

Cambodia New Vision

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13 November 2004 (with unofficial Translation of selected comments)
Tapping the Fully Grown Rubber Tree



Samdech Hun Sen and Madam are tapping sap of the fully grown rubber tree during the inauguration of a paved road and rubber extraction ceremony in the Chub rubber plantation (Photo: Virakmuny).

..., I have great honor and pleasure to be here in this rubber plantation for the 6th times, to joint you all, Venerable Buddhist Monks, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, in inaugurating of Paved Road and opening ceremony of Caoutchouc Extraction Site as well as presentation of certificate ISO 9001:2000 and ISO/IEC 17025:1999.

Employees, workers and especially students is the evidence of this historical event that shows our active involvement in development of rubber sector in Cambodia, which is one of the important agricultural product that supports the progress of country economic foundation.

To take this great opportunity, on behalf of Royal Government (RG) and my own self, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the management, civil servants, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery's staffs

and officials, including all employees and workers of the Chup Rubber Plantation (CRP) that have exerted their efforts and cooperated with international partners in order to obtain achievements and initiated the organization of this event.

The organization of this event again is the evidence that clearly reflects the emphasis on development of valuable natural caoutchouc resources, especially through this ceremony we can show and promote to the national and international milieu the good quality of natural caoutchouc that is growing on red soil in the Kompong Cham province.

As we all already know, Cambodia is a country where agriculture sector is determined as basic sector for economic development, especially rice and caoutchouc. During the 70s,
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18 November 2004 (with unofficial Translation of selected comments)
Building NR 7 between Kratie & the Border with Laos

... I have a great honor and pleasure to joint you all in the opening ceremony for construction section of the national road No. 7, which has a length of 187 km from Kratie Province to Cambodia-Laos borders in the Stung Treng Province, under the concessional loan from the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and counterpart fund of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC).

Taking this auspicious occasion, I would like to request His Excellency the Ambassador of the PRC and the Head of the

high level delegation of the PRC to convey our sincere gratitude from the Royal Government and the people of Cambodia to the people and government of the PRC for their continued support including grants, concessional loans and technical cooperation in the past years, for rehabilitation and socio-economic development of Cambodia.

PRC is one of the close friends of Cambodia and has provided many supports not only for rehabilitation and infrastructure buildings but PRC has also en-
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17 November 2004
Inaugurating New Office Building for Women's Affairs

... I have a great pleasure to joint you all in the official inauguration of the new building for Ministry of Women Affairs (MWA)... On behalf of the People and Royal Government (RG) as well as my own self, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the government and people of Japan for their direct contribution to develop and enhance the living standards of Cambodian people, which is a part of national policies for poverty reduction of the RG.

All Cambodians will always remember the contribution of the government and people of Japan in peace building and assistance to RG in the past years, especially generous assistance in socio-economic sectors as well as providing scholarships to train many young civil

servants to obtain undergraduate, graduate and post graduate level degrees... Furthermore, Japan is a good friend of Cambodia that has supported and assisted Cambodia in many circumstances by rehabilitating and developing all sectors through technical assistances and finances to develop policies aiming at to maintain social stability and to develop infrastructure that are the foundation for strengthening peace process, development, respect of human rights and enhancing democracy in Cambodia. Indeed, from 1993, the Japanese government has provided a lot of assist-
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caoutchouc plantation in Cambodia covered 65,000 hectares and caoutchouc exports were equal to over 50 millions dollars per year. In 1966, caoutchouc production increased to 52,000 tons with the average yield of around 1510 kg per hectare, which is one of the highest yields in the world.

This reflects the potential of Cambodia in the sector. However, during the war from 1970 to 1980, caoutchouc plantation of around 1300 hectares have been destroyed and another 22.000 hectares were damaged.

In case of rubber trees that we started to extract again in 1980 covered only 5,000 hectares, which produced the extracted caoutchouc only around 1,300 tons. Furthermore, in the 80s, we had started replanting rubber on existing and available areas.

Also, during the 90s, we started to cut old and exhausted rubber trees in order to replace with new rubber trees in view of timely revitalizing rubber plantations.

In the present, the government has transformed 7 rubber plantations from state-owned enterprises into public enterprises with autonomous economic management.

According to investment project, the government introduced development policy on family-based rubber cultivation and ensures the freedom of selling rubber products in domestic market. With stated policy, RG expect that our farmers will participate more to support the policy.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (MAFF) encouraged the family-based rubber plantation development and implemented pilot project

financed by Agence Français de Développement (AFD) which aims to develop a sustainable agricultural system based on rubber sector and provided fund for development of rubber plantation.

The Research project on family-based rubber plantation, that is the sub-project of Agricultural Productivity Improvement Project (APIP) funded by the World Bank, has been launched in order to identify the potential development area.

