

National Road 7 Segment Inaugurated

(07 February 2022 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)



China Helps with Connectivity to/in the Northeast

Today, I am pleased to work with the Chinese Ambassador His Excellency Wang Wintian, Excellencies, Lok Chumteavs, Ladies and Gentlemen, and compatriots to inaugurate National Road No. 7, a length of 93 km long from the Tiger Roundabout to Romeat commune, Kratie province. A moment ago, His Excellency Wang Wintian talked about the Year of the Tiger, and we came to the place of the Tiger. Of course, the Chinese or Vietnamese year has already entered the Karl (Tiger) year. People who have a tradition of following the Chinese New Year tradition usually divide the year in February, and they just entered the New Year. Cambodia divides the year in April, mostly on the 13th or 14th, the New Year angel will come down to replace the old year angel. I do not know what year to celebrate this year, but for me, born on the year of dragon, there does not seem to have any bad luck with any zodiac [...]

I am very happy to be back in Kratie today with the inauguration of a new achievement,

about which Senior Minister Sun Chanthol just reported and reminded us of the issues related to aid (of the People's Republic of China). [...] I clearly remember. I would also like to take this opportunity to state my intentions at the time. In 2004, when Cambodia was in political deadlock, China did not wait for the formation of a new government. This is an important point in our relationship. Everyone can remember that after the 2003 election, the political stalemate (occurred) due to the boycott by some political parties and lasted for almost a year before the government was able to form. At that time, the CPP had only 73 seats, and our constitutional system (required) (two-thirds of the seats in parliament) or 82 votes to form a government.

Some countries have pursued a wait-and-see attitude, but the People's Republic of China did not wait. Initially, the Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi visited the Kingdom of Cambodia. A month later, invited by His Excellency Wen Jiabao as Prime Minister and His Excellency Hu Jintao as President of the PRC, I paid an official visit to the People's Republic of China without

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Interior Annual Review Conference

(23 February 2022 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

Here followed are off-the-cuff comments on point 8 and 9 of the prepared text:

Point 8 – 2022 is the first year to implement the five-year plan of the National Program for Decentralization and De-concentration, Phase II, in order to continue to promote the process of sub-national administrative reform to achieve the goals of ministries, institutions, administrations at all levels. At the sub-national level, continue

to participate in the preparation of annual action plans and budgets to implement reforms with a high sense of responsibility [...]

[Start of Elaboration 1]

Regarding the National Program for Decentralization and De-concentration Reform, I would like to take this opportunity to speak to the leadership of the Ministry of Interior as well as the provincial governors about the appointment of officials. In the past, we have worked hard to organize ethnic officials in the Northeast and in Koh Kong Province. Before that, we sent many Cambodian officials on important tasks in the Northeast. Later we also organized training for the officers from those areas to be responsible for the works there and we did this work successfully. We did a great job for Koh Kong province too.

One of the issues that I would like to point out is the status of districts and/or provinces where there are concentration of Cambodian Muslims population [...]. I urge that there must be one deputy governor (from the ethnic population) in the provinces where the Muslims live, and if possible, where capacity allows, the deputy governor of the districts or Khan with the largest Muslim population.

This is not a quota, but an issue related to government policies and facilitation for the works we are doing to serve people. Of course, there is limited number of seats available. We see that now, as we begin to transfer jobs from the national to the sub

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Japan's Aid Choeng Ek Water Treatment Plant

(22 February 2022 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

Three Japanese Aid Projects Inaugurated Within One Month

Today we come together to inaugurate the Choeng Ek Wastewater Treatment Plant, a grant from the Government and people of Japan. As Ambassador HE MIKAMI Masahiro just mentioned, in just over a month, (we have put into operation) three projects [...] the first one is the National Road No. 5 segment, which connects Battambang and Banteay Meanchey province. Secondly, last week on February 16, we put into official operations seven bridges – two in Prey Veng (province) and five in Kratie province. Today, we launch the groundbreaking for the construction of a sewer system, a grant from the Japanese government and people.

If I am not mistaken, what happened today is the seventh step I took in launching and inaugu-

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waiting for the formation of a new government. This – as I remember it – I was calling on our Chinese friends to help with connectivity to/in the Northeast.

Turning the Northeast into a Fourth Economic Pole

In terms of connection to/in the Northeast [...] (the) focus has been on Kratie, Stung Treng, Ratanakkiri, Mondulkiri and the other part is to Preah Vihear. One can see that the roads that connect those provinces the Northeast region are mostly grants and loans from the People's Republic of China [...] from Kratie province to the border of Laos and then Stung Treng to Preah Vihear via National Road No. 9 and National Road No. 62.

Why did I do that? Our past has been difficult for people of our northeastern region. Indeed, there was a song “Rumduol Kratie” (a flower of Kratie) that says it is not far between Kratie and Phnom Penh (for the flower). Yesterday, this song was also re-written by Mr. Him Sophea entitled “Kratie and Phnom Penh is not far anymore,” broadcast last night on various TVs [...] I have traveled to these provinces [...]

On the other hand, I aim to ensure that Cambodia has up to four (economic) poles after we have established the three poles. The first economic pole is Phnom Penh. The second economic pole is Sihanoukville. The third economic pole is Siem Reap. I wanted to turn this northeast area into the fourth economic pole as we have potentials of agro-industry and mineral resources. It was with this intention that, at that time, I had a request to connect Kratie and Stung Treng as a preliminary step.

