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Launching Calmette's Radioscopy & Neurology Buildings



23 February 04 - In the Calmette Hospital, Samdech Hun Sen is looking at the graphic presentation with the French medical specialists during the inauguration of the two buildings.

"... it is a great honor and pleasure for me to join you all, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the hand-over ceremony of the medical equipment and supplies donated by France. We also today inaugurate two buildings for maternity, radioscopy and neurological therapy and examination, in the Calmette Hospital's compound, a modern hospital of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

On behalf of the Royal Government and People of Cambodia and myself, may I extend our profound gratitude, through H.E. Pierre André WILTZER, the Minister for Cooperation and Francophony, to the People and Government of France for their direct engagement in the reconstruction of Cambodia and improving the living standard of our Cambodian people.

We all always treasure the valuable contribution by France through the rebuilding of peace in Cambodia and the assistance

that France has provided to the Kingdom of Cambodia, especially in the health sector. This particularly includes the construction of hospitals and cooperation among hospitals and health science universities of our two countries, and the provision of medical equipment and supplies as well as that of scholarships for training of 172 specialized doctors over the past 10 years. The aids have been of great significance for Cambodia's recovery. All the assistance provided by France are invaluable and we have used them very efficiently. Apparently, the donation of medical supplies and these two new buildings that we will open now present another great achievement testifying the best and close long-standing traditional relationship between Cambodia and France.

Indeed, in our effort to overcome the long and difficult road over
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25 February 2004 (Informal Translation)

A Visit to the Kompong Raing Bridge Construction

... It is a great pleasure for me to visit the construction site of the Kompong Raing Bridge which is important for the efforts to bring about an internal integration of formerly inaccessible or hardly accessible areas. The bridge is indeed linking one side of Dambe district of Kompong Cham province to the district of Chhlong of Kratie province. The area in between is normally a hardly accessible or inaccessible one, which allows for bad elements to conduct their disastrous actions. It was true also in the time of war. After the war lots of efforts have been

placed on restoring the infrastructure, but it was unfortunate that the flood in 2000 destroyed many parts of the renovated roads. In this area it may have been a wrong study as far as water way is concerned. We seemed to have left inadequate way for flood to disperse as the SL Company filled some ditches with logs. It is for this reason that we cleared the ditches and dismantled most of the log-clogged bridges upper stream so that the flood flank would not stretch to damaging villages along side.

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16 February 2004 (Informal Translation)

Inaugurating Water Storage, Canals, Schools in Takeo

"... It is indeed my pleasure to return to the district of Bati in Takeo once again after I made two previous trips last year. I am also grateful to be invited by the Cambodian-Holland Bridge Organization as well as the authorities of the whole district and province for the inauguration of a water storage whose irrigation will cover area around this place.

school buildings in the Choeteal Chrum College, a school building in the Primary School of Promut, four bridges, 17 water wells, dirt roads and 40 houses for poor women-headed families. CHBO focuses its assistance in building rural infrastructure and in improving condition for education, health, social affairs...

... CHBO representative has just explained to all of us about the meaning of the word "Bridge" and I agree with her
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... I could recall that on February 14, 2002, with the head of Cambodia-Holland Bridge Organization (CHBO), we inaugurated five school buildings with 22 classrooms provided by CHBO in the commune of Chrey Vien, Prey Chhor district of Kompong Cham. Also inaugurated today are a 2919 metre of embankment, 14 water gates, two

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the past years we have faced many challenges. However, with our strong determination we have managed to overcome those challenges successfully, achieving considerable and bold results which are now having positive impacts on strengthening the pillars of the society and the culture of peace, security, safety and social orders, democracy, respect of human right and people's dignity, thus far have opened up new horizon of opportunities providing hope for the future of our country.

From this perspective, it is indeed very crucial to successfully advance all the reform momentum, so far attained, to be fast tracked, widely expanded and deepened to ensure the sustainability of development which will result in accelerated poverty reduction among our people. In this favorable context, the RGC has given high priority to social development, especially to improving health services to be more effective and efficient.

