

Covid-19 Vaccination for 12 to Under 18

(01 August 2021 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)



Vaccinate Teenagers to Build Community Immunity to Re-open Schools

Today we are working together to launch a vaccination campaign for children and young people (aged between 12 and below 18). It is not a coincidence. We have thought carefully until we have a campaign today along with the ongoing campaign that we are reaching out to people over the age of 18. Vaccination of children (adolescents) today is an important step towards immunity in the community. We used to say that children are the heirs or the bamboo shoots that will eventually replace the bamboo. (But) If children are unhealthy from now, we will not have good bamboo.

More so, the impact that occurred over the time of COVID-19 had been far-reaching on human resource training issues. Almost all countries have school closures. At this point, we are considering how to re-open the school, at least from secondary school onwards. Today's press conference goes hand in hand with the immunization campaign where I started by initially observing the preparation for vaccinations for

my grandchildren. There are still many children here today and at this place for vaccination. (We started vaccinating) in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Koh Kong, Kandal in a process to vaccinate 2 million adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 (approximately).

For today event, the press conference, which, previously used to be full of journalists, we have to reduce the number and allow only a few in. Before entering (this program), yesterday there was a PCR test (to find COVID-19), and this morning there was a rapid test before letting people in to this place. Even I could not escape the need for a health check. This is a new way of life for people, not just our country. This press conference is convened not only for journalists but also for spreading words to people all over the country. Your questions, ladies and gentlemen, will also get my answers for people all over the country. I would also like to emphasize that I give journalists the opportunity to ask questions first. Be prepared with your questions. In previous conferences, I usually briefed the reporters and allowed them to ask a few questions before closing. This time, I let the reporters ask

first.

Home Treatment, Self-Tests, Private Hospitals Vaccines ... Will Help

While journalists are preparing their questions, let me talk a little bit about some issues that our people should know. In the past, we have done a number of things that the public is aware of already such as we have allowed home treatment. This is one of the ways to deal with shortages of beds in hospitals. Many countries have done this. Their hospitals accept only those who are in serious conditions. Home treatment is allowed (for people with mild COVID-19). This method not only solves the problem of bed shortages in the hospitals, but also facilitates the family and the patient themselves to have a suitable place (for separate accommodation).

We have also allowed private companies to purchase vaccines for local distribution, giving Cambodians more options for vaccinations when needed. We also provide the private sector and the public with quick access to companies and families. They can test for COVID-19 themselves. When in doubt, they do it (test) themselves. This point is in our search strategy. If we explore the sick quickly, we can manage the infection quickly too.

For example, either they learnt immediately about the sickness from rapid tests or tests conducted by doctors, we could manage those (COVID-19) positive people quickly. If they are tested inside the family on their own (and if anyone is positive), s/he immediately isolates her/himself from others in their family. If the process is one or half-a-day delay, this person can pass the virus on to many peo-

ple. This is one way to carry out to manage the situation quickly.

Hotels Can Be Places for COVID-19 Patients for Hospitalization or Treatment

... I (do not) see yet if the Ministry of Tourism has requested permission from the Ministry of Health and the Commission Combatting with COVID-19, but they have been discussing on possibility of opening some hotels by transforming them into hospitals. We are hanging in a gap that should be filled. My consideration is that we have public hospitals and mild sickness care wards that we receive approximately 10,000 patients in Phnom Penh. In some private hospitals (hospitalization and/or staying in quarantine for COVID-19), the prices are high. Now the private sector, which previously worked with the Ministry of Tourism, plans to launch some of their hotels (as healthcare centers) at a lower price than at private hospitals. Some people lack the ability to pay for a private hospital bed, but s/he also does not want to stay in a crowded place. S/he wants to relax in his own room.

If there is such a request, I also recommend that the Ministry of Health should look into it. The problem is how we go about managing and providing doctors. So if we do this, the average/moderate income persons who do not want to stay in a place with thousands of people and do not have the money to pay for expensive hospital beds, but he does not want to stay at home for fear of infection to her/his children/grandchildren (can) go to the hotel to stay. S/he can rent rooms in (those converted) hotels. In this case, the hotels (change) from receiving guests and money from

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tourists to receiving from (COVID-19) patients. A part of hotel staff volunteered to bring food to patients could get their jobs. However, the state (must also) provide medical support for (hotels) that open (to provide service for such medical treatment). The doctors (gotten paid) and the private sector receive money from those who go there for treatment. That is still our thinking.

Lockdown 8 Border Provinces, Curfew from 9pm to 3am ... Prevent Delta Infection

The important thing here I am asking for the tolerance and understanding, and calling for (participation) of our people on the introduction of a circular on July 28, 3 days ago. We introduced circulars on the Campaign to Strengthen Measures to Combat and Prevent the Epidemic of COVID-19 and the Decision to lockdown the Provinces of Koh Kong, Pursat, Battambang, Pailin, Banteay Meanchey, Oddar Meanchey, Preah Vihear and Siem Reap provinces for 14 days. These measures will affect the rights of some of our citizens. The curfew re-introduced in Phnom Penh and in some provinces from 9pm to 3am, also affected people's right to travel. It also affects the rights of some citizens working across the border from Cambodia to Thailand and from Thailand to Cambodia. I am asking your compatriots for mercy (in understanding about the threat of) the ferocious Delta coronavirus variant that is invading the whole world, including the United States.

Now, the U.S. infection rate has risen again. Europe is also recovering. Every country in Southeast Asia also sees rise, except Brunei that has a low incidence rate. Yesterday, Laos (number of COVID-19 cases) reached more than 300. Previously, Laos managed well. Finally, yesterday (they recorded) 380 cases of infection (of COVID-19) ... Interestingly, Singapore, a country that has strict control, also had its infection rate in three digits, although not high. The heaviest attacks

(occurred) were on Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. Finally, just this morning, by 12 hours, Vietnam has had more than 4,000 people infected. Yesterday, Vietnam recorded more than 8,000 people with infection and killed more than 100. Southeast Asia is being attacked by the Delta virus variant. With Alpha variant out of England alone, we have more than 70,000 people infected and more than 1 million deaths. Should we allow the Delta variant to enter the country, crossing into communities everywhere, we wonder how many more people will we lose? I would like to take this opportunity to express my condolences to the families of the victims of COVID-19. No country in the world can escape infection and death.

