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Addressing the Government – Donor Monitoring Meeting



On January 23, 2003, Samdech Hun Sen is warmly welcomed by the elderly people during the inauguration of bridges 24 and 25 on the National Road 6A that are built with the Japanese financial assistance.

“... Please allow me to warmly welcome all Your Excellencies, the representatives of Cambodia’s development partners who are participating in this important meeting. This dialogue marks another milestone in the continuing drive of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the donor community to act decisively in implementing the reform agenda, which we jointly agreed upon at the Consultative Group Meeting here in Phnom Penh last June 2002.

Indeed, we meet at a crucial juncture in Cambodia’s history. Our “Economic Government” has been in office for 50 months. Thus it is appropriate that we make a candid assessment of our achievements and performance against set goals. This exercise is important, since through it we will learn from the experiences of implementation. The assess-

ment will also highlight the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the reform process. As a result we will be able to work out more effective and efficient action plans and measures to sustain and accelerate our efforts in fruitful momentum.

In this regard, I am pleased to inform you all that on 20 December 2002, the Royal Government adopted the *National Poverty Reduction Strategy* (NPRS). The NPRS sets our directions in development governance over the next three years. This important document was prepared in extensive consultation with all government ministries and agencies, the National Assembly and Senate, the donor community, NGOs, the private sector and most especially the poor themselves.

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17 January 2003

Addressing the Closing of Commerce’s Annual Meeting

“... It is a great honor and pleasure to address the *Annual Meeting of the Ministry of Commerce*, and thus participate in the review of the Ministry’s 2002 performance as well as set its objectives and workplan for 2003.

In behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and my own self as Prime Minister, I sincerely congratulate the Ministry of Commerce for its commendable performance and successes achieved in 2002.

The Ministry of Commerce

has exerted its best in implementing the government’s policies and reform agenda - especially that of open and free trade policy. Indeed, this has contributed to the reduction of poverty among the Cambodian people.

In 2002, the Cambodian economy achieved economic growth of 5% despite suffering serious flooding, droughts and the negative impacts of world insecurity and economic stagnation.

Exchange rates have been stable. (Continued on page 3)

14 January 2003 [Unofficial Translation]

Ad-lib Address on Roads and Bridges Construction in Khsach Kandal District, Kandal Province

At the groundbreaking ceremony to build in the district of Khsach Kandal, Kandal province three roads and eleven bridges, Samdech Hun Sen made the following selected and translated address:

... I am very pleased today for having a chance to return to the district of Khsach Kandal to preside over the groundbreaking ceremony for which three roads and eleven bridges are being constructed. This is a scarce opportunity and it is also not by chance to have a construction site of this size for the improvement of infrastructure aimed at generating the economic growth and reducing poverty among our people. May I take this opportunity to first of all express my

gratitude to the venerable head monk of Prey Baing pagoda for offering us the place to organize the ceremony and to our people whose residences situated along the three roads to be built for their support to the initiatives. I also wish to thank the Ministry of Economy and Finance, for which we have here the presence of HE Senior Minister Keat Chhon, our people, the military engineering team as well as Kandal’s public works office for the collaboration in (Continued on page 5)

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Even as we take note of the advances made so far, we do recognize that much more remains to be done, by all of us together, to implement the strategies, policies, programs and measures set out in the NPRS. These actions include concrete steps to be taken to improve governance, build up national capacity and further coordinate and fine-tune our development programs. As a major step, we have decided that to avoid overlaps in development directions, the next NPRS and the third *Socio-Economic Development Plan* (SEDP III) will be merged into a single strategic document.

This will to enhance ownership and further mainstream participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction activities in Cambodia.

Moreover, we have decided that the *Supreme National Economic Council* (SNEC) and the *Council for Social Development* (CSD) will henceforth be the key bodies responsible for the formulation of national policies and strategies for poverty reduction.

The SNEC will exercise its role, as it has already been performing, in support of the Prime Minister in the area of development strategy and policy. Thus the SNEC will serve as the Prime Minister's "*Think Tank*", contributing to the NPRS2 with regard to overall strategy and policy formulation. The CSD will serve as a focal point for technical coordination and manage the consultation and participation processes, as well as monitoring of operational activities and implementation of the strategy.

Within the Second Term of the Royal Government, this is the last opportunity jointly with Cambodia's development partners for stocktaking and dialogue on Cambodia's reform programs. Due to the conduct of the national elections on 27 July 2003, the next CG may need to be set toward the end of 2003 or even early in 2004.

