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September 13, 2002 [Extensive Excerpts]

Review of ESSP 2002-06 — the National Education Forum



On September 15, 2002, Samdech Hun Sen paid a visit to Koh Thom district of Kandal province to observe the renovation of the National Road 21 and the installation of a Bailey Bridge over the Prek Tiv canal.

“... I am very pleased and honored to join you this afternoon, to help bring to a close this National Education Forum to review the Education Sector Support Program (ESSP) for 2002-2006.

In behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and myself, I wish to congratulate and sincerely appreciate the management and staff of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) as well as the national and international experts for their efforts in organizing this important conference successfully.

Those efforts helped bring noticeable and encouraging outcomes, which H.E. Tol Lah, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) has raised in his sum-up report earlier.

In June 2001, this place where I participated in the Second Round Table Meeting on Education Development following the first meeting which was held in 1994 at the Cambodiana Hotel. Thus, in other words, this National Education Forum is the Third Round Table Meeting which is convened to review the Education Strategic Plan (ESP). I remember that during the second meeting we have approved the ESP and the ESSP for 2001-2005, which were fully supported by the Royal Government of Cambodia.

In my closing remarks to the Second Round Table Meeting, I contributed some concepts and visions regarding the implementation of the government policies in the education reform under the theme: "Role

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September 02, 2002 [Excerpts and Selected Comments]

Reforesting the Phnom Kulen Area of Siemreap Province

“... Today, I am pleased and honored to address to the opening of the Reforestation Site of the General Staff of Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) at Phnom Kulen area, Srok Bantey Srey, Seam Reap province.

In behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and myself, I wish to express my profound appreciation to you all for your participation and warmest welcome rendered to me in this inaugural event.

This day signifies another important activity in the effort to rehabilitate the forestry sector in Cambodia through reforestation toward sustainable use and management of forest resources. I am glad to see the voluntarily gesture of the RCAF especially the Fourth Regional Army who come to participate in this Reforestation Event.

This witnesses the striking commitment of our army to transform its nature and responsibility, to contribute building the nation after the

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September 04, 2002 (Extensive Excerpts)

Addressing the Conference of the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organization (AFEO)

“... In behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and myself, I wish to congratulate and sincerely appreciate the Council of Ministers, the Engineering Institution of Cambodia (EIC) and the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organizations (AFEO) for organizing this important conference successfully. To take this opportunity, I would like to express my deep appreciation to all of you,- the members and the representatives of the AFEO and other international engineering organizations, for your participation in this conference.

... Poverty reduction and sustainable development can be thought of as the two sides of

a coin or medal and they are the compliments to each other, but not the substitutes. The two processes require broad participation from all stakeholders; from the governments and the civil society nationally and internationally. You all may aware that recently the heads of state and government representing rich and poor countries have met in Mexico to discuss ways to

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of education in poverty reduction of the population."

This ESP and ESSP for 2001-2005 have been implemented for only one year (2001-2002), but I believe it is an appropriate period for assessing its strengths and weaknesses, based on which we make improvements and correction to the next subsequent plans (2002-2006) to be of high quality and effectivity for further implementation. In that way, this rolling plan and program means more flexibility for the review and adjustments, appropriately responding to the changing social and economic development needs of the country.

In general, the Royal Government has made significant progress in education sector during the past decade. In the eighties and nineties, we have gone through a phase of the rehabilitation of the education system; by reopening of many schools at all grades, community-led rehabilitation of facilities, gradual curriculum reform and emergency deployment and training of the teaching service.

Currently, we are shifting our priorities from rehabilitation to focusing mainly on the strengthening of the fundamentals of the education sector and on improving the education quality, through continued restoration of buildings, supply of textbooks, expanded teacher training and efforts to improve examinations.

The Education Forum this day, again, signifies the transition into a new stage of education development, which closely links to the overall framework of a comprehensive and sys-

tematic, national socio-economic development. As long-term vision for education, we develop the linkage to broader poverty reduction strategies by integrating the education financing plans into public expenditure planning and management.

In this context, the Royal Government considers education as a main pillar of the poverty reduction strategy. Reform measures, aimed at improving the education system, will help us producing quality and skilled human resources for the developments in all sectors, namely, the socio-economic, cultural, and political developments.