Cambodia Critics Should Ask Presidents of Big Countries ... about Human Rights

We do not pick on other countries to cover up our weaknesses. Some people, in the days that we did not have any infection, there were no dead people, affronted, "Let's learn from Cambodia, because Cambodia has no dead people (to COVID-19). Let's come and get medicine from Cambodia." As we now have infected and dead people, they smeared us, "Cambodia has a lot of deaths, a lot of infections." I also ask that those who have dual citizenship and are living in countries such as in the United States, France or Germany or Switzerland, etc., should ask the presidents of those countries.

In France, for example, why not ask the French president, "Why does France have so many deaths?" Why (they) ask only Cambodia? Why they do not ask (President) Macron? When we issued a law, they accused us of violating rights. French President Macron (just) issued a law, why they do not ask him. Now (President) Macron (seemed to) have sued a company that displays advertising images (by) likening Macron to Adolf Hitler. Macron resorted to suing. Why not ask him.

Even US President Joe Biden started to require federal officials to get vaccinated.

It will soon reach the stage that vaccination is obligatory. I think soon the world (will require) vaccination mandatory. Because (if) you refuse to get the jab, even if you are not obliged by law to inject, the objective factor will force you to. For example, traveling by bus or taxi. They may check or ask if you are vaccinated? (If) not, (they will say) Sorry. No drive. To take the bus, without vaccination, they are not allowed to board. Travel abroad, no vaccination, they are not allowed to enter other countries. As for jobs, too. If no vaccination, they are not considered.

Rights Start from the Right to Life First

For us, all we have done is for the survival of the people, which is one of the most important rights. The other day that I talked at the Phnom Penh International Airport about the right to life (there have been interpretations) about human rights by commentators. My advice for those working in human rights organization is (that you were educated) under the roof of a school that ... Hun Sen (built) a few decades ago. Is not it? Not all of you commentators are from abroad. Some intellectuals should not forget where they come from. They came out of the perforated roof of the school built by the hands of the leaders and members of the Cambodian People's Party for the children to learn. Where does that start? It started from the right to life. Of course, we cannot give up other rights, but other rights must start from the right to life first.

You may want to remember clearly that Hun Sen is not a petty cash politician. Participating in power management and leadership for more than 42 years, plus leading the resistance movement to liberate the country, (this person) has experience that can be a teacher for you. Have you ever seen ghosts exercising their right to express themselves through

speech or through newspaper writing? Never. How could they rebuke us to know nothing about the constitution and the convention on human rights? If you take and watch the clip from 1992, when only a few UNTAC staff started to arrive (in Cambodia), at the Kandal Provincial Teacher Training College, I was talking about the vision on human rights. At that time, Prince Chakrapong was also present.

All rights must start with the right to life. From then on, our natural rights began, including the right to food, the right to health care, the right to freedom of expression, politics, or the right to this or that in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the convention on human rights ... you are confused. You have never done managing works, not even as a commune chief or district chief. I went to the UN. I debated in the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement, etc. Why do I not understand that? My intention was (for people to) understand what we do is to protect human life first. Starting with the right to life, we will exercise other rights. There are some good things done. There are things that are yet to do. In some places, we needed to adjust [...]

I would like to reiterate, please do not because of foreign money try to pick on some unspoken arguments, because of short time, to comment. If you in Cambodia have no rights, you are already in handcuffs. Every day you are talking about the Prime Minister not understanding the Constitution and the International Convention on Human Rights. What are you talking about, saying all this? Are you talking about freedom of expression? With that statement, in Cambodia, there is a right (or freedom of expression). Those who shout that they do not have rights are those who are exercising their rights. We have to explain back to the rudeness of some people.

... I may talk this much so that our people can understand the difficulties (facing) to prevent
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the (coronavirus) Delta variant from entering Cambodia and leave the border provinces with time to breathe. So far, there are about 12,000 people in those provinces in quarantine areas. Including those staying in the hospitals, the number is too large that we needed to send in army trucks of the two divisions to help transporting them. A few days ago, we had to find about 200 more trucks ready to transport our brothers and sisters returning from Thailand. The provinces along the border must check on the food supply from our side ... the Thai side may have cooperated to let our people stay on their side. We can send them rice, noodles, drinking water from Cambodia. We leave them there for the time being. We will accept them later. Those coming in yesterday at O Beijoan, 40 of the 127 of people infected with COVID-19. If we cannot control it, everywhere in Cambodia will be full of Delta variant that will take more lives. Now there are fragmented areas, not yet scattered across the country. That is why we are trying to cut off and impose curfews on some provinces in order to prevent infection, to prevent the death of people, whose right to life is the greatest of all rights.

Now I invite journalists to ask their questions and I will give them my answers.

BTV: (Firstly,) can Samdech give assessments on factors that motivate the Royal Government to accomplish vaccination so smoothly and quickly? Can Samdech explain to our compatriots the efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia on this matter?

Question 2 ... today we launch a vaccination campaign for children and adolescents aged 12 to 17 years. As expected by the child's parents, they think they will be ready to go back to school [...] does the Royal Government plan to continue injecting children under 12?

Question 3: I noticed in your voice messages, Samdech considers vaccinating children and

the boosting dose [...] does the government plan to have a third dose, while some countries are considering this?

Question 4: If the situation of COVID-19 continues for a long time ... can the Royal Government sustain? What do Samdech have to explain to our compatriots in this present situation and in the future?