Chinese Grants to Cambodia on a World Largest Scale

The (Chinese) grant at that time as HE Wang Wintian confirmed was not only China's large-scale grant for Cambodia, but also the largest grant for the world. I still remember that (while learning about) Cambod-

ia's concern related to dealing with landmines and unexploded ordnance, since we were so poor that we could not even pay our civil servants [...] Premier Wen Jiabao, chairing a meeting in Yunnan, decided to provide an additional US\$ 600,000 for demining along the road to Stung Treng province.

I still remember that time Cambodia miscalculated (its progress speed). Major international institutions, as well as some countries, have misjudged Cambodia's rapid progress. The Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, Japan and China made evaluations and built Cambodia small roads as they used to. Even the Japanese National Road 6A, the reconstruction kept it at only 7 meters wide. We have expanded it from initially 7 to 8 meters, to wider width due to the increase in traffic. The flood destroyed us. Overloaded trucks damaged the road further. We asked the Chinese friends to help us again.

Today, we inaugurated this road as part of the Chinese friend's assistance for connectivity in the northeast, funded by the People's Republic of China. Cambodia has gradually established an economic pole in its own country. Here, connected to the development triangle are provinces are provinces of Kratie, Stung Treng, Ratanakkiri and Mondulkiri. We also look beyond Preah Vihear, where we have connected a bridge across the Mekong River, and National Road 9 is now connecting Stung Treng to Preah Vihear province.

The Journey of 6,000 Km Assess Post-War Situation and Peace/Development Era

I have traveled 6,000 kilometers ... all by land. I wanted to know where the fighting took place in the past and wished to see with my own eyes how it is now. In 2016, I traveled to many provinces to visit former battlefields so that I could assess the situation of war-torn countries, the post-war situation, and the status of a peaceful and developed country. Traveling 6,000 kilo-

meters at that time, I deployed many schools. In Kratie there has a (school buildings) of many floors in the provincial capital. I should emphasize a bit on socio-economic development. I observed from a helicopter while I was traveling and saw that Kratie land is rich in rubber along with other industrial crops that are part of the Cambodian economy. All provinces are in development.

Northeastern Crops Exported as Raw Materials and Processed

I should say that the gold produced in Mondulkiri for more than seven months was 1751 kg. Today there will be a report. In general, we produce almost 100 kg per week, maybe 80 to 100 kg. It has been increasing. That is why I am targeting the economic poles in the northeast, with agro-industry and mineral resources in mind. We have not done all the research yet, but we still have bauxite, coal, and more gold mines. We have not used them yet. We just started producing gold in the last seven months. So far, gold has not turned into the pure gold (of 24 carats) yet [...] I looked at the message sent to me on WhatsApp by the Minister of Mines and Energy [...]

Usually on Mondays and Fridays there are reports of the amount of gold produced. When we produce gold nuggets, some are 20 kilograms, some are 30 kilograms, and some are more than 10 kilograms, we send them to purify in Australia. Now we have crops in these provinces, although we do not have enough processing, but rubber, cashew, pepper and other crops exported as raw materials and as finished products.

“Political and Administrative Integration Is not Sufficient”

I am happy about what we have envisioned after we achieved peace. I have made it clear to my colleagues in government that it would not be sufficient to have political and administrative integration only. There must be physical integration. That means to have connecti-

ty. This means that Cambodians throughout the Kingdom of Cambodia enjoy the same development. It is in this regard that people can see many roads built, except we still have a small gap between Koh Kong province, passing through Pursat province to connect with Samlot of Battambang province [...]

If we just say the country is united but left in a void, what can people depend on? ... I used to travel from Ratanakkiri to Stung Treng. At that time, in 1990, the negotiation process was in full swing, and in the country, I also had work to do. I went to Mondulkiri by helicopter. I (went up) to Ratanakkiri. At that time, my entourage asked me not to travel by land at all because Pol Pot could have ambushed the convoy. I said – “anyone who is afraid can go back to Phnom Penh. Let me go my way.” All right, they all came with me. In Ratanakkiri, we stopped and ate at about 3 pm at Sre Pok Bridge and traveled to Stung Treng. I want to travel from Stung Treng down by land, but they say the road was in cuts. Anyway, because of work in Phnom Penh and the father's surgery at Calmette Hospital, I hurried back to Phnom Penh.

To Meet High School Students with Mention “A” on February 28

The situation is not the same as before. We have now built roads, hospitals and schools [...] there are up to 45 high school graduates with mention “A” (in the high school diploma or Baccalaureate exam) in Kratie province. I am thinking with His Excellency Hang Chuon Naron at first to meet with A-mention graduates only from Kandal and Phnom Penh in Phnom Penh, while students in the provinces had to follow online. However, I think that both the governors who sponsored the A-Mention graduates and the (CPP) provincial working teams, the students and the parents wanted to go to Phnom Penh. With 1,800 graduates and their families, I think we can

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arrange to receive them in Phnom Penh. Although Omicron seemed to have made increasing presence in Phnom Penh, I think we can still do it. I set the 28th (of February) for that [...]

