers, acid, as well as daily consumption goods such as soap, paint, electrical appliance, water pump and agricultural inputs etc....

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political parties that gained the majority of votes and those that gained less votes, must cooperate with one another refraining from use of insults, provocative remarks, bitter words, etc. as all of these could lead to violent conflicts and other negative phenomena resulting in loss of security and public order.

As for any negative phenomena or irregularities that could happen in the elections, may all the political parties take patience to their utmost so that the National Election Committee can exercise its competence in resolving them according to the principles of transparency, fairness and free from interference and pressure. I wish that all candidates – both women and men – who get elected would express their affection and understanding to those who failed. This spirit will create a cooperative atmosphere in their local development in accordance with the aspiration of the people who are the masters of their votes and to prevent confrontation and violence of all forms.

May I offer my instruction to the current commune chiefs, assistants, and deputies to stay calm and be prepared for a smooth transfer of power and communal governance tasks to the new commune councils. This may include also the safeguarding of the material base of the state and the respect of the election results. We all have to recognize and understand that the new power to lead and govern the communes is the results of elections that have been conducted generally, directly and confidentially in a free, fair and just manner within the framework of each commune.

I wish all voters taking part in the elections -- both those who win the most and less -- to score successes on the path of democracy and peace. We all are winners, so is our nation.

Prime Minister
Hun Sen □

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for ancient Khmer culture and civilization, welcome a new five-star, luxurious, wooden hotel with 56 rooms, built in accordance with international and environmental standards by renown experts and decorated with Khmer sculpture.

Indeed, this edifice does not only represent an investment, but also a proud for the Royal Government and the people of Cambodia. This hotel will strengthen the capacity of the tourism industry and provide more business opportunities in Siemreap-Angkor.

It is a testimony to the confidence of investors and business people in government's policies to create an environment conducive to investments and economic growth. More importantly it is a trust in peace, long-term stability, potentiality and the future of Cambodia's economic and political developments.

Successful implementation of the RGC's triangular strategy has opened up a golden opportunity for Cambodia's development, especially in the tourism sector. The achievement of national reconciliation and the restoration of peace, political stability and security in all parts of the country for the first time after many decades of war has been crucial for tourism development.

In this sense, I never tire to reiterate again and again that the Royal Government is strongly committed to maintaining peace, security and social order in the country for Cambodians from all walks of life. Moreover, Cambodia has been able to restore its image and prestige in the international arena and rapidly integrated into the international community, the region and the world.

This is critical in winning the support and trust of investors

and international tourists. Moreover, the recent commune elections that we have conducted recently represent a forward step for democracy and a fundamental expression of deepened reform process in all sectors in Cambodia.

It is my conviction that this process will not only unleash the powerful force of financial devolution and engender a far-reaching stimulus for strengthening grassroots democracy, but also significantly structure the social capital of local communities and promote further political stability and security in the country, which is vital for tourism development.

As you are aware, Cambodia has considerable comparative advantages and is endowed with great potentials in tourism, due to its endowment in historical heritages and the beautiful scenery of its beaches, rivers, lakes and natural forests. With these enormous potentials in cultural and natural heritage, our tourism policy is geared toward "cultural and eco-tourism".

These potentials are awaiting investment and sustainable development and are crucial for Cambodia's economic take-off. For this reason that tourism has been considered as one of the six priority sectors in our strategy to accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty of the population.

At present, tourism has experienced dynamic take-off. During the second term of office starting from 1998, tourist arrivals grew on average 25 to 30 percent per year. In 2001, tourist arrivals increased 29.7 percent, compared to 2000. Of these figures, the number of tourists visiting Siemreap-Angkor increased 36 percent and those taking direct flights from neighboring countries grew by 53.6 percent.

At the same time, arrivals by land from Poipet increased 101

percent. Thus, the open skies policy has displayed dynamism and benefited tourism development in Cambodia. According to the statistics, tourist arrivals by direct flights to Siemreap accounted for 22 percent of total arrivals, arrivals at Pochentong airport – 45 percent, while the remaining 33 percent is by road or waterway.