Samdech Techo: Thank you BTV. These four questions cover many aspects that, I think, seem to represent the press (wishes to know) so that I have the ability to respond to the issues arisen.

5 Factors to Complete [Vaccination of 12 M People Ahead of Plan

The first question concerns the issue of vaccination that may complete ahead of plan. Indeed, according to what is evolving compared to the original plan, our vaccination will be completed in 7 to 8 months before the deadline ... When we put out the strategic plan, we think of mid-2022. Now, according to our estimates, (vaccination) of 10 million and an additional 2 million children, will be ready by November, thanks to our efforts. We can raise the question of why Cambodia is able to implement so quickly ahead of plan. In my review, there are five factors that should be mentioned.

The first factor is the leadership, which sets out a clear plan and a clear implementation mechanism, which includes both the procurement mechanism and the commission for vaccination. It is not possible to bring in the vaccines to sleep in the warehouse. We must vaccinate people as soon as possible. At this point, I should remind you a little bit, if I believe in Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh, we could have walked fast a month earlier. Let's be honest. Samdech Pichey Sena got himself the jab first. Inject. I knew before Samdech Pichey Sena get jabbed, he let his children get jabbed first. One of his sons and some others took the jabs. At the same time, the Chinese army provided Sinopharm

vaccine to Cambodia. I told Samdech Pichey Sena (that) "I (had just) said a few days ago (that) Cambodia only accepts vaccines recognized by the World Health Organization." This is my original statement ... in principle it is so. But then they used the vaccine in their country without being recognized by the World Health Organization.

For the Chinese vaccine, both Sinopharm and Sinovac provided to us, (China itself) injected its citizens and exported abroad. The countries that use the Chinese vaccines in ASEAN are Indonesia, which has a large population ... Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other countries. Samdech Pichey Sena requested to meet me in person. I asked him the goal of the meeting. (He said) it is the vaccine. (I said) can you prepare a letter to the Chinese Minister of Defense immediately, and I will also prepare a letter to the Prime Minister of China Li Keqiang.

We were a step slow. In comparison, generally Cambodia is fast, but if I believed Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh, we would have walked one month faster. So, we started to make this decision by asking HE Mam Bunheng to recognize the Sinopharm vaccine to formal use approved by the Ministry of Health in our country. Well, as far as vaccines is concerned, we have been very careful in our consideration.

35,115,000 Doses of Vaccines Promised ... China – Main Source of Supply

I would like to inform you that according to the promised number of vaccines, we will have up to 35,115,000 doses. But with working experience on the issues and learning from what had arisen in the past, I told (Deputy Prime Minister) His Excellency Aun Porn Moniroth, His Excellency Vongsey Visoth, Chairman of the Procurement Commission, to take out figures of vaccines promised. Initially, there was only a promise from COVAX of 7 million doses and from Australia of 3 million doses, a total of 10 mil-

lion doses. (I advised to take them off) from our minds. (We) must consider China as a strategic reference in the supply of vaccines and other sources of support. At this point, it has evolved as we thought.

If we are not serious and rely on only help, up to now, including those coming from COVAX, including the arrival of Japan, including the arrival from the United States (we may very late) [...] strategically, we use China as a reference in the supply of vaccines. The reason is easy to understand. Now look at the countries waiting for vaccines to arrive, some rich countries have not yet received them, or they do arrive in very small proportion compared to the population and to the demand. When it comes to the government, there is no majority or minority of population. Some say that Mr. Hun Sen is selfish. I just want to tell you that the working system of the Royal Government is different from the presidential regime. In the Royal Government, once the Prime Minister orders, actions must happen. If s/he does not follow it, s/he must walk away. Fortunately, in the Council of Ministers, despite the Prime Minister has final say, there was consultation and consensus in the policies of the Royal Government.

I told His Excellency Vongsey Visoth (of the Procurement Commission) that as long as China says it is for sale, let us buy the vaccines immediately. We can see now that those with money can not buy vaccines. Vaccines producers also produce for demand in their country. They supply in their country first. We also see that while people say Europe respects human rights, Europe has introduced measures to ban the export of vaccines from going out of Europe. There are some allowed in form of supply to COVAX. The United States is no exception. Well, countries with money are not sure they could get vaccines they wanted. Look at countries in our regions, do they have enough

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vaccines? [...]

My instruction for HE Vongsey Visoth was that as long as China says they sell their vaccines, we must buy them immediately. China has provided us with 3.2 million doses in assistance. By now, maybe the plane is about to land, another 1 million doses will have arrived. China granted us 3.2 million doses, and in addition, we ordered 20.5 million doses more from China. So far, the vaccines that we have in our country and are in the process of inoculation is recorded at 19 million doses, plus the amount arrived this morning. In this August, 7,692,600 doses will come, both donations and purchases.

One million doses of Chinese vaccine in form of assistance arrives today. Johnson & Johnson (remaining portion) will arrive on August 2. Japan's offer of AstraZeneca (remaining portion) is pending confirmation. British Government (will provide) 415,000 doses (of AstraZeneca). An additional 5 million doses of Sinovac will arrive. So we will have 26,499,100 doses of vaccines, say 26.5 million doses in roundup figure ... HE Vongsey Visoth has a good relation with the Chinese Ambassador and brings my words to the Chinese Ambassador – "Do not let me be the commander (who) commanded the troops without giving them ammunition."