The Second Five Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDPII) has clearly indicated that: "Sustainable economic growth, sound social development and good governance are complementing to each other and are the determining factors for success in our efforts to reduce the poverty". Given this importance as indicated earlier, I wish to contribute some ideas related to the theme: "Education for All and Key Strategies of Poverty Reduction" with the following points:

First, Education for All: the Royal Government has made a commitment in the Conference on "Education for All" in Dhaka in 2000 to achieve the "Education for All" target by year 2015.

Realizing this overarching goal, I agree and support the priority ESP and ESSP which strategically focus on 9 year basic education by promoting the enrolment up to 2.4 million in primary schools (from grade 1 to 6) and up to 0.8 million in the secondary schools (from

grade 7 to 9) by the year 2005. Actually, the overall enrolment in primary schools has risen from 1.9 million in 1996 to over 2.7 million in 2001, representing an increase of 42% in the last five years.

This enrolment growth and volume exceeds our projection in the plan. Since the introduction of the Priority Action Plan (PAP) for basic education, enrolment has risen from 2.2 million to 2.7 million, representing an increase of around 23% in the last two years.

In addition, since 1999, girls' enrolment has increased from 1.01 million to 1.26 million representing an increase of 26% in three years, which is mainly because of the elimination of start of year fees. Indeed, this growth rate is not adequate to ensure a long term gender equality in the Cambodia society.

We should set out new measures to increase the number of girl students, especially providing them opportunity to move to higher classes. Nevertheless, the introduction of PAP for basic education has indeed contributed to the increased share of girls' enrolment, which has risen from 42.8% in 1999 to 45.2% in 2001.

The introduction of PAP for basic education, combined with the 2001 abolition of start of year fees, has sustained primary school enrolment growth in all 24 provinces and municipalities in the Kingdom of Cambodia. This also has had positive impact on primary enrolment in ethnic minority areas.

The combined enrolment in Rattanakiri and Mondulakiri has risen from around 14,000

to over 19,000 in the past twelve months, an increase of around 35%, while girls' enrolment has risen by 42% compared to 30% for boys. However, we are yet fully satisfied with this, as the overall enrolment and admission rates in Rattanakiri and Mondulakiri remain too low, 52% and 59% respectively.

This induces us to review and develop specific and viable strategies to address the unique access constraints in ethnic minority areas, such as the development of bilingual curricula and programs where Khmer is a core language, the provision of scholarships and the training of ethnic minority teachers.

Under PAP, we have set out specific measures to target budget allocations for small and remote schools. For example, a school of 200 pupils has an effective per student allocation of around Riel 7,800. In comparison, a school of 2,000 pupils has a per capita allocation of only Riel 5,500. Thus, we found out that the average per student allocation in Rattanakiri was around Riel 10,000, compared to around Riel 5,500 in Phnom Penh. Therefore, provinces with many smaller schools, usually with high poverty incidence and low enrolment, are now receiving differentially larger allocations.

This is an incentive measure for small schools in rural poor areas, helping improve the education quality there and provide better access to education for pupils from poor families.

Overall, the PAP performance has been highly appreciated and the results are encouraging.

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ing. A survey 2002 indicated that more than 90% of teachers are satisfied with the PAP and they are of the opinion that PAP spending decisions were conducted in a transparent manner.

Based on the reality of Cambodia, while the need for education keeps increasing from year to year, the Royal Government realizes that the formal education cannot absorb all the children and cannot guarantee all of them the 9-year basic education. Thus, we should turn to the non-formal schooling by making this system more effective and better quality. This is to ensure that all children and adults are entitled to basic education equitably without discrimination on sex, races or their social status.

The key rationale behind the use of non-formal education is to guarantee access to education for every adult and out of school youth through improvements in the general education curricula linked to vocational and behavioral training. This will enable them to be well prepared for future careers, which is the main purpose of the Royal Government's education policy for a "universal 9-year basic education linked to literacy and vocational training."

Thus, I wish to reaffirm the Royal Government's support of the MoEYS's initiative to eliminate the start of year fees contribution and the needs for other specific interventions to help the poor by offering scholarships, building campuses for students from poor families especially for girls through the implementation of PAP which helps the disbursements to the MoEYS timely

and effectively. The special treatment for the poor would not be limited only to the 9-year basic education; this should be expanded, providing many more opportunities for them to enter the upper secondary schools and to the universities.