At the same time, the government has implemented other measures to facilitate tourism development. For instance, the introduction of visa on arrival has provided the potential visitors with optional choices in making their itinerary. Some visitors come to Siemreap and leave at Pochentong or come through Poipet and leave from Koh Kong. Some make a trip from Koh Kong to Sihanoukville, Kampot, Siemreap and Poipet or from Poipet to Bavet.

Therefore, the Cambodian people have greatly benefited from the government's open skies policy and other facilitation arrangements. It is my conviction that the policy to open up road and waterway transport will further facilitate the inflow of tourists and promote economic development in Cambodia in general, and tourism development in particular. This will largely contribute to poverty reduction and improvement in our people's living standards.

With this concept in mind the Royal Government has taken serious strides to rehabilitate and develop road and bridge infrastructure, airports, ports and other ancillary facilities, such as water and power supply, as well as the telecommunications network, which provide a foundation and pre-requisite to transform these tremendous potentials and comparative advantages into reality.

At present, Phnom Penh – the heart of our homeland – has gone through a process of rehabilitation and development.

In Siemreap-Angkor – our most important tourist destination – a number of roads have been completely built and some are under construction.

The construction of five roads leading to the Phnom Krom port will be finished soon. In the near future, we will have public lighting and dredge the Siemreap River.

I believe that as soon as we finished the construction of the road network leading to main tourist destinations and linking Cambodia to neighboring countries and the international airports to accommodate big aircrafts, the number of tourist arrivals to shoot up and Siemreap will receive a million or more tourists.

Tourism development will create jobs and generate additional revenue for millions of our compatriots, thus contributing to our government's strategy to reduce poverty and improve the living standards of our people to a decent level.

Apart from making efforts to expand the domestic market for tourism products, we are conscious of the great potentials of ASEAN and the Greater Mekong Subregion.

The expansion of tourism region-wide based on the concept of "Promoting the region as a single tourist destination" will provide us with the economies of scales for tourism development, allowing all participating countries to benefit from the "win-win" situation.

In this sense, Cambodia has done its best so that we could reach an ASEAN Framework Agreement on Tourism (T-ASEAN).

In preparation for such developments, I urge the Ministry of Tourism to work closely with the Ministry of Environment,

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the Ministry of Land Management, Urbanization and Construction, as well as with relevant ministries, provincial and municipal authorities to develop the entertainment sector and to improve services to cater for tourists.

Attention should be given to developing measures to promote the protection of the environment and our cultural heritage according to the concept of "sustainable tourism development".

The most crucial issue is to work in partnership with the private sector to implement all action plan related to tourism sector development. The RGC recognizes that our vision, policy, plan and projects cannot be successfully implemented if there is no active participation of the private sector.

I wish to sincerely commend once again and highly appreciate this valuable and timely contribution of Pansea Hotels and Resorts to the development of tourism and hospitality industry in the Kingdom of Cambodia through the investment in the Pansea Angkor Hotel.

I wish to deeply thank all relevant authorities and the people from all walks of life for their active support for this sector.

I appeal to all government agencies and each and every Cambodian to continue to support and further develop the tourism sector.

I wish Pansea Hotels and Resorts, Mr. Robert Molinari and his colleagues a big success in their business. May I officially announce the inauguration of the Pansea Angkor Hotel. □

February 07, 2002 (Selected Comments)

Inaugurated Five School Buildings in Srok Prey Chhor of Kompong Cham Province

... Today I have a great pleasure for being able to return with HE Ambassador of Japan Gotaro Ogawa and our people to inaugurate the part between Roluos and Siemreap town of the National Road (NR) 6. In January last year with the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and HE Ambassador Gotaro Ogawa of Japan, I presided over the groundbreaking ceremony of the above section of the NR 6. With the efforts made by DAIHO and KATAHIRA companies, the project has completed two months ahead of schedule. I wish to take this opportunity to express my profound thanks to the leadership of the Ministry of Public Works and Transports as well as the above mentioned companies for realizing such an achievement.