Thus it is necessary that at this time we will discuss achievements and performance of the Royal Government not only during the last six months, but to take an overall view of performance over the last 50 months of the current mandate, covering the continuous efforts exerted by the Government, reflecting its firm commitment in implementing and accelerating the reforms regardless of difficulties and challenges, especially during the election year.

In this sense, I emphasize that we have decided to extend our discussions from only half a day to a full day. We should take note that detailed discussions have already taken place at the working group meetings prior to today's dialogue.

As before, we will listen to the Executive Summaries of the topics discussed in the working groups to be presented by the representatives of the Royal Government and the donor community. I and my colleagues from the Royal Government will be here the whole day to listen carefully to the presentations and discussions. We will be grateful for your concrete recommendations and suggestions and will carefully consider all these for adoption and implementation.

Today, we will discuss the important reforms undertaken by the Government and the

cooperation between Cambodia and its development partners. These topics include: Governance Reform, Legal and Judicial Reform, Fiscal Reform, Social Sector Reforms, Public Administration Reform, and Reform in Natural Resources Management.

Indeed, you are all aware that forestry is right now a very hot issue that has increasingly caught the attention of the public during the last few weeks. May I take this opportunity to ensure clear understanding of this issue right at the outset of our dialogue. *I hereby reaffirm that the Royal Government will not make a step backward, but will continue to be steadfast and remains strongly committed to reform of the forestry sector.*

Thus the Royal Government has no intention whatsoever, to suspend nor to cease the process and mechanism of forest crimes monitoring. The Government remains committed ensuring the continuity of this mechanism and to the nationwide implementation of a strong, effective, credible and reliable system of forest monitoring. I believe, this is our common objective, to which we have all agreed, and which serves as the basis for continued cooperation and partnership between the RGC and the development partners.

In exercising its management of the current situation, the Royal Government has proposed a flexible, constructive and compromise solution, that a new monitoring agency be sought and appointed without disrupting the process forest crimes monitoring and other reforms in the forest sector.

I believe all of you can understand the roots of this problem.

The current issues have emerged from the repeatedly hostile, faulty, unfair and destructive attitude and behavior of the current forestry monitoring agent, adversely affecting the national integrity and credibility of the Royal Government and especially the interests of the Cambodian people. Such behavior has ultimately led the former partners to lose mutual trust and confidence. The state of affairs has now degenerated beyond repair. This situation is akin to the joint process necessary to the choice of one's life-long partner or spouse. The Royal Government considers all our development partners not only close friends but as relatives. Certainly, close friends and relatives will not force their fellow friends and relatives to suffer a bad marriage where the partners no longer love nor trust each other.

We will discuss the details of the forestry issue in the agenda on the reform of natural resources management. As I have stated on many occasions, the Royal Government does not consider the acts of monitoring, constructive criticism, and recommendations by donors as burdensome conditionalities. Indeed, I urge my colleagues here and all development partners to continue the tradition of close dialogue, and therefore discuss issues and challenges of Cambodia's reforms in a candid and frank manner.

We welcome constructive suggestions and opinions and consider these as the caring concerns of the development partners. And, like before, my colleagues and I will be happy to answer your questions and provide comments on any issues that require clarification...□

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 ble while inflation maintained at around 3.3%. The growth of our country's economy has been driven by the continuing high growth in manufacturing, industry, construction and tourism.

Manufacturing, especially of garments has been growing very fast, employing more than 223,000 workers. Those workers received about USD 160 million in wages in 2002.

Given these excellent results, many countries and international financial institutions have praised Cambodia and the RGC for the outstanding performance in social development and economic reforms.

The Ministry of Commerce has played an active role in such successful performance. Yet we have so much more work to do.

In order to further promote the development of trade and the economy, I wish to take this opportunity to share with all of you some specific and concrete recommendations for further action:

1. Trade Strategy for Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction is a continuing task that cannot be completed in a short period. Most poor Cambodians are farmers in the rural areas.

Among the 49 least - developed countries, Cambodia is one of three countries with commodity exports in excess of USD 1 Billion since 2000, enabling more than 200,000 workers from rural areas to work in the 200 garments and footwear factories.

This achievement of Cambo-

dia has resulted from developed countries opening their markets to Cambodian products. Such advances have been won despite almost three decades of civil war and countrywide peace attained only since the end of 1998.

Indeed, Cambodia's performance has been praised by the international community.

In general, pro-poor trade policy should aim to sustainably promote growth through the promotion of both domestic and international trade.

