

At Takeo's Prey Kabas District Rice Production and Harvesting Activities

(21 July 2020 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)



To Export One Million Metric Ton of Rice Still a Target

[...] Ambassador of Australia, Excellencies, Ladies and our compatriots. Today, as I foretold in Prey Veng that I would be coming to harvest rice in Prey Kabas district of Takeo province. It is not just harvesting in fact but also a visit to review progresses made in agriculture. Our policy to produce and export over one million metric tons of rice has stayed on as our prioritized target and it has to go along with industrial policy for 2015-2025. I should say that when we set out policy for agriculture, mainly to produce more and to export rice – the country was recording a meagre surplus.

According to my calculation, as of 2002 we still had not enough rice. When Cambodia hosted ASEAN Summit, India supplied us 20,000 tons. We came through drought and flood in 2000-2001, and again drought in 2002. While launching the

policy, we started to have more rice available as finally, starting this year, we have nearly six million metric tons of paddy rice, or about four million metric rice in milled rice, in surplus. Cambodia, as a small and undeveloped agriculture, has recorded a surplus of six million metric tons of paddy. It is a huge amount. We have been successful, so to speak, with rice production [...] but we are falling behind the one-million metric ton of milled rice export. However, we exported, as of the first six months of this year, over 400,000 metric tons of rice. We hope to increase rice export to over one million tons by 2021 or 2022. To achieve this goal, we cannot go on with the traditional way of rice growing.

State Intervention for Farmers Abandoned – a Mistake

I could recall that in Takeo, in the district of Bati, we had

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At Prey Veng's Bati Fish Species Research and Development Center

(14 July 2020 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

Life of New Normal for Covid-19

I thank you all every much for our meeting and dialogue today. Minister of Agriculture, (Forestry and Fisheries) has talked about setting up communities of people who raise fishes, frogs, and lobsters so that they can have one voice for the sake of price bargaining. Today's meeting held in what we called a life of new normal

(for Covid-19). In fact, Cambodia has been very selective in its lockdown actions. Certain areas, such as schools, considered to restart and meeting as we do now is possible but in a new normal way. For a meeting like this in previous setting, I would have chance to get close to people and hold their hands. Now we cannot do that anymore. We are wearing masks instead and sitting in distancing from each other. That is what we called new normal. Covid-19 has changed our traditional way of life [...]

Cambodia & China Jointly Fight Covid-19 Pandemic, etc.

(July 2020 — from Press/Social Media)

Xinhua — Chinese President Xi Jinping said Friday that China and Cambodia have demonstrated through their concrete efforts in jointly fighting the COVID-19 epidemic that the China-Cambodia community with a shared future is unbreakable.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks in a message to Samdech Techo Hun Sen, president of the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and prime minister of Cambodia.

Xi said he appreciates the fact that on the occasion of the CPC's 99th founding anniversary not long ago, Hun Sen sent him a letter to

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A Campaign for Progress in Aquaculture

I think we should give this huge tree a name. We can sit in its shade. When I finished talking, we would not be exposing to daylight yet. I think we should call this "a Tree of Memory" [...] I thank Minister of Agriculture HE Veng Sakhon and his colleagues for their efforts to set up this important visit to allow me to understand and learn something about fish breeding, spawning and raising methods [...]. This year we have cancelled the 1-July Fisheries Day, normally presided over by Prime Minister, and the 9-July Harbour

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had so much difficulty. It was a time when the country celebrated the water festival in 1994, and people from the commune of Put Sar of Bati district came standing in front of my house asking for assistance to get water to their rice fields. I told them to return home. I visited the district. In fact, I celebrated my water festival in the commune of Put Sar of Bati district. It might have been a wrong calculation from our part that after implementing the Paris Peace Agreement, we abandoned state intervention (in the form of) digging main canals and filling them with water for farmers. For instance, in Takeo, there has a main canal Hanuman that helps irrigate rice-planting area. Pumping machines on dispose along the canal were either out of order or inoperable for theft of spare parts. I would say it was our mistake then to have abandoned state intervention on farmers while embarking on free market economy.

Two New Ministries Created in 1998

It was then that I launched my new conceptions about agriculture. People may trace back to what I said then. I declared in the commune of Put Sar about state intervention in constructing main canal for irrigation that it would be better to have rice and to harvest it in watered field than to have nothing to harvest. People then were familiar with the medium term and long-term rice. They did not cultivate short-term rice for the fact that it was too short and difficult to harvest with sickles. I think my concept of harvesting rice in an inundated rice field is better than having none to harvest is still applicable nowadays [...]

