



Samdech Techo Hun Sen pays respect to a lady who offered her house for him and his wife to stay after marriage in Tbong Khmum

Together Safeguard Natural Resources

(22 August 2016 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

The Meeting Indicates Change of RGC Officials' Working Behaviors

Today, I have a great pleasure to be present in this first gathering with relevant individuals and organizations working on environmental issues or, to a wider scale, protection, and conservation of natural resources. Over the past times, we seem to have stood distance from each other while we are sharing one common goal. We are to bring our stand together today to reach our goal. The meeting today, if I may say, indicates a progress and significant change of working behaviors of officials of the Royal Government. I would like to take this opportune moment to express first of all my sincere thanks and appreciation to monks and those of you who involve in efforts to protect and conserve natural resource in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Even though we have yet to take action in a common manner to achieve higher efficiency, our actions conducted separately have led to keeping and saving our environment. However, with improper measures and

mechanism to prevent further devastation, I think this status quo of our environment would risk facing more problems. We need to get the horses back into stable. We have had some of them back. We will take preemptive measures to prevent more horses getting out of the stable. We need a proper mechanism and I deem participations by every involved stakeholder are necessary to prevent more horses from getting out. It is not just a matter of suppressing it and the state mechanism alone would not be sufficient.

Participations by involved players, whether national or partners, are essential. It is not like we are making civil society an authority or justice police but every players have important role to play in terms of protection and conservation at the local level. I am so grateful for all of you, secular and monk participants, for responding positively to our invitations. We also have today the presence of Buddhist monk But Bin Tenh and I have learnt on the press that you would like to present some of your opinions. I will

(Continued on page 2)

Connecting Main Span of Koh Thom Bridge

(8 August 2016 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Roads/Bridges Reduce People's Hardships

I am so happy to preside over this ceremony to seal the connection of main span of the 415 meters bridge at Koh Thom district, Kandal province, in the western side of the river Bassac in the village of Prek Thun, Prek Thmey commune, Koh Thom district, Kandal province. I am seeking understanding from those of you who so far have been operating boat ferries. With the bridges in places, river and canals, they face losing ferry business. China has contributed in building seven bridges already, six of which are in operation. HE Ambassador just mentioned that Cambo-

dia needs two more bridges for the projects that spans from 2016 through to 2018. In fact, we are in need of more bridges. Over the Bassac river, aside from the bridge at Koh Thom, we also need one more bridge at Sa Ang [...]

I am so proud that today we are sealing the main span connection of the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at Koh Thom. Last week we put into official use the 140 Km national road 44 in the province of Kompong Speu. I hope that the achievement today will contribute to lessening people's hardships and poverty, while creating favorable conditions for

(Continued on page 6)

Inaugurating National Road 44 in Kg Speu

(02 August 2016 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

China's Finance Built 1,981 Km Road, 676 Km under Construction

I am so glad today to be able to join with HE Ambassador Bu Jianguo of the People's Republic of China, Buddhist monks and our people in the official inauguration of the 140 Km long national road 44 running between the district of Chba Mon through those of Oral, and Thpong to the national road 5 at Udong. Along with the inauguration, I also take this opportune moment to bring it to your awareness of the importance of using traffic reflectors in the course of traffic safety efforts. Please allow me to express my pleasure with people in the province of Kompong Speu, who have transformed from bloody battlefields before with so much transport and road difficulties to the present state of infrastructural development.

We have changed the state of being at war into one with safety, from the most difficult road condition or no road access to ones that people can travel in safety, comfort and saving.

I would take this opportune moment to express through HE Ambassador Bu Jianguo our gratefulness to the government of the People's Republic of China for providing supports to infrastructural development, mainly roads and bridges, in the Kingdom of Cambodia. As of now, the Chinese assistance has put in operation 1,981 Km roads and another 676 km road is under construction. We have more roads projects underway.

(Continued on page 8)

In This Issue

- Natural Resource Day ... 1
- Koh Thom Bridge ... 1
- National Road 44 ... 1

(Continued from page 1)

certainly give you the floor to you before I will continue to wrapping up the meeting. While we have here the presences of our Buddhist monk and civil society activists, I may have to share with you all my responses and discuss about what mechanism we need to have for this immediate task.

Civil Society and Six Relevant Ministries Meet Every Three Months

Before giving this forum to involved partners, I would wish to address one of the sixteen requests compiled by 19 different non-governmental organizations and forwarded to me by Mr. Toek Vanara. The last request in the list was to seek continuing meetings and sharing of information between civil society and relevant ministries every three months. It has also asked specially for a meeting between civil society and Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen to report on and seek intervention for environmental related cases once a year.

Well, before making a decision on this request, let me clarify to you what does this forum mean? Habitually, in the past, as far as forum between the Royal Government and the private sector is concerned, we have always considered decisions made in those meetings as valuable as those made by the Cabinet's meeting. Therefore, whatever decision we are going to come to today bears similar value as those of the Cabinet's meetings. After reaching a decision here, the Council of Ministers will issue a notification for wider information and implementation. We are not going to just talk to make it sound nice and will neglect about how to proceed on implementation.

It is a reform and the Royal Government provides chances for every involved player to share their thoughts. I accepted your request for the organization of the forum between the Royal Government and civil society and involved actors on protection and conservation of natural resources and environment once a year. In addition to

this, I do not know yet if the meeting will agree to my opinion or not that we cannot wait for a meeting in twelve months. It is a long time and one morning or one full day would not be enough to look into or address issues. I am proposing therefore a working module and should you agree, we may start working right away. There are ministries with whom consultation on relevant areas of expertise should happen every three months.