Trade policy that favors the poor focuses on the following key aspects:

- (a) *The promotion of exports using the GSP and MFN status of Cambodia;*
- (b) *The acceleration of the integration of Cambodia into the world economy through accession to WTO and promoting cooperation with ASEAN and between ASEAN and its dialogue partners to diversify market access for Cambodia's products;*
- (c) *The promotion of local production through measures that support the development of small corporations or SMEs in agro-processing, fisheries, textiles and tourism, especially in the countryside.*

2. Continued Integration into the Regional and World Economy for International Market Access

The Royal Government of Cambodia continues its efforts in integrating Cambodia into regional and world economy.

In preparation for WTO acces-

sion, Cambodia has so far conducted three rounds of bilateral and multilateral negotiations with other WTO members.

We expect that Cambodia will achieve membership in the WTO during the WTO Ministerial Meeting scheduled in Cancun, Mexico in September 2003.

Thus I urge H.E. CHAM PRASITH, the leader of Cambodia's WTO Negotiating Team to settle all the remaining issues so that Cambodia can definitely be recognized as a WTO member in this 2003.

For regional integration, Cambodia shall continue her cooperation with the other ASEAN members toward the establishment and taking advantage of AFTA.

Cambodia shall also support expansion of economic cooperation between ASEAN and its dialogue partners such as China, Japan, the United States and India.

The MINISTRY OF COMMERCE should further promote other bilateral trade cooperation opportunities especially with the US, the EU, Canada, Japan and the Republic of Korea to continue the expansion of the market for Cambodian exports.

Cambodia has effectively used its GSM and MFN status to promote production, exports, employment and income generation for the Cambodian people.

Thus I call on the Ministry of Commerce and other concerned institutions to work even harder to maximize use of these special trade treatments to increase our exports

even more than in the past year.

3. Preparation of the Trade Code

The strengthening and improvement of the efficiency of the free market mechanism via the development of the legal framework for trade should be speeded up.

An appropriate and transparent legal system is a key factor that encourages investors and businessmen to be confident about doing business in Cambodia.

A sound legal system should ensure the free and fair competition among all producers and businessmen. There are 13 pieces of draft legislation that have been proposed by the MINISTRY OF COMMERCE.

These are being reviewed by the government and the two legislative bodies. When completed within two years, these laws will help ensure that Cambodia will have an adequate system of trade laws and regulations consistent with WTO agreements.

The MINISTRY OF COMMERCE should make full use of all current technical assistance to facilitate integration and speed up work on the above-mentioned bills.

4. Cambodia-Thailand Economic Cooperation

In 2003, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, as Chair of the Cambodia - Thailand Joint Committee, should further promote the implementation of key joint projects already agreed, including the establishment of the Export Processing

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Zones in Koh Kong, Pai Lin and Poi Pet, the establishment of wholesale export malls for exporting and various tourism projects.

5. Triangle Economic Cooperation: Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos

Ministry of Commerce should play a leading role in the analysis and planning of the development of trade in the triangle area between Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos.

The outcomes of such analysis and plans will in the future be used to promote the area into sustainable, secure development zones that will greatly help reduce poverty among our people in the area.

6. Quality Control of Products

Products meant for commerce and trade must be controlled for quality and safety. This work has been performed well by the CAMCONTROL of the Ministry of Commerce.

In recent years we have observed a dramatic decline in the circulation of sub-standard and spoiled products in Cambodia. Thus control measures should be applied to all products, importers, transport companies, producers and sellers.

Consumer education is crucial to the public's understanding of the effects of use of poor quality products, especially of food.

Moreover, the Ministry of Commerce should ensure that products such as fertilizers, pesticides and other potentially harmful products bear labels in the Khmer language that provide key information on

proper usage.

Moreover, actions should be taken to prevent fake trademarks, including prevention, monitoring and implementation of measures on imports, production and circulation to ensure compliance with the Law on Trademarks and Acts of Unfair Competition.

Finally, the Ministry of Commerce should work to further build the capacity of national laboratories which certify the quality of products.

7. Administrative Reform and Decentralization Policy

The Ministry of Commerce has set its mission statement as: "*Year 2002: the Year of Decentralization and Deregulation*".

While the Ministry of Commerce has already achieved significant progress, much more work is required in order that its delivery of public services can quickly catch up with other countries in the region.

The Ministry of Commerce and other concerned institutions must study ways to use computerized systems to reduce administrative workloads.