At the time, I would like to highly appreciate all level of civil servants, workers, employees of CHUP Rubber Plantation who have been work hard for 25 years especially to successfully and significantly revitalize rubber on the existing land and that worth to be proud.

They also expanded additional cultivated area in Tum Ring commune, Sandan district, Kampong Thom province and promote the development of family-base rubber plantation to be better.

Furthermore, in 2004, CHUP Rubber Plantation has improved its total quality management (TQM) and has been certified by Australia based TQM system. Today, the celebration of its new achievement is a historical evidence to show the satisfied outcome of its performance through certification of **ISO 9001:2000** and **ISO 17025:1999** provided by Australian based TQM system.

I would like to recall the recommendations, I raised during closing of recent MAFF conference on Taking stock of 2003-2004 Performance, on promotion development of rubber product of the three agents: state, private and household through mobilizing private investment both inside and foreign countries.

The development can be done through grant and loan from international financial institution for development and promotion technical and procedure researches to enhance the quality of Cambodia rubber products to be internationally recognized.

Therefore, the products are able to penetrate into the market, absorb more customers and obtain high price and particularly meet the requirement of international rubber community in enhancing the quality of Cambodia rubber product to be able to compete in international market.

In the same context, I would like all of you to focus on the potential of expanding and development of rubber plantation that can be obtained via three important activities such as newly planting, re-planting and improving re-arrangement of young rubber plantation which allow us to have hundred hectare of un-extracted young rubber plant that can be rehabilitation by apply proper agromonomical technique for speeding up the growth of tree and increase output.

Indeed, re-planting need to remove over-35-year-old tree on hundred hectares and utilize seeds with provide high yields and high quality wood. The removed rubber plant will provide wood for making furniture.

The re-planting area, is currently about 280,00 hectares, have been establish not only for industrial cultivation but also family based cultivation. Therefore, quality and customer satisfactions are our target in the future.

I am convinced that in order to achieve these necessary objectives, each rubber plantation must put all its efforts in preparing modernized management

basing on good governance within the "Rectangular Strategy" framework of the Royal Government and using incentives scheme.

This is to increase labor yield in hand with human resource development in appropriate technical field which are keys in increasing rubber yield and quality with international recognition. Attention should also be given to livelihood and well-being of employees and workers who constitute great collective force in pushing rubber industry in Cambodia to obtain international standardized quality and capacity in competing with other rubber products of other countries in international market.

In view of creating jobs, value added as well as increasing economic efficiency, the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fishery must adopt strict and immediate measures in cracking down and timely preventing exports of un-processing caoutchouc and rubber trunks accordingly to existing technical principles.

In this spirit, the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fishery and concerned institutions must promote and encourage investors to establish domestic factories that fully process caoutchouc and rubber trunks for export purposes. This is to prevent the loss of quality of our rubber products.

As H. E. Chan Sarun has stated, family based rubber development program with multiple vegetation within rubber plantation is surely consistent with the "Rectangular Strategy" of the Royal Government painted by agricultural diversification and increased agricultural productivity in view of reducing poverty of the people in rural area through increased income, job creation, labor migration to cities, protection of environment

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and speeding up family economic activities as well as national economy as a whole. Taking this occasion, I convey my hope on other rubber plantations and encourage them to continue to compete for ISO certificate in order to enhance the prestige of Cambodian rubber with international recognition.

Once again, I highly appreciate new achievements that Chup rubber plantation has obtained and I deeply thank the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fishery, other seven rubber plantations as well as line ministries, local authorities, armed forces that have actively contributed to reform tasks and agriculture development, especially the development of rubber industry.

I also thank development partners who have contributed to the development of rubber sector in Cambodia, particularly I urge the French Government and the World Bank to examine the possibility to continue their aid in family based rubber development program to cover to nationwide scale.

May I take this occasion to also present my appreciation and loyal thank to great efforts of Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen the management, staff, employees, workers, compatriots as well as all local authorities who have jointly constructed this paved road to allow great deal of exchange of goods and facilitate transport of rubber, agricultural and industrial products and other resources in the region to market place and cities. This surely cuts both transportation cost and time.

In this regard, it's undeniable that the livelihood of people in this region will be improved with more favorable and improved communication and linkage with other regions in the country.

In order to congratulate Chup rubber plantation that has obtained ISO certificate and ISO/IEC as well as to uphold the cause of development of rubber sector in Cambodia that contributes to enhanced economic growth, job creation, equitable and efficient distribution of wealth, I am honored to declare the official inauguration of this paved road and caoutchouc extraction in Chup rubber plantation...

Selected Comments

... Today, together with my dear wife, I am very pleased to come to join all of you here for three important events – the inauguration of the seven-kilometer paved road (from the total length of 25 kilometers) from the national road seven to Chub and the next 15 kilometers from there to the O Tapao rubber plantation; the presentation of the certificate ISO9001:2000 and ISO/IEC 17025:1999; and the opening of the new caoutchouc extraction site in the Chub rubber plantation.

