

Cambodia New Vision

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30 July 2003 [Unofficial Translation]
“A Visit to the Flood-Hit Villages after the Election”



On July 27, 2003, Samdech Hun Sen, the CPP's only candidate of Prime Minister and MP of Kandal constituency, and Madame cast their votes in the Commune of Takhmao, Kandal Province.

... First of all allow me to share with all of you some of the difficulties that happened and affected 5013 households in seven communes of the district of Dangkao. This natural calamity was unpredictable as it took place in early rainy season. I think it is an unforeseeable incident that could be an experience for us. It was because of this reason that right after the electoral campaign and the election period were over, no one could prevent me from coming to see our people after my absence over one month. I am showing up again today for the first time and I also make my address for the first time within the afore mentioned period to the people of Cambodia all over the country, and especially our people in west of Phnom Penh as they had been affected by flood.

... Once again in the name of the Royal Government of Cambodia and in my own name, I wish to express my appreciation and gratefulness to the affected families and the Ministry of Water Resources as

well as the authorities of Dangkao district for their efforts to overcome altogether all the difficulties. Though we had so many things to do while flood affected the area, an rescue operation was in fact organized in a timely manner and as you all could see that one tractor is still in water. This could be said the second time rescue operation since the first one in 2000, in which HE Minister of Water Resources, Lim Kean Hor, had requested my permission at midnight to break open the national road 2 at the Prek Roteang area. The action was conducted with an aim to divert flood disaster from the districts of Kandal Stoeung and Dangkao, and a small part of Angsnuol... We conducted a study of the water current very well in the flood time of 1991 from the western part of Phnom Penh and since then we had projected to raise fund for the construction of the flood protection dam along the canal. The dams were built with the Japanese Government's counterpart fund and a part
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09 July 2003
Arbor Day at Kbal Chhay, Sihanoukville

In the name of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Cambodia and as the Head of Royal Government of Cambodia, today I am most pleased and honored to participate in this solemn Arbor Day event. I am also happy to see and talk with you here in Sihanoukville.

... I praise the MAFF for selecting this Kbal Chhay watershed for this celebration of Arbor Day. Indeed, we must act to transform this area into a forest once again. This we must do not only to help ensure that the supply of water to Sihanoukville remains fresh and clean, but also to promote this beautiful area into an important eco-tourism destination. Their Majesties the King and

Queen deeply regret that they cannot share in the pleasure of being here today. As you know, our venerable King is under medical treatment, and we all want him to remain well. But please be assured that their Majesties are always deeply concerned for all the people, and they love you all. They have conveyed their message to all of you on this joyful Arbor Day. They said that they will very soon return to Cambodia, so that they can participate in the National Elections of 27 July 2003.

The tree-planting that we all do today has become a tradition. Originally, it was initiated to contribute to
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27 July 2003 [Unofficial Translation]
Samdech Hun Sen's Post Election Declaration

On Sunday, July 27, 2003, from early morning, the Cambodian eligible voters in great numbers, both male and female, cast their votes fulfilling their political rights and freedom in choosing Members of the National Assembly for the third legislature through their voting for a political party they like. It was indeed a high pride of the whole nation when the general election has been conducted in an atmosphere of stability, security, non-oppression, non-threat and non-violence. These are in fact key factors for determining the freeness and justice of the election. It is in this meaning that the Royal Government considers July 27, 2003 as the most significant historic day on which the Cambodian people actively participate in the implementation of their rights and

freedom in electing their leaders in accordance with democratic principles and respect of human rights, while maintaining calmness, dignity and social order. It is certain that to lay a foundation of democracy is a long process that is going on and on. The election at this time reflects a step of firm progress of the culture of democracy in the Cambodian society, though internal war flame had been extinguished entirely from the country in just five years and the fabric of our society is still in fragile
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the implementation of the long-term vision of the Royal Government in conserving and protecting our nation's natural forests and wildlife.

This is because, "... forests are the veins of agriculture, the life of our farmers and a source of economic growth, thus we all should collectively preserve and protect the forests and replant new trees". Today's tree planting is consistent with our traditional values and vision for the development and protection of our nation's invaluable natural forest assets. Moreover, I strongly believe that all Cambodians can contribute to renewing and even expanding our forests.

Let us all commit and act to plant all types and as many of trees as we can, in all available areas in pagodas, villages, public places, and along the roads and canals. We should also commit to take good care of the trees that we plant, to nurture their growth. Indeed, such contribution will benefit not only ourselves but the community and the world at large, and not only today for ourselves, but for our children, and their children, well into the future. Three decades of war and internal conflicts destroyed much of our country and left us all with innumerable painful legacies, particularly poverty. Death, war and poverty have posed serious pressures on our natural resources, especially the forests and wildlife, including this area the Kbal Chhay watershed, which has long suffered serious degradation, de-forestation and over-hunting of wildlife.