I also urge, once again, all ministries and institutions to completely eliminate the practice of taking bribes or imposing illegal charges since these badly affect the competitiveness of our traders and producers and impede the development of the national economy as a whole.

I also call on all private companies to stop paying illegal fees to "bad officials". Indeed, those who pay bribes as well as take bribes are equally at

fault.

Furthermore, companies should review their staffs to uncover those involved in corrupt practices and shift the blame to civil servants.

8. Export Promotion for Creation of Jobs for Cambodians

The Ministry of Commerce has contributed considerably to creating jobs for Cambodians.

So far more than 220,000 people have found work in the garment sector. Each month, investors pay USD\$15 million in wages for garment workers.

Now, we need to provide training so that Cambodians can take over the jobs currently held by more than 3,000 foreign experts in Cambodia.

Starting 2003 the EU and Canada will provide Cambodia with preferential treatment, absolutely free of taxes and quotas for Cambodian products entering their markets.

This is another opportunity that will foster production, exports and jobs for Cambodia on a sustainable basis.

9. Upgrading of Ports

To further advance trade with countries in the region, I ask the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Public Works and Transports and other concerned institutions to conduct a thorough and detailed study on the promotion of ports such as Koh Kong, Sré Ambel, Keo Phus, Kampot and Keb into international ports.

10. Human Resource Development

The Ministry of Commerce has performed in Human Resource Development very well.

The Ministry has conducted many training courses, seminars and workshops for its officials in topics such as: English and Japanese languages, modern accounting, free market economics, commercial law, computer literacy, product quality education, property and intellectual rights, and ASEAN and WTO affairs.

As I have said many times, the year 2003 is the fifth and last of the second term of the RGC after the 1998 elections. The efforts to rehabilitate and develop our nation, which just achieved full peace a mere four years before, have not been an easy task.

I am encouraged by the Ministry of Commerce's objectives and tasks for 2003 set by this Annual Meeting. I wish H.E. Cham Prasith the best as Leader of Cambodia's WTO Negotiating Team, imbued with creativity and responsibility as he has consistently shown.

The Royal Government of Cambodia is confident that the Ministry of Commerce is effectively implementing the government's policy agenda, transforming those policies into a reality.

The RGC is committed to ensuring trade liberalization, free flow of products, strengthening overseas trade relations and the integration of Cambodia into the region and the world.

This will definitely bring the benefits for our people freeing them from the poverty...□

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implementing this project. Without the support from the Ministry of Economy and Finance and its experts, we may not be able to gather budget for a construction of this size, which cost in all Riel 12 billion... The construction has partially started and will be using up to 100 road-building machineries. HE Kong Eang of the military engineering team of the Department of Logistics of the Ministry of National Defense just said that roads and bridges in this area were built in the 1970s using outdated machineries because in those days money was used for purchasing modern weapons for the fight and not modern construction machines. Therefore the roads and bridges built at that time were not able to sustain in face of destructive war and flood.

... I wish to recall a bit about my trip in 1989 to this area. I was traveling on a motorbike under a heavy rain. It is known to all that riding the motorbike under rain is better than riding it when the rain stops because its wheel would be caught by mud. My itinerary at that time was first Prek Tameak and from there to the district of Srey Santhor of Kandal. Returning from Srey Santhor, I came by and stayed one night in the commune of Sanlong of the district of Khsach Kandal. We then had to cross a waterway by a ferry which was one made of two boats and moved by hand pulling the string which is tied to either side of the waterway. I have decided in consultation with the Minister for Transport and Communication and the Governor of Kandal in those days to build the Preah Kunlong Bridge in place of the ferry. The bridge survived consecutive floodings

as I promised that if the bridge is broken by flood I would immediately rebuild it. The bridge was inaugurated in March or April of 1990. We noticed later that the section of road from the bridge to the commune of Viheasuor was constantly damaged. By late 1995 and early 1996, I have raised money from friends abroad of about US\$ 100,000 to repair the road. In just a short while, the flood in 1996 washed it away. In 2000, the Asian Development Bank through the Ministry of Rural Development offered to build two concrete bridges but they two were washed away right away.

... Also I could remember about my trip to the district of Pearaing (which on the other side of the Small River). It was in 1984 during the Pchum Ben Day. I traveled by speedboat and joined the people in the area in their boat racing ceremony in the small river. I have a lot of memories in the area and I could be said to be the only Prime Minister in this world who had traveled the longest distance by motorcycle. I also came to the Kampong Popil commune with the late HE Sin Song to observe place to build the bridge of Kompong Popil and its construction in 1993. I also came with him to put the bridge into use as well.