Second, Continued Capacity Building for Implementation of Priority ESP and ESSP:

As implemented one year already, the priority ESSP is designed to achieve the policies and strategies as stipulated in the ESP. Now on, from 2002 to 2006, I think we should continue on building and upgrading the capacity in all fields to implement the ESSP to be highly effective, using the "education for all approach" as a main instrument to reduce the poverty of our people.

The strategy of building and developing of education for poverty reduction requires more funding for capacity building in all components, which especially include the followings:

- *Strengthen the quality of basic education to ensure equitable and increased rate of enrolment, reduced retention and drop out rate providing facilitation and greater opportunity for poor children;*
- *Improve the quality of secondary schools education, linking the education to technical and vocational training to enable the students to quickly acquaint jobs and continue to higher education including for the poor students;*
- *Strengthen the quality of higher education, by improving academic curric-*

ula and standards to the levels of neighboring countries in the region and to the levels that meets the market requirements;

- *Continuous teacher development at all levels through improvements in both new and continued teachers training programs linked to the improvement in the teachers' living standard;*
- *Develop sustainable provision of core instructional material in term of equipment and facilities in schools and educational institutions, which are the prerequisite for quality and effective teaching services;*
- *Expand the non-formal education system, improving training programs for literacy and complementary education, and re-entry programs, providing the opportunities for disadvantaged people, adults and children, to get the basic education toward the objective of "education for all".*

These are the six important components of the ESSP, which will support the strategy for poverty reduction.

Third, Strengthening Partnership: At this point, I wish again to indicate that, in the 2000 CG meeting in Paris and the 2001 CG meeting in Tokyo, we have discussed with the assistance partners on the need for strengthening the partnership, specifically focusing on improving the government's leadership and ownership in developing the nation.

Thus, I support the MoEYS, the assistance partners and all the NGOs, who are in agreement to seek and shape a new

form of an effective partnership. This reflects the change in the behavior from the "donorship" to a real partnership that helps facilitate the assistance programs to meet the targets. While, together, we will succeed in developing the education system in Cambodia, achieving the a long-term objective of "education for all for the poverty reduction".

Fourth, Promoting the ESSP: Throughout this Third National Education Forum, the ESSP have been reviewed and improved for implementation in the next 5 years (2002-2006).

I wish to sincerely congratulate and support the outcomes of this review making significant improvements to this rolling plan, which is more flexible and better coordinated. To take this floor, I wish to emphasize that the *Dhaka Declaration on "Education for All"* would not be realized easily and quickly if there would be no further support from our assistance partners. To promote the ESSP to be more successful, I call for the donors and the NGOs to continue their assistance and support to the education development in Cambodia.

The *Education Forum* this day presents an excellent opportunity for the Royal Government to reaffirm its commitment to promote an effective implementation of this strategic plan.

As the head of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I will make any effort to constantly and effectively enforce the implementation, monitoring and control mechanism for this plan within the context of a

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war had ended and the country had fully enjoyed the peace in the last three years. This further amplifies the government policies to accelerate the socio-economic development aimed at fast reduction in poverty in Cambodia.

To take this opportunity, I wish to thank the General Staff of the RCAF, the MAFF, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the local authorities and the concerned ministries and government agencies for their efforts in successfully organizing this important event. I strongly believe that this will definitely help to generate increasingly active participation of the civil society, and together with the government, we will preserve our forest and the environment for the benefit of the whole society now and for the future generations.

The participation by the army in the reforestation activity is morally significant for the whole Cambodian society. This reflects the changes in

nature of our soldiers: from the fighters for peace during wartime to the defenders of peace and national integrity, and to the active participants in development during the peaceful time. During the last few years, when the country is in peace for the first time in its history over many centuries, the Cambodian Army has played important roles in rehabilitating and developing the country.