Will Personally Honor Reception of Vaccines Aids Donated Bilaterally

... There was a comment that (when) the Chinese vaccine arrived, I went out to get it. The Japanese vaccine came and I went out to honor it. When those vaccines from COVAX arrived three months ago, I did not make my presence there. The day before, when the US vaccine came, I did not go to receive it either. I would like affirm today that I went to honor the vaccines handover at Phnom Penh International Airport only when they comes as bilateral assistance. In the next few days, on the 4th (August)

the British vaccine arrives. I will go to honor the handover. The vaccine comes under the COVAX framework, a multilateral organization in which Cambodia is also a member, I do not make my presence. I let the Minister of Health honor the handover. In March, I did not go and let Minister of Health, HE Mam Bun Heng, to honor it. The US vaccine (has) arrived via COVAX. The Cambodian and American sides reconciled to the presence of the Minister of Health. On August 4, I went to Pochentong Airport to receive bilateral aid from the United Kingdom. Do not say I have discrimination. I do not discriminate. If the vaccines comes in form of bilateral assistance, I will make my presence to receive it. If it comes through multilateral organization, the Minister of Health will be enough. COVAX has many countries members. Cambodia is also one of them [...]

40 More Vaccine Trucks [Purchased with Philanthropists Funds

Yesterday, I told Lok Chumteav Or Vandin to buy another 40 more trucks used for carrying vaccines. We already made purchase order of 40 trucks and the last 20 trucks of the first order will arrive soon. Now I order to buy another 40 trucks using the money contributed by Cambodian philanthropists and they will be in honor of their reputations. Even if COVID-19 is over, the vaccine trucks are still needed to transport vaccines throughout the country since it is obligatory to provide six different vaccines for children. The elderly are soon, I think, obliged to vaccinate against COVID-19 [...]

Holding to No Doctrine but Pragmatism

It is not a matter how or what one announces (about this or that many) to vaccinate. The question is there is no vaccine available ... I would like to tell you that upon receiving one million doses of vaccine, (I would never allow) to inject 1 million people. Hun Sen does not do that. As one million vac-

cines arrive, I instructed a 5% reserved for accidental damage. When the 5% reserved augmented to larger amount, we allowed the 5% (reserve) to go into injection. Why do we not take 1 million doses to inject 1 million people? (That is) because the vaccine requires two doses. So, if you get 1 million doses, you need to inject 500,000 or 470,000 people [...]

... I never do things impractical way. I do not hold on to any doctrine. I am a pragmatist. For example, we have 1 million doses and inject 1 million and wait for the second leg to arrive. And if the second leg does not come, the vaccine injected to one million people will be in vain. There are so many force majeure and it's hard to say. Sometimes local factories explode, they can not produce ... (For a quantity of) 1 million doses ... we are willing to inject less than 500,000 people. The remaining 500,000 doses are left for the second dose ... in some countries ... they have problem looking for the second dose vaccine, after they gave the first ones. I reiterate that Hun Sen does not hold on to any doctrine other than pragmatism. I will it a go if it is practical. I will not if it is not [...]

The second factor is we have a clear source of supply. We take China as the main source of supply. We stick to China as a strategic source, and all else are supporting sources. No matter what some say, China has already given 1,600 million doses of the vaccines to its population, equivalent to 800 million people, and about 200 or 300 million doses have been sent abroad as oversea assistance. So there are great number of people inoculated with the Chinese vaccines. In Indonesia, in Egypt, there are even factories to produce them. For us, the supply of vaccine from China is easy. They can survive at 2 degrees below zero, and the delivery time is short [...]

Of course, we thank the Japanese government, the US government, the British government, even though the vaccine has not yet arrived. Thanks to

the Australian Government for promising even though it has not yet arrived. We do not reject the aid of any country or source of supply from any country. Let us look a little closer. To move to this side a bit and that side a bit ... would not get us what we needed. Find a clear source. If not clear, we have no ability to supply [...]

Factor 3 is we have savings that can be paid immediately when we sign a vaccine contract. Sign the contract and hand over the money immediately. Without cash on hand, you cannot buy. There were people who asked us to make a deposit first and did not tell us when the vaccine would arrive. We did not book it ... we signed with China. We deposit money for them and pay them in full once we signed the contract. We have the cash, not the check (to give) and we do not buy them on credit ... This question relates to the question below about whether we have resources to go on [...]

Fourth, we have human resources for the vaccination process, both military doctors, civilian doctors and volunteer doctors. Institutional leaders and sub-national authorities have taken up responsibility to lead and implement. In the past, doctors were degraded, but with this COVID-19, doctors became a symbol of heroism. They were nicknamed the white coat army. For more than a year and a half, our doctors have rarely seen their wives or children. They worked at the hospitals. When they get out of the hospital, they go into quarantines to rest. They dare not visit spouses and children ... We have doctors, who are both civilian and the army. The army doctors/physicians have taken the responsibility to provide one-third of the vaccinations. There are volunteer doctors and physicians, and they are from many groups, such as the TYDA one, which is the largest group, the groups belong to Samdech Tia Banh, Samdech Say Chhum, Hun Manly, and many others. They help with the vaccination,

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and the sub-national leadership of every institutions have in them sub-commission for the task of vaccination, responsible for setting up, overseeing, and making our plans going smoothly.

Factor 5 is the participation from the people to get the vaccine and help to fund the purchase of vaccines. The national movement in the vaccine issue is a big one. It is like a referendum. (Some bad elements frightened people that) Chinese vaccines would kill or maimed them. However, more than 7 million, out of 10 million people, vaccinated. It is more than 70% of those who have reached the voting age. What do you think? Would that be your strategy of sleeping at home and win? I do not rebuke it with anyone. However, you have to see a national movement that comes out to get vaccination. Older people over 100 years old come for vaccination [...]

Now, for the second question, about launching a vaccination campaign for children aged 12 to 17. On this issue (I wanted to talk about) the benefits related to vaccination for teenagers. I want to clarify a bit about the benefits of vaccines. Some people say that there have been people who had vaccinated and somehow infected and died. That case of infection and death are not the case only in Cambodia. You may want to ask what happened in America, in France, in the UK. Even in Singapore, the previous day's figures showed that among more than 1,000 people infected, 75% of those are vaccinated. That happened not just in Cambodia. Some vaccinated and became seriously ill and died. The mortality rate is low, though. Vaccination reduces the risk of infection. However, even with vaccination, one cannot walk (without taking protection measures). In the United States or Europe, where people vaccinated can remove their masks, now are told to put them back on. Do not rely on vaccines alone. We must continue to exercise our three "Do's" protections and three "Don'ts"

measures. With or without vaccination, we must take these measures [...]