Without Electricity, Clean Water, Schools/Hospitals, Urban and Rural Gaps Are There

Now look at the statistics of Kratie, which has five districts, there is 1 university and 12 high schools. This means that, on average, there are 2 high schools, and 43 secondary schools in each district, while the province has 43 communes. That means at least one secondary (for each commune). For the time to come there would be 2 to 3 (secondary schools) in small/large communes. There are 286 primary schools, while we have 295 villages. Some villages are still not registered, but some villages are probably small. There are 102 kindergartens. This is how we are going about reducing the gap between urban and rural areas. If we leave the countryside in mud, if we leave the countryside without electricity, if we leave the countryside without access to clean water, without adequate schools, hospitals, reducing the gap between urban and rural is still impossible.

Every Villages Access to Electricity and Clean Water

[...] some 87% (of villages) have access to electricity. There are no electricity for villages in remote areas. I believe that would be the case for some newly developed provinces, such as Kratie, Stung Treng, Ratanakiri, Monduliri, and Preah Vihear. These provinces may be a bit slow (in having access to electricity and clean water) compared to other provinces in the lower basin area, which every village already have electricity [...] we will make sure that all rural villages have access to electricity. Now 98 percent of the villages (in the whole country) have access to electricity. The remaining 2%, would be those in Kratie, Stung

Treng, Ratanakiri, Monduliri, Preah Vihear – the newly developed province. We must continue to work to provide electricity to the people as well. Where water pipe of clean water are not there yet, we may have to work harder of giving them access to well water to solve the water problem.

March 2022 – Two Hospitals to Inaugurate

Regarding the new achievements as mentioned by HE Wang Wentian, at the end of last year and the beginning of this year, three achievements have gone into inauguration – the first is the bridge (at Stoeng Trang of Kompong Cham province and Kroch Chhmar of Tbong Khmum province) and the official opening of the construction site of Road 71. Secondly, the inauguration of the Morodok Techo Stadium, a huge (China's) grant of over one hundred million dollars for the SEA Games, but also serving the needs of our youth and sports development to the future. The third achievement is the road that we are celebrating now.

The other two major hospitals that will be inaugurating are a hospital in Tbong Khmum, inaugurated on March 7 ... and the Cambodia-China Friendship Hospital Preah Kosamak on the 28th (March). Therefore, in March, two hospitals worth nearly 80 million US dollars are going into services with the assistance of the People's Republic of China. Earlier this year, apart from China, we also had the opening of a South Korean site for National Road 48 and the inauguration of Road 5 with Japanese funding from Battambang to Serei Sophom. In the next few days, a few more Japanese built bridges in Prey Veng will also go into service. Well, the construction sites are open non-stop. In other words, Covid-19 may slow us down, but cannot hinder our development [...]

NR 7 to Border with Laos, a Bridge at Kratie Town, and the Road to Kampong Thom

For this province (Kratie), HE

Wang Wentian said “China owes” [...] I would say the Chinese friend has two more obligations. The first obligation was to connect NR 7 to the border with Laos with expansion and improved quality. We did it once together, but now it is in damaged condition. The second obligation is, in 2023, to launch the construction for the bridge across the area near the provincial town of Kratie so that we can connect to Kampong Thom. Do not assume that Hun Sen forget about Kratie province. The connection of the bridge in Kratie province is not just for crossing from one side to the other, but we are building a road to Kampong Thom and Kampong Thom province [...] it is a habit of the Chinese friend, when they speak and they work fast than what set in plan. This is a Chinese way. They talked less, but they do more [...]

Chinese Market Opens Wider for Cambodian Produces

Indeed, at this stage, China is implementing “Zero Covid-19”. The implementation of Zero Covid-19 makes it difficult for professionals (to travel). When boarding the helicopter together, HE Wang Wentian confirmed that he had solved the problem of phytosanitation checking for the Cambodian produces of Mian Pailin (longan from Pailin) and fish online. Well, we will be exporting them to China. The Chinese market is more open to accept Cambodian produces. Bananas and mangoes are already on export. In this Kratie area, people can grow bananas and mangoes to meet not only domestic demand, but also for export demand, for foreign currency. Doing rice farming alone cannot be rich. We have to have goods to serve for export [...] although now it is difficult for Chinese technicians to travel to Cambodia to inspect the Chinese friend has made it easier for the so-called online information system to control such checking [...]

“3 Dos 3 Don'ts”, Basic Vaccination Plus Boosters,

China's Sinovac, Vaccine Factory

... Even though the COVID-19 has been down for more than 30 days and we have not had any casualties, the economy is fully open, including the opening of karaoke clubs we must not forget to protect ourselves. Continuing the vaccination campaign for people who have not had vaccinated with the basic doses, the first dose, the second dose, because s/he has some diseases, or pregnant women when we started the vaccination campaign [...] the other day I told His Excellency Wang Wentian at my house that I was ordering 5 million doses of Sinovac. Suddenly, His Excellency Wang Wentian said that there was no need to buy, keep the money. China is to donate the 5 million doses of vaccine. However, because I have approved the commission's request, I wrote back that let us buy only 3 million doses as China would donate 5 million doses [...]

Please help deliver to Cambodia because I need to have it in hands to ensure that my people have had their strategic vaccination, which in turn guarantee the community immunity causing no more deaths of COVID-19. That is how I do things. I apologize that the vaccine arrived in Kratie a little late compared to Phnom Penh. This is a solution when we do not have enough vaccine [...] I voiced on phone that we needed to ensure full vaccination in Phnom Penh and Kandal. That was the cause for delay. This option is the best [...]