We have already seen the dangers of serious degradation here at the Kbal Chhay watershed. The Royal Government has taken action and has organized a program to ensure the sustainable management of the remaining forest stocks. The Kbal Chhay watershed has been design-

nated as a protected area for the purpose of maintaining the supply of fresh water to Sihanoukville.

The MAFF and the Department of Forestry and Wildlife have also been instructed to implement stringent measures to protect, preserve and manage the natural resources and wildlife as well as undertake reforestation in this area. Indeed, we started this effort some years ago. I still remember that in 1999 HE Sar Kheng came to officiate at a tree-planting ceremony here in Kbal Chhay, right after the government decided to eliminate anarchic activities in forest exploitation and occupation of land.

We should also note that in the Second Term of the Royal Government, Cambodia has achieved the full peace and security over the entire country. We have also secured the confidence of the country and the international development partners that we are on the correct path in forestry reform. Indeed, we now have a clear vision and program toward sustainable conservation, management and development of our forests. With pleasure I have listened to the speech earlier made by HE Chan Sarun. HE Sarun outlined the important outcomes realized by the Royal Government in implementing the program on forestry and wildlife development.

It is a significant achievement that Cambodia's forest cover has increased from 58.6% (10,638,209 hectares) in 1997 to 61.14% (11,104,285 hectares) in 2002. This is an important achievement of the second term of the Royal Government. Let me state clearly here that I consider Cambodia's success in sustainable forestry management vital to my political life. Therefore, during the second term the Royal Government we have taken strong measures, and have acted with determination to combat forestry crimes, improve regulations and

build a sound institutional capacity to ensure sustainable management of forestry and natural resources in Cambodia.

During its first term from 1993 to 1998, the Royal Government made several mistakes in the management and use of forest resources. Errors were made in the granting of land concessions to companies in excessive quantity and extremely low price. During the Second Term of the Royal Government, the mistakes made during the First Term could no longer be easily corrected. Throughout the Second Term of the Royal Government, I have exerted my best efforts to get our entire house back in order. It has been a difficult task, since the effort involved not only implementing the correct policies, but also required work to repair the mistakes made during the First Term.

With determined commitment, I have set firm measures to get our house back in order. We have set measures to raise the levels of timber royalties to rational economic rates. We have reviewed concessions and cancelled the investment agreements of some concessions, returning the forest into the nation's permanent assets. The difficult work has borne good results.

During the Second Term, the Royal Government has cancelled 15 concession agreements which had been made during the First Term. These agreements cover more than three million hectares, of which we have returned 1.3 million hectares back into the protected forest domain. Furthermore, the coverage of some other existing concessions are being reduced, so that the portions cancelled will also be returned to the protected zones, while others will be transformed into social land concessions for the productive use of the poor and vulnerable people, thus helping reduce poverty.

Currently, the government is processing the cancellation of 2 other concessions, covering 499,700 hectares. The Law on Forestry, which is the principal legal instrument to guide the sustainable management of our forest resources, has been effective since 31 August 2002. The Royal Government has also issued a declaration on forestry policy of 26 July 2002 and has been actively and continuously formulating sub-decrees, prakas and related regulations to ensure the effective and prompt implementation of the forestry policies and laws.

In this context, I urge the MAFF to exert its best efforts to organize a new and stronger line structure of forestry administration as soon as possible, to accelerate the implementation of the Forestry Law and programs across the Kingdom of Cambodia. Even as the national elections approach, the Royal Government will not relax in its efforts at forestry reform. We are committed to the continuous and strict implementation of forestry reform, with the strongest determination and resolve. The Royal Government will maintain the suspension of logging and timber transport in all concession areas until the sustainable forest management plans and the social and environmental impact assessments of those plans are finalized and officially approved.

If any company is found unable to implement the required conditions in the sustainable operation of its concession, the Royal Government will cancel the agreement. Overall, in the implementation of policies and strategies in the forestry reform, the second term Royal Government has been praised and supported by the national and international communities for its numerous pragmatic efforts to preserve and protect and sustainably manage Cambodia's forest resources. Nevertheless, the Royal Government recognizes that

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these achievements are still inadequate to meet our nation's needs. More effort, determination and time are required to realize the sound development of forestry in Cambodia to match the best practices in the region and the world.