... Development efforts in this area have not been sufficient in comparison to those potentials. This area has a combined potential of the district of Khsach Kandal of Kandal and the districts of Peareang and Srey Santhor of Prey Veng. The gap so far has been the lack of road link and transportation. It is also true to mention about other needs like water damn or dike, but road link has

been the priority. In our judgment, this area could be threatened by flood. In rainy season, this area is inundated with only spots of high land surrounded with water like islands. I am always present before anyone else when the area is affected by serious flood in order to deliver relief, taking for instance the flood in 2000 and 2001.

... Taking into consideration the three roads and eleven bridges to be built, we have planned to use up to 462 meters of Bailey or cost us in all about 40 kilos of gold. HE Keat Chhon, one of the experts who did the study of the road system in the Kingdom of Cambodia, has a wide knowledge of the potential of the area and the need for road access. Also in the Japanese study recently, Prek Tameak has been selected as the point where a bridge has to be built. But because we have not got the road built yet, the bridge has been built at the Tonle Bet in Kompong Cham instead. Otherwise we would have a bridge across the Mekong at Prek Tameak rather than in Kompong Cham. Before they used to say "Prey Nokor falls, Phnom Penh disappears, Battambang destroyed, Angkor Wat is happy." Now we could change the saying to "Kompong Cham unites, Phnom Penh is happy, Battambang is beautiful, and Angkor Wat has fun." Kompong Cham has now linked between its eastern and western side because of the Kizuna Bridge. Overall, the period as envisaged by the saying has gone and what we have left is the sermon in every pagoda.

... Take for instance this area before was full of gunfire and it is the hottest battlefield between 1974 and 1975. There

was this soldier named San and he fought defending the barrack at Prek Tameak until he became Sak Pram. It was a tough battle because it is the belt that protected the capital of Phnom Penh. Just now HE Governor Tep Nunnry mentioned of the development projects in the western side of Kandal – Angsnuol and Kandalstoeung including also the district of Kongpisey of Kompong Speu and Khan Dangkor of Kandal. We also have the construction site of road 21 between Kandal and the border of Vietnam. We may have to seek to finish the five kilometers left as ADB does not have fund to finish it. We have to provide pre-financing to the Public Works of Kandal to bridge the remaining five kilometers. So around Phnom Penh we have three big construction sites – the road and bridge construction site here in Khsach Kandal, the construction site in the western side of Phnom Penh and the National Road 21 between the border with Vietnam and Takhmao. Aside from this we have so many construction sites throughout the country that are in operation. This is what I would say the implementation of the locomotive strategy for the economic growth and poverty alleviation... I would not give my agreement to the argument that economic growth could be achieved without having to pay attention to the construction of roads and bridges. We should at least think of four priorities – water, roads, electricity and human resources. They all have equal importance and we have to reprioritize according to the real situation of each place. Where there already has been water, road should become the first priority, and vice versa. The four priorities are the areas for

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which investment should be made. Take for instance this area could become another rice bowl for Cambodia when we put into perspective the existing potential for agriculture of Khsach Kandal, Srey Santhor and Peareang combined. So far we have not made sufficient investment in this area yet. Look at the mat-making handicraft. This area could provide the mat for use throughout the national market and also for export to other countries as well. They are needed in restaurants in Japan. But because we do not have the means of transport, to supply them to the market is unfeasible. So today we have come to put into practice the locomotive strategy, which should lead to economic growth and poverty alleviation.

... A country needs to have road access – small, big and average sizes, and canals of all sizes. It is no different to a human body which has to have all sizes of veins. Any damage in one vein would cause trouble to the rest. This is not only what we say where there is road there is hope, but it is a vital factor of either one's body or country. For so long in the past the veins have been damaged, and our country has fallen into the underdeveloped situation. So now we have to rebuild all roads and bridges that existed before the war. We have put out a vision that all asphalted roads in the Sangkumreastr Niyum must be re-asphalted by 2005. We also have to build roads to other places where roads are needed because the number of population has grown more than before. Let me take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to HE

Senior Minister Keat Chhon, who, in his old age of 69, had made a trip to visit the road construction site at Preah Vihear near the border with Thailand. He is doing so because he has sensed the focus of the Prime Minister on roads and bridges construction. He had gone to the most difficult-access area.