Some countries have now reached the level of enforcing administrative and legal measures, with fines for those who refused to have vaccination or dismissal from work for not vaccinating. Well, for us here, we give to our people free of charge [...] the day before, the French ambassador requested for Pfizer to inject 6,000 people, including children from the first dose [...] in case we could not provide, France will request the import of Pfizer and

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Moderna. I told Lok Chumteav Or Vandin to give vaccines for both the booster dose and the base dose to 6,000 people. Cambodians are generous. Foreigners in Cambodia, Cambodians provided vaccines for not a dime [...]

I have nothing to give now, and those countries already have theirs. The vaccines to arrive is for use only in Cambodia. Since AstraZeneca Poland has approached its deadline, we needed to speed up in provinces to provide them as booster doses. Separately, the storage period of Sinovac and Sinopharm is 2 years, so we can buy and store in the warehouse. I do not want to be an officer by letting the army go into battle without weapons, without ammunition. I have to make sure that our doctors have enough means on hand for vaccinations or immunizations. This is a guarantee that our efforts are now recognized.

I would like to thank the People's Republic of China for its strategic support in providing vaccines to the Cambodian people and thank all the sources of support that have provided the vaccines to Cambodia: Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Poland and Australia, whose vaccines come to us as a source of support. The strategic source we still need to continue is from China. Let us work together to promote the establishment of a vaccine production base in Cambodia ... Doing that means that we would have things in hand. Although we order from the factory, the vaccine is in Cambodia without the hassle of long distance shipping [...]

Please call on our people to do their best so that we do not go backwards. We missed the Khmer New Year celebration for 2 years in a row. Now this year, we are determined to celebrate it. Let us dance for fun, but dance a little apart. During the Chinese New Year, there were nearly 1 million people going places [...] but we see very low infection rates in the provinces. Kratie does not seem to have

infection for more than a month now. We have worked very hard to fight this disease. Now Alpha and Delta, a deadly disease seems to be going out of Cambodia, and what is happening today, there are 108 people infected with Omicron. (I am calling on our people to keep exercising) the 3 Dos and 3 Don'ts [...]

“Scolding Hun Sen Does Not Means the Person Has No Relationship with Hun Sen”

I think I do not say anything more. I do not want to talk politics. It is boring ... some commented that the US canceled the US-ASEAN meeting due to US dissatisfaction with the ASEAN chair. We have received the letter (about the US-ASEAN Summit) since January 14, but ... we kept it away until yesterday. I signed the response letter on February 1. They were offended, but now they are starting to make more comments saying that as long as Hun Sen dares to go to the United States, he will surely fall into the hands of the United States. What a deviation [...]

Let me send a message to James Sok too. Brother James Sok, as you speak I have your voice with me here. You speak with the intention of causing me to return fire to you, brother, so that you will attract some people in the opposition. I do not play with you. You are wrong in what you said. For example, “If there is a war, be willing to take up arms and attack Cambodia.” I warn you, you are worse than animals. The beast knows its nest. Even if you are a foreigner, you should not use that language. Even if you do not speak, no one will call you dumb [...]

Method for Myanmar: “Put out the Flames of War before Democracy Works”

The situation in Myanmar has caused some to agree and some to disagree. That is the democratic process. I am also waiting to see between the soft and hard methods, (which one will work). My mandate is just over 11 months, so ... let have someone solve it later. I chair

ASEAN for a year, how could I solve the problem of Myanmar? I am continuing my efforts to resolve. Previously, many Myanmar people insulted me. I have to remind them that what they do is wrong. I have no interest other than to help the people of Myanmar get out of the war. Some are now cursing the UN Secretary-General's special envoy. She also has an interpretation of the so-called process of dividing power with the military. Those who made comments cursed the special envoy (accusing her) for trying to keep the military in power. (The way I see it is that) if you wanted to get rid of the military, you have to go to war for another 50 years. Go for it if you would like to. From seeking peace to protecting peace for my country, (I know that) it is very difficult. If you want to fight, go ahead.

My method is to put out the flames of war, and then see about democracy, or whatever. People can like or dislike it. If they do not like it, (let me ask) to whom would you talk? Now think of this question. They want to overthrow the government of those in power in Naypyidaw. You do it as you please. According to the Cambodian eleven-year experience, from 1979-1991, the Khmer Rouge sit at the United Nations. The Hun Sen government had had not recognition by anyone. In the end, they had had to work with Hun Sen. (This) is an experience that you should understand. Whether you belong to the opposition in Myanmar or to others, (I am inviting) you look forward to fighting non-stop. If (you continue to pursue the) position of closing the door. Wanted me to go and solve complicated things in one day [...] those mighty ones may go do it themselves [...]

Holding on to 5 Points Consensus Initiated with Partners in the ASEAN Framework

I am now willing to go to South Korea to co-chair a meeting on the Korean Peninsula with three or four co-chairs – including me, the President of Albania,

former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon – and maybe the UPF (Universal Peace Federation) Chairman. I will read the opening speech. If they welcome me, I go. If someone does not welcome me, I have many jobs to attend. I fulfill the role of ASEAN (Chair) [...]

I will wait and see with other ASEAN partners on resolving the Myanmar issue because I seems anyone has tried to resolve it. Once the ASEAN Chair started acting, there have been reactions internally and among us. There are also many supporters, both inside and outside the region. This method is a way to prevent people from dying. I do not want you to be killed by bullets or bombs. I want the prisoners released. I want a ceasefire, humanitarian aid and I want a dialogue. It all comes down to a five-point consensus. Speaking of meetings in Jakarta, ask for the recording back. (Who) raises 5 points of consensus? I raised 3 points, but (Singaporean Prime Minister His Excellency) Lee Hsien Loong organized it into 5 points.