Indeed, we are continuously reviewing the forestry reform policies of the Royal Government, particularly the links between the agriculture and forestry components aimed at improving forest productivity and improving program effectivity, thereby maintaining environmental balance in our nation. With this purpose in mind, I would like to take the opportunity to provide some recommendations, as follows:

First, I request the MAFF to strengthen the implementation of the monitoring and reporting project on forestry crimes through the strengthening of institutional capacity of the Royal Government, ensuring ownership in the project by adopting as quickly as possible the work plan and operating budget for 2003-2004.

Second, we must all work to improve and strengthen working relationships with Cambodia's development partners, especially within the framework of working group on management of natural resources.

Third, to work on the passage of the prakas on the management of revenues from forestry by cooperating with the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

Fourth, to promote the adoption of the sub-decree on forestry communities, ensuring that the sub-decree is consistent with the sub-decree and policy statement on social land concessions.

Fifth, to formulate an action and development plan for local timber market and ensure continuing consultation with the international com-

munity on forestry policies. Cambodia has a great potential in agriculture, particularly diversified agriculture where many potentials in rice, livestock, freshwater and seafishing, vegetables and flowers, and industrial crops such as rubber, palm oil, cashew, cotton, tobacco and tubers. Many of these still require proper development.

Indeed, rice is the most important agricultural crop in Cambodia, covering approximately 2.3 million hectares, or 90% of the country's total cultivated land. Our farmers still use traditional cultivation methods since 60% of rice produced is only for subsistence. While in the near future we expect to increase rice productivity from 1.3 ton per hectare to 2 ton per hectare, such an achievement will still be low by regional standards. Our neighbors Viet Nam and Thailand have already achieved 3.4 tons of yields per hectare. The Royal Government has been working hard to strengthen research on high-yielding rice seeds, expand agricultural lands and extend the irrigation systems to enable increased rice productivity and ultimately attain food self-sufficiency as well as production for export. Currently, surpluses have already been achieved in a few provinces, but other areas still face production shortages.

All these are clear indications of Cambodia's great potential in agriculture in ensuring food security, and even more in attracting and strengthening and expanding the bases for economic growth, which will have a positive and quick impact on improving the rural livelihoods. Having seen this, the RGC has set long-term development strategies for agriculture over the period of next 50 years as follows:

Expanded rural infrastructure and irrigation as the cornerstone of our strategy to improve agricultural productivity. The RGC will need to

drastically increase its investment in rural infrastructure and irrigation over the next 5-10 years to improve agricultural production and productivity. Specifically, we aim to increase irrigated lands from 20% in 2002 to 24% in 2007.

Provision of micro-finance: The serious lack of financial services in the rural areas is a key obstacle for the growth of agro products and rural development. The Royal Government has been working hard to strengthen the rural credit system aimed at creating employment and increasing income for the poor, particularly by establishing the Rural Development Bank. Indeed we must ensure the sustainable development of micro-finance and gradually expand the services to cover small and medium enterprises.

Improve research and extension on agro techniques: The Royal Government considers research and extension on high-yielding technology and know-how in agriculture as a key aspect to the improved productivity and the modernization of Cambodian agriculture.

Strengthen the distribution of agricultural equipment and inputs: Improved access to quality fertilizer and agricultural equipment is crucial to increasing farm productivity. Fertilizer use by farmers varies considerably in relation to limitations in supply and prices. High transport costs, combined with illegal charges also constrain supplies and increase marketing costs. We need to pay more attention to improvements in this area.

Strengthen agro-product processing: Due to the lack of capital or resources for development of processing industries, our farmers export raw or unprocessed commodities to neighboring countries, and are thus forced to sell at low prices. The small-scale rice mills available in the local areas cannot produce export-

quality rice. The Royal Government has encouraged investments in modern rice mills as well as food processing factories necessary to develop our potentials in agro products exports.

Diversify market access for farmers: Aside from rice, Cambodian farmers are able to plant fruits, raise animals and nurture pond fishes that can generate employment and additional income complementary to their income from rice harvesting. However, after production they lack access to markets due to poor information channels.

In addition, there are many traders but most are too small size, lack market information and financing. Furthermore, illegal charges collected during transport constrain supply as well as increase transport costs. We have learned many lessons from our experiences with state intervention in the collection or buying of agro products with the purpose to ensure price stability, and in organizing collectives and state companies. However, all these measures have failed due to the violation of the market-economy principles, corruption, and delays and red-tape within the state bureaucracy in payments to farmers.

Moreover, any state intervention or careless subsidy to the agriculture sector would be inconsistent with the trends in integration in the region and the world, as well as against the requirements for Cambodia's membership in the WTO. Learning from the past, the Royal Government has selected the strategy of integrating private, agricultural enterprises with farm households based on market principles as our strategy for development.