Vaccinating Teenagers to Prevent Family Infections, Build Trust and Safety

... When it comes to vaccinating children and teenagers, the primary benefit would be to prevent infection in the family. If in a family where there are adults from the age of 18 and fully vaccinated but children and teenagers are not, the whole family will not be 100% sure and safe. In this sense, the risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19 in the whole family remains and still threatens the safety of the family. There will be no 100% reliability and security. In this sense, the risk factors for infection and transmission of COVID-19 in the whole family persist and still threaten the safety of the family [...]

Secondly, (the vaccination will) ensure healthy children and youth – whom we called bamboo shoots to bamboos in the future. They needed to be in good health and have bright intellect. We used to talk about bamboo shoots. How do we get good bamboos if the shoots are damaged with COVID-19 from a young age or they are sick [...]

Thirdly, reduce the mortality rate of children and adolescents. We need to protect the adolescents/teenagers from serious illness, and get well soon after short time treatment, and less or avoidable loss of life.

Fourthly, (we will be able to) re-open schools, educational institutions ... at least we can reopen from secondary school up for the school year 2021-2022, September or October, to reduce the impact on the education of children and youth, the pillars of our society. School closures for some time now have affected the quality of learning. I have already said that it is the biggest concern of the world, or the Royal Government of Cambodia. It incurs loss of human resources that we need to cultivate. Learning online is not the same as learning in person. If we build im-

munity in children, it gives us a chance to reopen schools. While we have inoculated teachers and the students, there was less to worry. It reduces transmission. If infected, it does not fall too ill for too long. It is just like the common cold. In Phnom Penh and Kandal province ... almost everyone vaccinated. The number of cases in Phnom Penh is declining since we blanket Phnom Penh and Kandal with vaccines.

Jabs for Children under 12 Awaits WHO Instruction and Vaccines

Your third question is relating to the second question. Should we give it to children under 12 years old? Now we have to wait for the World Health Organization and the production of vaccines in countries for children under 12 years of age. In my personal opinion, I would like children under the age of 12 to be vaccinated for immunity. As of present, children are taking vaccination from birth ... some countries have started with children, for instance, the United States injected Pfizer among children. What I want more in the immediate future (is to vaccinate children) from 10 to 11 years old ... We do it in step so that we will reach 13 million people, which is 80% of the population. Now, with the injection of teenagers between 12 and 17 years of age, we bring the number of injected people to only 12 million or equal to 75%. If we inject 13 million people, the percentage will be equal to 80%. We have to wait for the World Health Organization, on the other hand, the countries that make vaccines, can they make them for vaccinating children? We will further address this issue. The COVID-19 Disease Combating Commission, as well as the Royal Government, will make a decision. The health sector especially will make recommendations on this issue.

AstraZeneca – Stimulant or Third Dose for Sinopharm or Sinovac Recipients

The third dose, also known as the boosting dose ... yesterday I

made the decision to allow injections using AstraZeneca as a stimulant dose. Those injected with Sinopharm or Sinovac should have AstraZeneca as a stimulant dose. We must immediately serve it to the frontline people along the Cambodian-Thai border where there is threat of Delta variant. Japan's AstraZeneca vaccine delivered to Kratie and Monduliri province, and on 4 August (AstraZeneca) of the UK arrives. Due to the short live span, plus the number of people to receive is not that large, we may use it quickly, because the third dose is a single dose. We also prepare to use Japan's AstraZeneca as a third dose. I told His Excellency Vongsey Visoth yesterday to get ready to buy AstraZeneca through COVAX or contact the factory directly to buy AstraZeneca for a third dose for people who had Sinopharm or Sinovac inoculation.

Which Vaccine Used as a Third Dose for AstraZeneca Recipients

But the subcommission in charge of the study (of the vaccines) had to find a boosting vaccine for those inoculated with AstraZeneca, like me and some of the leaders here, except Samdech Tia Banh, who had to have AstraZeneca because he got the Sinopharm ... for me, (I had) AstraZeneca, what vaccine should be a stimulant? It is clear to me that it is either Sinopharm or Sinovac, because those are what we have. It seems that a change from one vaccine as the first dose to another as a second dose is forbidden. From the third dose, they can give another brand. Our team of doctors and specialists have already conducted studies. The third dose, like AstraZeneca, produces more antibodies than the same vaccine. Please study for me and the leaders who injected AstraZeneca as to what vaccine to inject, Sinovac or Sinopharm [...]

Boosting Dose to the Frontline 500,000 to 1 Million People First

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We have given thought on the issue. It is not just thinking, we can even do it tomorrow. On Monday, Lok Chumteav Or Vandin, Youk Sambath and some other people who injected Sinopharm can have AstraZeneca right away because beside the amount of AstraZeneca sent to the provinces, we also have the reserve for damage. That is what we do in Cambodia. The period between the second dose (of one vaccine to the boosting dose of another is) for 6 months ... However, I would suggest that we make it available for the front-liners of about 500,000 to 1 million people. With this number, I think the amount of (AstraZeneca) vaccine to receive from the UK and the remaining from Japan is enough. After that, we will think of the remaining 9 million people. Children cannot receive AstraZeneca [...]