... We are also having this problem of population growth to tackle for as the number of population grows while there are increasing demands for residential and cultivation land. In retrospect of the situation we have broadened the infrastructural development beyond the capital and its surrounding to the provinces of Preah Vihear, Uddor Meanchey, Ratanakiri, Mondulakiri, Kratie, and Stoeung-treng. We have to redress the situation where sometimes we have too high population rate in a less available land area and low population rate in the highly available land area. Among many reasons, absence of communication and road access is one of them. This situation has slow down the productive and trade activities. Today for the district of Khsach Kandal, we could foresee the interaction and interrelation among the districts of Kandal, Prey Veng and Kompng Cham provinces through the construction of the afore mentioned three roads.

... The three roads have a total distance of 26.800 kilometers. The first road is eight kilometer in length and stretching from the Preah Kunlong Bridge to the commune of Chey Thum and containing four bridges – Kaaong I (51 meters), Kaaong II (51 meters), Pannaon (51 meters) and O Yim (51 meters). We have to make the area linked and

commutable by road in both rainy and dry seasons. Alongside with this about 4,000 hectares of rice field could also be cultivable. The second road is linking between Vihearsuor to the commune of Bakdao with the total length of 15.800 kilometers. It contains three bridges – Prey Baing I (30 meters), Prey Baing II (21 meters) and Prek Tahuy (36 meters). This should facilitate traveling by our people in Peareang to Phnom Penh. The third road is about 3000 meters in length containing a bridge about 27 meters linking Preah Sre to the commune of Sithor. We will use up to 103 construction machineries and they are no outdated machines as in 1970s.

... We are now living in the culture of peace and all sorts of weapon are forbidden. As now we have good road condition, we notice new signboards of different parties displayed. They are welcome to do so as we all are living in a democratic society. The road is not built for just one or two particular person but for all –non-politician, politician – good and bad ones too. Just now I am blessed to be winner on all, but let me win in a situation that we all are coexisting peacefully. Before each side made claims to have destroyed so and so number of tanks, bridges and lives. We do not say that anymore but so and so number of lives that have been saved from death rate of children from polio, from HIV/AIDS, etc. We are in the culture of peace what else we should say about destroying. So if we win we also have to leave room for those who lose to survive in peace. We must not practice this saying "when the water rises, the fish eats ants and vice versa." Some people have borne the concept

of retaliation in their minds – I will take from the rich to give to the poor, if I win. This would create trouble again. We should be afraid of the repetition of the experience we had in the Pol Pot regime. As for school buildings, one of the current achievements, despite the fact that there has been anti-propaganda, I wish to say that children of any person could go to study in those schools. I do not care about their cursing but their children have to study hard and become good students. If they learn and refrain from cursing one another it is even better for all. All we should practice is performing good deed. I used to think that like when we had before 54 political parties, if each one builds our people one thousand water wells, we would have 54,000 wells in the whole country.

... Let me make one thing clear. Today we have these roads covered with red coarse soil. My vision is that based on the potential that we have learned, if I were to be entrusted to lead the Government in the third term after the general election on July 27, 2003, I would make this road asphalted and declare it the National Road 8. The NR 8 is linking Prek Tameak through Kompong Popil, the district of Pea Reang, Prey Veng Province to the NR 11 at Thmor Kor. It should be 60 kilometers in all. It should be realized in the term 2003-2008. We have got the foundation ready for asphaltting later. This is taking place in the second term, in the third term one more NR would be existing in the culture of peace era. Some people might hint that Hun Sen is making an electoral campaign. Well how about all of you (opposition figures) are

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25 January 2003 [Unofficial Translation]

Inaugurating a Zoo in Koh Kong Province

During his visit to the province of Koh Kong, Samdech Hun Sen inaugurates a zoo called the Safari World and made the following selected ad-lib address.

... Today my wife and I, accompanied by our grand-child have come to join you all to officially inaugurate the Safari World Zoo in Koh Kong. It is indeed a new achievement among various others that are taking shape in Cambodia in this time of peace culture.

... This zoo was built in just two years but it has proven to us that it is an international standard zoo with the facility to cater to the needs of tourists. Tourism will offer us jobs and will also absorb some of our people's products... May I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the provincial and district authorities as well as our people for the contributions they made in bringing about various achievements and I also thank Mr. President of Duty Free Shop for his personal efforts so far.