I nurtured a wish to create a Ministry of Water Resource at the time and HE Lim Kean Hor, then head of department of hydrology of the Ministry of Agriculture, followed me to various places. If we were to put more budget in agriculture, it has so many departments and not much would be available for hydrology. When the Cambodian People's Party won the elections in 1998, I decided to set up two ministries – the Ministry of Water Resource and Meteorology and the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction. That was very much the background. It has always been my main thought that to achieve progress in agriculture, it is critical to have water for irrigation [...]

Not Easy to Change People's Rice Growing Practices

In those days, we implemented project by what we called "food for work." You might still remember that people dug sub-canals to their fields connecting from the main canals in exchange for rice. That was how we did it [...]. I came and harvested rice with sickle in 2000 at a place near the border between Saang district of Kandal and Prey Kabas of Takeo. Twenty years later, I came back again, but I harvested rice using harvesting tractors. It is not common anymore to use sickles harvesting rice. As for this year, we have already ploughed over two million hectares out of four million hectares of land for rice cultivation and 99% of them done by agricultural machines [...]

The situation has changed. I am taking this opportune moment to express my sincere appreciation for our people and the Ministry of Agri-

culture, Forestry and Fisheries, as well as their officials and staff involved, for their commitment and contribution to inflict great changes in our people's attitudes/practices (towards rice cultivation). It was never easy to change people's perceptions and practices to accept something different or new. My late father rebuked Agricultural extension workers who instructed him (about choosing a better seed) that he had grown that traditional seed for his whole life, and he was able to feed every mouth in the family. In fact, I came quite often to many parts of Takeo because Pol Saroeun was then governor.

As you already know, Takeo never practiced solidarity farming system. They gave back land to people to grow rice for themselves. In the end, Takeo became successful. As of present, Takeo has become the third biggest rice-producing province after Battambang and Prey Veng. In the time of war, while land for cultivation was inaccessible for fighting in Battambang, Takeo stood first and supplied rice to other provinces [...]

Australia Helped Agriculture

Please allow me to take this opportune moment to express through HE Ambassador my sincere thanks to Australia for giving its assistance since the time it did not recognize government of the State of Cambodia, since 1988, if I am not mistaken. Maybe I should say a few words about relation between Cambodia and Australia. In 1983, Australia came up with an initiative of recognizing the Khmer Rouge presence no longer at the United Nations. I am sure the Australian Ambassador must have learnt about it before coming.

When the Labor Party of Australia won the elections, it withdrew recognition of the Khmer Rouge presence at the United Nations. At the very same time, non-governmental organizations from Australia came and contributed mainly in agriculture. CARDI – Cambodian Agricultural and Rural Development Institute – has recorded Australia's contributions.

During my visit to Australia in 2006, it was under Prime Minister John Howard, they organize a visit for us to an agricultural area [...] Australia participated in this program of what they called "price chain of agriculture" for five provinces. They help put in place not only irrigation infrastructure allowing our people to cultivate more than one time but also technical assistance and training on seed selection and marketing aspect, just to be briefed. Under former Agricultural Minister Chan Sarun, we were able to deliver new seeds such as Sen Pidor, Sen Kro Ob, etc. I also inaugurated CARDI when he was Minister. It is quite an achievement [...]

Concrete Sub-canals, Wider Roads along Main Canals

We have done many things in the past 41 years after the fall of Pol Pot but there are more to do, still. Such agricultural practice (where there are better irrigation allowing farmers to grow rice more than one time) has yet to replicate to other areas. So far, it has been a practice only in some regions. Another remarkable model would be an irrigation network I initiated and helped by Japan in the district of Kandal Stoeung of Kandal province. I said about 20 or 25 years ago that in the

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future, we would have concrete sub-canals, and for main canals, we would be fortifying the embankments for wider roads. Sub-canals built in concrete at a level that water would flow into rice field [...]

We still have tens of thousands of hectares of land available. We can enlarge our rural roads. When we can fulfil our aim of having the canals that I mentioned we will be able to expand the roads along the main canals.

Once we have our smaller sub-canals built in concrete, we would have more land available for access road. As of now, you can see that even sub-canals are up to seven meters in width. Once we are able to downsize the sub-canals, we would have land for access roads. It would be helpful for our people to go from one rice field to another and transport would be more applicable too.

Rice Production Exceeded Processing and Export

Minister of Agriculture, HE Veng Sakhon, just whispered to me that in the first six months of this year, we have already exported over one million of rice from Kompot, Takeo, Kandal, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng provinces that are bordering on Vietnam. Such trade activities are unrecorded in the five billion USD trade volume target between Cambodia and Vietnam [...] as of now, Vietnam would buy 300,000 metric tons of milled rice from Cambodia.