There are six ministries that I can say directly involve in such consultative discussion with involved partners or actors. They are the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Land Management, Mines and Energy, Industry and Handicrafts, and Water Resource. I would invite partners or actors involved in relevant fields to seek out working session with the said ministries. I would not urge NGOs to organize themselves to appoint a leader though. In forum between the Royal Government and private sector, conducted once a year, in between forum to another, they have working groups. On the RGC's side, for example in the field of agriculture, we have Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries as representative. From the private sector, among the various companies or business enterprises, they chose someone to represent them to take part in discussions and giving opinion on their behalves on development of policy, legal framework, and judicial regulatory. They work as partner to a working group of the Royal Government. Since structural organization (of NGOs and private sector) is not similar, I would not argue for you what to do. However, we must proceed, if I may, with the need for a meeting every three months to which Ministers of relevant fields will attend.

The Truth Once Every Three Months Better Than Lie Once Every Five Years

Take for instance we are talking about forest issue ... There need to have a package of measures to deal with it. Forest,

despite prevailing policies and actions continues to deplete ... (therefore) we cannot leave it to a meeting once a year to resolve the issue. It is a waste of time. We should agree then on meeting on issues of forestry, fisheries and others once every three months with relevant ministries – most frequently is the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, because forest and fish are the two items harmed by many predators. Some would involve with action to pump up sand from riverbed. If we do not pump it, sand would block water current. However, allowing sand pumping, with improper expertise and disrespect of rule and regulation, could also cause shore erosion on either side of the river.

... Representing the 19 NGOs making requests, I would wish to know if Mr. Toek Vanara agrees with what I have laid out. It is indeed broadening their rights and power. They would not wait for one year to work with relevant state institutions. They can share their findings, concerns, and ideas on a more regularly short-term basis. Would you see that as a good starting point here? (Mr. Toek Sovanara took the floor and gave his thanks). Well in fact, I just add on to terms of reference and authority already provided to relevant ministries on this issue. We are addressing here though irregularity and lack of regulatory, though so much had been done.

Formulation and development of draft law, regulatory, and policy framework needs to have wider consultation. What is more important is that we must take actions to protect and conserve our natural resources. All that said, I am declaring now that once in every three months, relevant ministries will invite NGOs and involved players for discussion. I would urge the Ministries involved to listen to the truth once every three months is better than waiting to hear lie once every five years.

Redefining Roles and Functions of Concerned Ministries

As is said earlier, I must reaffirm that firstly decision made

by this forum will bear same value as that of the Cabinet's meeting. We are not here just to listen to what the Royal Government has had to say but to have your participation in formulating policy, draft law and regulatory. Let me remind you that such mechanism would have to work directly with provincial authority level because it would be more efficient. Working here in the peace palace is too far from the reality. Take for instance problem keeps occurring in Prey Lang of Kompong Thom.

Please allow me to inform you that we have redefined roles and functions (of the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and Environment). Forestry will go under control and management of the Ministry of Environment. Previously, there are two kinds of forestry works. They both are protected forests but managed by two different ministries – Environment and Forestry Administration, which is a part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. Now we have decided that forestry will be under the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries transfer protected forest to the Ministry of Environment's management. Vice versa, land that are before under the management of the Ministry of Environment go under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries' management.

On another instance, it is not a delegation of power but empowerment of sub-national administrative authority, which is under structural reform. We have noticed that work order according to line ministries is fine but they still have difficulty when there has communication across the line. We are now working on reform for empowerment of sub-national administrative offices. In previous working method, logging under their very nose, provincial governors would not have a say because they would deem the responsibilities overseeing by the Ministries of Environment or Agriculture. There they went. As of now, provincial government

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

nors will have to take the task. I wish to clarify here that we will not go on with this working manner. I have instructed changes of working manner since when HE Chan Sarun was Minister of Agriculture. However, draft of amendment of the law concerned does not seem to be ready. I will see to that after this meeting. If you stay idle on matter, I will lead the work of amendment myself.

We have discovered so far what I termed “a ministry of one head but three tails.” The Ministry sates its business to cover issues of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. This is at national level. When it comes to provincial level, they only have one work to cover – agriculture. They call it “Office of Agriculture.” Where are two other works (forestry and fisheries)? Office of agriculture then work only on agronomy and animal husbandry but nothing they did about loss of forest and fisheries crime. Instead, they have Administrative Khan (like district) of forestry and Fisheries. I think HE Ouk Rabun, while being Minister of Agriculture, already made a request on this matter. I do not know if HE Veng Sakhon, new coming minister also learnt about this or not.

Most recently, I have received a proposed amendment for law on forestry and fisheries from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries aimed at promoting administrative Khan of forestry and fisheries as professional offices secondary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. I have written an instruction back to clarify the point. I have made it clear that we will soon place administrative Khan of forestry and fisheries under the provincial offices of agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Please understand what we need to do in this matter. There is no need to maintain position of head of administrative Khan and leave the ministry a bizarre one. This has been one of the causes that we could not protect forest and fish so far.

In time to come, we will also

redefine functions for sub-national level authority’s responsibilities and as I said the two formerly administrative Khan of forestry and fisheries will join the office of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. We must give work to what the ministry calls itself. I must be responsible for this mistake. I was not good on this issue and I needed professionals to help me on it. I accepted whatever they suggested. I would just blame the fault on me. I have finished my inquiry though that we must see this work through to the end – assimilating administrative Khan of forestry and fisheries into sub-national office of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.