... Let me take this auspicious occasion to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to a comprehensive and elaborate report of HE Chan Sarun, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on achievements in the Chub rubber plantation. My appreciation and thanks go also to the governing board of the Chub rubber plantation and its staff and workers for the efforts they made in overcoming all sorts of difficulties over the last decades. One may say the road that we have traveled together has been a long and historic one.

... The restoration of rubber production has centered at Chub rubber plantation since the beginning and it then covered a huge area which included Peam Cheang, Krek, O

Tapao... We have set up a separate rubber company for the rubber area of Krek, a company at O Tapao and one for Peam Cheang. We had in those days, as I was Minister for Foreign Affairs, signed an agreement for a financial loan for the restoration of rubber plantation in Cambodia, at which time we focused mainly on the area east of the river Mekong...

... I traveled many times to this area and one time I came by a recently burned down factory by the Khmer Rouge's Pol Pot forces. However, step by step, we have restored our rubber sector and swapped one type of management to another. As we commenced the second term of government, by mid of 1999, we have transferred our management system to an economically oriented public enterprises...

... At the time Cambodia was under embargo and we could only send our workers for training in rubber planting procedures in Vietnam. Vietnam has contacts with Malaysia, and brought to the country the new variety. Our people secretly took the seeds to Cambodia. The new seeds were planted in Chub without a name plate. In 1995 I went for a visit to Malaysia and I told her former Foreign Minister the incident...

... Facing with fall of caoutchouc price in the international market, the enterprises not only survived the risk of being bankrupted but resolved requirements of their workers and reinvested further in rubber plantation by expanding the size of cultivation to the border of Kompong Thom (a province next to Kompong Cham) in addition to their efforts to meet a flexible tax condition levied at 2%, 5% and 10% according to the amount of production.

... What impressed me most is the fact that all enterprises used

no state fund to equip their production system with modern technology, especially in processing system. Aside from paying contribution to the state, the enterprises have established for themselves factories, labs, workers' housing, schools and other social requirements. We have today a seven kilometer-long paved road and the Peam Cheang rubber plantation will also pave a road to the Phsar Tosu and to Doeum Sdao of Koh Sotin for which it has been proposed Sen Tosu as its name.

... What also impressed me is the fact that in Tbong Khmum we have 1379 hectares out of 13850 hectares that are under household rubber cultivation. I wish to make an appeal to all rubber companies to encourage further rubber plantation at a household level as it is going to be a very important movement with the assistance provided by the World Bank and France.

... More people in the laterite (red soil) area grow rubber, Cambodia will have more caoutchouc and our people will improve their living standard because growing caoutchouc for two tons per hectare would give them better income than if they grow rice or soya bean for the same yield. Starting from 2005 we will be tapping sap from 5000 hectares of rubber per annum. From 2007 we would increase the coverage to 10000 hectares per annum.

... As Cambodia is now in its development opportunity, I would therefore recommend to the province of Kompong Cham and other rubber factories to attract investment to bring our rubber products to a stage of finished products in the country. So far we only exported latex to foreign markets but we should think of further investment using rubber such as car tires, etc. which would give Cambodia

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more value added. I think it is time for all provinces to compete for outside investment and we have to be attractive to investors. We have now closed down border for smuggle of rubber as possibilities where rubber were stolen and sold to Vietnam would be at its end. I have informed and requested my Vietnamese counterpart for a cooperation in closing border trade of rubber trees and sap by banning companies from Vietnam to stop setting purchasing office along the common border.

... In 2004 we experienced a stalemate but it has been removed already as we have established the new Government of the third legislature and the National Assembly under cooperation from top to bottom levels between the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and FUNCINPEC. I am glad to see that we could come out with such cooperation and I wish to see all are collaborating with one another. Uncertainty with regard to the throne has also been removed completely through crowning of the new King after Preah Mohavirak Khsatr retired. We also have now full security throughout the country. All this is a diamond and gold opportunity for development in Cambodia. The biggest challenge of all for us at present is drought and I have made an appeal since November 8th as some places are affected by drought despite an overall increase of rice cultivation area. Though rain has come to some provinces, still many areas are under threat of water insufficiency and I would recommend that efforts should be made to save our people by providing them with water access until we all get over with rice cultivation in dry season. Contribution should be made from our people, the pagoda also included as one pagoda could provide a contribution of one million Riels which would in the end make Riels

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couraged their investors to invest in industrial, agricultural and tourism sectors in Cambodia. These have helped to push economic growth, generate employment for Cambodian citizen, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation in Cambodia. On behalf of People and the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to highly appreciate and treasure the kind gesture and generosity of the government and people of the PRC that has been imprinted in history and in spirit of every Cambodians.