The Calmette Hospital has gone through many critical periods and is now opening new pages of its history for best practices, - which are prideful and promising for Cambodian people. Taking this opportunity, I would like to congratulate and appreciate for the efforts of the management and all the staff of Calmette Hospital in focusing on rebuilding the physical infrastructure, such as buildings, equipping the facilities and training medical staff, in order to provide best quality health services to clients.

I still remember that I did join the opening of new buildings and the handing-over of a scanner donated by French Government on 7 May 2002. During that time, foreign donors hesitated to provide Cambodia with such modern equipment, doubting the country was unable to adopt the

technology because of lack of specialists and patients. But it turns out that, according to the report, Calmette Hospital has provided "scanning" service for up to 3,493 people within 18 months for the purpose of diagnosis and timely treatment. Up to now, the revenue from fees charged for scanning service has recovered two third of the cost of the machine, while helping provide scanning service to a great number of poor people.

In addition to opening of the building, today we also join in a ceremony to hand-over the modern equipment worth almost USD 1.4 million. With the intention to improve the effectiveness in providing service to patients, the manager of TOSHIBA Singapore, who joined me during the opening of a conference room in 2002, has volunteered to purchase this new equipment, with appropriate price and 5 years gradual repayment without any interest.

Thus, I have agreed and instructed Cambodian technicians to conduct a study tour in Singapore and visit the Toshiba's plant in Japan to get this modern equipment to operate and provide the public service to Cambodian people. I think the Calmette Hospital could not afford to pay back the cost of this equipment as quickly as it did for the Scanner. Nevertheless, it is the need for public health, and I believe the hospital will try its best to repay as agreed in the terms of contract.

Indeed, the Calmette Hospital has become an administrative public entity, enjoying a status of financial autonomy. Thus, the hospital can move forward by its own, such as in expanding and constructing new buildings to meet the demand of patients in maternal and neurological therapies, and providing well-equipped and modern VIP rooms for national and international patients.

In fact, financial autonomy implies that we have to generate revenue or income to cover the costs. Even the hospitals, which are public administrative institutions, are financially autonomous, but they are still non-profit organizations. Thus, they are not entitled to make profits like other factories or enterprises. We serve and deliver public service with contribution from patients who have ability to pay in order to help those who lack this ability. We have observed that anything that completely relies on the state could not quickly progress.

In the world, there is no country where the state guarantees all provisions of public health service, though there are some treatment costs covered by the state, but they are paid from the funds that the government withholds social security or insurance contributions deducted from the civil servants' salary.

The status of financial autonomy provides public entities with flexibility to handle sales and purchases or independent rentals, but this must be managed and reviewed carefully, with high responsibility and adherence to the existing provisions of laws and regulations. The practice of "financial autonomy" by public institutions, such as one implemented in the Calmette Hospital, could serve as a model for others.

The hospital has developed physical infrastructure, such as these new buildings worth US\$ 265,069; and equipped with other equipment, furniture and appliances worth US\$ 57,585. So far, the hospital has provided treatments to 6,442 poor people, about 36.6% of inpatients per year while the number of patients admitted to the hospital per day has increased to 300 compared to 200 per day in the previous year.

Moreover, I would like to emphasize that all the achievements the hospital has attained so far are

the outcomes of our hard works over a long period, combined with the efforts of cooperation between Cambodia and France, and those of our board of directors, management, personnel and all the staff of the hospital. Furthermore, the French cooperation has expanded technical assistance to other hospitals in the capital and provinces.

I am convinced that other main hospitals will follow the path gone through by the Calmette Hospital, which already comes up with good management system, thus becoming similar financially autonomous public administration entities. This would build on three key factors for effective functioning of hospitals, which include:

First, clean facilities with hygiene and comfort, as well as equipped with modern, well and adequately maintained equipment.

Second, highly qualified staff without any discrimination on patients and adherence to professional ethics and morals.

Third, sound financial resource, allowing for additional investment and adequate salary for staff, as well as helping the poor who have no ability to pay the fees.

Improving the health system is one of the objectives of the Royal Government's reform program, providing Cambodian people with access to quality health service. This is a key sector, which can contribute to the national development, especially to economic growth and equitable distribution of the fruits from that growth.