You may know that Heads of Office of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries bear no power to order armed forces. The provincial governors, on the contrary, have commanding right on armed forces – soldiers, military police and police in his/her area of responsibility. We could foresee more power to provincial governors and they will take high responsibility before Prime Minister on issue of safeguarding natural resources. As for national level authority, they would work to formulate and review policy, and monitor their actions. I am sure this will bring us closer to efficiency. We will not bring solution from top to bottom anymore and make local level authority be responsible.

The Prey Lang community led a campaign across the Prey Land forest. It was a good action deserving welcome and protection. I even recommended to Minister Say Sam Al to provide them with clothes protecting them from cool weather or raincoats in the rainy season. We may also need to provide them with food if need be when they walked in the forest to “make Buddhist trees.” We noted flaw in the past where incohesive work from the Royal Government structure leading to ignorance of forest crimes by provincial governors, and lack of cooperation between administrative Khan of forestry with civil society and/or local communities. Armed forces too

were not under the command of administrative Khan of forestry and fisheries. At the end of the day, everyone who cried out to safeguard a tree, only lose it to illegal logging. It is a big flaw and we need to come up with a certain mechanism to deal with it.

With regard to amendment of laws on forestry and fisheries, you may want to know why we leave it to Samdech Krola Ham Minister of Interior. This issue is relating to law on organization of sub-national administration. If there were no consistency among concerned laws, we would not be able to address the matter properly. I wish to stress that once this matter carries out, I would not wish to see divisive sub-national level administration anymore. I hope HE Veng Sakhon will work on this and get ready to take preemptive action though the laws are yet to amend. Put them under the office of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries and under order of provincial governors.

Now I would like to let involved actors to share the podium and raise questions that you may have. We may spend one hour or so on Q & A. I will give a summary in the end. We may want to take it as an introductory remark to guide us from this forum to the next. I would wish to see that the forum next year be held earlier than this date as we may have more works to do toward end of the year. Well, in this room, we are going to host the World Economic Forum in May 2017. This year I will have to leave for Davos, Switzerland again. We must prepare for the organization and protocol of the WEF. May I now invite venerable monks and participants in general to bring matters up frankly with one another [...]

[Q & A Session]

Among issues clarified, Samdech Techo made a point about insult by opposition leader on Samdech and family.

Well, Thi Sovantha talked about honesty. In fact, I do not want to go into this issue but I may accord that people try to diminish others by very means. When we

take a reciprocate action, they say we do not observe freedom of expression. I must say now that I cannot accept the fact that they insult my wife to be wife of Vietnamese leader. I will not forgive that. Since the one who said it is a US citizen, I think the US Ambassador could see to it. It is the gravest insult for me. People may ask why I do not seek a pardon for him/her. I will not. They have gone too far to insult my personal life. Since you are on Facebook too, venerable and people may know that they demand to have a DNA test on my son Hun Manet [...]

... I am sure HE the US Ambassador knows about this. Hun Sen sought pardon before for many to stay outside of prison because law allows Prime Minister to do so. However, with this insult, I will not do so ... I led Cambodian warring factions to sit down together and unite. I did that. For this case, please understand me, I cannot do it. I would tell President (Barack) Obama or Secretary of State John Kerry that if that person is a Cambodian in Cambodia, I would have him arrested ... What I wanted most is the truth. I cannot stand more insult like that. This course of action is to be repaid by a high price ... I am asking diplomats in Cambodia not to talk about this issue with Hun Sen. Those who committed mistakes must serve justice. I am not taking this chance to say anything about this but Thi Sovantha brought up issue of political coloring, I may have to make thing clear on this issue [...]

[Wrapping Up Session]

Development Always Have Impacts on Natural Resources

Let us end our Q&A session here. Please allow me to synthesize points in a more concrete term [...] I wish to talk about a general context between development and protection and conservation of natural resources. Has there been any country developed without depleting its natural resources. There has none. Exception may go to the case of a small number of coun-

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

tries – like Singapore, Hong Kong, Macau, Monaco, etc, whose developments did not depend on natural resources. As for other countries in this world, they have used their resources on land, underground, in water, under water, etc. Take for instance countries that make money from oil, they would not have it without drilling it from underground and/or undersea. They develop their countries using resources they have. The US even, while keeping natural resources in their own soil, tried to make investment in foreign country to increase their stocks of resources for their needs.

I am not an expert of US but I know they have many oil drills and stocks. They reduced use of local natural resources and increase investment to foreign countries through their companies. I would say that many industrial nations are doing the same and they should in fact take more responsibility for emission that caused climate change. They have made profit from development. We are not blaming them but we wish them not to blame us too. We only want people to speak the truth. We accept that in truth our management has yet to improve and mechanism need strengthening. It is all of this a testimony that we need to have a better cooperation.

Finding a Resilience to Climate Change

The present world is hitting a hot point of climate change. First, we deal with climate change, then terrorism, then food security and energy security. The four issues have taken attention and priority in every discussion. Years before, people discussed about food and energy security. Now, climate change is the prime topic. Cambodia, as well as other countries, has sought ways to adapt to climate change. While our rice seed before grew well in an atmosphere of 36 degree Celsius, we now have to find one that grows better in 40 or 42 degree Celsius. This is why I am saying that we need to find resilience to climate change.