Indeed, the "Rectangular Strategy" of the RGC has considered the development of physi-

4000 million as the pagoda would depend on followers and if they starved, the pagodas would face similar situation. I have an example of the pagoda of Chrey Bak in the district of Rolea Phae where the head monk and his followers built a water canal so that people could make use of water for their rice cultivation. I am also pleased today that the Chub rubber plantation is presented with certificate ISO 9001:2000 and ISO/IEC 17025:1999 from the QMS of Vietnam and the Benchmark Quality Control of Australia. I would suggest that all rubber enterprises should also try to achieve similar standard as this would facilitate out term of exports.

... As water festival closely approaches I would recommend that those to participate in the boat race should first take care of their rice field before coming to join the traditional sport event and I would suggest that the Ministry of Health take notice of widely bringing awareness on HIV/AIDS issue to our people from countryside and make a wide distribution of condoms as well... ■

cal infrastructure as a vital foundation for economic development, high sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. Road is an important economic infrastructure which facilitate businesses, trade of goods between this area and big commercial centers within the country and in the region. For instance, for a person, to make body growing and having a good health requires the blood, which is supporting element of the body, to flow everywhere in the veins. For the same reason, an economy can grow only if trade, which is the supporting element of the economy, flows everywhere in the economy, where the road infrastructure facilitates all these trade activities.

In this sense, roads are necessary means to promote the engine of socio-economic growth, improve living standards and welfare of citizen as the slogan saying "where is a road there is a hope". With the good road infrastructure, we can transport and exchange agricultural products quickly, safely, in large quantity, and with less time as well as with low cost in order to response to market needs. Good infrastructure can attract investment in every sector including industry, agriculture and tourism that may generate employment for our people and facilitate development of health and education sectors to reach remote areas. Then, the living standards and welfare of people will change for the better with good health, and become more educated with high morality and culture.

The section of National Road No. 7 to be built is the last parts of the dragon's tail, which begins with the head at the Sihanouk Ville port connected with the National Road No. 4 along the sea coastline passing through Phnom Penh and the body crossed the National Road

No. 6 A connecting to the National Road No. 7. This "dragon" is a breath and important veins for Cambodian economy linking southwest and northeast, which are the areas with economic potentials and provide important benefits for national and regional trade, in particular for cooperation among the three countries Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. When "dragon tail" is connected, the "dragon" will revitalize and empowered to increase the pace of economic growth and enhance living standards of Cambodian people to free them from poverty and improve welfare. It is because the areas where this "dragon" is passing through are the main economic areas of Cambodia including industry, agriculture and tourism. This national road will be used for traveling, transporting products of people in the North-East. The areas which are endowed with large area of high quality rubber plantations with international standard, potatoes plantations, soybean and sesame fields, cotton plantations and many others, in particular plants that can only grow in cold region such as butter trees, grapes, tea and coffee. In addition, this region is the area for eco-tourism that has nice sceneries, mountain surroundings and waterfalls as well as can see fresh water dolphin in Preak Kompy in Kratie province that can attract national and international tourists.

Moreover, this section of the National Road No. 7 will serve for the triangular development and cooperation of provinces of three countries Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam as this road is a potential crossing bridge for land transportation of goods for these countries. This road is also the ASEAN highway project No. 11, which connects cities from Kunming, China crossing through Vietnam, Laos, Phnom Penh city towards international sea via Sihanouk Ville port, (Continued on page 5)

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passing the National Road No. 4 or Cambodian rail road. At the same time, we can exchange products and goods within the areas around the National Road No. 7, including products from Rattanakiri, Mondulkiri, Kratie and Stung Treng provinces as well as products from Laos, Vietnam to Thailand by rail road from Phnom Penh to Poi Pet.

There should be noted that in the past the transportation of goods in those areas were only made by water transportation, in particular only in rainy season because there is no appropriate road infrastructure to facilitate economic activities between different areas as this part of the national road was covered by red gravel and was damaged due to the lack of maintenance. Thus, people in those regions were cut off from other areas and Phnom Penh capital city which is the biggest center for politics, economy, commerce, culture and at the same time their living condition still at low level as there is a lack of ability to transport their products to the market and lack of experience and knowledge exchanges between other regions and especially with Phnom Penh city. Specifically, this national road will greatly contribute to effective and rapid integration of Cambodia into the region and world.

We are very proud of various achievements that we together have exerted effort to attain and we are very optimistic about the bright future of Cambodia. I would like to appeal to members of the RGC, authorities, management and civil servant of the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation to continue to cooperate and fulfill their duties in order to connect transportation network across county wide. At the same time, support and understanding of citizen is prerequisite for this process, so that we

can move smoothly and rapidly.