Land management. Clearly defined ownership of land is important to encourage farmers to invest in their

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 condition. In the name of the Royal Government and in my own name, I would like to express my boundless pleasure and I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to our compatriots for their restraint, patience and forgiveness that clearly and appropriately responds to the appeal of the Royal Government at the time of preparing for the election and the election campaign till the election was conducted with a complete success. With high respect and appreciation, I wish to place an appeal to our compatriots to continue to exercise high responsibility while maintaining calmness, public and social order in the period of ballot counting until there is an announcement of the official result, from which the National Assembly and the new Royal Government would be chosen to take office.

I wish to make a special appeal to the Government officials of all levels in all Government Ministries and institutions and to the Cambodian Armed Forces to continue to work and fulfil their tasks according to their functions and roles in a usual manner while maintaining calmness, order, discipline and neutrality in their work performance, especially keeping regular function of works in all Government sectors until a new Government swears in, with strict and serious respect of the Code of Conducts of the Government officials, and according to functions and tasks of all the Cambodian Armed Forces stipulated in the constitution and related existing laws. I wish to express my sincere appreciation once again to the Provincial, Municipal and Communal Election Committees, and the security sub-committee at all levels of the National Election Committee, for their efforts in fulfilling their tasks in a just, effective, neutral and independent manner as are predetermined by law. I wish to also give a high evaluation to the local authorities at all levels and the Cambodian

Armed Forces of all kinds for the full devotions they made physically and spiritually with high responsibility for the cause of an election to be held in a fair, free, just, transparent, secure, safe, threat-free and violence-free manner. I also thank and appreciate the participation by all political parties in searching for support from our people in the electoral campaign period by basing on legal norms, democratic principles and respect of human rights. May all political parties show their courage by approving the decision and supreme judgments made by the Cambodian people by accepting result of this election, while evading all disputes, conflicts and provocations that might plunge our nation into instability, disgrace and loss of prestige. These achievements have shown the political maturity and high responsibility for the destiny of our nation of all political parties taking part in the election. Those parties receiving great number of votes and those with small number of votes have to be courageous in accepting the will and decision made by our people, have to be harmonious and patient, while displaying forgiveness to one another, refraining from using unkind and provoking words, which may lead to conflicts, acts of violence and other negative phenomena, and to a worse extent, loss of social security and safety of our people and public order.

In this spirit, I wish to appeal to all political parties which took part in the election to maintain their dignities, calmness, while exercising high responsibility and political maturity, giving the National Election Committee an opportunity to fulfil its role in a just and law defining manner in solving incidents that could have happened in the election with the principles of transparency, justice, independence and neutrality without interference and oppression from any circles.

For the sake of strengthening legiti-

macy, raising high dignity, honour, and national prestige and for the conduct of political activity in manner of transparency, honesty and justice, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I humbly appeal to all Government Ministries and institutions, local authorities at all levels, the Cambodian Armed Forces at all levels, to continue to raise high their spirit of vigilance in the fulfillment of their duties and tasks, while taking all sorts of measures for the sake of strengthening stability, security and social order until a new Government is sworn in.

Efforts have to be resolutely taken in preventing actions that may threaten the society and nation or instigation of violence from this moment to the time when the new Government swears in so as to guarantee that major achievements in all sectors of the society, especially peace, stability, social order, democracy and respect of human rights have always been safeguarded and promoted. In the end I would like to convey my blessings to our compatriots as well as leaders and representatives of all political parties for their participation in this election and wish them successes on the road of democracy, respect of human rights, defending and strengthening of security and speeding up development for the sake of the Cambodian nation and people's supreme interest.

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 nology in Khmer will open the door for more Cambodian people to benefit from scientific achievements. Thus, the issuance of Khmer language standards in computers will enhance effectiveness, capacity and communications at all levels. Therefore I urge the National Authority for ITC Development to pay intense and urgent attention to this issue. Parallel with this, the strengthening of English knowledge remains very important for absorbing and deeply developing this modern technology.

Fourth, we should pay attention to the protection of intellectual property rights as we use the internet, using the technology and facility solely for the objective of development, and not using the technology for criminal purposes, which is contrary to morality, tradition and good customs of the nation. These are the main points that I think the meeting should also discuss in the formulation of the long term policy and strategy for ITC development in Cambodia.

Furthermore, I emphasize that in all these concerns, the training of quality and highly skilled human resources is indeed very crucial in improving the human resource base to perform work that will ultimately promote Cambodia's competitiveness. We all are aware that a well-performing economy is one with effective training, use and management of human capital. Thus, it is necessary to create a favorable environment for good development and management of Cambodia's intellectual capital...