In fact, we were in a state of having gold but not paper to wrap it. I accept what people blamed us about producing more rice but there has not been market for it. We were in a state of having not enough warehouses, rice

mills, and capital to purchase rice [...] out of four million tons of rice available, we exported only about half a million metric tons, while 70% of the rest went to Vietnam and 30% to Thailand.

More investments now placed in warehousing, rice milling, drying silos – all of which would leave values added in the country. When we exported paddy rice, we lost jobs, rice brand, broken parts of rice, rice husks, etc. We have attracted foreign companies – and 400 million USD coming from China – to build more warehouses and to purchase rice.

Once we have all that in place, I am sure we would be able to address the concern of the farmer presented to me earlier about rice price fluctuation. We would be in control. It is indeed so, that rice production, after our promotion efforts, has increased exceeding those of processing and export [...] as far as export quality is concerned, we must make sure our rice is well dried [...]

Though more companies are making efforts but our capacity are still far from meeting our demand. The market has been competitive. Where they offer a good price, people sell their rice. We are in the framework of AFTA. Earlier I decided to stop exporting rice and food items for a while to review local food situation. From the Peace Place, I declared pausing export of white rice and paddy rice for a brief period. After reviewing our food availability, and being sure that we have plenty of food, we allowed food export again. That five provinces along the border with Vietnam exported over one million metric tons, we must consider that our market for rice. It does not have to wait

until there comes this market opportunity in Europe. We would sell to anyone as long as the price is right.

Attracting Processing Industries for Local Materials

We must take a two-pronged approach, which is to achieve agricultural development as a whole and rice in particular. In tandem with functioning 2015-2025 industrial development policy, we are looking to attract processing industry for local raw materials. You may say it is an industrial policy of the RGC or of Hun Sen [...] we have thousands of water canals. The Vaiko canal runs through three provinces – Kompong Cham, Prey veng, and Svay Rieng. In Battambang, we also have many main canals. Thousands kilometers of canals irrigated vast areas of land. I once had a bird eye's view of an area over Kompong Chhnang with Mr. Kuroda, currently President of the Bank of Japan, from a helicopter.

From about 400 to 500 meters above the ground, I pointed to the land below and said to him “that is Cambodia's potential.” I explained him – once Cambodia solved the question of ensuring water for irrigation, many of these lands will be able to produce more than once and we will be able to save for export.

From Extensive to Intensive Farming

As for this area, people before would have this problem of finding water for their rice. They were not able to cultivate rice more than once. At present, they can grow rice three times in some locations. That is a potential and our people in Prey Kabas are reaping it. I hope that this experience will replicate to

other areas and we will continue to focus on resolving demand of water for irrigation. In the National Assembly, sometimes people only looked at the budget column we disposed on agriculture or water resource and complained they were too little. They never thought about hundreds of millions of USD hydraulic system we have put in place [...]

As for Australia, if there is a need to expand (assistance), they may do so. I am sending a message to the Australian Prime Minister to help. The more Australia would do so, the better it would be. They have expertise. We have potentials that are yielding now and that are going to yield in the time to come. Since 1995, I called on (concerned institutions) to change direction. You may listen to my speech in Preah Sihanouk province again that we must increase our feeding capacity from the existing land of cultivation. We did that in Kraing Yov and Kok Sar area [...]

In the past, for a household of five people, our ancestors would make sure they have one hectare of land for rice cultivation. Once the number of household member doubled, the land for rice cultivation would have to double too. In the past, in some areas, people practiced slash and burnt technique, where they would leave the land after four or five-year cultivation [...] we now have oriented those practices to growing rice on one hectare not only to feed five people but ten or 20 or more [...]

To achieve these goals, we needed to invest more in water for irrigation, and with these profits that we all see, I am sure our people would dare to pay to irrigate their

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rice fields [...] I have instructed the Ministry of Mines and Energy to study your request of lowering the price of electricity. (Involved institutions) would have to take up your requests and study for a solution as a package for the sake of our agriculture – from rice mills, water pumping, electric prices, etc. [...]

Increase Food production for Regional and World Demands

When I visited the Fish Species Research and Development Centre at Bati of Prey Veng, we had 15 new cases of Covid-19. Last night, we were shocked to have another 26 new cases. That has increased Covid-19 infection to 197 cases in our country. They all are imported cases. Our students are returning homes [...] over 90 people coming back from Saudi Arabia and 24 of them are infected. Our students coming from Russia and France. Out of the 26 infected, 25 of them were Cambodians and one Korean. Covid-19 could only bring about devastation to a certain degree but it may not starve us to death. It has been my immediate effect direction now that the Cambodians have food in their stomachs [...] people could cancel their trips, their purchases of new clothes, or cars or motorbikes, but they could not stop eating. Hence, [...] we must turn this crisis into opportunity for Cambodia to expand food market for export [...] not only rice but also cassava flour, mangos, bananas, etc. [...] we must increase our food production capacity of what the region and the world may need. We must continue to take stock of progress made in agriculture and it must be an ongoing process [...]