In this sense, on behalf of the RGC and people of Cambodia, I would like once again to extend our gratitude to people and government of our development partners and to all donor agencies that have always assisted and supported us mentally and materially as well as financially for rehabilitation and development of Cambodian economy, in particular in improving and building transportation infrastructures, which is a key for economic growth and poverty reduction.

I would like to express my high appreciation to all managements, civil servants, employees, workers of the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation, as well as to authorities, armed forces and all related institutions for their tremendous efforts to ensure the successful realization of strategic plan that RGC has laid out, in particular the construction of the section of this National Road No. 7. I would like also to congratulate and appraise the **Shanghai General Construction Company** that implements this project and **Third Chinese Railways Exploration**, which is technical consultant, making their efforts to implement the projects in order to successfully complete this part of the National Road No. 7 before the deadline, by the end of 2008...

Selected Comments

... Today I am very pleased to join all of you in celebrating the groundbreaking of the construction of the national road 7 between Kratie and the border with Laos, via the province of Stoeung Treng. It is one of the construction sites that we all are waiting for along time, not only for the provinces of Kratie and Stoeung Treng, but throughout the Kingdom of Cambodia. What we have been

longing for is happening now and in just a couple of years our people will possess another great wealth, like the bridge Kizuna, the national road 7 which stretches to the border with Laos. Let me take this solemn opportunity to express my sincere thanks first of all to the People's Republic of China for the loan that is made available for the construction and the Shanghai Construction Company for the organization and operation of the construction site. I am grateful for the report by H.E. the Chinese Ambassador which illustrates the consideration extended by the Government of the PRC for the construction of the road.

... A few years ago we sought after credits, loan capital and assistance for reconstructing various road sections, which included the renovation of the national road 6A, the national road 6 and 7, the bridge Kizuna, and various major bridges along part of the national road 7 including the bridge Moat Khmung. From Moat Khmung, the road renovation is financed by loan from the Asian Development Bank, between Meh Mot and Snuol district of Kratie, the renovation is financed by loan from OPEC and ADB, and from there through to Kratie we used the loan from ADB. We then had a section between Kratie and the border with Laos, via Stoeung Treng, that was left without financier.

In one of my visits to the PRC in 1999 in early second term I had proposed to HE former Prime Minister of the PRC Mr. Zhu Rongji for a feasibility study to build the 198-kilometer road section. What is the most scaring point of all for a possibility for the reconstruction of this road for the ADB and WB was not about the amount of money but the threat of mines and unexploded ordnance.

... But they were not obstacles for the PRC in building this road. After a feasibility study, the PRC decided to provide loans in stages for the study as well as for the construction of the road. The finalization of the cooperation project was on April 20, 2004. Thanks to my visit to the PRC for the participation in the ASEAN-China Trade Fair in Naninh, Madam Deputy Prime Minister Wu Yi decided to offer Cambodia another US\$ 600,000 for mine clearance for the construction area. To sum up, the project cost totally over US\$ 70 million, in which four million US dollars is the Royal Government of Cambodia's counterpart fund. In her visit to Cambodia last March, Madam Prime Minister Wu Yi gave her strong impression on the project and my return visit to Kuang Xi autonomous region I paid much attention to exposures made by various construction companies on issue of mine clearances. Aside from thanking H.E. the current Ambassador and the former Ambassador of the PRC, and the Ministry of Transports and Public Works, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the local authorities and the armed forces at all levels for their positive cooperation in organizing this ceremony for such a smooth project to take a start.

... In fact the project could be said to be an arrow that caught two birds at the same time – the clearance of mine and the improvement of the country's infrastructure. Originally the road length was discovered to be 198 kilometers, with some exits are possible, according to H.E. Sun Chan Thol's report, we could cut short the road to 187 kilometers. I wish to take this solemn occasion to convey my deepest thanks to our people living along the road project for their cooperation in the matter of removing their properties from areas af-

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 fected by road enlargement. It is this regard that the RGC contributed its US\$ 4 million as counterpart fund to the project. The road is indeed very important for the country. It could be compared to the last part of a dragon's tail with its head in the seaport of Kompong Som, linked between tail and head by the national road 4, via Phnom Penh, and the national road 6A and 07, via the bridge Kizuna. What could be the most impressive element of all is that in just a few years before, our dragon has got a head only and later its body was built with the Japanese assistance – the bridge Chroy Changva, NR 6A and 7 to Kratie. Now that we have its tail built with the Chinese help, our dragon has got the whole physical structure and we cannot wait to see how powerful it could be as its head lies in the sea at Sihanoukville, its tail placed on the border with Laos, and the whole country, so to speak, is well connected to this road master plan.