In this context, the Royal Government's Strategy for Health Sector 2003-2007 has clearly stated the priorities we must focus on and successfully implement. Those

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include: the provision of basic health service for all Cambodian people, financial and administrative deconcentration, human resource development, attention on elimination and prevention of infected or transmitted diseases especially HIV/AIDS, and the strengthening of health information system.

Indeed, if we look at the objectives of the health strategy, we found that considerable progress has been made. But, we are not yet satisfied with the results. The Royal Government recognizes that there are many challenges and shortcomings. Though the Ministry of Health has delegated financing decisions down to the district and commune levels, but the actual results are limited, not up to the degree we desire. Moreover, the deployment of health personnel to provinces has not yet met the demands.

The health sector is experiencing lack of resources, though during the past five years the Royal Government has tripled the budget for the Ministry of Health. Access to health service by poor families is still limited due to high cost of private health service.

Moreover, I observe that there are problems remained with us, such as inappropriate use of medicines and equipments because some of them are spoilt and the use date is expired.

Some hospitals face shortage of medical supplies and others receive late supplies beyond the expiration date, while the others store the medicines too long and they are expired. Thus, I request the Ministry of Health to conduct a review and find out the reasons for the delayed supply, the supply of expired medicines and equipments which are not appropriate for use. Thus, generally we have plenty of works to be done. Therefore, I urge the

Ministry of Health and all the hospitals to continue strengthen your efforts and help reducing the problems which have adverse impacts on public health. I also urge all the health personnel to strictly adhere to professional ethics and conducts, in order to move forward toward succeeding our Health Strategy 2003-2007, which the RGC has set.

I believe the medical supplies and the new buildings we inaugurate today will significantly contribute to my main thrust in improving the health status of our Cambodian people.

Once again, I deeply thank for the generous and humanitarian gestures, clearly reflecting France's commitment in helping Calmette Hospital and other hospitals in the Capital and provinces and in some districts, especially the support provided to the health sector in Cambodia. It should be noted that this is also the position always taken by France in helping countries in the Francophony Community, such as Cambodia.

We hope and strongly believe that France will continue to provide scholarships for medical specialists and provide medical supplies to hospitals across the country, and help foster more and more cooperation agreements between hospitals of the two countries, - thus facilitating our cooperation and help extending the lives of those infected with HIV/AIDS.

I also thank the Toshiba and Dynamic Pharma Co. Ltd. Companies in Cambodia, who have donated US\$ 100,000 through myself in helping build two buildings, and facilitate the Calmette Hospital to buy the IRM machine on credit, with no interest and five year repayment period. I believe the companies will sale their other products on credit, and with long term repayment and appropriate price...!

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Moreover, in 2004, with financial support from the United Kingdom through UNDP, the Mine Authority has organized the quality control group and socio-economic group with the total number of 7 technical staff, to further strengthen quality control and planning of mine clearance operations, and the smooth distribution of de-mined lands to the deserving and truly poor.

This innovation integrates poverty reduction and mine clearance operations as one into the national development program.

I urge the Mines Authority to implement all measures necessary to reflect the strong commitment and vision of the Royal Government in ensuring the transparent and accountable use of assistance from our development partners. These measures include:

- (1) *Compilation and coordination of the national strategy and program, as well as national standards for mine clearance activities;*
- (2) *Prioritization of de-mined lands, and the assurance of achievement of mine clearance;*
- (3) *Strict enforcement of laws, international conventions and treaties on the prohibitions on the use of mines;*
- (4) *Harmonization of regulations and reporting by all mine clearance operators to ensure accuracy of statistics and the timely release of information; and*
- (5) *Implementation of monitoring and inspection of de-mined lands,*

Furthermore, the Mines Authority should continue to strengthen the mines activity data center according to interna-

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that though a bridge could be just a few meters on which we cross from one side to another, but it also could be a friendly relationship between Cambodia and Holland as well.

... I wish to take this opportunity to express through Mme the representative of CHBO our people's gratitude to those charitable people who have provided us through CHBO this useful assistance. She first went to assist Cambodians at the Cambodian-Thai border in 1981, and she came to assist the Cambodians inside in 1989 – a sum of fifteen years now.