(As far as) the third dose is concerned, we decided yesterday, after I received the report from the permanent commission, which HE Aun Porn Moniroth discussed and raised to me. I agreed in writing. I send a note to Lok Chumteav Or Vandin to change the plan immediately. Where we plan to put AstraZeneca (is now to be) replaced by Sinopharm and Sinovac so that we can get AstraZeneca to use (as the third dose). The vaccine has not yet arrived. Those arrived and sent already to Ratanakkiri and Kratie cannot return. We need more AstraZeneca and we need to buy on our own. Purchase it. We may purchase one part through COVAX and another part through contact to the factory. South Korea, Japan, India, etc. have this kind of vaccine. Let us buy it from whatever countries that are easy to buy. We need to spend more money ... because at some point the effectiveness of (vaccine) will decrease, so we take a third dose to increase even more [...]

The fourth question ... is concerning (demand for) large cash to meet huge expenses and to resolve all sorts of issues. We did spend a lot of money so far and not only on the COVID-19,

but also on the flood crisis. You might have seen already. Last year, we took the hits from COVID-19 and flood. We did spend a large amount. We could not avoid spending. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify a bit so that our people can all understand why the Cambodian government, said to be collapsing in a few months, is still standing. According to outsiders, (this government) collapsed since last year. Now it remains the same. They even say that Hun Sen is dead ... Last night, on YouTube, I saw them talking (about waiting to see) if (the true) Hun Sen appears today. Here I am alive and going on live broadcast on all systems [...]

The Five Revenue Sources to Support Expenses

... I should say that so far we have had incomes from five sources to meet expenses. *The first source of our current monthly income is about USD 400 million on average.* Despite the decline in revenue, our revenue was still able to sustain expenses. As of yesterday, our seven-month revenue, excluding fiscal revenue, we recorded US\$ 3,061 million in tax and customs revenues. Of that, 1,716 million USD is from taxes, equivalent to 76.55% (of plan), and 1,345 million USD is customs revenue, equivalent to 56.9% (of plan). Let say it is three billion USD in 7 months. We can expect at least another two billion USD more in the remaining five months. In average, we have five billion USD a year or about 400 million USD/month. We spend not only for the fight against COVID-19, but also for infrastructure investments. We spend hundreds of millions of dollars in Sihanoukville. We are in the process of building 38 roads in Siem Reap city. Work continues no less on mounting the electricity network using both direct investment and counterpart fund ... We just now have the second belt road, when the third one is ready, transport will be easy. They do not need to go through traffic in Phnom Penh.

No Request to Suspend

Repayments, No Additional Loans Signed

We have not yet requested the lender countries to suspend the repayment. Still paying them back. Of course, this year we have not signed any new loan agreements yet. We only sign up for grant financing. We have financing for vaccine. ADB offered 95 million USD to buy the vaccine ... that said, how could they anticipate collapse of the Hun Sen's government? Some even say that Hun Sen has run out of money. We did spend a lot of money, but (look at) the income, if only spending on salary, including retirement, is 250 million USD/month, we still have the remaining 150 millions USD to spend on other things [...]

Where did our second source come from? We saved more than three billion USD before COVID-19 arrived. We recognize that so far we have spent a third of it already. That means we spend more than 1 billion (USD). We now have more than 2 billion dollars left. It is cash on hand and does not interfere with the international reserves of 20 billion (USD) and tons of gold [...]

Over 10 Months, 400M USD Spent to Support the Poor and Job-Loss Workers

... Think of the nearly 3 million people we have to feed. So far, we have supported them for over 10 months, spending more than 400 million (US dollars). There are tens of thousands of workers suspended from work in both the garment industry and the hotel and tourism industry, and we have to provide for them. They got 30 (USD) from their bosses and 40 (USD) from the state, while they have no jobs to do. They went to help their parents doing the farm works. On the tourism side, they get 40 USD and stay at home to help their parents ... we also provide cash for labor, so they can help build a dirt road, a canal, from which they got some more income. That reveals the meticulousness we are devoting to and not just for the sake of making noise [...]

No One Left to Die in Street, without Coffins for Cremation or Burial Ground

Last week alone, more than 7 billion riels or about two million USD spent on people in quarantine ... we let no one to lie dead in the streets. We have seen that in other countries. I still keep in mind that at least I have a coffin for the dead. I will not allow a corpse (of COVID-19) to lack the coffin and bury the body wrapped in a mat or nylon cloth. Yesterday I sent a report about coffin making into the anti-COVID-19 commission group. The production of the coffin (is useful), although we may not use them at this time, we can offer them to any poor man who die in the future. We just give out the coffin. It is not an insult on the lives of the people. Even in Myanmar, Min Aung Hlaing has just ordered 10 crematorium, and I have been ordering ones for a long time, to ensure that there are enough to cremate and land to bury the bodies of people killed by COVID-19.

The third source that we have spent in the past is coming from donations and contributions by HM the King, HM the Queen Mother and philanthropists for the fight against COVID-19 and the floods. I would like to inform you that the total amount has come to more than 140 million dollars. On the fight against COVID-19 and the floods ... of that amount, more than 130 million dollars and more than 48 billion riels donated by civil servants and the Armed Forces ... Khmer people are amazing. In this world, the poorest king is the King of Cambodia, but he is also a kind king who cares for his people. Both HM the King and HM the Queen Mother have no property, but they always take the lead, followed by others, in joining with the Royal Government actions. I did not go to ask rich people for help, but I suddenly saw Fresh News showed running news of contribution of this/that much by this/that person [...]

No Time Limit to Run for Prime Minister Position

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... Until I No Longer Want to

Without unity around the government, no one will contribute. Do not ever talk about this government being dictatorial. No one would join with a dictator. No one is more dictatorial than Pol Pot, but Pol Pot lasted only 3 years, 8 months and 20 days. Hun Sen has led and participated in leading the government for more than 42 years. Look, the more dictatorial you are, the more people wanted you down. I never do anything to get anyone killed ... They may sleep on it as to why I am able to stay this long in power. Now, I no longer limit my time as Prime Minister. (Hun Sen will) do it until Hun Sen no longer wants to. That would make thing easy. (Some make comments about) my health is like this or like that. I read the speech, (they said) that the footage was a montage [...]