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from loan from the Asian Development Bank. The Royal Government of Cambodia also used its counterpart fund in purchasing land from our people in order to dig it open and increase the width of the canal so that water could be channeled to the lake of Choeung Lomg. The dams have been used as both the protection of villages from flood and road access for villagers to outside. The dams have proven to be efficient but unfortunately we also have a bridge construction on the national road 2 because of which water could not flow as planned. The construction of bridge is nothing wrong, but the timing is...

... I am here today not only to give you a small package of rice, which is only an immediate response, but to tell you that we have to rebuild the dams for your long term interest. The dams should be of previous sizes and covered with laterite, and the request for enlarging and asphaltting them would be taken for consideration against the Government's budget. All I could say now is that the dams will also be a road connection around the city of Phnom Penh. It is a long term vision though. Our people in this area have given a good judgment between those who work and those who just comment. They know that making promises is easy, but keeping them is difficult and our people proved that through their votes recently.

... I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the people of Cambodia, the local authorities of all levels and the Cambodian Armed Forces for taking my appeal into account from before the electoral campaign through to the voting and ballot counting days, making the general election going in calmness, which has been satisfied by our people and national and international observers. Various countries like India, Japan... issued

their remarks already that the election was conducted in a free, fair, just, violence-free, transparent and acceptable manner. On behalf of Samdech Chea Sim and Samdech Heng Samrin and leaders of the Cambodian People's Party, I would like to publicly thank members of the Party and all of the Cambodian people for casting their votes for the Cambodian People's Party, and for the approval of Hun Sen's candidacy for Prime Minister in the next term.

... Though the official results have yet to be announced, but the preliminary results had proven already that CPP is taking unassailable lead in communes, districts and provinces throughout Cambodia. CPP will not only maintain its 64 seats but get over 70 seats in the National Assembly. However, we will wait for the official results that will be announced by the National Election Committee between August 15 and September 07. CPP won 51 seats in 1993, 64 seats in 1998 and now we may add up to over 70 seats. This implies that CPP will continue to be the leading party and myself Hun Sen is its only candidate for the post of Prime Minister. The elections have been conducted. It is now NEC's role in fulfilling the remaining duties as the Royal Government will abide by its role of keeping public order and providing NEC with fund only. The Constitutional Council also will have a role to play in matters concerned. For the period between now and the formation of a new Government, or the swearing in of new members of the National Assembly and the swearing in by the new Government, I wish to appeal to our people to continue to stay united for the sake of keeping security, social order, while making efforts in cultivation.

... All 22 contested parties have had some votes, if not many, and this means that our people from all corners have expressed their rights

and I am glad to see that our people in villages, no matter which party they may vote for, have maintain their coexistence in peace. Let's leave the politicians work with one another despite the fact that they did a lot of cursing. So all political parties should practice the sportsmanship by giving due respect to the will of our people and should not underestimate their will. I heard and our people heard call for changes and I am saying yes we have changed from the second term Royal Government to the third one, and I am the elected Prime Minister. But there have been some comments that I wish to explain to our people on the basis of constitution and laws.

... As far as election matters are concerned, it is the mandate of NEC and the second term Royal Government of Cambodia to continue to be in power. After what has been done by NEC, it is going to involve HM the King's role because the first National Assembly session has to take place, according to the constitution, within 60 days at the latest after the election, under the presidency of HM the King. So I am sure that HM the King would not prolong the constitutionally required time for such a meeting. Thereafter, a Member of the National Assembly, the most senior in age, will convene a meeting to select President and Vice Presidents of the National Assembly... Instead of thinking about this, some politicians are thinking about the creation of a coalition Government, and they have claimed to create one without Hun Sen. I used to know that the winner will set a standard for the losers, but this is on the contrary. It is strange and probably a "Cambodian-style" democracy. Taking this matter into consideration let me declare that I will set up a coalition Government only with two political parties and I will choose a party that is sincere. Which party (to join with CPP in the coalition) I have in mind already, but I am not saying it out now as I am

waiting for the National Assembly first session to take place. If some MPs do not join the meeting convened by HM the King, they would lose their privileges because they would retain or possess them only when they come to the swearing ceremony or they would not be validated. So they risk being stripped off the old privileges and get no new ones.

... Also relating to this matter I learned that there has been a suggestion for a provisional Government. I wish to respond that any attempts to set up a provisional Government is tantamount to a military coup and I warn that in Cambodia, not just days, months or years or even decades or centuries to come, according to our constitution, absolutely we will not allow for a provisional Government to take place. The constitution reads "the current Government continues its work until the new Government swears in." I wish no politicians are deceitful on this issue. In 1998 when we could not form a new Government, the old government continued its work for a few months with HE Ung Huot then being the First Prime Minister.