... As we all know that within the period between November 2001 and January 2002, and up to the present, achievements and construction sites assisted by the Japanese assistance have a total value of more than US\$ 100 million. It may be a small amount for the Japanese people, but it certainly is a tremendous amount for the Cambodians.

... May I take this opportunity to express through HE Ambassador my profound thanks to the Royal Government and people of Japan for their provision of such a great donation for Cambodia's development. Japan is one of the countries that play a key and important role in bringing peace to Cambodia. Especially the initiative of the late Prime Minister Obuchi, when he was Minister of Foreign Affairs, and HE Prime Minister Hashimoto with regard to Cambodia's general election in 1998. I refer to Japan as one of the two midwives, another one is the European Union, who together help in the creation of the second-term Royal Government. Stemming from here Cambodia has striven to sort out its internal

problem till the internal rifts that have plagued Cambodia in decades were removed.

... Japan is the biggest donor for Cambodia as well. As I have said in a number of forums already that Japan is facing with both internal and regional economic difficulties, and currently the recent need in Afghanistan. Japan is in the process of resolving its economic stagnation and reducing assistance to foreign countries. During the discussions I have had in Tokyo during the Consultative Group Meeting on Cambodia and through the visits of the Minister of Finance of Japan to Cambodia, Japan asserted that its assistance to Cambodia would not be reduced because Cambodia is poor and has so many hardships. I have suggested to the Minister of Finance of Japan to offer Cambodia every year a grant of a sum of US\$ 100 million (last year Japan gave US\$ 118 million.) With regard to loans, because of Cambodia's ability to repay is still limited, Japan sets to allow Cambodia to get loan of US\$ 40 million once every three years. I have raised a suggestion that the loan of this amount should be given on a yearly basis instead. He then requested that Cambodia maintain peace and political stability.

... HE Minister Khi Tainglim as well as HE Governor Chab Nhalivudh, have already mentioned about Siemreap-Angkor Wat as an attractive place for tourists. It can be said to be "train head" strategy of economic growth. When I came to preside over the groundbreaking ceremony last year I named a strategy after the train head. It is the development of infrastructure with prime focus on roads and transports, or to systematically link all roads together. Particularly for the NR 6, and the area around the Tonle Sap lake. From Phnom Penh one has a Japanese bridge at Chroy

Changvar, the Japanese built road between the bridge and Skoun of Kompong Cham, and the section built with the loan from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank between Skoun and Roluos. And between Roluos and the Siemreap town, which we are inaugurating today, is the highway standard built with the assistance from Japan. The road between the Siemreap town and the Siemreap airport has already been completed as well as between Siemreap town and Phnom Kraom.

... Today I would like to inform HE Minister of Public Works and Transports, the Governor and people of Siemreap that I decided yesterday to renovate five more roads in Siemreap town which have a total length of 6.4 kilometers. The estimated cost is about Riel 1816 million. It will be asphalt.

... In 1994 HE Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister of Singapore, said to me that if he were Prime Minister Hun Sen he would implement open sky policy so that direct flight could be made through to Siemreap. This recommendation has started to take effect in 1997. In fact though more tourists land at Siemreap, the number of tourists visiting Phnom Penh does not decline but increasing further. In order to strengthen our policy, infrastructure in Siemreap has to be well built and managed.

... The five roads to be renovated are 1) the part between the NR 6 at the Water Refinement Headquarter to Preah Endh Korse, 2) the Achar Hem Chieo Street, 3) the Phsar Nhe Street, 4) the part between the Tourist Office along the Canal to the Jayavarman Hospital and 5) the Achar Sva Street. The Ministry of Transports and Public Works will oversee the construction of the five streets and

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the lighting as well. In the coming month, according to our consular office in Osaka, we will have about 2,000 Japanese tourists from Osaka. If we were to have a larger runway, we could have accommodated the charter flight from Japan to land in Siemreap airport directly. In 2001, the number of tourists coming directly to Siemreap was 9255 in September, 8233 in October, 13,076 in November and 15,322 in December. In 2000, the whole year figure of tourists was 466,365 and in 2001 the figure rose to 604,919. We have noted an increase of 29.71%.