... In this respect more bridges will be built. Take for instance more bridges need to be built across the river Sekong – the upper part of the river Mekong to an area adjacent to the border with Thailand. It is indeed not a big job for Shanghai, as Kizuna is not big for Japan, taking resources and construction technology into consideration, but they are and will be marvelous wealth for Cambodia. Along with the prospect that Japan will decide on its assistance in renovating the national road 1 and the bridge across the river Mekong at Neak Loeung, we could say it is the completion of the first big phase for the renovation of Cambodia's infrastructure or the complete connection of all main blood veins for the country. This reminds me that I owed three bridges at the district of Prek Prasap in Kratie. Let me assure you that I will make January 22, 2005 the groundbreaking

ceremony date for the three Bailey bridges.

... May I add some of my thoughts over what was mentioned by H.E. Minister Sun Chanthol. The completion of the national road 07 brings about four favorable conditions for Cambodia. First, it allows for better internal integration of Cambodia. Second, it helps Cambodia in its move for integration in the region. Third, it promotes development in remote areas in the northeast of the country such as Kratie, Stoeung Treng, Ratanakiri, Mondulakiri and Preah Vihear provinces. Fourth, it will help in redistribution of manpower/labor forces that is not currently in equilibrium condition. These are applied not only at the benefit of the completion of the National Road 07, but all other roads in the country. As I used to mention on various occasions that in order for the rural area to grasp at development, four points need to be taken into account and prioritized – in short, water, roads, electricity and human resources." They are my vision sounded out since 1987. We then focused on investment aimed at providing irrigation system and means for agricultural development. Another area of focus has been the improvement of the infrastructural development – road, rail and other form of transports. A concern to be addressed shortly is also the cost of electricity that is still high for household and industrial consumptions.

... During the time when we were in deadlock situation in a little over one year, the PRC and some other countries continue to play very important roles in their contributions for maintaining the Kingdom's political stability. Aiming at achieving that goal, I have put out four essential tasks for controlling the situation. **First** we have to maintain political sta-

bility, security and social order which are indeed vital interest of the Cambodian people. **Second**, we have to maintain our macroeconomic stability, prevent inflation and promote economic growth. **Third**, we have to sustain all Government institutions and local authorities at all levels, and adhering to reforms plan. **Fourth**, we have to nurture good relations with neighboring countries, region and the world. Taking this into consideration, we could be proud that no one country is proclaiming its cessation of assistance for Cambodia. Some countries have taken different position in providing assistance to Cambodia by holding its provision until the country has its new Government. However countries like PRC and Japan did not take that position as their assistance continues in regular flow. If the PRC took similar position to the above, we would not have a chance to start the project today, but would be waiting on further.

... The March visit by H.E. Deputy Premier Wu Yi and my return official visit to the PRC in April of the same year have brought about new sign of political support for the Kingdom of Cambodia and it was indeed an interaction leading to possible favorable political condition leading to the establishment of the new term National Assembly and the new Royal Government on the basis of reconciliation between the Cambodian People's Party and FUNCINPEC and between I myself with Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranaridh, whose daughter is also present here today. Many people are currently enjoying the fruit of agreement between me and Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranaridh, and no one is caught responsible for the deadlock situation in the history of Cambodia. Samdech Krom Preah and I have also cooperated in bringing a solu-

tion to the throne crisis in which we elected a new King.

... I would like to reiterate that the relationship between Cambodia and China is growing by day and I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to Preah Karuna Preah Baat Preah Norodom Sihanouk Preah Mohavirakksatr, the Royal Father of Independence, Territorial Integrity, and Khmer National Unity, who has laid a positive and firm relation with the PRC and Samdech's brilliantly correct one-China policy. There was a question asked if I have any doubt or concern over the fact that the PRC would become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). My answer is short – we want a rich or a poor China? It is indeed dangerous if some people want China to be poor. China is a huge country with almost 1.3 billion people. What could happen if China is poor and facing with so many difficulties? Take for instance what could have been the solution if we were to face with 30 million refugees from China? We all do not want to repeat the history of having numerous Chinese in the past came residing along the Mekong.

... Now we have two flights per day to-and-fro between Phnom Penh and Shanghai. We are expecting more tourists coming from Shanghai and if we were to increase the number of tourists by two million a year, our ability to bring development to the country would also be better. After joining WTO, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar will enjoy 197 favorable goods. Many countries have now mobilized their capital to PRC, which makes many Chinese companies, the Shanghai Construction Company included, wealthy enough to come and invest in other countries, Cambodia is the practical example here. Cambodia is honored to be assigned as coordinator between ASEAN and China...■

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 tance to fulfill real needs and invaluable benefits... In this sense, taking this great opportunity I would like His Excellency **Fumiaki Takahashi**, Ambassador of Japan to Cambodia, to convey our high appreciation and gratitude to government and people of Japan that have always supported Cambodia in terms of technical assistance, equipments and finance, especially for this MWA's new building which will be officially opened shortly.