Climate change has especially caused other disasters such as flood, drought, unpredictable seismic activity, or Tsunami, for instance. This morning news was that water of the Mekong at Steong Treng province receded but we anticipated a rise later in the evening because on August 20, there was a huge rain that flooded Luang Prabang, Laos. That incident would definitely cause a rise of the Mekong river downstream, Steong Treng is where it is. A few years back, rain missed the Mekong basin area. It caused the Mekong to have insufficient water. We should not blame Laos for its dam projects in Xayaburi or Don Sahong. They are 1,200 kilometers away from the border with Cambodia and none of them has come up with real construction yet. That we did not have high flood was because of the change of rain pattern that did not fill the Mekong basin.

Cambodia Exploits None of Its Oil, Gas, Coal and Other Mineral Resources Yet

... Please allow me to speak first about gas, oil, coal and other mineral resources. We have exploited none of them yet. We are in the stage of feasibility study, while countries in the region, Timore-Leste for instance, have already used their resources. We will continue our study and will make the best use of them. There had been bragging about curses or blessing that we have oil. Many big institutions, some ambassadors even, talked a lot about how to manage income from oil, when they met me. I had to make a point with them that it was no time to talk about which fish is for grill or soup while they all are in water. The issue here is to catch the fish first. From 2002 through now, 14 years already, I told my Ministers not to talk about what that is not real yet with them [...]

Timber Used In Every Stage of Cambodian History

As far as timber is concerned, we should note that they used it in every stage of our history. Under Pol Pot time, we also noted extensive use of timber.

Pressure from population growth also is a real factor that depleted forest. Take for instance we have a province called “Prey Veng” (literally means Long Forest). They named the province like that because there used to be a long forest. Now where has the forest gone? People cleared them for land. They did that since when Hun Sen was not born yet. That is why I am concluding that our forest or timber have been destroyed in every stage of our history. War also kills them because of bombs and shrapnel. People removed forest for land to cultivate. They need them for fire to make bricks, to cook sugar. They also burnt or chopped down illegally. Forest or timber has so many predators. However, when we take measures to improve forest management like in 1986, when I conducted a wave of reforms necessary, to forbid forest cutting had brought about jacking-up price of firewood in Phnom Penh. I had to reverse our strict control of movement of firewood into Phnom Penh, which is a requirement of our people.

... As of this moment, water from the Mekong flooding started to inundate bushes areas. In days ahead, water will rise continuously. We may note that people will take it out to the bushes area in their boats looking for firewood. They would bring them back and keep them at hand in their homesteads. When it is time to dry tobacco, in some areas, people will have their firewood they need. This habit also contributes to forest or bushes areas disaster. We must find a way to protect them. It is time we are protecting them now. What I have said above is just to have your attention that forest or timber has so many predators – under the time when the French or the Japanese were here, or under Pol Pot. War is also another major cause of forest depletion.

In the wartime, the US used its chemical to cause trees to lose their leaves. Well, bringing this matter up, we could not avoid talking about what the US did to Cambodia. I would excuse them for bringing it up but I

would urge them to help us deal with UXOs from cluster bombs still hidden in the ground in Cambodia. I would wish they helped us financially to remove them. Many Cambodians died or maimed because of them. I would urge the US Ambassador to inform President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry of this wish of Cambodia.

Why Cambodia Allows Import of Tiles from Abroad

There has been criticism on the Royal Government for allowing import of tiles from foreign countries. I would wish our Buddhist monks and people to think this issue through with me. Sometimes buying stuff from abroad could cost us less than we would rather produce them ourselves in the country. Take for instance have you actually thought how much firewood one needs to dry tiles. Talking about economizing, we must accept that sometimes buying ready-made products from abroad would cost less than we would do it ourselves. People may say doing that would lose concept of being independent. Look the US imported its oil from Middle East, have the US lost its independence?

... You may want to ask the US Ambassador here. He is an economist and speaks Khmer too. The US has so much oil but it chooses to make investment abroad and import oil for their markets. It is their strategy to leave them aside. Before BREXIT we exported some 882 million USD to the United Kingdom under European trade regime that says “anything but arms.” Now that the UK is out of EU, we are obliged to renegotiate trade deal with the UK and we do not know if we are going to enjoy the favor as before or not. If the UK buys from Cambodia, and people are afraid that the UK loses its state of being independent, I would say it is the end of the world. I would urge people to reconsider that statement [...]

From Searching for to Abandoning, Losing and Fighting
(Continued on page 5)

**(Continued from page 4)
for Land**

Let us now talk about land, water, fish, and wild life. The time of deep water system and not many people to feed has gone. This is when water is shallow and there are more people to feed. When the French came to Cambodia, our population was somewhere over one million and reservoirs were deep and full of fish. There used to be a few big lakes behind my villages. They now are shallow because of siltation. In the late 1970s, there was this issue of searching for new land and abandoning it too. It was the time when the US invaded Cambodia. My families' cultivations of pineapples, Rambutan, Durian destroyed by the US and South Vietnamese bombardments. After searching for new land to grow, we then had to abandon them. No one would wish to have them. The war in 1970 scared us all away.

Under Pol Pot regime, they nationalize land. It was a time when no Cambodian people own a land. Later, there was this stage of claiming new land. Liberated from the Pol Pot's regime in January 1979, we even encouraged people with money to claim new land. We continued to implement financially encouraging land-claiming policy until 1988. HE Nhem Vanda was then Minister of Planning, before moving to Trade, oversaw that policy. As of now, I would say we are in the stage of fighting to gain land, to plunder land. I wonder if war is not over, would anyone want land. I would hope they do not blame me for putting out the war ... that everyone now could go anywhere they wish to [...]