Our soldiers have become active and effective workers in rehabilitating and constructing the infrastructure, roads and bridges over the country, especially in the rural areas where the dangers and difficulties are and inaccessible for the civilians. Soldiers emerge to help clear the minefields to restore the agriculture land for the people. Soldiers help to rescue people affected by floods. Soldiers help people in raising crops when there are draughts and so on and so forth. In short, wherever and whenever sufferings and dangers are and need emergency help, there our soldiers come and help.

Now, the RCAF has started with a new and ideal task -- reforestation. Thus, it is clear about the participatory approach in the country's economic development and about the solidarity between the army the people. I am convinced that this initiative will indeed promote an active reforestation movement over the country in order to transform the planted forest into additional forest reserve. That will reduce the pressure on the use of natural forest and help to protect the environment and consequently improve the agriculture production, which is, in turn, translated into the improved livelihood and more jobs for our soldiers.

Planting new trees is a culture of Cambodian people long time ago. Traditionally, Cambodian people used to plant trees in their village vicinities, in pagodas, along the roads and on their farm boundaries, as well as in public places. Those trees provide many benefits such as protection from sunshine heat, fuel and construction materials for

house building and other transportation means that considerably contributes to household income and to the development of communities in rural areas.

In addition, trees play an important role in maintaining soils fertilized for agriculture. Thus, we have seen many types of benefit provided by trees to Cambodian people for generations both in physical term, support everyday subsistence, and in term of biodiversity system ensuring stable ecological environment.

As you all may aware, the Royal Government of Cambodia has considered the sustainable management and the sustainability of forest resources as the top priority in its development strategy for poverty reduction. We have even declared to make a bet on this by resigning or ending our political life for failure in eliminating the anarchy in this sector. Thus, with the reforestation the protection of natural forests are still an important

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packaged development with other sectors. This is aimed at achieving three important complementary objectives: (i) ensure long-term higher economic growth; (ii) promote sound social development for a highly educated, healthy and dignified society; and (iii) strengthen good governance that helps people of all walks of life to equitably benefit from the former two factors.

To ensure the success of the ESP, the Royal Government will facilitate the coordination and cooperation among concerned government's agencies, seek for support and assistance

from friendly countries, national and international community, and especially attract private sector participation in this process. So far, the government has increased the disbursements for education more than threefold in 3 years from 1999-2001.

In the Medium Term Expenditure Framework for the next 3 years, the government is committed to double the allocations for education sector, including annual recruitment of 5,000 new teachers and increased budget for PAP programs.

To take this opportunity, I wish to thank all the educators

at all levels, as well as the Buddhist monks, parents and families, communities and the local authorities for their efforts in performing their respective role and functions successfully in the past 2001-2002 period.

To move forward the ESSP 2002-2006, I wish to appeal to all the compatriots to help build and develop a quality and effective education system for our children with the motto of "Education for All and All for the Education".

In short, the Royal Government of Cambodia considers education as an important pillar of the poverty reduction

strategy, which is clearly reflected in the SEDPII, 2000-2005. Specifically, the equitable access to basic education for every children and adults is an effective mean to insert power, freedom and democracy to people and help them to become educated and skillful for earning their living as well as to contribute to the defending, building and developing our nation. In this sense, the Royal Government is paying close attention to fine-tuning and implementing the ESP and the ESSP, and requests for further support from donors and all kinds of contributions from NGOs and the private sector... □

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task of ministries-institutions concerned and the authorities at all levels and all Cambodian citizenry.

To this end, the Royal Government has set out and firmly implemented the necessary measures to eliminate all kinds of illegal activities in this sector. In this sense, the Royal Government have make every efforts to strengthen the legal frameworks, developed and fine-tuned the action plan, rationalized the forest violation monitoring system with close cooperation with our key assistance partners.

Generally, in 2002 the reform in this sector has moved forward and achieved considerable improvements, especially when the laws on forestry has been approved by the National Assembly and the Senate recently and after the issuance of the statement by the government on forest policies in July 26 2002.

Moreover, the Royal Government is preparing many other related laws and regulations that H.E. Chan Sarun has mentioned in his report earlier. Indeed, strengthening mechanism for implementation and monitoring system of law enforcement including measures to strengthen the collection and management of revenue from forest sector is also a priority.

In general, the Royal Government in its second term in office has made considerable progress in cracking down the illegal activities in the forest sector, and moves forward with confidence to the next stage, sustainable management of the valuable forest resources for the benefit of human beings forever.