... Yesterday HE Keat Chhon reported about expenses covered during the commune election. Foreign countries have promised to offer financial assistance. Japan has made actual contribution of three million US dollar, which is about nine billion Riel. In particular, the Royal Government has earmarked Riel 46 billion from the national budget to cover the need for the electoral operation by the National Election Committee (NEC) and the maintenance of security. It is a huge investment on democracy. For some other countries, Riel 46 billion is a small amount but for Cambodia it can build numerous roads. But for the sake of building democracy, something that can not be done by outsiders but Cambodia itself, we have to sacrifice.

... I am very glad to hear HE Chap Nhalivudh said that there were no acts of violence during the election period in Siemreap – from the beginning of the campaign to the end of the voting day. I am very pleased that we have put an end to the status of commune leadership by appointment and replaced it with the commune leadership by people's vote. We have now started to transfer the commune leadership into a stage of decentralization of power at the local level. Commune heads, assis-

ants, and the commune councils will have a different working method in the relations between the central administration and the local communes. The law on commune administration already exists. What remains to be done is how to actually develop the communes and villages. I would recommend that they meet with people in their areas of responsibility to listen to what the people think and how they want their communities to be developed.

... I have issued one after another statements and declarations in the course of the election. I wish to express my gratitude to our people for going to vote and keeping patience to their utmost giving no chance of violence to happen. The 16 cases of violence that happened prior to the election, we have discovered 14 cases already. The remaining two in Kompong Cham province are under pursuit. The fourteen cases were judged to be non-political. Minister of Justice has an obligation from February 16 to coordinate hearing as it is his capacity to work closely with the court. As for the remaining cases, competent authority continues its investigation. In some countries, about 50% or 60% of the eligible voters turn in to cast their votes. But in Cambodia people turn in greater number to cast their votes smoothly and free from violence.

... I have been criticized because I did not go to vote, and it has been interpreted that I wish to be king. In fact I just exercised my own right. I read news the other day that said I was playing the role that should be played only by the King. May I make it clear that I am the one who makes, chooses and protects the King. I should not be accused of wanting to make myself king just because I did not cast my vote. The law has obliged the Prime Minister to declare the schedule of the election. That is why I did not participate in the campaign as well as vote for any

political parties. It is true that I am one of the leaders of the Procheachun political party, so if I were to cast my vote I would do for my own party and not for others. I have contributed to the full in the efforts to reestablish the royalism. Secondly I contributed and will be contributing in the selection of our King as the King has to be selected by the Throne Council in which I am a member. Thirdly I protect the King because in my capacity I would not stay idle to see the King toppled by anyone at all. The King has to stay above.

... In every commune council we have now from three to four political parties representing in them, though the final and official result has yet to come out. What I wanted to say is that no matter from what party one may come from, one has to collaborate. Having done so we would be able to promote a spirit of cooperation from bottom to top and vice versa. Like we have come today from various political parties to inaugurate the roads. It is a pleasant event and better than fighting each other. Our elderly people here would not at all want to see their younger ones in conflict. Despite the fact that we have different party affiliation we have to collaborate in building bridges, roads, water canal, schools, etc. If we were to have done so, we would be able to make fast progress and Japan in this instance would offer us more financial help. Once again I thank our people for exercising their rights as people who are free to make their own decision.

... No matter one may call or say, our people recognize themselves that they have exercised their own rights to the full (in choosing their local leaders.) Blaming the result of the election is like blaming the voters, neither Hun Sen nor this or that political party, nor NEC, nor the Royal Government. The Cambodian people are intelligent enough to think through whom to vote for, and they cannot be

forced or threatened to vote for this or that person. Therefore, whoever blames the result is tantamount to cursing millions of voters. One should not be confused on this point. In my meeting with the Senators from France, we talked about what is international standard as suggested by some. What remains to be international standard now can be found only in sports. As for other matters they are judged according to the principles, norms of each country.