Three Shortcomings on Land Reform, Fishing Lots Reforms, and Land Conflict

... In my life, I have three remorseful things. First, *land reform happened later that I would want it to be*. It was a difficult issue when we had to discuss and make decision on whether we recognize ownerships from before 1975 or ones at present. Pol Pot eliminated everything and people displaced

everywhere in the country. In 1979, when we came back, people might occupy more than one house if they wished too. No one would bother ... Land reform was late because we had to think before making a decision on issue of ownership. If we were to recognize ownership from before 1975, we would then have to move people around in the country again [...]

Secondly, *reform of fishing lots was late. I should in fact remove fishing lots rights since 2000, and not 12 years later*. Thirdly, *land conflict arisen at the time that the Royal Government provided economic land concession handled inappropriately according to recommendation and instruction, especially land overlapping with people's property*. Land conflict rises in full. Our forest and million cubic meters of timber destroyed in between 1993 and 1998 [...] With regard to what we have achieved so far, let us see it together:

Fishing Lots and Land Concession

Firstly, we have ended all fishing lots rights. We maintain only conservative areas where we need to protect our fish species and need protection of all forms. We protect inundated forest, especially the Zone III of Tonle Sap, while promoting people to culture fish. Fish from natural resource is not enough to feed the fifteen million people. We need to exercise aquaculture. What I wanted here was to seek our people's cooperation to fight against illegal fishing using forbidden tackles, otherwise our fish species would deplete along with shallower water system. We must find the way to deepen conservative area in the lake so that fish will not die from overheated water for too shallow condition [...]

For land issue, we have already stopped providing economic land concession since 2012. The question has been whether we would lift up the moratorium. My answer is no we will not. As for land already given, we must continue to review and confiscate. Minister of Environ-

ment HE Say Sam Al already mentioned some of them already. We have readjusted duration of long-term lease of land from 90 years to 70 or even 50 years. Campaign to measure land for people in what we called new actions to fulfill existing policy has also scored us successes. Where are the lands coming from? They are lands that we claimed to be free on maps, while in reality, people already moved in and make their living in those lands. We have cut out lands from economic land concession and forest coverage on maps, and given them to our people. Some lands listed as forest in maps but, in reality, people are living there [...]

That we no longer give out land for concession, we must continue to make efforts to provide social land concession for people who really need land. However, we must also be alert for those who would be omnipresent wherever we give out land. We must be serious in taking their identification [...] In light of this I would urge well functioning of the two ministries – Environment and Agriculture. I would urge continued registration of state lands, community lands, lands belong to ethnic minority, systematic and parcel land registrations. I am calling for the Ministries of Land Management, of Environment and Agriculture to use a unified map. We need to come up with a clear border for all lands for investments [...]

Job Creations, Reducing Firewood Cutting

One important point here is to reduce using firewood for cooking, heating, etc. [...] We also need to create other sources of income for people to divert them from being dependent on forest products. This sister from Uddar Meanjei and Thi Sovantha also hit on this issue. If we do not make efforts to change their trades, they would go on chopping down woods to make a living. We cannot blame or find them faults. It is their habit. We are so worried that for every one tree we planted two trees are down. There must be a bal-

ance between demand and supply, or between newly planting trees and cutting down ones [...]

We need to continue crack-down campaign on forest crimes, in which we must make efforts to cooperate with neighboring countries, through which Cambodian logs passed through. When buying stops, there is no market for it and selling can too. I have always worked with the Vietnamese and Laotian sides to prevent trade of logs/timber. I did not do it with Thailand because normally our timbers would go to Laos before making their ways to Thailand [...]

Wild Life Protection

Protecting forest plays a major part in safeguarding wild life. We also need to diversify our people's jobs from hunting. I would urge some pilot projects and HE Say Sam Al would see to it. We may try to provide whatever necessary for those hunters to change his way of life. We also stop asking for wild animal meat in restaurants. We all must love our natural resources [...]

In this pilot project, we may need to spend some money on rebuilding their capacity and introducing them to new jobs. If it will be a burden to the national budget, I would see a need for a movement to help this project to have its best pilot action. We may need to find them land, provide them materials, and should look for a project period of three years [...]

No Sand Pumping at Sea

... It was a disappointment⁶. I have mentioned it once when I talked about declaring Cambodian beach the most beautiful. I asked if they have conducted a thorough study about pumping sand in the sea. Would it be safe? Would it wash the shore into the sea? I said it in about two months a request to pump six million cubic meters of sand came to me. I rejected the request. We now need to deepen Tonle Bassac River to open waterway again. We need to deepen waterways in the Me-

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 1)

them. They used to have difficulties in crossing the river because they had to pay for the service of ferry but also spend so much time doing so. I hope that once the bridge construction is ready, people will benefit the chance to cross the river and transport things they need to from east to west and vice versa easily.

NR 21 Phnom Penh to Border with Vietnam and Bridge for Trade and Electricity

The construction of NR 21 is underway. I am seeking understanding from people residing along the construction project because we have to enlarge the road to cater to growing demand to accommodate traffic in time of speedy development. The road actually runs from Phnom Penh, through Takhmao, Koh Thom and through to the border with Vietnam. The transport corridor between Cambodia and Vietnam not only signifies issue

of ferry but also communication, trade among people, as well as running electricity transmission. The fact that we are building infrastructures is not for serving any particular person's interest alone but for everyone. However, the first beneficiaries of this are people residing along both sides of the river.

The benefit widens to increasing income, reduces expenses that people had to pay for ferry and so much time they had to waste while taking a ferry or boat crossing the river. I hope the construction of the bridge will be ready by end of the year to quicken time that people have been waiting for. I hope that the China Road and Bridge Corporation and the Technical Consultancy companies will speed up schedules and finish the construction by the time our people celebrate water festival, and especially their traditional celebration of Katina. However, they must ensure technical

norms [...]