... So in this situation, if I am not mistaken, I would go on to be Prime Minister until there will be a new one coming, and it will be me—Hun Sen is the Prime Minister of the current Government and also of the new one. Or we will have a new National Assembly but old Government. Next week I will convene a Cabinet meeting of the Royal Government as usual and I am sure that all its members will report to the meeting. Of course we would not be able to introduce any amendments but we still have the power to make decision and rule by sub-decree. May all Government employees go back to work and abide by the Code of Conducts for the Government Employees.

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... One may ask whether Hun Sen would resign. I wish to make clear that I will not do so because the people voted for (my party and for) me to be Prime Minister. My candidacy has been declared since 1998, again in 2002, in January 2003 and again in April 2003 at the CPP Congress. Nothing could change this and I will not resign as well. One may ask if I do so because I love power. My response is "no" but I have been re-elected by the people. If they say I am clinging to power, I would ask them "aren't they doing the same?" Some have even proclaimed themselves as Prime Ministers while not winning the election yet... I wish to appeal to all CPP members that they go on with their works and should not wait till 2008 to start again. We should apply the method of training soldiers in five years for a battle of just one day. From now on CPP has to stay by the people and go right to their work fields. Ill intention to force Hun Sen out of power by the so called "people power" like in some countries would not work because I have the people's supports. Giving away power is a betrayal of our people's confidence. Whether a new or the same Prime Minister is not anybody else's affairs as only the Cambodian people could decide.

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fields, yet currently only 10% of farmers have land titles. With secure titles, these can be used as collateral in obtaining credit from banks. Therefore, we must strengthen land ownership to avoid land conflicts and promote investment in the expansion of agro-industrial crops such as rubber, cashew nuts, coffee, coconuts and palm oil and many others.

Further reforms in fisheries: The Royal Government will continue reforms of fisheries, particularly the rational and effective management of fishery lots that have been set for reallocation, in order to expand access to this important resource by the poor. However, most communities do not have adequate capacity to manage this important resource, thereby leading to overexploitation or the surrender of their use rights to private businesses. Thus, our work is to strengthen the management of communal fisheries resources by establishing fisheries communities that support and encourage people in the sustainable management and use of fisheries areas.

Strengthen Forestry management: The Royal Government will continue to prevent and crack down on illegal logging by strengthening mechanisms for the monitoring of forest law enforcement and other regulations to ensure that forest use will serve the long-term interests of the nation and will not worsen the lives of the poor people in the rural areas.

Promote the "One Village One Product" approach: An important key to development is to select two or three specific products which are of highest potential for production by each province. The development of these potentials may be in various ways, including links to financing, transfer of technology, knowledge and know-how, training for the improvement of quality, and market

identification. However all these approaches require motivation and the participation of the private sector through strengthening the capacity of SMEs.

Once again, on behalf of Their Majesties the King and Queen and on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I express my warmest greetings and thank all of you, the development partners, for your active participation in the rehabilitation, building and development of forestry and wildlife sector. Your help and assistance has resulted in significant improvements, and I call on all of you to continue your support. Specifically, I would like to thank the Royal Government of Denmark through the DANIDA for the technical and financial assistance extended to Cambodia for rehabilitating and developing this important area of Kbal Chhay, providing a protected source of clean water for the people in our Sihanoukville.

I am convinced that the joint efforts made by our government officials, all armed forces, authorities at all levels, our people and other stakeholders will create a new environment with high sense of responsibility in protecting our country's wealth in forests and natural resources.

Today on "Arbor Day", may I appeal once again to all Cambodian people, all armed forces, and all political parties, who are campaigning for the coming elections, to continue the spirit of patience and mutual understanding and to compete with dignity, legality and morality, to ensure that the elections will be free, fair and transparent without violence and threat or intimidation.

I also appeal to all to put the long term interest of our beloved nation above the short term interest of political parties. Our nation and people badly need peace, political

stability, national unification, democracy and development for the enhancement of their livelihood and uplift their lives. Therefore, there is nothing better than the spirit of patience, mutual understanding and behavior in accordance with legality and morality, to preserve an environment of political and economic stability, which is of high interest of our nation. This is as important as sustainable management of forests and natural resources...!

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a Consultative Meeting with the international community in Tokyo, achieving the full normalization of relations between Cambodia and the international development community, especially with the international financial organizations, including the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Then in April 1999, Cambodia became a full member of the ASEAN, contributing to the achievement of the vision of the ASEAN Ten which the founders of the ASEAN have dreamed of since the 1960s.