It is my strong conviction that the army participation in this reforestation event, today, is invaluable contribution to nurturing a moral responsibility among all of us in protecting and conserving the forest for the common benefit of our nation. I hope that the army will continue to play important roles in other sector as well, such as the protection of environment, wildlife and fisheries to help contribute to the country development and finally free our people from the poverty.

I wish to call all our compatriots for active participation in protection and development of forest resources, wildlife and fisheries, and especially helping protect the newly plated trees in order them to growth fast. I would consider the reforestation by the RCAF today as a kick-start of a campaign of a systematic and big-scale reforestation nationwide. This will make Cambodia a green country, fully covered by forest, plant trees and agricultural crops round the year.

Once again, I wish to express my deep gratitude to donor countries and all the international development partners who have been supporting Cambodia in the course of reforming and developing the forest sector. In addition, I would call the ministries' and institutions management, civil servants, the army and the authorities for their active participation and collaboration in implementing the necessary measures to cease the violation and irregularities in the forestry sector.

Together, we will ensure the success of the implementation of the SEDPII -- sustainable use and management of natu-

ral resources...

In his ad-lib address to the event, Samdech Hun Sen made the following points:



... Today I am very glad to have a chance to return to Siemreap once again. It is true that I have come to Siemreap many times to preside over various construction projects. Today I am coming also to preside over the opening of the project site but this project is different from those before. We have moved in further to make use of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, which has transformed into the civilians in military uniform. It is a marvelous transform with a revolutionary nature. It is a very important day because the General Staff has convened commanders at all levels in provinces/cities, the regional army commanders also included, to share experiences before instructions would be made.

... The event of reforestation today could not be separated from a marvelous idea that came out after my inspection to the construction site by the Chief of Staff engineering team of the national road 5 that links Phnom Penh and Kompong Chhnang. In our exchange I have given my recommendations, one of which was to replant trees so as to prevent erosions as they could be detrimental to the national road 5.

... I am glad to notice that soon after that the chief of staff together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and HE Senior Minister Keat Chhon of Finance and Economy have come up with the project of replanting trees in this area. It was also from there that we have this

idea of the participation of the armed forces in replanting as well as safeguarding trees. As a result today we have noticed that our armed forces have been transformed into hired laborers to grow the forest for their nation. Let me take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation for the Ministries of National Defense, Economy and Finance, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) for their active implementation of this new task.

... In time of war, our armed forces have no choices but seeking means to weaken our opposite forces. But by implementing the win-win policy, we have been able to put a final end to the state of breakaway and secession, which have plagued Cambodia in centuries. We have got to dare say that Cambodia has had its history of internal fractures not in just 30 or 40 years but in many centuries already. The country shrunk by times until we abandoned Angkor City... and moved to the current city of Phnom Penh. In this span of time Cambodia never had less than two groups of armed forces. Take for instance prior to 1970, there were four different armed groups – the Government army, and other armed groups named as Red Khmer, Blue Khmer and White Khmer. In between 1970 and 1975, there were at least two major armed forces fighting against each other.

... Between 1975 and 1979, in time of fighting against the Pol Pot genocide, though they resided in different areas of Cambodia, there had been many armed groups created for fight against the genocide.

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From 1979 to 1993, we had four different armed groups – the Government forces and three different guerilla forces.

... By late 1998 we have reduced to two armed groups – the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and the Khmer Rouge, whose control had been the areas along the Thai-Cambodian borders and certain spots. The win-win policy has brought about an end to secessionism and division of controls while eradicating all internal boundaries.

... Full integration has been achieved and also the game of "the fish eat the ants when water rises and the ants do vice versa when the water recedes" has ended. We have brought our country to a state of peace and peaceful culture in the last four years. What is "the fish eat the ants when water rises and the ants do vice versa when the water recedes?" This is a policy of taking revenge without end that had happened in the past. When we won, we kill our opponents and when our opponent won, we stood to be killed. It was a true story in the past. Take for instance in 1970 the Lon Nol group eradicated those followers and supporters of Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk and when Pol Pot came to power, both supporters of Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk and Lon Nol had been killed... The war saw no ends. We have put an end to this policy and that is why we dare have our armed forces demobilized and ten of thousands firearms destroyed. Not only that we destroyed old weapons, but we also do not buy new ones as well.