Mekong River Commission to Laos, Regional Flood Management & Mitigation Centre in Cambodia

Yesterday I was in a hotel in Vientiane this time. Today I am here at Koh Thom. In my mission to Laos, I conducted bilateral discussion with our Laotian friends. I would share with you that the secretariat of the Mekong River Commission, which has once been in Thailand, and later in Lao, and later in Cambodia, and finally split into two parts, one is in Laos and another is in Cambodia. We have decided to allow the part in Cambodia to join with the other part in Laos. We will keep in Cambodia only the Regional Management and Mitigation Centre. HE Lim Kean Hor, Minister of Water Resource and Meteorology, will work it out and continue to discuss about this issue of uniting the two parts of the Mekong River Commission.

(Continued from page 5)

kong River. We need to improve waterway while pumping sand for construction purpose. If I were to declare no sand pumping, the price of sand for construction will go sky high in the whole country. We must find a way in between taking care of environment and maintaining demand for other purposes [...]

Returning Dolphin Basin to Agriculture

There had been an inter-ministerial meeting led by Deputy Prime Minister HE Bin Chhin to give the dolphin basin in the Mekong River at Kratie to the Ministry of Environment. I disagreed. The basin for dolphin lies right in the middle of the river where the Ministry of Environment and Agriculture's Fisheries department work together. I would urge the Ministry of Agriculture to continue to oversee the Dolphin basin and conserve it. Originally, we were of the opinion to transfer all conservative jobs to Environment and exploitation to agriculture. However, at this point and on this issue, I would leave the dolphin basin under the management of agriculture [...]

RGC to Change Attitude from Not Cooperating to Cooperating

Since we have a common goal, why should we take action separately? Venerable But Bun Tenh said sometimes goodwill actions were prevented too. I could say that not only that we did not have cooperation but also there was hindrance. Now, we have a common goal. I urge that we are taking common action. The state of no cooperation and hindering actions would only benefit those who steal and destroy our forest or fish. The one to lose is our nation. I would say that we have not used our force fully to achieve the goal. The one to change is not the civil society or involved players, but the Royal Government. We must change our attitude from not cooperating to cooperating, and from hindering to collaborating [...]

Please allow me to take this mistake as my own because I have not closely monitored people under my leadership. I am urging people in the junior level to take every point we discussed today and translate them into actions together. Peo-

ple must love our forest and natural resources. I am sure in next meeting, there would not be issue that venerable Bun Tenh hindered by authority in his forest safeguarding actions [...]

... Well, we can solve a number of issues here but there are certain issues we cannot. Although I am here present as Prime Minister, but some issues are under direct competency of respective ministers. When any requests you made exceed Ministers' competency to make decisions, they will bring them to me. Take for instance, to increase number of park keepers is not within the limit of ministers' competency. Only the Prime Minister can answer to this call. I would urge you bring certain issues that you have not been able to bring up in this meeting to the attention of ministries with relevant areas of expertise [...]

Again, I am so grateful that you have responded positively to attend this meeting. I would suggest March next year for such a meeting to take place before we are celebrating the Khmer New Year.../■

I wish also to share that while being in Laos, I also had participated in the Forum on Asian Leaders and was conferred the ASEAN Lifetime Achievement Award (by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute). I must clarify that this is not an achievement proven to Hun Sen. solely but to the people of Cambodia altogether for supporting my leadership and decision to bring Cambodia into ASEAN. I thank the Cambodian people for supporting the Cambodian People's Party, my leadership and Cambodian working stance in ASEAN, which creates numerous achievements in both Cambodia and in ASEAN frameworks. I devote the award for people of Cambodia in the whole country [...]

Who Spread News of Hun Sen's Unwell Should Just Care for Their Families' Health

Last night I came across a VDO and the footage maker seemed to have inferred that Hun Sen had a stroke and is on his way to Singapore. It was indeed a story they made about two years ago. Phay Siphon of the Royal Government said that as of this moment Prime Minister of Cambodia is having his golf. I just wanted to respond with a message that that was an insult and very sinful thing to say. I would urge those young people to worry about health of their own health, father and mother or others in their families. They should not extend their worries to health of the Prime Minister. By the way, I remember that at that time two members of the National Assembly from the opposition party said should (the news) be true, we must pack and leave because it will not be sure who is in control of the country [...]

If they wanted to spread the news about Hun Sen, they should write that Prime Minister is concerned about his belly and overweight, which caused him difficulties to swing in golf. It has been quite a development these days that when I stepped

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

in the car on a long travel, I just fell asleep. Take for instance on the flight from Vientiane to Phnom Penh, I slept until the plane landed [...]

Another VDO made by a young Cambodian living in Korea. Someone said that Hun Sen never talked about shortcomings in Facebook. Another one said that I agree but I also never see the opposition party talks about achievements of the Royal Government. I agree that I have talked little about that in Facebook but I revealed them on TV. Take for instance I made it a strong case against ID cards issuing process. That has now changed. They no longer wait until they have many before they give out to people but whatever amount they received in hands [...] take for instance omission of driving license issuance for people who drive motorcycle with cylinder of 125 CC or less. While urging our people to respect traffic rule, I also had to respect the law myself. I went to let the police fine me for not wearing a helmet while driving motorcycle [...]