... She has written a book "**A River of Return**" in which, to my understanding, she wishes to express her love of Cambodia that after leaving, she has to return and this is a coincidence to the natural course of our Tonle Sap current which after flowing in, the water returns.

... According to a report by HE Governor of Takeo province, the storage could reserve up to 1,400,000 cubic meters and could irrigate 900 hectares of rainy season rice and between 170 and 200 hectares of dry season rice, plus about ten hectares of subsidiary crops in 14 villages of Kraing Liev commune.

... I am quite happy to have observed from the helicopter that right behind this place there are farms with cucumbers and with the water facility provided today I just hope that our people will take it further. When I visited the district of Kong Pisey yesterday in relation of providing water for irrigation, I have requested our

people there to plant anything they can, to increase yield and to look after infrastructural achievements.

... Just now CHBO has provided a kind of flower species and I hope our people will try it somewhere to see how well it grows. Flower growing and marketing is a good business. Take for instance our neighbouring countries have taken up the business of exporting orchids so our people should see that this business is not only for local market but also foreign ones.

... As far as the rice production in Takeo is concerned, I have a great pleasure to notice that though we could not fulfil our target set for the rainy season rice, we instead have exceeded the target set for dry season rice.

... In general, we have achieved rather good cultivation and the market mechanism will assist in providing surplus rice to areas where rice did not produce a good yield or failed to grow. I am glad to return to see our people here once again and I have to come because the people voted for me.

... There are eight seats in Takeo constituency and CPP was voted to attain five seats already, so how could Hun Sen be expelled. In this sense, Hun Sen will be present for the old or new (Government). I wish to have our people's attention that whatever happens should remain within the circle of politicians and should refrain from destabilizing the livelihood of our people.

... The main issue here is to maintain political and macro-

economic stability, contain inflation, and retain economic growth, while the current Government continues all fronts of reform and good relations with neighbouring and foreign countries as a whole.

... We have many forms of cooperation now. We have state-people cooperation; state-private-people cooperation; state-charitable person and people cooperation for the achievements of something. Take for instance the achievements that we realized here is the result of such cooperation and some achievements have taken shape without the assistance of the Government as well.

... Although some people turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to these achievements, we will go on working harder and mobilize all sources of capital and make use of it economically aimed at downsizing the military spending and increasing investment in areas of education, health, and infrastructural development.

... We welcome all sources of investment capital, state, private and personal, and in Takeo we have a good example of HE Inoue, former Minister of Post of Japan, who built many schools in the district of Kirivong.

... It is indeed primary to have peace and political stability so as to allow the country to develop, and stability could not be maintained for long if in peace the country does not develop. Therefore we have to work out a real development though we know it could not be achieved in a short time at all.

... According to the five year plan of poverty reduction strategy that was formulated with helps from the World Bank and other foreign partners, Cambodia has 36% rate of poverty to reduce and we hope to relieve our people from this situation 1.2% a year.

... It is a naive remark that some politicians have made to wipe the poverty all out in just two years. But we see this as a problem that requires careful examination and steps in resolving it. Take for instance we saved our lives in 1979, and our material requirements have changed since then for the better – from just survival to further requirements such as in education, health, communication,...

On that occasion, CHBO provides four more canals for the extension of irrigation to rice cultivation from the Thnol Dach water storage, and Samdech Hun Sen offered ten million Riels each to the pagodas of Choeteal Chrum, Srah Kev, and Pun Nheankuk, a school building of six classrooms each to the Primary Schools of Choeteal Chrum and Angrun.'

NB: The prepared speech is available at www.cnv.org.kh

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... As far as Bailey bridge construction is concerned, since 2001, the engineering teams of the Ministry of Defence, the General Staff and the Infantry Division have installed over 400 bridges of more than 10,000 meters of Bailey, which is an intensive investment and it has been justified by the fact that our people are making use of the roads and bridges for the sake of their family socio-economic improvements.

... I personally think, and I am sure the entire Cabinet agrees that it is a priority area that requires long-term investment and you may take my word on it. The country's infrastructure which was achieved under the Sangkum Reastmiyum period of HM Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk in between 1955 and 1970 had been destroyed almost completely. Take for instance along the national road 7 between Mehmot of Kompong Cham and Kratie province, none of the bridges that were built and put in use in those days was left in good condition as they were attacked or bombed by the war in 1970s.