... The defend budget these days are not given for pur-

chasing aircraft fighters, warships, tanks and/or all kinds of weapons. They are for use in purchasing food, uniforms, training, and medicine – about 75% of the national defense budget. The fact that all this can be implemented because we trust in long-term peace in our country. I think there are not many countries in this world that dare do as Cambodia did, especially in the area of reducing the number of soldiers.

... We at the present time are prepared to demobilize another 15,000 soldiers. But because we have some problem in the proposed procedures with the World Bank, the financier, we might have to postpone the demobilization until 2004. They wanted our soldiers to be demobilized without having a down payment that we had paid for the first pace of demobilized numbers. We gave them US\$ 240 per person with a sum of materials. As they proposed not to give them that assistance for the next group to be demobilized, I would say we could not afford to give one group and not the other group. If so, I would say the demobilization would cease to proceed.

... Then there may be a Hun Sen-plan to resolve the problem. We may have to borrow the money from banks and pay them back by installment on a monthly basis. I had proposed similar option in the case of CMAC (Cambodian Mine Actions Center). I said if CMAC was dead, then the SEN(Hun-Sen)MAC would be born. So we might have to reschedule the demobilization to 2004, but if we were to get the money, we then would demobilize another 15,000 soldiers immediately.

... It is true that I am no longer commander in chief of the armed forces but I wish to take this opportunity to say a few things in this regard. I had transferred the position of commander in chief to HE Ke Kim Yan since late 1999 but as Head of Government I also take strong consideration into the army. HE Ke Kim Yan has mentioned already that in our duties as the armed forces, we have the obligation and task to defend independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity – the prime duties of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF). So far our RCAF have fulfilled four main duties.

... **First**, RCAF has become an effective contractor to the Government in various construction projects of roads, bridges and a number of other constructions. Various places are inaccessible by civilian engineering, our military engineering team would take them. Take for instance our military engineering teams are present in areas of high malaria or mines to build the road between Siemreap's Banteay Srey and Anlongveng or the road 56 between Pursath and the Thai-Cambodian border. We have gathered in all about 1000 construction machines, which has become the largest intervention forces in Cambodia. Their equipment is even more than that of ten construction companies combined.

... **Second**, RCAF helped in de-mining in various regions to clear land for our people to cultivate. It is a very important contribution that also brings down the numbers of death and the maimed among our people. I wish also to take this opportunity to express my deep thanks and appreciation to them.

... **Third**, in the last few years, especially 2001 and 2002, RCAF had proven to be the most effective intervention forces of the Royal Government in saving our people from the flood and drought disasters. They are placed for emergency assistance along the rivers and also sending their forces to our people planting rice in drought affecting areas.

... **Fourth**, they also assist the Royal Government and other institutions in taking measures against dishonest actions. Before some people put the blame on the army, but now we have seen that the honor of the armed forces have been restored as they have implemented the Royal Government's policy in fighting against the forestry anarchy that is a very important issue in the policy of forestry reform.

... If we were to have no support and intervention of our armed forces, we would not be able to conduct such large-scale search for and prevention of the large-scale forestry anarchy in between 1993 and 1998. They also assisted the Royal Government in the tax collection task making our tax revenue going up in numbers. Now we have one new task for the RCAF and it is the reforestation. We have consecutive plans for the reforestation. This year we grow forest in an area of 200 hectares in the military region number 4, which is adjacent to the Kulen Mountain in the commune of Tbeng, district of Banteay Srey.

... Last year I also accompanied Samdech Preah Reach Akkamohesey Monineath in
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financing the development with the prime focus on narrowing the gap in the living standard of people around the world. In addition, during the time we are discussing here, the World Summit on Sustainable Development is going on in Johannesburg of South Africa to find the solution to the concerns of the world - the poverty. Thus, what the ASEAN engineers have raised in this conference is the most important and up-to-minute issue of our time.