Social Assistance Program Not Forever

Let us remember that we are an agricultural country and most of our workers who lose their jobs from closing factories are not yet completely detached from their farmers' nature. In countries where their ancestors of generations are farmers, losing jobs means they lose everything. As for Cambodia, in 2008-2009, the world economic downturn and financial crisis, about 40,000 workers lost their jobs and they returned to farming with their families. As for this crisis, about 100,000 workers coming back from Thailand returned to farming along with the social support supplement fund of 40 USD. They have become quickly as supplementary labor force needed in agriculture.

On this planet, no one survived only by state's assistance. It is true that in the time of Covid-19 the state provides some supports. Yesterday, Minister of Social Affairs declared that in July households needed assistances have increased from 560,000 with 24 million USD in assistance fund to 610,000 with 28 million in assistance fund. We have discovered over 50,000 new poor and vulnerable households. If the Covid-19 does not subside, we may continue this program but that does not mean the state will feed them forever and it is not entirely feeding program. It is just a compensation [...]

Peace Offers Opportunity; What to Do

Let me take this moment to appeal to our civil servants and people about the substitute Khmer New Year holidays from 16 through to 21 August [...]. It will be a time for our people, especially civil servants, to take a break.

As for farmers, they have their own working and holiday schedules. (Many) farmers are now making more money (dialogue between Samdech Techo Prime Minister and farmers about their incomes). Would this situation possible under Pol Pot, or right after Pol Pot. When the country is in full peace, we are able to make it happen. We have water for our rice fields. We claimed land for cultivation in areas where they were inaccessible for war. I thank Australia once again for helping us with demining program. We cleared mines to get land for cultivation [...]

I think that by 2050, advanced farming like the one we are doing in Prey Kabas would reach anywhere at 50% (of the country). We have 30 more years. We needed to have irrigation system that will manage water for rice cultivation to at least 50% of the four million hectares of land currently cultivated. With two million hectares cultivated and irrigated, Cambodia will surely be a country with abundance of rice. It self-feeding capability will be certain and there will be credible amount of rice for export. We must focus on resolving irrigation need to ensure transition from extensive to intensive farming. We then will introduce them to new seeds, growing methodology and use of mechanics in agriculture.

This morning I ordered 1,000 larger and 1,000 smaller sowing machines. We will first make them available to the 135 families/households here. We provide them with small-scale sowing machines [...] we have created this Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation that will conduct related researches. They have a

workshop at Chak Angrae of Phnom Penh. They will support us. I will buy from them [...] as for the larger machine, we may find a farmer to take care and use it for wage. We may provide it to those without much land. In this case, we offer more works for people. For larger village or community, we can leave them with two large-scale sowing machines [...]

I am calling on our people to (1) wear facemasks when it is necessary to protect yourself from the pandemic; and (2) wear facemasks made of Kroma – traditional scarf, which we can wash and use more than one and it helps saving money. I noticed that more and more people are wearing no facemasks. Let us all be protective. During which time that people are taking substitute holidays and going out, I urge them to avoid large crowd for fear of Covid-19. Please do not confuse that hot weather prevented you from pandemic. Though most of the 197 cases are coming from abroad [...] we must continue to exercise high precautionary measures. It is not yet over.

Some countries are slowly reopening but then are locking down again. Some schools are resuming including those for children of investors and diplomats. Some tertiary institutions conducted exams. We may be patient a bit more for our safety. Let us be clear not to have anyone die of Covid-19 and/or of hunger without us knowing and resolving it [...] I am urging governors of every province to take every measures to make sure that people who are poor and vulnerable will receive a Poor ID. We must make sure the ID will go to those who are really poor and vulnerable. That is justice [...].

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Day, presided by HM the King. Today, I visited this centre to see progress we have made in aquaculture and taking this opportunity to strive a campaign to change our way of production in certain areas, for instance, where we used to grow only rice, we could now raise fishes and frogs, or lobsters instead, for better profits.

The world has changed tremendously. Number of death has been high and vaccine has not yet been available. Habits that we had for thousands of years in the world has changed because of Covid-19 [...] as far as production or economy is concerned, rich or poor, countries in the world has suffered impacts from it. In service sector, where we had arrival of 6.6 million foreign tourists last year, we did very small number this year. Hotels closed down. Countries with industrial foundation suffered even more [...]