... As the war was over we have to look after those damages and improve the infrastructure. For instance we have enlarged the national road 7 from 7 meters to 11 meters because we are now in the epoch of huge lorry traffics. This is also a good explanation why we have to gather more investment in bridging together infrastructural network throughout the country and when I say so I mean to include also hydraulic works, communication system, irrigation, etc. With the construction of the Kompong Raing bridge we have fulfilled our plan to link up between Dambe of Kompong Cham and Chhlong of Kratie on the national road 73,

one of the tributaries of the national road 7.

... To improve connection in this part of the country, this year I approved the construction of another 42 meter bridge in the Prek Prosop commune. We still have some Bailey bridges that the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China offered to me to be installed along the Small River, a tributary of the Mekong River at the point of Koh Sotin. We still have to link this part of Kratie through to the district of Stoeung Trang of Kompong Cham and the engineering team of the General Staff will be ordered to take care of for the rest.

... As for this part of the road renovation, HE Keat Chhon is in the process of attracting foreign partner for an investment in asphaltting the road 73, if not the whole length we could make it up to the Bridge of Kompong Raing. Our plan, however, is to asphalt the road up to Kratie. I was told that the Japanese are interested and we will follow up with them as they sent their study team to this area as well.

... The Japanese has got two billion Yen per year as their counterpart fund aside from project and non-project grant aid. Recently they used 12 million dollars for the renovation of the national road from the area of Phnom Den to the town of Takeo, therefore they may do so for this road as well. Having done so our people could travel to from between Phnom Penh and Kratie by three routes – 1) the national road 7 from Phnom Penh, Kompong Cham right to Kratie, 2) the national road 7, the national road 73 and through to Kratie and 3) by navigation in the Mekong.

... It is indeed a great opportunity that I have met today with leaders of the provinces, districts, and the commune councils and I

would give them my constant appreciation for their efforts in fulfilling their jobs. To conduct a regular general election is a must in the democratic country, especially in the case of Cambodia where there is still much to learn about de-concentration and de-centralisation of power.

... It is not a simple fact that we had conducted successfully the commune election and the Royal Government spent on this 40 billion Riel or ten million US dollars. After the elections, the Royal Government prepares 40 billion Riel every year so as to keep the system operational.

... I am very happy to see that despite limited budget and knowledge, we all from different political parties as elected by the people's choice have shown to be cooperative in fulfilling our work together. I advise you all to go on doing so and as for the Head of the district of Dambe is from FUNCINPEC, but in his role I would urge him to think he is not a FUNCINPEC in his duty but an official in the public administration framework.

... As far as politics is concerned I too have difficulties in coordinating a solution. Many conditions have been brought up for the formation of a Royal Government after the achievement of the 5-November-03 Agreement. However, an announcement was made by HM the King prior to His departure to the People's Republic of China for medical check-up for our people to decide upon their will for a coalition Government of two or three parties.

... First if any party leaves the coalition Government, the whole Government dissolves and the Government has to go to the National Assembly for re-approval. In this context who dissolves the Government? The

National Assembly as is said in the Constitution or a political party?

... Second, before the formation of a new Government, a new National Election Committee (NEC) has to be set up. NEC is an independent and neutral institution with a five year mandate so if a party could dissolve it, what does independence and neutrality mean for this institution?

... To set the record straight I am declaring that I wish to set up a coalition of two parties and the party I would like to work with is FUNCINPEC. If FUNCINPEC wishes to go for a Government of three parties, it will be entitled to only 20% of the share and about half of its officials will lose their jobs. As 2/3 of their senior members would lose the jobs, its ability to compete in 2008 would also slip through.

If FUNCINPEC agrees to a coalition of two with the CPP, with the formula of 60% and 40% or even more, I can guarantee that it will maintain its portion in the Government and will be provided with post of Deputy Head of district for about 185 (FUNCINPEC) officials and some more at the level of provincial Deputy Governor and I think they would gain a reasonable strength to run in the next elections.