So far, the Royal Government of Cambodia has placed poverty reduction policy at the core of our national development plans. The government is approaching the strategy by setting out and implements a policy mix, combining increased foreign direct investment, improved market access, international environmental cooperation, multilateral technical and financial assistance from global institutions, meaningful debt reduction, improved governance, institution and capacity building and so on and so forth... You all may know that in order to realize these objectives, the Royal Government has initiated the "Triangle Strategy", which is built on three main objectives:

- 1 *Ensure and maintain the peace, stability and the security for the nation and its people;*
- 2 *Integrate Cambodia into international community and normalize Cambodia's relationships with international development and finance institutions; and*
- 3 *Promote sustainable socio-economic development through the intensive implementation of reforms in key areas including demo-*

bilization, public administration reform, judiciary and legal strengthening as well as economic and financial reforms.

Note that these wide-ranging reforms include strict measures aimed at improving the management of our natural resources – the forests and fisheries; of our public finance and state assets, strengthening the banking and financial sector, management of land, environmental protection and ultimately the improvement of social welfare.

... We are playing an active role in the ASEAN and in other regional and sub-regional organizations such as the Great Mekong Sub-region. Favoring by our Triangle Strategy's success, we move forward to accelerate the reforms at home. As a result, we have achieved an averaged growth of about 7% annually during the last three years. The inflation rate remains low around zero in the three subsequent years. These achievements have been made, while the world and regional economy has gone through the recession and uncertainty period. Recently, the Royal Government has adopted its Second Five Year Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2000-2005. The SEDP is comprehensive, and guides our development activities in all the sectors of the economy according to our motto: "poverty reduction through higher economic growth and environmentally sound and social equity". It is my conviction that the human resource development is vital not only to the national development but also to the regional integration and cooperation. This is why HRD has played an important role in the Initiative for

ASEAN Integration (IAI)... Which has four components – infrastructure, information and communications technology, regional economic integration, and human resource development.

... I wish to have some comments on three important points that the conference has discussed during the last three days. Those are the establishment of the ASEAN Engineering Register Committee, Regional Training Center and the awarding system of honorary engineer titles for their contribution, interest and skills in engineering. The recognition of professional skills among state members signifies a truly equal partnership. There is indeed no such absolute equality. Nevertheless, with our joined efforts the gap will be narrowed down that the equity and justice will be strengthened. To this end, the Royal Government of Cambodia has authorized the establishment of an independent committee for granting engineering qualification certificates, aimed at guaranteeing the competency and professional ethics in the engineering profession... The civil society is a development partner of the government in building each nation and society in the region toward prosperity, free of hunger, poverty and diseases...

You all may know of the recent history of Cambodia. The country plunged into a desperate situation over the last three decades. Actually, the dawn of the new century has indeed seen the take off point of the Cambodia's economy. This nation has realized full peace, for the first time in its history, on its own. Now, the country is moving forward and strictly adheres to the principles of national reconciliation, na-

tional unification, democracy, respect for human right and the free market. We are moving forward with caution. Any mistake that leads to confrontation would put the country in danger and we all are to be held responsible for the eventually negative consequences of this situation.

In this difficult quest for progress, the building up of the alliance aimed at strengthening the cooperation such as the AFEO is an encouraging and useful activity. For the Kingdom of Cambodia, this network is an opportunity to promote development and poverty reduction. As we know, there is no such the sectors, - agriculture, transport and telecommunication, power supply, human resource development, the labor intensive and export oriented industry including the tourism; where there are no engineers playing important and leading role. Taking this opportunity, I would declare the following awards:

- One Career First Class Medal to the President of the AFEO for his substantial contribution to the region;
- Six Career First Class Medals and three Second Class Medals to members of the EIC's Board of Directors for their contribution to the successful achievements of the EIC;
- Nine Sahak Meitrey Medal to the Presidents of the engineering organizations of the AFEO member states for their support to the EIC, and,
- Two Sahak Meitrey Medal to the ASEAN Engineering Register (AER) for their efforts to promote mutual recognition of engineer skills in the region...□

13 September 2002 (Unofficial Translation)

Samdech Hun Sen Welcomes the Japan-North Korea Dialogue

In addition to his prepared text, Samdech Hun Sen has delivered to the audience at the closing of the National Education Forum, a statement to congratulate on HE Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi's forthcoming visit to North Korea. Excerpts are as follow:

... Since this is the National Education Forum, we have so many foreign experts present and I think it is the best moment for me to make a statement in relation to the issue of security and stability in South-east Asia.