Agriculture Grows in Supremacy

Industry and Service suffered impacts. Cambodia's in this case has had one strong point being a country of agriculture. It seems that agriculture has grown in supremacy. On this note that the Royal Government quickly changed direction to promoting agriculture contributing to resolve local food demand and to supply food in the region and the world. Minister Veng Sakhon reported that we exported some 400,000 tons of fish in the first three months of this year, more than we did before. It was true that at the time that we have not assessed our local consumption demand, I declared that we stopped exporting white rice and paddy for a while. With situation reassessment done, we allow export of rice

and paddy, fish, etc. [...]

As of present, we do not see it would be a problem. After harvesting rainy season rice, we are now harvesting dry season rice [...] on 21 July I will join people harvesting dry season rice in Prey Kabah district of Takeo [...]. It is nothing new to see that Hun Sen is talking with people in the field. For instance, in Kompong Trobek of Prey Veng, in my meeting with rice farmers then [...]. I reiterated my motto presented to the National Assembly of not leaving anyone to die of hunger without us knowing and/or helping him/her [...]. I have pictures with Minister of Water Resources Lim Kean Hor as it was time that we tried to resolve demand for water for irrigation. In Prey Kabah, I am going to operate harvesting machines. It is not time to use sickle anymore. In Takeo's Prey Kabah, there are 8,000 hectares of dry season rice (short-term rice) [...]

Cambodia to Continue Its Regional Food Supply Chain

[...] there have been press articles [...] raising concerns about disruption of food supply chain in Asia because of restrictions on the parts of Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, India, and even Russian wheat. Cambodia wishes to reaffirm that it will continue to participate in regional food supply chain since it would have every year a surplus of about six million metric tons of paddy or about four million metric tons of rice [...] Cambodia would be capable of supplying food not only for itself but also for export. Our foreign friends and journalists who wrote a few articles so far about this issue (should know). Today, I am making a point to them that Cambodia continues its par-

ticipation in regional and world food supply.

Anything Else but Food

I saw a report yesterday that our aromatic rice exported to Europe. Though they demanded us to pay tax, we would still be able to export [...]. Countries heavily depending on industry and tourism would face up with food insecurity. According to its ability, Cambodia, from its part, would contribute the supply of food – such as rice and fish [...] in the time that Covid-19 caused disruption and losses in the world one may opt for reducing productions of airplanes, cars, wrist watches, clothes [...] however, one thing they cannot reduce is food for their stomachs. In 2008, when economic crisis hit the world, many had opted for scaling down their demand for clothes, for instance. (In the Covid-19 era) some nearly one million Vietnamese workers lost their jobs. In Cambodia, 170,000 of workers laid off. As people in Europe, America, etc. suffered economic difficulties and millions lost their jobs, they would not think of buying new clothes [...] still, they could not cancel purchasing food [...]

From Covid-19 Crisis to Opportunity in Agriculture

[...] Cambodia still has great potential since it has about four million hectares of land for cultivation –for rice and other crops. We can grow [...] it is our expectation that export of rice, cashew and other foodstuffs would grow [...] we are working to move quickly to transform Covid-19 crisis into opportunity in agriculture [...] in this field, where previously it employed up 80% of the Cambodian population, with growths in industry and service sectors, 73% of our pop-

ulation are still farmers. At present, labour forces losing their jobs and incomes from industry and service could now return to agriculture [...] though price for rubber would not rise, those of rice, mangos, cassava, banana would as we expanded our market to China, Korea, Japan, etc. [...]

Promoting Local Animal Husbandry Efforts

Let me now talk about raising animals [...] we have a demand of 290,000 tons of meat per annum [...] we have been able to provide only 239,000 tons or 82% of what we needed [...] we have had to promote animal husbandry in the country [...]. Yesterday, a company requested to import over one million live pigs from Thailand for local demand and for exporting to Vietnam. I instructing in writing for Minister of Agriculture to discuss about this with Minister of Trade – Pan Sorsak. However, in my opinion, we should not import meat from other countries that would impede local animal husbandry efforts [...] we may import only the amount we are short of, which is now about 18%. Once our husbandry can address that shortage, we no longer have to import from outside [...] let us take this time to make efforts in animal husbandry. When there's rising demand for export, we may do so to markets in Hong Kong, Singapore, etc. [...]

Canals/Waterways Help Increase Fish Population

On aquaculture, it is not a new thing for us. You may check the resolution and manifesto of the Cambodian People's Party of the Fifth Congress in 1985 [...] we made it clear then that while

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(Continued from page 5) conserving fish species, we must work on promoting aquaculture. The problem was in those days the Cambodian population were anywhere between seven to eight million. As of this moment, we are at 16 million [...] it is true that fishing lots that we gave to people have created them opportunity thanked to the irrigation networks. In the 1980s, only 7% of our cultivation land were under irrigation. As of now, we have increased such area to 62%. By building waterways and irrigation such as canals, etc. we have created favourable conditions for more fish population. We released millions of fingerlings fish every year for people to catch them for consumption. However, they should not do so in time of fish spawning [...]