Source 4 – we also have financial support from international financial institutions ... that we have spent in the past, such as the Asian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and some from the World Bank. European Bank lends in water development ... we are not just fighting COVID-19. We have to solve economic problems too. The Asian Development Bank gives 95 million USD to buy vaccine. We have not used it yet. We already have the vaccine. There are other costs involved when we need to give additional vaccine.

Source 5 – bilateral aid from some friendly countries. Friendly countries like China – provides us with medical supplies and vaccines, Japan – provides us with ambulances, medicine, and equipment for the fight against COVID-19, including vaccines that had arrived and were ready to arrive, the United States, announced it will offer 11 million USD plus more than 1 million doses of the vaccine on arrival. The British vaccine is coming soon. Although it has not yet come, Australia is committed to the offer. Our neighbors, both Vietnam and Thailand, also provided for us. Thai-

land just gave us a few days ago. Vietnam has provided many materials and helped us in the border provinces as well as the army. We ourselves have also shared with some countries as much as possible. Recently we sent help to Vietnam, and before this, we offer some help to Laos, to Myanmar, to Nepal and to Bangladesh.

2022 Financial Law – No Salary Increase & Public Investment Reduction Possible

The certain source to us is the monthly income of 400 million USD. We cannot ask other (for financial) assistance to deal with the problem. We will keep up with that level. *In drafting the budget law for financial manage for 2022, firstly, it is not yet possible to introduce a salary increase for civil servants and the army. Secondly, be prepared to reduce public investment.* In the past, we have reduced institutional expenses at both the national and sub-national levels, such as missions abroad, stationary needs, gasoline ... that saved us some 98 million USD. Our officials used to conduct mission tours to provinces. Now they stop to cut down the money for spending on what we needed here. We still have plan for infrastructure, but we can also reduce if necessary. In total, what we have spent so far, we can build at least 10 bridges across the Mekong River [...] You raised this question covering many issues and hope that this answer will not only provide for the press, but also be able to convey a message to the people, both inside and outside the country. Now let have more questions.

FRESH NEWS: [...] *I see that there is a risk of a re-emergence of the virus that is causing uncertainty in the world economy and trade [...] (1) what sectors does Cambodia depend as backbone strategies to support Cambodia's socio-economic development going forward?*

(2) Regarding the vaccination of children and young people [...] what is worrying now is that some are still worried and not bringing their children for

vaccination, and in this case, what problems can they anticipate in the future for not getting their children vaccinated? [...]

(3) [...] people in local community lack are still gathering to eat and drink, gambling [...] what could be the impetus for local authorities to strengthen measures to prevent ... COVID-19 risks in society [...]

(4) [...] will we see a possibility of ending the COVID-19 community outbreak event in the near future or are we going to put our heart and soul into living with COVID-19 ? [...]

(5) [...] related to US Congressman from the Democratic Party to continue the process of approving the Law on Democracy of Cambodia [...] (while) Mr. Biden himself said recently that “the choice of freedom comes with responsibility” [...] Would Samdech respond to this US Congressman [...]

Samdech Techo: Thanks for the questions. The first deals with economic uncertainty issues. This may relate to the prediction of economists on the world economy, as well as on the Cambodian economy. They may be wrong. This error is not the weakness of the forecasts of economic scientists of the major financial institutions, but (due to) the disruption by COVID-19, which distract the world economy or the economy of Cambodia from meeting the plan. The Cambodian economy, which previously aimed to realize at 4.1%, we now reforecast it to only 2.5%.

Cambodia to Rely on Agriculture

You asked what on sectors are we depending. *Agriculture is still an area that Cambodia needs to rely on. I said all the time that “(we must) make sure Cambodians do not run out of potable rice.” In this meaning, agriculture is a good sector. I just looked at the report of HE Veng Sokhon, Minister of Agriculture, a few days ago, and the volume of exports of the*

agricultural sector has increased more than expected. Although rice exports have declined slightly, paddy-rice exports to Vietnam, to Arab Emirates have increased by 200%. Now some countries are buying paddy rice from us. When we did not have a complete stock of rice mills, we sold them. If processed locally, it is also good. There is rice bran, there is rice husk and it creates jobs. However, we have to follow its chain according to the possibilities we have. Cashew nut exports increased by almost 300% ... up to more than 800,000 tons. Exports of cassava, bananas, mangoes (and other commodities) worth billions of dollars.

In addition, *small and medium-sized industries remain at the core of our efforts. We need to find ways to drive them. Apart from that, there may still be an opportunity in that if there is no pandemic transmission into the factory. Perhaps the size of the export of garments, shoes, etc., is still accelerating because the countries that used to supply is no longer able to do so. Only Cambodia can still supply. Some countries have a disrupted production chain and they move to invest in Cambodia. Although COVID-19 hit Cambodia, the Council for Development of Cambodia (CDC) still has a series of new investment projects approved. Even if we do not achieve our plan, job losses, and the tourism industry has not yet picked up, we expect that once vaccines are covered, we could revive tourism at some point [...]*

Second question – vaccination for those who have not yet vaccinated. In my opinion, even though we do not impose a mandatory vaccine law, you will see that it will arrive. Those who refuse to inject, I will soon give instruct authorities to check (for their reasons for not having vaccinated) [...] but we did not give up. They are our people. Even if s/he is wrong once in a while, we are tolerant. We will give him/her injection. This is just what we have to do because we are their leaders. Even

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though s/he used to curse the vaccine, blaming it for lack of effectiveness, killing, etc., but we must still give her/him the injection. I believe that it is not only in Cambodia. Soon it will become mandatory. (That the US President) Joe Biden himself told all federal officials to get the jab, would he be violating rights. Why they do not call him dictator or human rights abuser? [...]