... Some says countries in Europe would suspend their assistance if the deadlock situation is to continue but a French Minister who was in Cambodia recently told me that France would not do so and the German Embassy in Phnom Penh just issued a statement that it will provide its grant of 18 million dollars for Cambodia.

... To be frank we see no interest in continuing such a deadlock situation as we have so much

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works to do and many laws to adopt – take for instance the trial bill, the WTO accession approval bill, the Extradition bill between Cambodia and the United States of America. As far as the country's pulse is concerned, we seem to have no problem.

... The financial situation seems to be in good health and is better if compared to before the elections. As no news is good news, many people resort to sports and I find HM's Website an interesting source of information. I just attained a copy of HM's article in 1955 and recently another one from 1959.

... The articles revealed many issues in the past and it made me certain that it is no strange when politicians are in conflict with one another like in 1955, 56,... and in 1959, when Son Ngoc Thanh and Sam Sary betrayed the country, the exchange of criticism also gained its momentum.

... I am mentioning this because it is worth noting that when HM the King led the country in the 1960's for development, He was also blamed and overthrown by the coup on March 18. As I am a pagoda boy, a son of farmers I might as well be defamed...!

On that occasion Samdech Hun Sen urges the people to look after the national achievements and warns the provincial and district authorities of their carelessness in providing protection to those bridges and roads and offered 20 million Riel to the pagoda of Kompong Raing and a school building of six classrooms to the Kompong Raing Primary School.

19 February 2004

Taking Stock of the Cambodian Mine Action Center's 1992-2003 Performance

"... it is a great honor and pleasure for me to join you all, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, in closing the General Assembly of the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC), where we have taken stock of mine clearance activities for more than 10 years, from 1992 to 2003.

I take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate and express deep appreciation for the valuable and humane mission of the CMAC, the Mine Authority, and the Royal Armed Forces Engineering Corps, and concerned national and international organizations. I also thank the Cambodian Red Cross and other international organizations that have made continued efforts to promote awareness of the danger of mines and unexploded ordnance

to our citizens, especially to those who live in areas where mines continue to exist. Together you have exerted your utmost efforts to clear all mines and unexploded ordnance here in Cambodia.

The mines and unexploded ordnance are brutal and murderous instruments that are one of the aspects of the legacy of prolonged war in Cambodia. Our joint efforts for over more than the past decade have brought many good lessons and experiences towards the ultimate goals of our mine clearance operation. Our experiences now enable us to identify the strengths and weakness, difficulties and status of mine clearance works in Cambodia. Our experiences have also taught us how to produce action plans and other measures aimed at the acceleration and effectiveness of our programs.

The Royal Government has always considered mine clearance of highest priority in the rehabilitation and development of Cambodia, especially in reaching the goals of poverty reduction and liberating the Cambodian people from hunger. Land mines are intimately linked to poverty, environmental degradation, growth and social equity.

Land mines not only limit our access to natural resources, especially land, but land mines also cause the rural people to abandon their homelands and resettle in the urban areas. Such migration has worsened the problem of overpopulation, social and environmental degradation, especially in the urban areas.

The poor and vulnerable people are often left with no option but risking their lives by working the mined areas. Indeed, the issue of mine clearance relates not only to social security, but also to economic growth and development

in general, since it relates to land distribution and the provision of safety nets for poor farmer-households in the remote rural areas.

The Secretary General of the Mines Authority has reported the substance of accomplishments from 1992-2003. The mine clearance stakeholders, including national and international organizations and the Royal Armed Forces Engineering Corps have:

- (a) de-mined farm lands totaling 26,552 ha;
- (b) destroyed 459,146 anti-personnel mines;
- (c) destroyed 13,426 anti-tank mines, and
- (d) destroyed 1,037,634 pieces of unexploded ordnance.

In 2003 alone, some 4,170 hectares of land was cleared. Some 109,844 anti-personnel mines, 1,993 anti-tank mines and 222,342 pieces of unexploded ordnance were destroyed.