... The Khmer built Angkor Wat at a time when some countries had not even existed and/or had no independence. So they should make their critics rational. One should not suppress Cambodia by taking advantage over the fact that it is a poor country. Japan never puts pressure on Cambodia at all but brings to our attention of what is wrong and what is right. One day I will be on CNN to take this matter with them about what should be the international standard? They said the election is not free and fair, as there was no access to the media. They forgot it is the commune election.

Unlike in 1998, which was the general election, all political parties were allowed to use equally the national television. No particular country in this world organizes commune election with campaign by political parties on TV.

... In the next few days the election final and official results will be announced. I wish to inform all out-going commune heads, deputies and members to transfer power to the elected ones. All properties registered must be retained for the new service disposal. I hope that the transfer of power will go smoothly. □

February 24, 2002

Selected Comments during the Mines Awareness Day, Ratanak Mondul, Battambang Province

“... In addition to the prepared address and which I have read a large part of it already, may I take the opportunity to elaborate further responding to the requests made by our people here. Well it seems that I have become someone with hidden power that everything could be resolved. There are about 1,000 workers who have been cheated with their money for going to work in Greece... As far as this issue is concerned, tomorrow they will be repaid.

... Let's talk a few things about mines. Mines indicate the aftermath of political mistakes committed by the former politicians. We all here, monks or people in general, are victims of the wars. We, though some age more than 70, were not the ones who brought about the wars. It was the political mistake of the former generation that put us all in this situation that although peace prevails, we still have many of our people victimized by mines. According to the figures given by HE Sam Sedha, the period between 1979 and October 23, 1991, which does not cover the period between 1970 and 1979, there were 27,296 victims or an average of 210 people per month. From 1992 up to 1998, the period that de-mining was in operation, the number of people victimized by mines has gone down to 13,625 or an average of 162 per month. In 1999, there were 92 victims a month. In 2000 the rate was still 70 victims a month. In 2001 the number of victims per month was recorded at 64. Though, according to the figure, the number of victim has gone down from 210 to 64 per month, the rate is still high.

... Why there are mines (in Cambodia.) They could not take shape by themselves. They were here because of conflicts. Who brought about those conflicts? It could not have been our rural and poor farmers but influential

politicians. They fought and fought till everything was destroyed. Take Samlot for instance. Samlot was in flame since the 1950s. The wars ceased but in 1958-59 there was another to stir up. I was born in 1952 and the war commenced in 1954. How could ones put all the blame on the younger generation? That is why I said that we all are the victims of wrong politicking and the ones who bear and assuage all the difficulties.

... Talking about the national reconciliation, when I came in 1996 to Pailin, Samlot, Tassanh, Kam Reang, Phnom Proeuk, and Mealai, my parents were very worried of my safety and security. But I have a strong belief that if I do not exercise my will, those people would not have confidence in the reconciliation policy of the Royal Government... Let's imagine of a high place where we had artillery unit on top, tank unit at the mountain low and mines were planted all around. Well we did all we could in those days to protect our lives and to get rid of the others. That was war and now we have realized peace already. As peace has already been achieved, we have to take our utmost to safeguard it.

... I may be too old for another war. When Pol Pot committed killings I was 25. I took the leadership of a struggle movement. I was 27 when the country was liberated. Now I turned 50 already. I hope that our people would not let a small fire make a bigger one at all. What remain to be done is to de-mine our land. Mines are hidden killers.

... Today we have representatives of a number of major donor countries. Cambodia has strictly abided by the Ottawa Treaty. We have to take those mines, not only the ones that are uncovered in the field but that are stored in warehouses of both

the military and the police, to be destroyed by CMAC.