A Calendar for Harvesting from Aquaculture

It is now time for our farmers to engage in aquaculture. We may organize a calendar for raising activities so that harvesting fish from aquaculture would not be coincided with those fish available from natural sources, which would cause a price collapse. In December or January, seasonally, we have fish from natural resources – lake and rivers – Mekong, Tonle Sap, Bassac, and ponds. Price would plummet. Supply exceeds demand. It is my recommendation that the Ministry of Agriculture need to develop a calendar so raised fish would be of marketable size by the time fishing in natural system is not allowed [...]

More Aquaculture Experts Needed

I agree with this need (for more expertise in aquaculture) and I will tell the Ministry of Public Functions and

the Ministry Economy and Finance to figure out increasing number of technicians in aquaculture. Let us take those who have been contracted staff – between 45 and 50 of them – and we will include them in payroll as of early next year [...] what we are doing now is to strive forwards aquaculture movement. We can no longer depend on fish from natural system such as Tonle Sap, Mekong, Bassac and/or lakes anymore. Our former King – HM Preah Sisovath decreed establishment of fishing lots in 1909. I dissolved the fishing lots in 2012 or about 100 years later. While fishing lots given to contractors, people could not fish. Frequently, there were conflicts between those who needed to dry out fishing area early to catch fish and farmers who needed to retain water for their rice cultivation [...] once in 2000, I dissolved 60% of the fishing lots but it was not enough and the conflicts were on and on. I finally dissolved them completely and people have set up communities to protect and take benefit from the system by themselves.

USD 500,000 Trial Fish, Frog and Lobster Raising in PVC Canvas Tanks

In history, in 1920, people in Prey Veng rose against the French (on issue of fishing lots). In my younger days, there were plenty of fish. I would say water was deeper, lands were in abundance, and less number of people to feed. At present, water are shallow, there are less fish, and there are more mouths to feed. It is quite a contrary. On this note, we are making efforts on one part to conserve fishes and fish species through releasing fingerlings in natural systems, breeding more fish species, and on the other to promote aquaculture

such as fishes, frogs, lobsters, etc. for the sake of addressing our people's demand for food. The Royal Government will make funding of USD 500,000 available for a trial period. Mark my word – initial trial. In the Covid-19 time, we already have rice but we needed fish too. To release by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the fund will be for people to buy PVC canvas fish tank so that they can raise catfish without having to dig up ponds [...]

Retain Budget for Local Mission/Training Programs

[...] I have instructing in writing to (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance) HE Aun Pornmoniroth to keep budget for internal/local missions [...] such as seminars and training programs in the country and to continue to allow no missions abroad [...] this is aimed at giving our officials/technicians chances to work more in their fields [...]. I think that Covid-19 cannot starve the Cambodian people. It may cause destruction but it may not starve Cambodian people to death since the pulse of our economy does not rest solely on service and industry sectors [...] the main pulse of our economy is to feed our people – to have rice in cookers and to have fish to go with it [...]. We have no way of knowing how long Covid-19 would be here but we must take urgent and effective measures to promote cultivation, animal husbandry, etc. [...]

Innovative Technologies in Agricultural Curriculum

We will, actually we have, come to processing. We already processed and exported dry fish as I saw it on display in China's Nanning

Expo. Raising fish is a bit different from growing vegetable. Certain vegetable are prone to perishable once the marketable life is over. As for fish, should they have no market fresh, people may do various forms of fermentation [...] they would not be wasted. We must work hard on this to increase production and challenge exports to neighbouring countries. Both Vietnam and Thailand have high capacity on aquaculture and animal husbandry. Vietnam processed and exported billions of USD in raised Tilapia fish. We must learn from our neighbours [...] and introduce new and innovative technology in agronomy and/or aquaculture to curriculums of our agricultural schools and university [...]

Make-Up Khmer New Year Holiday from 17 to 21 August

Let me take this opportune moment to affirm to people in the country. It is now time for the Royal Government to make up Khmer New Year holiday. We cancelled our three-day holiday on the Khmer New Year day in April as we tried to deal with Covid-19 situation. The Royal Government, instead of allowing a three days holiday, decided to give our people five days of holiday as promised from 17 through to 21 August [...] people might ask why not in the two weeks coming. We needed time for the Ministry of Health to work out health infrastructure at the time that people are out on holiday. We may not go in crowdedness as before or dance in congested distance. We also needed time for guesthouses/hotels managers to put in place health protection measures and system [...]