Journalists also got it. At that time, they did not write anything in my praise. Even the Philippine Foreign Minister posted on Facebook praising me for raising the issue. Why would I abandon the five-point consensus that I initiated with other partners in the ASEAN framework. I should say in response with some diplomatic language and some exhortation. Although Cambodia is a small country, we have equal rights. Let the ASEAN Chair do some work. If you wanted to fight, just you fight then [...]

Thank China for Honoring HM to the Opening of the Winter Olympics

Through His Excellency Wang Winthean, I would like to express my gratitude to the People's Republic of China and thank you for the honor of inviting HM Preah Karuna Preah Mohaksat of the Kingdom of Cambodia to attend the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Beijing. Not many heads

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-national level, more works are now at the sub-national level. That is why the Standing Committee (of the Cambodian People's Party) decided to assign the task to Samdech Krala Haom to amend the laws related to increasing the number of seats for the Board of Governors of the Capital, Districts, Khans, and Municipals.

I suggest that in any districts with concentration of Muslims, there should be a deputy governor (of the Muslim origin) in that district or Khan, so that we can facilitate community relations, and that is part of the racial harmony. I repeat, this is not a reserved quota for Muslim, but this is a policy that we must pay attention. Please call on (Muslim) students as well as Muslim officials to pay attention to capacity building because it is not possible to choose just any Muslim (without qualifications) for that matter [...]

... We must start with from formulating a policy framework, as we have set out that at the provincial level there should be at least one female deputy governor. If the provincial governor is a woman, then there will be two female members in the board of governors, meaning one governor and one deputy governor. Well, we set out general principles, and in institutions, we set out policies that there must be at least one female Secretary of State and at least one female Undersecretary of State. We are now also developing such a policy framework. Therefore, provinces with Muslims should review how many districts in their provinces to fit in this policy and submit this proposal to the Ministry of Interior to check the qualifications to appoint those officials later.

We will be amending the law to increase the number of seats for more positions. Now, to be honest, I pity those at the sub-national level. Too much works. The jobs of a minister in Phnom Penh is easy, because we are in the office [...] but **the officials at the grassroots level are very difficult. Sometimes we invit-**

ed them for a meeting in Phnom Penh, and while being busy in Phnom Penh, they had so much works waiting for them at the grassroots. Especially when we transfer more functions, the workload falls more down [...]

It is part of the policy that we have developed and implemented in Koh Kong, Stung Treng, Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri provinces. If I observe, there are not many provinces with lots of Muslims. There are provinces of Kampong Cham, Kratie, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Kampot, etc. Phnom Penh may have one Khan/districts ... Officials we needed must meet the necessary qualifications to be appointed as deputy governors or governors. This is just another indication of the ongoing reforms at the grassroots level [...]

[End of Elaboration 1]

Point Ninth – We must continue to work together to implement the Royal Government's measures to combat Covid-19 by continuing to promote the Covid-19 vaccine, which is a key measure linked to the consistent implementation of the “3 Dos and 3 Don'ts” measures, while adhering to the lifestyle and work with Covid-19 in a new normal way.

[Start of Elaboration 2]

Support Customs and Tax Departments in Revenue Collection

I think that there is one thing that His Excellency Lok Chumteav can consider as the 10th point or a separate point of reference related to the issue of requesting all forces, both armed forces and civilians, to support the process of collecting revenue for the state and try to save money [...]

This relates to two points. **Firstly, I would like to emphasize that we must jointly campaign to support the revenue collectors, namely the Customs and Taxation Departments [...] if we cannot collect revenue and let the culture of not (paying) taxes continue, it is a disaster for**

our country. I give an example to illustrate the absoluteness [...] when I first issued an absolute order that from the next June or July, there will be no more unpaid tax duty vehicles or right-hand drive on the road. We collected revenue from 5,993 unpaid tax duty vehicles, equivalent to \$ 51,600,000 as of yesterday. We still have another half to collect. The Ministry of Economy and Finance's estimates are not wrong. There are more than 10,000 units worth more than US\$ 100 million. Now we start from taking strict measures. So far, we have collected US\$ 51 million from tax evaders. This is just about cars. There is something else.

Therefore, I would like to ask the officials or those who have the money to buy a car or motorcycle to pay taxes to the state. We cannot be complacent about this. If the state has no income, how can the state cover the expenses [...] frankly speaking, the poor do not have money to purchase cars. Well, let us be honest. The best they could do perhaps was to buy an old motorcycle. Why those having money and using expensive cars falsify the plate numbers, or sometimes taking refuge under the license plates of the army, police, parliament, senate, and government [...]

If we set a bad example, how do we expect others to pay taxes? So please continue to cooperate [...] we must mobilize those who initially evaded paying taxes to pay taxes. This is the point where I am making an appeal and issuing an order for all levels, all institutions to do this work [...] where do we get money from every day to pay salaries? Is it not that we get salaries from taxes (collection) [...] we also needed it for other expenses. Let us all work on supporting customs and taxation. Without the support of local authorities and (armed) forces, we will not be able to achieve the goal of raising revenues for the nation.