Indeed, over the past five years Cambodia's image in the regional and international arena has gained strength and definition. Cambodia is now a full member in many key international organizations including the UN System, World Customs Union, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Association, and the International Center Settlement of International Disputes. Cambodia is now playing an active and significant role as an equal partner in a wide range of regional, subregional and international affairs. Today, Cambodia's credibility in the regional and international arena has reached new heights, and our entire nation should be proud. From 35 November 2002, Cambodia, with great honor and pride, hosted a large number of historic international events, achieving excellent results and receiving high praise and commendation by the international community.

On 3 November 2002, the leaders of the Greater Mekong Subregion Program met in the First GMS Summit with the participation of the ADB President. On 45 November 2002, the ASEAN Heads of States and Government convened as the 8th ASEAN Summit, back to back with the ASEAN+1 and ASEAN+3 Summits with the lead-

ers of the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Moreover, the ASEAN+India Summit was convened for the first time. The President of South Africa, representing the African Community, also came to Cambodia to participate in the Special ASEAN-South Africa Summit.

In 2003, the Royal Government also played host in the gentle land of the Angkor to several important international events, including the ASEAN Tourism Forum in January 2003, and the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, ASEAN Regional Forum and other related meetings in June 2003. In the wake of the Royal Government's success in implementing the agenda of international integration, the achievement of WTO membership represents the culmination of difficult and painstaking work along the second side of the Triangular Strategy of development.

Cambodia's victories in international integration clearly demonstrate the intimate interlinkages among the three sides of the strategic triangle. The realization of peace, security and stability creates the prerequisites necessary for enhancing Cambodia's credibility and active participation in regional and international affairs and in promoting economic and social development. Success in any of other two angles, such as success of diplomatic policy and international cooperation would have positive invaluable impact on the maintenance of peace, security and stability and the efforts in promoting economic and social development. During the second term of the Royal Government, the "triangular strategy" triumphed over any political games and created a favorable environment for development both within and outside the country. This facilitated the preconditions for Cambodia to move forward with hope and strong confi-

dence on its chosen path of reforms and development. Success has translated into strengthened international confidence in the country and the Cambodian people, resulting in benefits through increased trade, investment and tourist flows into Cambodia as well as closer international cooperation. All these developments are crucial for employment creation and increased incomes for Cambodian families, contributing to poverty reduction and improved welfare among our people.

The great success we have achieved so far that has culminated in WTO membership is the success of the nation and of all Cambodian people. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I express my sincere appreciation to the working group of the Royal Government led by H.E. Mr. Cham Prasidh, Minister of Commerce, and the Cambodian missions at the UN and WTO in Geneva, who have dedicated their energy, intelligence and spirit to all difficulties in negotiations toward WTO accession, finally achieving unprecedented success. I also thank the officials and staff of all ministries and offices of the Royal Government for work, support and all necessary collaboration extended to the working group of the Royal Government dedicated to the membership negotiations. I also thank the development partners of the Royal Government, especially the important international financial institutions, namely the IMF, World Bank and ADB, and all ASEAN members and other WTO members for their kind encouragement and support, including moral support, technical assistance, financial resources in addition to their open minds and flexibility and special understanding of Cambodia.

The successful negotiations highlight the fact that Cambodia has been on the correct track in modernizing the economy and liberalizing trade and

investment in order to integrate the country into the regional and world economy and market. However, the government is conscious that becoming an effective member of the WTO may even be more difficult than the process of attaining membership. It is clear that many challenges in successful international trade and exchange still need to be overcome. To this end, Cambodia must exert its utmost efforts to face the numerous challenges, difficulties and obstacles to deepen reforms in all sectors, especially in institutional capacity building and human resource development, a process which takes time and requires strong commitment and political will.

Therefore, as Head of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I appeal to the officials of all ministries and institutions, members of the armed forces, the authorities at all levels and each and every Cambodian citizen to continue to actively support and cooperate with the Royal Government in the implementation of reforms in all sectors. I also appeal to all of our development partners to continue their assistance and encouragement to the people and government of Cambodia in our never-ending quest for development and poverty reduction. Indeed, broad and determined cooperation and support is necessary for Cambodia to effectively meet all her obligations and commitments as a full-fledged and rightful member of the regional and international community, especially the World Trade Organization.