In addition to mine clearance, some institutions have promoted awareness of mines and the reduction of danger from mines. These institutions include the Cambodian Red Cross, UNICEF, HI, WE, WVI, NPA, and CARE. These agencies have jointly helped keep the rate of mine accidents relatively low and stable over the last few years, even dropping from 848 people in 2002 to 745 people in 2003. Such achievement must be considered as good news and a source of pride for all Cambodians who envision that Cambodia will achieve the zero rate of mine accidents by the year 2012.

It is important to note that while Cambodia now enjoys 100%

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sincerely thank all donor partners for their valuable contribution in all forms, including financial and technical assistance, in their efforts of rehabilitation and development of health sector.

As I have mentioned, good delivery of health service will positively contribute to the economic development. This health service is key to increased labor productivity, investment and the level of saving through people's better attainment of result in education and better performance at work. In this sense, the Royal Government considers capacity building and people's health as the top priority agenda in the response to the poverty reduction and the implementation of reform programs in all sectors. Thus, the Royal Government has exerted its utmost efforts to promote the participation of NGOs and private sector in providing health education, health care and disease prevention activities in urban and rural areas, aimed at reducing mortality rate of children and maternity and preventing all kinds of infected diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Indeed, we have substantially and notably achieved in the improvement of people's welfare. However, we still have many works to do in order to reach the standard of health compared with more developed countries in the region. Being well aware of this situation and demand, the Royal Government has officially announced the Strategic Plan for Health Sector 2003-2007, which provides a common framework for all partners of the Government in its health development for 2003-2007.

This plan spells out the strategy for health service delivery, behavioral change, quality improvement of health financing, human resource and institutional devel-

opment, with the objective to effectively develop health sector in order to enhance health of Cambodian people, especially the poor and people living in the remote areas. Taking this opportunity, allow me to recall my recommendations, which I raised once on the occasion of the official dissemination of the Strategic Plan for Health Sector for the attention of the management and all health officials and staffs:

First, intensify the capacity building of all health officials across the country; encourage them to serve the poorest people in the remote areas; and find ways to reward them with incentives according to their performance;

Second, work more closely with other concerned ministries to improve the disbursement of health funds to the provinces and Operational Districts where there are of dire needs;

Third, ensure the transparency and the ownership in the implementation of national plan with other sectors as well as with the private sector;

Fourth, effectively monitor and evaluate the performance of the plan making sure that the targets are met while responding to the overall objectives of the government.

I would like to emphasize that the joint contribution made by "the Friends without a Border" and all generous people to the construction of the pediatric hospital and health education center helps improve not only the welfare of our children, but also provides many jobs to nurses and other Cambodian personnel, up to 147 people. More importantly, our doctors, nurses and young medicine staffs also have good opportunity to learn and draw lessons from the experiences working in health care with foreign

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tional standards on information management. Such will be favorable for planning and operations management.

Once again, may I express my profound thanks to all donor partners who have supported mine clearance in the Kingdom of Cambodia for over a decade. These donors include Japan, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Community, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, UNDP, UNICEF, NPA, HI and CARE.

I urge the international community to continue your strong

experts who help us in this hospital. All these are the valuable contribution, which well responds to the prime objective of the Royal Government in human resources development in the health sector..."

support for mine clearance in Cambodia. This is a crucial and historic activity that truly responds to the people's real and urgent needs. Finally, I hope that all our common efforts will lead all of Cambodia to a state truly free of mines and unexploded ordnance within the next 10 years...!

26 February 2004**Opening the Angkor Hospital's Health Education Center**

"..., it is a great honor and pleasure for me to join you all, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, in the fifth anniversary of the "Angkor-Seam Reap Pediatric Hospital" and in inaugurating the new building for an administrative office of the hospital and a health education center in our Seam Reap province. I have learned that "Angkor-Seam Reap Pediatric Hospital" is not just one of modern pediatric hospitals in the Kingdom of Cambodia, but it is the first hospital which has opened to provide services to children in Seam Reap. The hospital has been in operation for five years and helped over 200,000 children. Among others, some children came from the neighboring provinces of Seam Reap, such as from Banteay Meanchey, Oddor Meanchey, Battambang and Kompong Thom.