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for factories, they may discuss and sort out with workers as to when and how they would observe holiday [...]

100% of Covid-19 in Cambodia Are Imported Cases

There has been an impressive development. While previously people criticize our medical staff, they now wrote songs about “white uniform army.” Those who before flew to Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, France, etc. for medical treatment, have now taken done so locally with Cambodian medical doctors [...] our medical staff have been doing their utmost. Well, unfortunately, there have been infection cases of 15 and today another nine cases from the 90 students coming from Saudi Arabia three days ago [...] 100% of infection cases in Cambodia have been imported transmissions [...] as of now, among number of infected, half are foreigners and half are locals. However, there has not yet one death from the infection [...]

Taking this opportune moment, [...] I recommended our people to put on face-masks to protect themselves whenever is necessary. I have taken measures to transfer some factories to swap production to producing masks. Some handicraft shops now have produced masks. Today I bring you masks that the Ministry of Health has purchased [...] made from Kroma (Cambodian scarf) which you can use more than one time. They are washable [...]

Schools, Restaurants Reopened with Proper Hygiene/Sanitation Measures

Well, we started to have our schools reopened in steps.

Schools will open for exams. The Minister of Education and schools managements have agreed to have a first stage reopening of tertiary education with strict and proper health safety and measures. Karaoke shops that have transformed into restaurants can also go into business [...] guesthouses/hotels would reopen for locals who will take holidays. Let us hope that this will help amend loss of jobs and incomes in service sector [...]

We have been providing social support fund (in the time of Covid-19) of USD 40 per month to roughly 170,000 workers losing their jobs. Besides, as of yesterday, we also provided 92 billion Riel or 23 million USD cash support for 520,000 poor and vulnerable households. According to our estimates, we would do that for two months. Should the situation not subside, we may make it a four months commitment. However, we have secured fund for ten months ahead.

If the 500,000 USD Trial Fund Works, Increase to 5 Million USD

I am calling on workers and those who have returned from Thailand to take parts in promoting agricultural activities. We may add more fund if 500,000 USD is not sufficient and the additional fund should be for those who raise catfish. We provided them free of charges with PVC canvas fish tank, fingerlings, and technical training [...]. The state spent money to create jobs for farmers. While we dare to spend 25 million USD (on workers losing their jobs) excluding expenses on women of pregnancy in poor and vulnerable households, for which we spend about 50 million USD per months,

why we dare not spend another 5 million USD, now only half a million, more for people to engage in aquaculture? It is an investment to create jobs and generate incomes for farmers. Such investments would not be less valuable than in building up schools [...]

A Prime Minister's Life Worthless for Justice?

I will talk more about rice cultivation and other agricultural activities when I go to Prey Kabah on 21 July. That I have announced it, would there be anyone to lay mines or send grenade for it? Some may have wished to remove me from power [...] like what they did in 1998 to set four B40 rockets trap on me. It was lucky that none hit my car [...] did anyone care to seek me justice? When someone shot my brother in law dead in the centre of Phnom Penh in 1996, did anyone care about seeking justice? Were they thinking life of a Prime Minister is worthless for justice? I do not hold them for the karma of their actions [...]

Local Investors Sought for Animal Feed Investments

As for animal feed, I am asking Minister Veng Sakhon to think of ways to attract local investors to produce them to reduce imports. There are not many investors interested in producing animal feed or fertilizer. There could be some issues regarding prices of electricity, etc. We must think of ways to mitigate them. You may discuss it with HE Cham Prasidh and HE Sok Chenda (of Cambodia Development Council) to seek a few local companies for such investments. The state would assist them through Rural Development Bank's loans for the investments [...] on this consideration, should the private sector

be unable to mobilize enough investment fund, the state could consider a joint-venture investment with the private sector.

We must embark on this to ensure animal feed for our animal husbandry and aquaculture efforts. If we could do that and ensure the prices anywhere comparable to those imported, people would buy them. This could create jobs locally and we can be sure of our ownership in animal feed supply [...] considering free market principles. The state must not provide such capital but this applies only in policies towards poorer countries, while in rich countries, they subsidized their farmers. We must do it too [...]

Cambodian People Will Never Die of Hunger

Let me send a message to Roth Sothi in Banteay Mean-jei who said that the Royal Government gives cash support to (poor and vulnerable) households using money assistance from the European Union. Let me tell him that he was lucky on that day (that he said it) that I did not order him arrested. From where did you Sothi get information that I used money assisted by the European Union to provide cash support of 25 million USD per month to (poor and vulnerable) households? [...] the Royal Government has not used a cent of foreign money to resolve social matters arising from Covid-19. While in many countries, they trimmed salary, Cambodia did not [...] generous contribution, modelling by HM the King and HM the Queen Mother, from civil servants and the armed forces have now reached over 15 million USD [...] people are with Hun Sen and they will not die of hunger [...]./☐

(Continued from page 1)

express his own as well as the CPP's wishes and views on deepening relations between the two parties and countries.