... We have here CMAC, MAG Hallo Trust, and the Military Engineering Team. Along side with efforts to strengthen the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), we have to pay heed to fortify the capacity of the engineering forces so that they could fulfill tasks that the foreign funding agency could not implement. HE Chief of General Staff Ke Kim Yan reported to me that from 1993 to 2002, the engineering forces has liberated 4,288,913 ha from mines. Among those uncovered, 129,657 were mines against human beings, 7,894 were the ones against tanks, and 23,476 were UXO.

... HE Khem Saophoan mentioned in his report that CMAC once almost ceased to exist. Let me be frank that at that time I was so disappointed because CMAC was not given fund to go on with their work. I was determined then that if CMAC could not exist anymore, (Hun) SenMAC would come into existence. This solution was foreseeable because we are de-mining the Khmer territory. As financing continues, CMAC carries on its operation too. In fact CMAC was a child of the United Nations for which HM the King and the UNTAC Head Akashi were co-chairmen. Now that I am taking the chairmanship, with a number of restructuring, CMAC does not stall anymore. We all hope that the reform in CMAC continues to progress.

... We may send our de-mining team to Afghanistan. We may seek the Japanese financial assistance so that our people could be dispatched in the framework of the United Nations. It is an international obligation. We could do it as we had so much experiences in this matter... HE

Sam Sedha mentioned that by CMAC's 20th Anniversary, the average of victims per month would be brought down. But I think we should bring the number of victims to nil for the 20th Anniversary right away. What do I mean? Even if by then there would be some mines to be destroyed, we could still put an end to casualties. We have to educate our people and raise their awareness about mines. Where there are mines to be uncovered and destroyed, our people should refrain from accessing the areas. Research has to be conducted to set up knowledge and documentation about mines. I have seen a good spot in TV about mine awareness. Once we have no more victims of mines, we have proven the efforts made by the Royal Government in reducing mine hazards.

... I wish to make an appeal that we have to focus our de-mining efforts in areas where land availability is crucial for our farmers for conversion from land of mines into agricultural lands, and freeing the land for the landless farmers and not for those who wish to grab more land. This should be seen as a land issue policy of the Royal Government because we have to provide land to our people to toil for life.

... I wish to approve here the construction of a Bailey Bridge of a length between 60 and 70 meters over the canal Kra Nhoung in Chamlong Romeang village, Kompong Ropoeu Commune, Samlot district, Battambang province. This bridge will be beneficial to Samlot district, Kuos Kralar district, and Veal Veng district. I would suggest that HE Prime Minister Sar Kheng take the presence during the groundbreaking ceremony. □

February 20, 2002 (Selected Comments)

The Inauguration of Hun Sen-Kompong Leav Secondary School and the Flood Protection Dyke in Prey Veng

"... Today I have a great pleasure for having the chance to return to Kompong Leav. We have two things to inaugurate today. Firstly the school buildings that I have just cut the ribbon and secondly the dyke that protects the provincial town from flood and is also used as road. I remember that we have rebuilt regional and provincial pedagogical schools, but left this secondary school in bad condition. At the time I organized 'flower festival' to collect money to help the Regional Teachers' Training Centers and a certain amount of the collected fund had been channeled to Prey Veng. As of today, besides the two school buildings in Ba Phnom, there are in all 143 school buildings with 702 classrooms that are provided.

... I have been quite recently informed as I went through a report about this school in Kompong Leav. In this secondary school there are six buildings and one of them that is supposed to be used for sewing class has yet to be equipped with sewing machines. Today I have already ordered to bring here fifty machines. Please forgive me for having left the building unequipped for a while. Though it is late, still it is better than never. Now we have fifty sewing machines and 750 meters of fence around the school. Oknha Kit Meng has just informed me that the top three students who study in the Hun Sen school at which Hun Sen has come to would be offered cellular phones for free for five years. So the three top students -- one in mathematics, one in physics and one in Khmer literature -- from this school would enjoy this offer.