... Last year I came here to inaugurate the 1900-meters bridge, second only to the Kizuna Bridge across the Mekong River. The two bridges are not precedent in our country's thousands of years history. What we have seen realized here today stemmed out of the efforts made by all of our people, investors, for which the environment of progress and jump-forward of economy as well as in other fields have been achieved after the war ended and the peace culture comes. May I take this occasion to express in my own name as well as in our local authorities of all levels to

thank Oknha Ly Yong Phat and Madame for various contributions they made in realizing achievements in the form of investments in infrastructural development – roads, schools, hospitals as well as Buddhist pagodas for the sake of our society and people. It is indeed a model of resource sharing between those who are rich to those who are poorer and it could be seen as an investment in job creation and financial contribution into the national budget.

... Since I have this chance to be in Koh Kong province, please allow me to speak about what happened in the past in this place. First I would talk on some background of HE Tea Banh. Originally he was not Tea Banh but Mr. Tea Sangvang. He was arrested and sent to a place for shooting to death. One man next to him was shot to death while he was pretending to be shot before him. As they (soldiers) thought he was dead already, they took no care of him and he escaped into the forest while the soldiers were digging holes. Since then he became Tea Banh (Banh in Khmer means shot or shoot). His background presents us a bitter history in the province. HE Say Phuthang was then a leader of the rebellion movement in this area in 1974. In their retreat HE Tea Banh was getting married at point 207 at the Thai-Cambodian border, and I could recall that there is a jackfruit tree.

... I wish also to share a political experience when our neighbor wanted to transfer a situation from war to peace. In between 1979 and 1985, especially late 1984, I was then Deputy Prime Minister and

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doing it everyday. Some of you even said that if you win you would confiscate from the rich to give them to the poor. What I am saying is just if I were re-elected for the third term, I will asphalt the road between Prek Takeak and Thmor Kor, the NR 11, and make it the NR 8. I do not think it is wrong to say so. I am now declared to be the sole CPP candidate again for the post of Prime Minister. Some people said this has happened because Hun Sen moved his army around. I found that groundless and warned them that they should bother with their internal problem rather

Minister for Foreign Affairs and later in early 1985 when I became the Prime Minister, I have met with various diplomats.

... I would write a book about all those meetings and I am sure it will sell well. There are always conflicts of ideas in politics. In time of hot war along the Thai-Cambodia border, I issued a policy of neutralization of Thai armed forces and administration in gradual preparation for a relation to take place and the policy has brought about Koh Kong's life as we have seen here today. The then Governors – HE Rung Plam Kaison and the current parliamentary Ay Khan, may well remember some of the recommendations to shut off relations with Thailand here.

... My wife and I came to visit the area in order to study the situation, after which I disagreed with the recommendation to close relations with Thailand because by doing so we would suffocate our people in Koh Kong by the time that

than trying to break open the Cambodian People's Party internal affairs... Please do not force me to use my DIFID strategy. DIFID has in fact been the strategy to eliminate the Khmer Rouge. Well it is not a secret anymore. DIFID is an abbreviation from these terms – D for Divide, I for Isolate, F for Finish, I for Integrate and D for Develop. May I warn you that do not force me to change the last D from Develop to Destroy. So all political parties should refrain from breaking the CPP and pay more attention to your own affairs as trying to split CPP would result in a bad omen for your own...□

Cambodia was punished in general term. If we were to close the trade route between Koh Kong and our neighbor, especially with Thailand at Khlong Yai, it was not Thai people who would suffer from that action but our people in Koh Kong instead. At that moment if we were to be weak and the Khmer Rouge took control of the area, we would never gain it back. But we were lucky that in those days our military officials who have 50% political blood and 50% military blood accepted my order...

... Neutralization of the Thai army and administration brought us very favorable conditions. I could take five points to prove that here – Koh Kong, Pailin, Poi Pet, Preah Vihear and An Seh. Among the five, as HE Tea Banh, Ke Kimyan and Pol Saroeun could remember, we had managed to control all of them except Pailin. What is important is that we controlled four out of five... I used to travel by speedboat at around 3am from

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Koh Kong to Khlong Yai in order to continue my trip to Pataya to participate in the meeting in preparation for the setup of the Supreme National Council (SNC) in Tokyo. It was then in 1990 and in Japan it was under Prime Minister Kaifu. So SNC was initiated in Bangkok but was setup in Tokyo. I would call it a success of the policy not to confront enemy in all direction at one time. If in that time we fought Pol Pot while created problem with Thailand we would have a worse battle. We would have the worst time still if only Thai army fired artillery shell in support of the Khmer Rouge army.