Voters' Registration on 1 September 2016

I would take this time to appeal to people in the whole country to register starting on 1 September. The National Election Committee will commence voters' registration once again. I must make it clear that this is a new lists voters' registration and everyone, though you already had your name in the previous lists, you have to re-register. They are compiling a new list for eligible voters. Please set aside your time to re-register and register. If you do not re-register or register, you will lose your voting right for the forthcoming election of the 4-June communal elections in 2017 and the July 2018 general elections.

According to a new electoral law, it is the Prime Minister's decision to call on an election date. I am ready to do so. Stipulated in the previous law, every five years, the general elections would take place on Sunday of the fourth week of July. To

guarantee respect of the Constitution that the National Assembly has a five-year term, cannot dissolve before end of term, unless it dissolves twice within twelve months, I am declaring that the date set for the general elections will be on Sunday of the fourth week of July (2018) which is 29 July. If we do not follow this, we would have to amend the Constitution. I am calling again for people to re-register and register to ensure your rights to vote. I will also have to re-register or I will not be eligible for voting or being a candidate.

Some people working in the golf course where I had a swing the other day asked if they could have a chance to re-register or register anywhere near their working places without having to go back to their native places. Previously, they had to register in their home villages. Even if they were in Phnom Penh for work, they had to go back to register or exercise their voting rights. Now they do not have to do that. If they stay in Phnom Penh for work, they can just register in Phnom Penh. People may register anywhere they had to and do not have to go back to their native villages. There is a law not to allow people to take alcohol for 24 hours.

What is key issue here is the ID cards. Authority must speed up their ID cards issuance. Previously, people must have both ID cards and voting tickets. Now, you just need ID cards. Fingerprints are important. They guarantee not only people's identification but also their property [...]

Well now that the time to take senior secondary school exam is getting close now, I would urge the CPP working team, led by HE Sun Chanthol here, to find good teachers to provide extra lessons for our students so that we will have better exam results for Koh Thom. In Kep, 94 out of 97 students of the secondary school final exams passed. I am so proud ... I hope our students here in Koh Thom district will make your best efforts to get grade of distinction in the forthcoming exams./■

(Continued from page 8)

each other if there were a road to mean if they could make inroad to business or income. Even in exam, if people say there were to road, they meant it was hopeless. The fact that we had made efforts to build this road, we anticipated various chances for our people ... It is a way to equitably distribute economic growth between urban and rural areas, the rich and the poor. We must be thankful to internal connectivity.

The ASEAN Lifetime Achievement Award

Today I have planned my trip to the southwestern part of the country to cover Kompong Speu, Kompot, Kep and Preah Sihanouk Ville. Last week I traveled to the Stoeung Treng and Kratie. The week before last, I was in the northwestern part of Cambodia – Battambang, Banteay Meanjei, Siem Reap and Kompong Thom. As for this coming Saturday and Sunday, I wish to inform our people that I have to travel to Laos, bringing along some deputy prime ministers ..., where I will be presented with the ASEAN Lifetime Achievement Award.

The first one to receive this award before me was a Sultan in one of the Malaysian state, and two Prime Ministers – former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore and Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed of Malaysia. Counted in the Sultan of Malaysia, I would be the fourth to receive the award. However, considering those bestowed as head of state, I would be the third one to receive it. I wish to share the honor and achievement with Buddhist monks and people who support my leadership and politics in the international arena.

Sino-ASEAN Strategic Partnership Interests All Ten ASEAN Members

Leading a country could not be one with imagination or making promises. HE Ambassador of China just mentioned in her address about Sino-Cambodian relations. It is priority of Cambodia's foreign policy to

strengthen external partners, the People's Republic of China included. In the framework of ASEAN, the Sino-ASEAN relation provides significant interest to ASEAN. It is in this interest and understanding that Cambodia always searches to coordinate to achieve harmonization in relation between ASEAN and China, and to further the already big trade relations between ASEAN and China. Export from China to ASEAN is smaller than that of ASEAN to China. Therefore, the strategic partnership between ASEAN and China serves interests of all ten ASEAN members [...]

For the sake of ASEAN-China relations, and the Cambodia-China relation, whereby Cambodia is in the framework of ASEAN, this Saturday I am traveling to Vientiane as Laos is chairing ASEAN, to receive this lifetime achievement award. It is not by chance that I have this honor. It is an honor that we have from efforts made by our people who had voted for the Cambodian People's Party and my candidacy for the post of Prime Minister. Result of leadership of the Cambodian People's Party led by Hun Sen, and those of the would-be other party would be different. However, what have already happened – the national road as everyone can see and are inaugurating today, is one of the numerous achievements scored by the leadership of the Cambodian People's Party and is directly under my leadership.

"Thank You" to Support and Voters of People of Kompong Speu

I wish to express my sincere thanks to the people of Kompong Speu as well as the people in the Kingdom of Cambodia for voting for the Cambodian People's Party again. This has allowed me to have stronger ability to lead. It is not yet time of electoral campaign but I do hope that people here as well as in other provinces in the whole country will continue their supports and vote for the Cambodian People's Party so that I will have more power to continue to lead the country [...] /■

(Continued from page 1)

In my discussion with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang, about two weeks ago, and my discussion with the Chinese Trade Minister in relation to Chinese financial assistance to Cambodia, I have made it my constant proposal for the Chinese friend to provide further support for Cambodia's development, whereby connectivity is a major part of it.