... It is true that we currently have tensions in a number of regions, especially the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the United States of America. The US embassies in a number of countries had been closed in protection from possible threats by the terrorists.

... While wars are taking place in a number of places, the situation in Southeast Asia, East Asia and Northeast Asia seems to have a positive sign that deserves appreciation and encouragement.

... From here, through HE Gotaro Ogawa, the Japanese Ambassador to Cambodia, please allow me to convey my support to HE Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi for the courage he has taken in planning a visit to Pyongyang of North Korea for a constructive dialogue.

... I could recall that in 1992, or about ten years ago, when HE Watanabe was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, he had discussed this matter

with me to a large extent. My recommendation then was to encourage for a dialogue and to refrain from putting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in isolation.

... So far we have had already the negotiations between DPRK and the United States of America, the top leaders of North Korea and South Korea. Now we are going to have a constructive dialogue between Japan and North Korea. I consider the visit of HE Prime Minister of Japan to North Korea a courageous act that has not happened before.

... Absence of negotiation would make everything difficult. As long as the negotiation between the leaders of Japan and North Korea is concerned, it is a victory already as it may reduce concern in the Korean peninsula and the Northeast Asia.

... I think that the acceptance for a dialogue between North Korean leader HE Kim Jong-il and Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro of Japan is a constructive gesture as well.

... The Royal Government and people of Cambodia have strong confidence that they will have good news from such an historical dialogue. Northeast Asia has evolved from confrontation to dialogue and cooperation and I strongly believe that only cooperation that can establish a win-win situation for all. This is no different to our national education forum that we are discussing today. We could do so because we have achieved peace and stability -- the basis for development... □

(Continued from page 6)

the trees planting event in Banteay Srey. Here we grow trees in a farm-like system. Next year we will put another 2200 hectares of land under forest – 600 hectares in military region 4, 500 hectares in military region 3 and 5, and 200 hectares in military region 1 and 2. In addition to that they also have to grow trees in areas where they station so it should become a movement to grow trees. Our task nowadays is first, to prevent deforestation from happening, and second, to replant trees. But growing trees only is not sufficient because we have to provide care like what has been mentioned by HE Ke Kim Yan just now. I wish the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to make an inventory to see what is the current status of the 9000 hectares of forest that were planted previous years. ... To prevent waste of trees, labors and other resources, we have to have a system of monitoring of the forest situation. Like in this area there have been many forest fires. So a systematic studies have to be conducted to find out how to prevent the forest from getting burnt otherwise the more we grow, the more we waste. I would also encourage our people to grow more trees in their homesteads. They could range from fruit to firewood trees. I used to mention about community forest, in which I imagined of newly married couples planting trees for their own children. They may also do that somewhere in their home compound. It is now time for us to take care not only trees left in our natural forest but also newly planted ones for many generations to come. In fact growing trees in the community forest is like helping to strengthen their

marriage relations, as we have come to the present situation of so many broken marriages. This year the weather created a difficult condition in our country as drought hits some parts of Cambodia and some other parts is affected by flood causing destruction to various infrastructures. For our people living along the rivers, they have suffered serious losses... Take a bush of banana for one US dollars. And in three years, how many banana trees have been destroyed. Take also the papaya, if they were to get 0.5 US dollar for a tree, how many trees have been destroyed. So our loss is enormous. The same impact could be calculated in drought affected condition.

... As now we have had some rains, some provinces also have almost completed plans... Taking this opportunity, I wish to reiterate my appeal at the Council of Ministers to the Co-Ministers of National Defense, Interior and the armed forces that they must get their forces ready for intervention/assistance. Any places with seedlings but lack of labors, police and military police in those respective areas have to come in to help our people so that they could finish planting rice in time. It may be late now and planting late will result in low yield. The best way to do is to mobilize forces to help them... I think that the armed force or in time of peace is known as the civilian in military uniform have their duties, in addition to defending the country and security for our people, to provide assistance to our people ranging from sharing food, medicines, hard works, etc. I wish the commanders go with their soldiers to fulfil this mission.... □