In Cambodia, there many concessions for its people, including agricultural land taxes. We never take agricul-

tural land tax for our national budget. The CPP has been leading this work since 1979, and if the CPP continues to lead, the people can be sure that there will be no land tax. If the next generation levies taxes on the agricultural land, if my soul still knows, I will curse them because it is my policy from the beginning [...] under my leadership since 1985, I do not take (agricultural land tax). From 1979 in the leadership framework until now, 43 years, I still do not impose farmland land tax. If I could live to be 100 years old, I would still not take (agricultural land tax), but when I die, and if the next generation of CPP leaders were to take farmland tax from farmers, and if my soul knew, I would curse them.

Farmers need our support, not taxes from them. We need to invest in the canal system and other investments so that they can develop the family economy. Not a time to take tax from them. Even if you take taxes from them, you cannot get rich. Let us help them to become rich. It alleviates the fact that we have to intervene to help them. I also experienced the tears of my parents. They used to confront the dilemma of flooded rice fields and taxes. This is not a new story. (The case of) “The Beast” village in Kampong Chhnang province, you may ask why it happened? Since the 1940s, the French tried to collect taxes. As the people had nothing to pay, they rose against them and killed the French tax collector. They then called the village “The Beasts” [...] it was all about tax issue.

That is why I decided in my life that I do not allow my hands to collect taxes from farmers. Instead, I lead the land reform that Pol Pot took away as common property and return the property to the people. We have distributed land to people when the country has a population of six to seven million and we now have up to nearly 17 million people. We are in short of land and destroying the forest [...] I urge all business people to pay
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taxes according to the law in force and ask the authorities to support the collection of taxes by the customs department properly [...]

Second, I would like to urge the sub-national authorities to focus on costs management. We all already know that the world is going through difficulties because of Covid-19. Before 2020, in a year, we earned three, we spent two, we saved one [...] but since the Covid-19 began, we have not made enough money. Although we earned more than US\$ 400 million a month, it is not enough for our expenses. The money we saved in the past is getting less [...] so I would like to issue an order. Although you have already in plan, but if it is not necessary, please postpone, and wait for Covid-19 to subside.

If you think about spending without looking at the source of income, the expenses would be big. Some expenses are huge but we cannot avoid, while some we can. Expenses we cannot avoid are needs to buy vaccines to inject people. It is inevitable [...] today we are also launching the vaccination campaign for the 3-year-old children.

We have no idea as to when we can stop using the vaccine. We must have money at hand. It is not possible to borrow money to buy vaccines. We needed cash. We had to release the budget. We continue spending almost US\$ 40 million a month to feed the poor and vulnerable people.

We must also provide proper care, medicines, and food for the patients at Covid-19 care and quarantine centers. Now there are effective medicines. We ordered [...] Yesterday, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance, HE Aun Porn Moniroth, at the request of the Ministry of Health, requested to release 7,000 doses from the reserve stock for today, because in a few days the new batch will come [...] (medicine) is not

always easy to buy. Sometimes, even with money it is not easy to buy [...]

[...] It has been two years now that we did not increase the salaries of our civil servants. I would like to thank all the institutions that have complied with the insistent request and the regulations in place not to recruit new employees, which adds to the staff burden costs. Keep up the good work. As far as recruitment is concerned, we must think from the day they go to work until the day they die. They work and they get paid until they retire, they have money in retirement until the day they die.

This is what I called the staff burden, which normally should be only 4% of GDP. We have already paid 5 or 6 percent. We have the budget [...] it is just that we did not raise salaries. We still offer Khmer New Year and Pchum Ben bonuses for our civil servants and the armed forces. That is all necessary expenses. I propose a delay so that we can reduce costs. We are ready to reserve this money in case we are in force majeure situation [...]

... Previously we earned three, we spent two, and we saved one. (Thanks to the saving) we had, fortunately, we used them when Covid-19 happened. I would ask relevant institutions to prioritize their demands [...] yesterday ... a unit argued in a request that they needed to get ready for works at the local level in 2022 and 2023, and they requested to buy two cars [...] one Ford 2022 and another one in 2022 too. I wrote back that the budget is struggling, I cannot allow such purchases [...] there is no reason to go down to the grass-roots (at this time) [...] let us pause, and delay. Some plans can be postponed.

I ask the Minister of Economy and Finance to inspect those requests seriously for me. I cannot run out of reserves for the fight. I urge everyone here not to make requests, and those at the lower level do not make proposals [...]

I always sent (status of income) every weekend. I always send into the Royal Government Group. All members of the Royal Government know how much incomes we have. Last month, on the night of the 31st, I sent a report that we have received USD 288 million in internal taxes and USD 195 million in customs. This month, we have not got the figures yet. As of yesterday, the customs revenue is less than USD 130 million, and the tax is not there yet but they hope to pick up from today onwards [...]

I am thankful that for the last two years we have reduced expenses by ministries on stationaries to make up for the costs we needed. We have not yet brought down the expenditures to support people infected and/or impacted by Covid-19, and to buy Covid-19 vaccines, since Covid-19 is not over, this is the point I want to make [...]. Samdech and Excellency can put this comment in as the 10th point or a separate point, or the order and the appeal, urging to work together to help the revenue collection unit have a tax against tax evasion [...]

As far as revenue is concerned, we must support the revenue collection unit, while the expenditure department must all save money. The war is getting worse. Although the Omicron variant caused less death but if it infects a great number of people, what are we going to do? [...] the forthcoming situation is not yet clear for us.

To be clear, we must have tool at hand and that is the budget. We have to defer expenses that it is not necessary to a later time. We even put off the road and bridge construction sites. People can cross the river with ferry the way our ancestors did to save money for Covid-19 treatment. All this is for us to understand, otherwise spending would finally bankrupt the Royal Government.