Social and Economic Advantage of NR 44

For people in Kompong Speu province, they have reaped now the social and economic benefit from this infrastructural development. People can travel now between NR 4 and NR 5 without having to go on detour to Phnom Penh. Those who would like to go from the area along the national road 4 to the provinces of Kompong Chhnang, Pursat, Battambang, etc. will not need to take a long trip to Phnom Penh on detour anymore. NR 44 is therefore a shortcut for them. On the contrary, people in Battambang, Pursat, Kompong Chhnang, etc., who would have to go to Kompot or Takeo, Preah Sihanouk Ville or Koh Kong, also do not have to travel through Phnom Penh. The NR 44 is therefore serving interest not only people residing in the area but also those in various connected regions. This is serving internal connectivity purpose.

I would wish HE Ambassador to convey gratefulness on my behalf and those of the Royal Government and people of Cambodia to the government and people of China who always provide its support to development efforts in Cambodia without any political condition attached. I am also grateful to the fact that HE Ambassador kept her record jotted that in her three years diplomatic mission in Cambodia, she had 68 audiences with me. This should portray active comprehensive strategic relation between Cambodia and China. I am sure HE Ambassador has made great efforts in traveling and joining us in the groundbreaking and inauguration of various con-

struction sites and achievements. In just days ahead, on 11 August, HE Ambassador will travel with us to seal the last connection of a bridge over the Bassac River before she will pass a farewell visit to me.

Bridges Built with Chinese Assistance, More Asked

As for bridges, our Chinese friend's financial assistance built in all seven bridges in Cambodia, of which a length of 6,409 meters or about 6.5 Km of bridges built. We have requested for two more bridges and one of them is under price negotiation. It will connect one side of the Mekong at the district of Stoeung Trang to another side in the district of Kroch Chhmar of Kompong Cham province. Another bridge under negotiation is to connect one side of the Mekong in Kratie to another side in Kompong Thom province. They are major contributions to alleviating poverty and promoting socio-economic development of Cambodia. I have been so proud to work in comprehensive strategic partnership with the People's Republic of China.

I would take this opportune moment to express my sincere thanks and appreciations to the Ministry of Public Works and Transports, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, local authority and armed forces, as well as our people who contributed for the achievement of the NR 44. The Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Public Works and Transports have done their parts to provide counterpart funding for the project. As you know, for every project underway, we must contribute counterpart funding. What is even more significant that that is the fact that local and sub-national authority of Kompong Speu through which the road is running, collaboration of people residing along the road included, has resolved all impacts of the project [...]

Peace Searched in Kompong Speu's Oral District

I am so happy to see this local connectivity concept is working. No one could have hoped

that there could be road built here. While I am here, please allow me to speak a few things about our efforts to make peace from the Oral district. As far as Oral or Rolak Kang Joeung areas are concerned, no previous governments, under the French or Japanese times, could have controlled them. The areas are shelters from where the armed resistant groups against the governments could find their safe havens through to Samlot in Battambang. The area could be said central stronghold of the Khmer Rouge who fought against the rule of France and various other forces before 1970s. They were also shelters and fighting grounds after 1979, when we toppled the Pol Pot's genocide.

There is one thing I wish to share with you today on how to search for peace in this region. We decided to try out a win-win policy here. General Keo Pung of the then Khmer Rouge forces, present here, was the first of his clan to exercise win-win policy with us. Minister of National Defense HE Tia Banh, HE Pol Saroeun and other leaders had been active in integration efforts in the Oral district. Gen. Keo Pung then quietly sent his children to study in Phnom Penh. He led military operation in the district of Oral and extended his coverage area to the southeastern part of Cambodia. He quietly travelled to Phnom Penh. When he finished working with us, he returned to the area.

Some on our side then said to me what if Keo Pung did not return or betrayed us. If he abandoned our plan, what should we do? I said if Keo Pung betrayed, he abandoned our plan, there would be nothing to lose or to gain. If Keo Pung were to stay or come to us, it is only him alone, and the Khmer Rouge side would only lose one man. They would have their force intact and control their vast areas. However, Keo Pung did the job successfully. In early 1996, weather was rather the coolest over many years, we integrated the Oral area to the national folds, and we started to infiltrate win-win theory to other parts of

their strongholds like Pailin, Samlot, Kamrieng, Phnom Preuk, Mealai, and more to further inside the country like Ta Ken Koh Sla [...]

Implementation of the win-win policy required sacrifice of life trading for possible national achievement. Without peace, we could not build the NR 44. Keo Pung could have blown up every bridges built. It is a true story and a fact. This is part of the peace making history of Cambodia in this area started in 1996. Whether Keo Pung would return or not was in fact our key issue. We then had to make a decision. If we kept Keo Pung in Phnom Penh, the Khmer Rouge would only lose one man. If Keo Pung returned to his base, we stood before two possibilities – either he did not implement the plan or he did. That he did, we had the chance to end the war entirely. The integration for peace in Oral resonated to other parts of the Khmer Rouge's strongholds.

Peace, Infrastructure Serves People's Interests; Equitable Distribution of Growth

They accepted win-win policy proposal voluntarily and Cambodia ended war entirely in the late 1998. People are traveling everywhere now without fear. The fact that we built a road here creates numerous chances for people in Kompong Speu and facilitate transport sector from other parts of the country to our deep seaport at Preah Sihanouk Ville and southwestern parts of Cambodia. Transport cost comes down. We have also taken back the national road 4 from private investment and people no longer pay when they had to travel on it. From Phnom Penh to Preah Sihanouk Ville, travelers do not pay anymore. We also have more roads connecting to Kompong Chhnang and Pursat on one side and to Kompot, Kep, Kandal and Takeo on another side. Our Buddhist monks traveling any distance or direction would not be worried about missing his scheduled lunch anymore.

People in Cambodia would ask
(Continued on page 7)