... As Her Excellency **Ing Kantha Phavi** has highlighted in her report that our country has moved one step forward to overcome those challenges by implementing series of activities to develop female human resources which is valuable and equal partnership with men in contributing to socio-economic development through cooperation and aid in term of building, including activities and projects to empower women in rural areas and female civil servants in different ministries and institutions.

Those activities fully correspond with the Rectangular Strategy of the RG for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency, which recognized that **"women are the backbone of economy and society."** RG will give a high priority to improve women's role and social status by enhancing the implementation of strategy for gender equity, developing women's capacity, changing social behavior of discrimination against women and ensuring women's rights to actively and equally participate with men in rehabilitating and developing the country.

At the same time, I would like to recognize and highly appreciate the implementation of the national programme **"Women as a Precious Stone-2"**, which is continued from previous term and has emphasized on the development of women's capacity

as well as changing the behavior and perception regarding discrimination against women in society by reducing the gender gap between women and men in the participation in economic sector, education, access to health care, decision making and legal protection to give opportunity to women to be equally involved in family activities and society.

Moreover, I have noted that Ministry of Women Affairs, which is a direct mechanism in the implementation of RG policy programme, has made tremendous efforts and overcome all difficulties by conducting a series of important programs such as training the trainers to further train important officials in ministries/institutions, members of provincial, municipal, district, commune, village development committees regarding the gender issues, leadership, self confidence and also data gathering for analysis and policy preparation to respond to gender needs in all sectors. In this sense, I would like to sincerely appreciate the hard work of MWA as well as civil organizations for their cooperation to improve women's status, which will contribute to poverty reduction.

Eradicating violence in family and society, combating human trafficking, eliminating discrimination against women in society, increasing enrolment rate of girls, improving maternal and infant health are all our responsibility. Women's problems are not the only burdens for females or MWA, but are joint responsibility of all sectors and institutions, including individual.

Indeed, as I have mentioned many times *"helping women is to help ourselves"* because women as our grandmothers, mothers and wives are the first teacher to provide us education

and to take care of our children to become a person with virtue, moral, education and high position in the society.

In this regards, every related ministry must cooperate with the MWA to change the society and to move towards equity and equality in providing opportunity, rights and benefits to women. Furthermore, this great work could only be successfully achieved if there would be close cooperation from every institution, community, NGOs, and the public, including supports in terms of donations and assistances from our development partners...

... RG is conscious that more works need to be done in Cambodia to achieve the creation of gender indicators and development objectives responding to the issues of gender equality in the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs). In this sense, I would like the MWA to promote the implementation of the following four priority programs:

1. Converting and Expanding Women's Development Center to Women's Enterprises Center. RG recognizes the development of small enterprises is crucial to the achievement of broader development objectives, including poverty reduction and the empowerment of women. Especially, the slowdown in garment sector after 2005 will have considerable impact on female job seekers, as female workers of the garment industry represents about 90 percent of the workforce.

To increase the employment opportunity for women workers, RG of third term is making effort to reduce the cost of doing businesses to ensure Cambodian competitiveness in garment industry and to focuses attention to expand the source of growth by promoting agri-

culture and agro-industry sectors.

The Women's Enterprises Centers will provide an integrated package of knowledge and skills, including provision of specialized skills, business training especially market research, linkages between small financial institutions and other supporting services, socio-cultural empowerment of women through literacy enhancement, instruction in health, nutrition, life skills, and personal and business counseling and support.

2. Expansion of Micro Credit Schemes. I would like the MWA to promote the expansion of micro credit schemes to micro financial institutions in order to finance women related activities, in particular of those who are living in rural areas.

3. Promote Better Nutrition. This initiative focuses on two priority areas: the nutritional status of infants and their mothers. A concentrated and sustained campaign is necessary to increase knowledge about breast-feeding and the nutritional status of women and children, as well as to change people's attitudes toward the use of commonly available foods and nutritional intake.

4. Dormitories for Secondary School Girls. Better-educated women will help reduce poverty for the next Cambodian generation. Girls frequently have to travel and sometimes stay away from home in order to attend secondary schools. I would like to support the initiatives to build dormitories for students to provide training and support for those young females.

The program described above require financing. I would like to ask the MWA to exert their efforts to mobilize domestic resources and appeal to donors in order to successfully implement above mentioned projects...■

15 November 2004 [Unofficial Translation]

Inaugurating a Buddhist Assembly Building in the Chruoy Thmar Pagoda

At the Inauguration of a Dharma Hall and Achievements in the Pagoda of Chroy Thmar in the Province of Kompong Cham, Samdech Hun Sen made the following comments:

... I am glad to be back today with all of you to inaugurate a new Dharma assembly building and the office of chief monk. I am feeling great to notice various other achievements that have been realized one after the other. HE Governor Chieng Am has mentioned in his report just now about history of the pagoda, which is now in its 89 years of existence.