We have already experienced owing salaries to the civil servants. At that time, our civil servants said that Cambodia has 60

or 70 days in a month. We have now been able to pay twice a month because we have saved cash. We have increased salary and let our civil servants draw twice a month. **We do not back away from this program. There is no shortage of salaries. We may defer other priorities but we keep money for this (salary). The necessary expenses that we cannot skip is the salary, daily treatment of Covid-19-related diseases that we have to find and order new and best drugs [...]**

I am calling on **all companies to fulfill their tax obligations. I see that some of the debt figures that the company owes to the state are high. Please hurry to pay taxes.** Although today we work within the framework of (Ministry) Interior, but we have ministers, governors, all together. Let us do it. This is a life-and-death matter. Covid-19 can kill people [...] so far 3,023 died and Covid-19 can continue to kill. **Today there is one more death, maybe tomorrow there will be another or the number continue to increase or decrease, but I would confirm if the economic bomb exploded, nearly 17 million people are gone. What we needed to do is to manage macroeconomics, control inflation to ensure the livelihood of our people.**

Let me take this opportune moment to talk to (Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) His Excellency Veng Sakhon about pig issues. I have written an instruction before, but HE Veng Sakhon did not cooperate. I then wrote to (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance) HE Aun Porn Moniroth to do this work again. It is a problem with supply. We have a need. Yes, we support local farmers raising pigs, but what if we satisfy demands of 4,000 to 5,000 local pigs raising farmers and leave an estimated 17 million people to suffer from rising pork prices? In the past, I only saw correspondences. Now, maybe (Minister Veng Sa) Khon should increase cooperation a bit. Among the ministers,

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rating the (water treatment plants) sites. The first step we did in 2003 and 2004, the site was opened on January 20, 2003, then inaugurated on September 29, 2004 ... the second construction site was launched on December 13, 2007 and inaugurated on September 16, 2010. The third step was to launch the construction site on January 16, 2012 and inaugurate on November 5, 2015. The fourth step we launched the construction site on March 4, 2018 [...]

Today, we launched another construction site after an agreement signed by the Ministry of Economy and Finance with JICA [...] as Ambassador HE MIKAMI Masahiro just made an impression it has not been easy. As the country develops, we had to choose a suitable location to serve the needs for water discharge on the one hand and for issues relating to environment and sanitation on the other. Before we let the wastewater into the Bassac River, we need it to go through treatment system [...] we notice that the city of Phnom Penh is full of waste. If not treated properly, or what we called wastewater filtering and treatment before discharging into the

Mekong, Tonle Sap and Bassac rivers, there would be consequences for those living along the river. Dirty water can cause diseases in our city too.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Phnom Penh Capital Hall for its efforts in cooperation with JICA and the Embassy of Japan in making this site a reality. As usual, it will not take long to complete the project as planned. I would like to express my appreciation and thanks through HE MIKAMI Masahiro to the Government and people of Japan for their continued assistance to us in almost all areas of our joint efforts, and the groundbreaking ceremony today was part of the fruits of good relations between Cambodia and Japan.

Seventieth Anniversary of Cambodia-Japan Relations and 30th Anniversary of PKO

Next year we will mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Cambodia and Japan. This year is also the 30th anniversary of the arrival of the Japanese Peacekeepers (PKO), and I have just informed HE MIKAMI Masahiro that I will be in Sihanoukville for three days – (March) 14, 15 and 16. I also told Samdech Tea Banh to

organize some programs. I just whispered to HE MIKAMI Masahiro that I needed to invite the Japanese military officers who would be there for a chat and a meal. I am going to get together later, but this is what I remember most from the events of 1992.

In 1991, we signed the Paris Agreement. In 1992, His Excellency Yasushi Akashi, a Japanese who also served as UNTAC President in Cambodia, requested that I travel to Washington, D.C., to mobilize the United States to contribute to the peace process through UNTAC. This was the request of HE Yasushi Akashi, President of UNTAC at that time. When I traveled to the United States via Tokyo. At that time, because he and I had a good relationship, HE Watanabe, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan welcomed me to discuss the issue with him before I left for Washington. *(That meeting) led to a discussion about Japan's contribution, which exceeded the share that Japan should cover [...] Japan has spent on peace-keeping operations in Cambodia more than its obligatory share. That is the first thing (that meeting had discussed).*

The second thing (that we discussed) was issues related to the first deployment of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (as Peace-keeping Operation or PKO) to help maintain peace through the Paris Agreement and under the auspices of the United Nations called UNTAC. I have supported this initiative. I once said that the Shimun Akahata, the newspaper of the Communist Party of Japan, went to Washington to ask me about this matter. Arriving at Pochentong, Cambodia, I gave a press conference. Unexpectedly, the Akahata newspaper reporter was there and asked why you support the Japanese Self-Defense Forces to come to Cambodia? It is really a memorable thing.