... There was one time we shelled into Thai territory because Khiev Sam Phan came for a ceremony in Khai Phu. Well the war is over now and a political solution has been found. Taking this opportunity I wish to clarify that An Seh and Preah Vihear were lost to the Khmer Rouge because of UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia). We had retained our control but UNTAC could not control them and the Khmer Rouge soldiers fought and tied the UNTAC soldiers.

... To take them back was not that easy as shell would further deteriorate the temple condition. My vision currently is to transform all previous battlefields into development areas. These areas called Neang Kok, Cham Yeam were just battlefields. Take for instance in this place before we had just a few artillery pieces in defense of some islands but we no longer need them as we now invite tourists to come see Dolphins dance instead...

... Just now I have told all of

you that we have bridged the border between Cambodia and Thailand by the 1900-meters bridge already and we have improved the road condition of NR 48 already except that it has yet to be asphalted and to have four more bridges to be built. My Thai counterpart, a good friend of mine, HE Thaksin Shinawatra, agrees to build us the four bridges and to offer us concessional loan to asphalt the NR 48 at the total length of 158 Kilometers. What remains to be done is to complete the paper procedure. We have the hope of seeing the road along the sea that connects to Sihanoukville, Kompot and to Vietnam. It will be the shortest road connection of the three countries in the Sub-Mekong Region.

... The industrialized zone Neang Kok will be built in this area and we are looking for investment from Thailand both in finance as well as in technology. Cambodia has market in Japan, China and in some other countries but Cambodia has not got products to send them to.

... I wish you look into processing industry for export from Cambodia taking the benefit of its GSP and MFN. Cambodia has got lots of markets but has not got enough products to supply them. So we should see this as a complementary deal. Taking this time I wish to give a recommendation to Oknha Ly Yong Phat to open your vision for seaport as I have declared a few days ago "open-water policy." This means that we should no longer depend on just one seaport at Sihanoukville because our export and import potential would be limited.

... Let's see a scenario in which we have our products

made in Koh Kong and we have to transport them to Sihanoukville for export. This would increase the transport cost. To solve this problem we have to build a seaport in Koh Kong, in Sre Ambel and in Kompot. The port in Sre Ambel could be used for exporting animals -- cattle. The port here would host tourists for a visit to waterfalls and other entertainment.

... This is what I say we all are transforming the battlefields into development areas -- Koh Kong, Pailin, Kamreang, Phnom Proeuk, Melay, Sapeoulone as these areas started selling corns and other crops to Thai markets based on the agreement between Thailand and Cambodia. If we were to ship crops to Phnom Penh before export, we would lose a lot. The area of Preah Vihear is in operative moment in being transformed from battlefield into development zone...

... We have sought to make friends and to have cooperation with our neighbors -- Thailand in the west, Vietnam in the east and Laos in the north. Yesterday we have opened the 22nd ASEAN Tourism Forum in Phnom Penh to which the ten ASEAN member states and the representatives from China, Japan and Korea have participated. We ended not only internal conflict but also benefit from the end of the cold war era and move in speed into the regionalization and globalization era so that a complementary state of being in the relations will bring us progress.

... As for the sea in front of us, the Royal Government is making speedy negotiation with all parties concerned in the spirit of sharing profit from the overlapped zone in the sea that

we believe there is abundance of oil and gas... Thailand hosted six to seven million tourists a year and if among them about half extend their visits to Cambodia, it would be a positive sign. Some of the Thais wanted to see Angkor Wat, and now we have invested in building an airport in Koh Kong. People in Trat do not have to travel to Bangkok to take a flight to Siemreap but travel to Koh Kong instead to take a flight to Siemreap... On their way back they may also buy some products home. We also think of doing the same for tourists from Vietnam. I also have a vision for ASEAN + India or South Asia that our package tour could also include South Asian countries, particularly India as we have HE Ambassador here today.

... We should not seek to be enemy with anyone and what we have sought for them to do in return is what they can really do and that is to respect our territorial integrity and sovereignty of Cambodia. We want no land from anyone and we would neither trade any pieces of our land. We will try to keep the size of land that the Cambodian history has left us. I would not go to take Kamputhea Krom and I would not do the same for Surin. These lands have lost in the past hundreds of years and I would not do that but take care of the remaining Cambodia left by our history. Some people may want to nurture the problem and for these people I would say that one may tame the dolphin to dance, the monkey to fight but one may not be able to tame human of this sort (to change their minds). No one is blinder than a man with good eyes but pretend to not see and with good ears but not to hear...□