Calling China and Cambodia good neighbors and good partners that help and support each other, Xi noted that since the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic, the two sides have maintained mutual support and close cooperation, and achieved important progress in their concerted fight against the coronavirus disease.

Xi added that Hun Sen's visit to China at a time when the epidemic situation in the country was still grave has left a deep impression on the CPC, the Chinese government and people, and himself.

Stressing that China attaches great importance to the development of bilateral ties, Xi said he is ready to work with Hun Sen to strengthen political guidance for the relations between the two parties and countries, deepen inter-party and other exchanges and cooperation, and promote the building of the China-Cambodia community with a shared future for the benefit of both countries and their peoples.

Meanwhile, Xi said he is glad to see that under the strong leadership of Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni and the Cambodian government headed by Hun Sen, Cambodia has made gratifying achievements in various fields.

China, he added, firmly supports Cambodia in pursuing a development path suited to its own national conditions, and believes that under Hun Sen's leadership, Cambodia

will surely make new achievements in the cause of national construction and make positive contributions to promoting regional stability and development. (Xinhua)

Updating the List of Poor and Vulnerable Families to Receive "Cash Transfer Program for Poor and Vulnerable Households during Covid-19"

(01 July 2020 — Facebook Page Samdech Hun Sen)

I recently announced the "Cash Transfer Program for Poor and Vulnerable Households during Covid-19."

To ensure that poor people who are really struggling to get support from the government, it is extremely important that we are updating the list of the poor and vulnerable families during the fight against this disease.

This work is almost entirely dependent on the local authority, the village chief and the commune council, who must ensure clarity and thoroughness.

Therefore, in order to ensure transparency and integrity in the provision of this cash transfer program, I strongly urge local authorities at all levels, especially those at every commune, to focus on doing the job properly and consistently, and avoiding absolute collusion with their relatives whose families are not really poor and vulnerable to receive this allowance.

I will take action with no exceptions if this collusion is found in any village and/or commune./

Persons Taking Advantages of Land Distribution and Acquisition Would Be Punished

(5 July 2020 — Facebook

Page Samdech Hun Sen)

On July 3, 2020, at the plenary session of the Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen instructed three ministries – the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Land Management to carve out land for the people living in and reaping benefits from the state's wildlife conservation areas and protected areas.

Samdech Techo stressed:

1) For those who are actually living in the aforementioned state land, further clearance and claim of land is not permitted. So far, Samdech Techo observed that only the powerful and the rich use the small ones to exploit the land for them.

Those dishonest, who, while encroaching the state land could for a night build 10 to 20 huts, and Samdech Techo already knew of their identities. If found really guilty, they will be arrested.

2) For the allocation of land to people, the relevant ministries and authorities must justly carry out their tasks, and are strictly prohibited from exploitation of the land for own benefits, while (anyone) found to have done so, they would be subject to compulsory punishment.

3) Besides carving out land according to their actual holdings for the residents, the state will add a reservation of 10% of the land for the community's common benefits and use as firewood collection and/or for cattle grazing.

Samdech Techo reaffirmed to the powerful and wealthy officials that they already have had enough and should be sufficient and stop causing trouble for the people./

Celebrating Chol Vossa, While Protecting Yourself from Covid-19

(6 July 2020—Facebook Page Samdech Hun Sen)

Greetings from my wife and I to all our compatriots, and especially the Buddhist monks, who are entering the Rain Retreat (Chol Vossa) period from the 5th of July to October 3, 2020.

I would like to thank our people and senior citizens who brought the Vossa candles and many offerings to the monks at the monasteries throughout the country, especially in the remote areas.

Moreover, I really appreciate that Excellencies, Lok Chumteav, members of the National Assembly, the Senate and CPP, who donated rice, instant noodles, canned fishes, protective masks, soaps, disinfectant gels, kroma (Khmer scarfs) and medicines to needy people across the country.

In the meantime, I would urge our people to continue protecting themselves from Covid-19 infection by carefully washing their hands with soap, disinfectant alcohol or gels and properly putting on protective masks. So far, the world has not had a cure for this disease, and the number of cases is growing alarmingly.

This afternoon, my wife and I plan to bring some offerings to the monks who are attending the Rain Retreat at Wat Chumpous Ka-ek Pagoda.

My wife and I would like to wish all the Buddhist monks and our people the four Buddhist blessings and the state of being free of Covid-19./■