... I have had a chance to meet with HE Issei Inoue, former Minister of Posts and Telecommunications and Member of House of Representatives of Japan. Our discussion focussed

on the establishment and collection of funding for the top three best students throughout Cambodia. The top three students -- one in mathematics, one in physics, and one in Khmer literature -- would automatically be sent for further education in Japan. A foundation has been established using the start-up capital contributed by HE Inoue is called 'Sunshine Fund.' Yesterday he already gave to the foundation a sum of two million Yens and we Cambodian also contributed a part to set up an account called "Whole Country Top Students for Going to Study in Japan."

... Talking about the province of Prey Veng, I think I missed only two districts -- Peam Ro and Mesang -- that I have not had spent the nights. Otherwise, since when HE Chiem Yeap was the Governor of the province, we have traveled and spent the nights almost in all other places. That is why I had gone ahead already, when some people were planning their activities, as they all were mapped out in my head. In other words the Cambodian people know Hun Sen quite well.

... I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the efforts made by our officials at all levels and people in the province, especially HE Sar Kheng, Nhem Vanda, and PRASAC for their collaborations in building the dyke that helps protect the provincial town from flood. It is also being used as road access as well. In the 1960s, before the war in 1970 and 1975, this dyke had been used as trenches. It has been left in bad condition and never has it been renovated. HE Sar Kheng contributed a sum of Riel 70 million and a number of sacks, while HE Nhem Vanda has contributed Riel 41 million. The provincial authority made available Riel 315 million and PRASAC offered its soil breaking machines for 54 days.

... With regard to waterways, may HE Minister Lim Keanhor (of Water Resources and Meteorology) makes an inspection to see where they should be made like I have ordered to Your Excellency and HE Chea Sophara the other day about Sak Sampeo commune of Phnom Penh Municipality. It has to be well studied in which places drainage should be mounted and in which places Bailey Bridge should be used.

... As long as we have peace, we could do almost anything if we stand to be united. We may not be able to leap a giant step but surely can leap a frog step. As long as the frog does not stop, it will reach its goal in no time. If the giant does not move, one would get to nowhere anyway. Like the Khmer saying that goes 'drop by drop the bucket is full.' But in Prey Veng, the year 2000 and 2001 had been under flood and this year, up to now, there has been no drops of dry-season rain. I am quite worried. So we should pay our attention to the care of the dry-season rice. I have notice the flood recession rice being grown here. So wherever there are water resources, the dry-season rice must be taken care of till they are harvested. The Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology and the local authority have to look seriously into this matter.

... The water level in the area in front of the provincial headquarters has not yet gone down. This situation would cause us to be unable to cultivate on 1795 hecta. May HE Lim Kean Hor look into this issue and conduct a study to find out why the level of water in this area in 2000, in 2001 and probably in 2002 too has not gone down to the level that our farmers could cultivate rice as usual. If it were to stay like this, what would the impact be on those farmers upstream? May HE Son Kunthor who

heads the Rural Development Bank commence a study about possible business alternatives -- like swapping from rice cultivation alone to a combination of rice growing and animal husbandry. These could in the end bring about the poverty reduction.

Before closing my address I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to the authority for best serving the National Election Committee at all levels by taking care of security allowing both election (reelection on February 17) to take place safely and smoothly. As is said in HE Governor Duong Sivuth's report, the Cambodian People's Party took a lead in all 116 communes, or in other words the CPP's candidates are going to take the posts of commune heads in all the communes. If these figures are correct, without any changes made from NEC, I wish to take this opportunity to appeal to all those elected from the three parties to collaboratively serve our people.

... As of now, power at the central level has been reduced as the commune leadership is to be decided by our people. After being elected, they have to figure out what need to be done first. Water canals, rural roads, schools, healthcare centers and clinics, roadblocks, porno video, etc.

No matter from what political parties they all have to work together in the commune councils. They have to refrain from conflicts and face with the tasks to relieve daily difficulties for our people living conditions. From now to July when we will have rain again our officials have to reschedule their timeframe to visit and help resolve water demand problem. □