... I would add some information about the pagoda's history as in between 1970 and 1975 it was an artillery position of the Lon Nol regime to provide cover attacks to eastern side battles of the river Mekong. There were two artillery positions in those days in the area – one in the pagoda of Chroy Thmar and another in the pagoda of Dey Doh. It was no doubt that the Lon Nol army used the pagoda as its military position and one of my eyes was wounded on April 16, 1975 by shells fired from one the two positions.

... I lay in coma for a week and after recovering I immediately asked for a visit to the town of Kompong Cham. I came by a small boat but was stopped by the 304 army group as the army of 304 and 203 took the Mekong River as their line of control. After making contact with one of the 304's commanders I was allowed to get to bank. I went into the pagoda and I found not a single monk in the pagoda on April 30, 1975 but only the army.

... I requested to enter the Kompong Cham town in a purpose to observe if people who had been evacuated earlier were allowed

to return, but no permission was granted... One more recall is that in 1979 the pagoda was not yet rebuilt because it was requested for use as a political training centre. I would seek your mercy on the fact that the pagoda was used for a different purpose other than Buddhist teaching for quite sometime before renovation is possible.

... By gathering here today, it is reflecting that we are true followers of Buddhism. Also present are Muslim people who coexist peacefully with Buddhist followers. This shows that our people have confidence in the leadership of the Royal Government, the local authority as well as my leadership. In some countries this does not seem to exist as people have different beliefs and they could not accept that everyone has got the right to personal belief.

... Take for instance in Cambodia we have two Buddhist sects – Dharmayudh and Mahanikay. But for us religion cannot be a barrier to solidarity between people and people at all. Religions – Buddhism, Christianity or Islam -- instruct people to believe and to act in good faith. It is in this sense that we will not let the different beliefs be a hindrance to our march for development.

... I believe in good faith if one act in good faith one will have good karma, if one acts differently one will suffer karmic reciprocation. Take for instance Pol Pot committed bad faith and we all see how Pol Pot faced his death, how Lon Nol faced his karma. We all understand that Lon Nol was the one who brought war into Cambodia, and though he went to the United States as his last journey, the Government of the United States returned the

money he took to the Cambodian Government. What is left for his family? Pol Pot died and was cremated with car tires, and the remainders will have to face the court of justice... As today we all have come in good faith for religion. Reconstruction of the pagoda took a lot of time and resources. It created some debts and because we all are acting in good faith, today I am sure the debts will be resolved.

... Before my departure to China (returning on November 08) I have instructed the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology to provide our people with effective assistance in irrigating their rice fields that are under threats of drought. We have had recently some rains in Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Thom, Kompong Speu, etc. In fact weather has changed dramatically not only in Cambodia but throughout the world. This year Japan is affected by both earthquake and storm. Drought has affected countries around us like Vietnam, Thailand, China, etc. As for Cambodia, according to our memory, we should still have more rains because kapok trees do not seem to bloom yet. This is a locally traditional memory that we could still have more rain. Once we have wind from north and another from west.

... There has been a prediction that there might be huge and consecutive rains by the fourth week of November. Well that would likely to be a disaster as well as it would negatively affect rice because at that stage most of the rice would be in its blossoming period. Too much rain would destroy them.

... Though we cannot control weather, we could still control ground surface water system. Wherever water reservoir is

available, rice in the area must not be left dried. By saying so I am very glad to see actions taken in the past week by our officials, local authorities, the armed forces and our people and monks for rescuing rice plantation from drought.

... From my visit to various places in Khsach Kandal the district of Kandal province, Kompong Cham, Kompong Chhnang, Prey Veng, Kompong Thom I have learned a lot on issues relating to the lack of water, inappropriate decisions made with regard to water distribution, etc. I have found out that some decisions could not be made at the local level and they have to be brought up to senior authority.

... What is also remarkably important is that each affected place has got to have a commander to regulate water provision system. As we are talking about water scarcity today I wish to bring to your attention some remarks for further analysis. When the country is affected by flood, as a result of a lot of rain, deforestation was the culprit and when the country is affected by drought, the culprit is again deforestation. Take another example, when there is an intention to put blame on China, if there is too much flood down the Mekong, it was because of dams in China. It is also because of China when it is vice versa. Certain ill-thought persons make use of this for their personal benefits. Some of them make criticism to satisfy foreigner's intention and their own interest. I would urge them to stop going against the current which would bring about no positive result for the country and people.

Samdech Hun in that occasion offered a contribution of 79 million Riel to the pagoda and 25 water pumping machines for the province of Kompong Cham for combating drought. ■