On the occasion of this grand gathering, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the parents of all the children who received health care in this hospital, allow me to express our profound gratitude to Mr. Kenro Izu, President of the "Friends without a Border", who initiated to mobilize thousands of generous people from around the world, especially Japanese, Americans who have mentally, physically and financially contributed to the construction of this modern hospital and fully covered the cost of operation since 1999. May I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to all the generous people who present here, and to others donors who are regrettably not able to come for this event.

Particularly, I would like to thank the Venerable Houmyo Saito and Dr. Masumi Kamachi, each of them has contributed USD 3,500,000 respectively for the construction and operation of the hospital, and they have

planned to finance the operation of this hospital for the next four years. My thanks also go to the Japanese Government which contributed, through the Embassy of Japan in Phnom Penh, a 100 kw power generator and other equipments for the hospital. As we are all well aware, the prolong war and political instability for the last few decades left Cambodia with very poor public services and infrastructure. The Genocide Regime of Pol Pot destroyed the national health system completely. After the liberation of 7th January 1979, we started to mobilize doctors and health staff who survived to reorganize a national health system. The period between 1980 and 1989 was the time for rehabilitation of the whole national health system including physical infrastructure, management structure, and human resource.

During the period, many health staffs were trained; health service system was institutionalized, financed and equipped with facilities and with skilled staffs at all levels, from national, provincial, district hospitals to commune health centers. All national programs, such as programs on tuberculosis, malaria, dailies, polios and nutrition, have been implemented vertically within the whole health system.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all officials and staff of the Ministry of Health who have made their utmost efforts physically and mentally in fulfilling their valuable duties for the cause of rehabilitation and development of national health system, and attaining great achievements and improvements of the health system in Cambodia. Taking also this opportunity, on behalf of the people and the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to

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peace, mines and unexploded ordnance still infest some forest and farm lands, daily causing harm to innocent people who live in the remote rural areas. There continue to be millions of land mines, the legacy of prolonged war in Cambodia. Many, many people have been maimed or killed monthly by land mines. It is estimated that 40 percent of agricultural lands are still mined.

Indeed it is the serious obligation of the Royal Government, the Mine Authority as well as other mine clearance-related organizations as well as local officials to enhance their efforts and collaborate to promote mines awareness among all citizens to avoid more incidents.

To ensure full peace and security in Cambodia and among all Cambodians, mine clearance is considered a key program. The Royal Government aims to free all of Cambodia from land mines by year 2012.

Thus the Royal Government has adopted land mine clearance as an additional Millennium Development Goal for Cambodia – a new, 9th goal in addition to the 8 MDGs adopted by the United Nations.

Therefore, today, may I express my appreciation and support for the commitment expressed in this meeting to minimize the rate of incidents due to mines and unexploded ordnance in 2004, and to enhance mines education, especially in provinces where incident rates are high - such as Kampong Cham, Battambang, Oddor Meanchey, Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchey.

Cambodia has not, and does not, produce weapons nor mines. Yet Cambodia has severely suffered more than most countries from mines. The Royal Government has unconditionally committed to and signed the Ottawa Convention and related conventions.

As Cambodia has strictly observed the provisions of the Ottawa Convention, the international community has supported mine clearance operations in Cambodia, awarding to the CMAC, HALO Trust and MAG with annual budgets totaling US \$20 million. Moreover, the Fifth General Assembly of signatory states of the Ottawa Convention honored Cambodia and Japan as Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee on mine clearance operations, education and awareness programs, and mine clearance technology.

Last week, the Secretary-General of the Mines Authority returned from Geneva where he successfully chaired the Steering Committee meeting, in which there were participants from more than 100 countries.

On behalf of the Royal Government and people of Cambodia, allow me to express my profound gratitude through your Excellencies, the Ambassadors, Ladies and Gentlemen, representatives of NGOs and other national and international organizations, for your generosity. Your efforts to mobilize technical and financial aid for the clearance of mines and unexploded ordnance in Cambodia has indeed contributed significantly to the freeing of farms and the reduction of danger from mines in Cambodia.

May I also express my appreciation to the Cambodian Mine Action and Victims Authority – the "Mines Authority" - that has successfully played its role and performed its duty as the regulatory institution that ensures effective coordination and cooperation among all mine clearance operators in Cambodia. I note that the Government of Canada has continued to help strengthen database management by the Mines Authority.

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