23 July 2003**Message on Cambodia's Accession to WTO**

The 22nd day of July 2003 has become another historic day for the Kingdom of Cambodia. A working group of your Royal Government, led by H.E. Cham Prasidh, the Minister of Commerce, has successfully concluded a series of negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland on Cambodia's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The successful negotiations will culminate in the membership of Cambodia in the WTO to be officially launched at the 5th Ministerial Meeting of the WTO in Cancun, Mexico, from 10 to 14 September 2003. My compatriots, the proactive efforts and difficult work that the Royal Government of Cambodia has exerted toward WTO membership over the past three years shall now bear fruit.

Cambodia is the first Least Developed Country to be admitted into the WTO. This achievement is hailed all over the world as a revolution in the history of the WTO, as no poor country has ever gained such status. All current members of the WTO, especially the developed countries, are warmly welcoming Cambodia's membership. They have commended the Royal Government of Cambodia for being able to meet the stringent and voluminous conditions for WTO membership. In particular, they appreciate Cambodia's clear commitment to democracy, principled respect for human rights and transparent and predictable promotion of the market economy.

In admitting Cambodia as a full partner, all WTO members have pledged to provide further support for the Royal Government's comprehensive policy reform agenda aimed at the achievement of sustainable development and poverty reduction. Indeed, this strengthens the political and economic program

of the Royal Government of Cambodia in the implementation of its "Triangular Strategy", helping strengthen Cambodia's opportunities for long-term development and serving as a firm foundation for the third term of the Royal Government of Cambodia. Our Venerable Monks and all our beloved compatriots are aware that when we began the Second Term of the Royal Government, I introduced the "Triangular Strategy" covering the three key fundamentals in ensuring the sustainable development of Cambodia. The first side of this strategic triangle is building peace, restoring stability and maintaining security for the nation and people.

The second side is Cambodia's rapid integration into the international community, especially into the comity of regional nations, and normalization of our relationships with the international financial institutions.

The third side of the Royal Government's strategic triangle is to promote national development within the favorable context created by the implementation of key reform programs: military demobilization, public sector, judiciary and economic reforms including fiscal and banking reforms, land reform, fisheries reform and stringent measures taken to crack down on illegal logging and to promote environmental protection.

In implementing the second side of the strategic triangle, we have already achieved tremendous and invaluable progress. In only one week after the beginning of the second mandate in 1998, the Royal Government officially reclaimed Cambodia's full and official seat at the United Nations. Within only two months from service, we organized

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03 July 2003**Formulation of ITC Policies and Strategies**

... I am most delighted to participate in the National Meeting on the Formulation of National ITC Policies and Strategies... I take this opportunity to express and convey our deep gratitude to Ms Dominique McAdams, the UNDP Representative in Cambodia and Mr. Sahit Atta, the UNDP-APDIP Representative, for your continuing support to ITC development of Cambodia, including your support in organizing this important national meeting...

... Those countries in the region and the world that are benefiting from the dynamic pace of globalization are attuned to ITC. Such economic growth linked to the modern world can help ensure sustainable development and an equitable society. The formulation of the ITC policies and strategies that we discuss today is important for improving efficiency, reducing work time and the overall costs to meet our everyday needs as well as the needs in management, business and the government's operation. This work also reflects the commitment of the RGC to fulfill the goals identified under ASEAN integration and engagement in Globalization.

... The value of ITC lies in its understanding, recognition and use by society. For developed countries, ITC is widely used due to their firmly-established infrastructure and strong fundamentals. The increasing speed and lowering costs of computers and the progress of wireless communication has enabled this modern technology be shared and used all over the world, a phenomenon that is quite new. Moreover, the value of the entire network grows as the number of users increase. The participation by developing countries in the universal ITC network would add more value as such participation enables the posting of the data and information they have at their dis-

posal, for use and dissemination throughout the global network. At the same time, they would benefit from using the network to communicate or trade with other countries. Thus, all countries, developing or developed, shall benefit from participation in the worldwide web. Therefore, I would like to use the stage of this opening session to raise some additional key ideas and comments, which I hope this meeting can discuss.

First, we should focus on the formulation of the appropriate regulatory and institutional framework for the development of the ITC sector. We need to develop an ITC infrastructure consistent with our liberalization policy, institutional strengthening for regulation and control, while preserving openness for broad and fair competition. Indeed, the beginnings of Cambodia's modern communication network and appropriate IT foundation are now being built. Success in this regard will ensure that Cambodia will no longer be isolated or left behind the mainstream of ITC revolution.

Second, we must continue to improve the computer literacy and the use of internet among Cambodians, expanding especially to rural areas and focusing on attracting private sector investments and new technologies. This should be undertaken by promoting free and fair competition and preservation of the principles of the free market, which are the prerequisites for low costs and high quality of service, enabling the government, private sector, academic and research institutions and the public broadly and openly...

Third, language is an important means to promote development and use of technology. The use of tech-

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