For (Question 3) about negligence, disobedience, non-compliance with health rules, we have just set up a sub-commission to lead law enforcement. Our law has penalties. Well, if you violate it, you have to pay less, you have to pay more, or you have to go to jail ... If some are still not listening, still enjoying karaoke together, law enforcers will arrest and send them to prison. What else is there at this stage? Respect rights of one person and let many other die in a village? ... (How can we) think of individual rights, but do not think of rights of tens of thousands others [...]

The answer to the fourth question about whether or not the COVID-19 community outbreak event is going to end, for me, I believe that the disease is not going to be over yet. The only option left is to learn how to live with COVID-19 in a new normal way.

Singapore has started training (people with their normal way of life). I also started training myself now. I now have to take care of my files myself. No one arranged it [...] I am learning to live on my own ... I have to fetch your own food and your own plates. Let us learn to live in a new normal way [...] the new normal way in the COVID-19 era will go on [...] again, I do not believe that COVID-19 disease will be over. It will remain like the so-called Spanish flu, which continues to catch people today. The Spanish flu, according to history, killed 52 million people at that time. Now we are less than 5 million dead. Well, it does not end. Let us learn to live in a new way,

wash your hands, wear a mask, (and keep safe distance), this is what everyone needed to do.

For the fifth and final question, please go and ask the Americans. I do not have to answer it. Please go and ask the US House of Representatives, because the Americans who do it, (it should be) the Americans to answer. However, do not consider it (what happened) the US government. How many MPs? Please go and ask. I do not have the right to answer on behalf of the Americans. Whatever they wanted to do is up to them. As for anything belongs to Cambodia, I can answer. I cannot answer matters of others [...]

PNN: [...] *(I am) asking Samdech Techo's permission to allow public sale at a reasonable price of rapid test kits [...] so that people can buy and take the test in the family [...]*

(2) [...] (Patients visiting) the doctors (for other illnesses), sometimes an emergency, there have been demands for COVID-19 tests while the testing process is slow [...] and the cost of such test at some private hospitals can be as high as 50 USD. Samdech Techo, could you intervene on this issue?

(3) [...] concerning Johnson & Johnson vaccine ... when will Samdech Techo decide in principle to deliver and to what group of people? [...]

Samdech Techo: to answer the first question about the (COVID-19) test, as I mentioned earlier, it is very important that we manage it in time. So far, we have allowed the private sector to import rapid tests device. The issue is the poor do not have access to such testing, so it is inevitable that the state will continue to be responsible for the testing, with which I suggest the Ministry of Health can share the test equipment with hospitals in remote areas where testing is needed.

For the middle class, they can afford to buy the test device. We need to differentiate between those who are knowledgeable, those who are able and those who are not. Those

who lack the ability are clear that the state is still responsible for them. This issue is being prepared for monitoring the distribution of state test device and the sale of test device by private sector. It remains the subject of monitoring regarding its effectiveness, both public and private, for us to make adjustments. This is a new problem for our society. There are not many countries in our world that people can take the (COVID-19) tests and treatment free of charge. (COVID-19) vaccination and treatment for foreigners is also free of charge. Cambodia is poor, but Cambodia is not heartless. Countries in our region, (people) pay for testing.

Now the payment for test is available in the private sector/hospital, which you have said that the price is expensive. I suggest that the Ministry of Health should monitor the testing that takes too much money. I am asking the Ministry of Health to monitor and work with the private sector/hospitals, which charge high price for (COVID-19) tests. In other instance, absolutely, (COVID-19) testing by public doctors is free of charge. Please send this message to the people [...] let us divide it into two parts, and the part carried out by the state will be free of charge for the people, whether rich or poor [...]

Even if we take money from the people who are taking (COVID-19) tests, it will not make Cambodia rich. We have already spent hundreds of millions of dollars (to help our people) and continued to do so. The Cambodian economy does not collapse because we do not charge people for taking the tests. As for the private sector, they have to take money [...] Therefore, I inform the people to protest against the state doctors or volunteer doctors who take state equipment/device to test and charge money. It is wrong. That is not a regulation [...]

Johnson & Johnson Vaccine to Ethnic Minority Areas

I suggested to Lok Chumteav

Or Vandin to send Johnson & Johnson to the ethnic minority area. Why? Johnson & Johnson came late [...] I want the people in the minority areas in Stung Treng, Ratanakkiri, Preah Vihear, etc., – ethnic areas, to receive this Johnson & Johnson vaccine. It is easy because Johnson & Johnson is a single dose injection vaccine.

On the one side, our doctors will not stay in those areas for too long and, on the other, it will be only a one trip for those ethnic people. We will figure out how to get enough people for the one million doses of Johnson & Johnson. We will try to locate them in Ratanakkiri, Stung Treng, Preah Vihear, and some other areas like Oddar Meanchey, Pursat, and Kampong Speu provinces. Suppose we still have some left as suggested by Lok Chumteav Or Vandin, we will have to check expiring date. If the date is good for a long time, we may use it for people who have not yet vaccinated, and that would include our citizens who are currently in Thailand and will be returning home. Thailand cannot find a vaccine for them. Some are in the hospitals. When they return, they will need vaccine. They may get the Johnson & Johnson [...]

First Drop of Oil May Fail, Gold May Be Lucky

Let me talk a little bit on this ... on December 29, we announced the first drop of oil may for Cambodia. It might have been the first failure for us. That we planned to get 5,700 barrels a day, finally they could get only 1,000 barrels a day. Now the company is bankrupt and the tanker with oil pumped in escaped. We were late to block it [...]

We will continue to make efforts as we still have many oil blocks to explore and do business. Luckily, we got gold. In just one month, we can refine up to 137 kilos. It is 90 percent gold (or 21.6 karat) in bulk of 20 kilograms, 15 kilograms, 5 kilograms. Our first (natural resource) revenue may come from it [...]