Thirty years have passed. Cambodia will celebrate this anniversary when the Japanese navy will arrive in Cambodian ports

in March. I will go to Sihanoukville to visit the Japanese army officers and would invite some officers along with the ambassador to have a chat and we had a meal together as part of the 30th anniversary of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces coming to Cambodia. We will mark the sacrifices of the Japanese army and police on Cambodian territory, and proceed to celebrating the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Cambodia's Progress Inseparable from Japan's Supports

As I mentioned in my speech in Kratie province on February 16, Cambodia's progress is inseparable from the contribution of our development partners, in general and in particular, from the supports of Japan. Japan served as the co-chair of the reconstruction of Cambodia, known as the ICORC meeting at the time. The meetings took turn between Tokyo and Paris. In Paris, there were only two meetings, and in Japan, there were about three meetings. The first meeting was in 1992. At the time, discussions were under way on implementing the Paris Peace Agreement, but we also hit on issues related to reconstruction. I still remember the last ICORC meeting was in 1996, because it was at a time that I had to leave Tokyo for Seoul, a visit to establish the first diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea, South Korea.

Consecutively, annual meeting between Cambodia, donors, and development partners, in which the World Bank took over the role, went on. This is where Cambodia always remembers the contribution of all development partners, as well as international financial institutions, in large part also came from the support from Japan in the first phase, the largest donor in that circumstance. Now our relationship is deep rooting and our cooperation is bigger day by day. We are not just waiting for help from Japan, what is important is that we try to attract Japanese investors to the King-

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I would like to point out that the minister who does not seem to cooperate with others is the Minister of Agriculture [...]

Do not forget we are a member of the World Trade Organization, a member of the AFTA – ASEAN Free Trade Area, a member of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement, and we are now a member of the RCEP – Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, in the region. Well, we cannot take separate measures. Please inform all our pig farmers that we cannot close the border to prevent the entry and exit of goods, and consider that we respect the law [...] **we must work together on how to prevent our economy from falling into a crisis while we are busy dealing with public health crisis.**

Do not say that this Prime Minister is mean. No. I follow up on works of the ministers. I needed to keep abreast with who works how. Sometimes we have to be firm, thorough and cooperative. Do not make me your correspondence handler because one minister refused to talk to another minister [...]

Some people would have a chance to comment that Mr. Hun Sen [...] was upset. You bet I will never be. I am never under stress [...] I have the need to tell people all over the country as this is a TV live broadcast [...] if inflation occurs during this health crisis, it would be catastrophic [...] I am talking a bit so loudly and I touched on (HE) Veng Sakhon. I wanted to advise you and so that you would say I never say so [...] ■

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dom of Cambodia [...]

Sihanoukville Blue Water Port - Japan's Assistance, Why a Debt to Chinese Trap?

The Japanese government has been helping and offering supports to the Sihanoukville blue water port. On this remark, I do not think it is true that some talked comparing the Sihanoukville falling into the Chinese debt trap as what happened in Sri Lanka. The deep-sea port that is busy assisting Cambodia's trades today has been receiving loans and assistance from Japan instead. Well, I am asking some analysts who do not understand the truth to stop misleading the situation. The port, which is currently serving imports and exports purpose, has been receiving assistance and administering its construction from Japan. Japan also bought some shares in it. Why they analyzed that the port can become a Chinese debt trap. It was Japanese assistance, why it would become a Chinese debt trap. This is a slander. We do not know what to comparison them to [...]

We welcome all of our development partners who wanted to help us. Well, as in the case of Japan, the Asian highway connecting Ho Chi Minh City to Bangkok, via Phnom Penh, Japan covers about 90% of the road and bridge, from the Cambodian-Vietnamese border to the Neak Leung Bridge. Take National Road No. 1 and continue on National Road No. 5 from Prek Kadam to the Cambodian-Thai border. This is where the importance is and we needed to see [...] that (is the fruit of) former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan and I raised at the level of strategic partnership. Through this trust, we are able to exchange delegations with each other to boost our cooperation.

Japanese Leaders Welcome Cambodian Army Commander

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ambassador, the Prime Minister Kishida, the

Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defense, the Commander-in-Chief, as well as other Commanders the Army and the units of the Japanese forces for welcoming the Cambodian Army Commander. It is a rare event, frankly. If I were the Prime Minister of Japan, I would not have been able to do it. Why not? To be the Prime Minister of Cambodia, I could make time for a walk and a golf. Being the Prime Minister of Japan, one would not have a chance to do all that. Remember, HE Mori resigned at that time. There was a submarine hitting ship incident [...] with students doing internship in Hawaii. At that time, HE Mori was playing golf. He played golf at night. They demanded he resign [...]

The Cambodian Army Commander had had an audience with the Prime Minister of Japan. This is a special point in our relationship that I mentioned the day before and Hun Manet has already met with three Japanese Prime Ministers. In 2010, he met HE Yukio Hatoyama. In 2018, he met with HE Shinzo Abe. In 2022, he met with Fumio Kishida, Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and Speaker of the National Assembly. Visiting Japan is not easy to meet with the Prime Minister of Japan because his very busy schedules. That this time he made it, it demonstrates our cooperation in exchanging delegations, and we will do the same with each other in our relations [...]

Adhere to Hygiene and Proper Garbage Disposal

I should take this opportunity to speak to the people of Phnom Penh. Our Phnom Penh city in the 1960s did not have any headaches for garbage or dirty water. Let me remind you that I started with only 16 kilos ration of 10 kg of rice and 6 kg of corn. That we were not full, we had to pick off bananas because Pol Pot planted bananas in Phnom Penh. We go to fetch water from the Mekong River to use. The situation at that time was doing anything we could to be able to live on and no atten-

tion paid so much on hygiene. We just ate what we could find. There was no garbage to transport for that matter because there was no food. Nowadays, unlike before, the daily garbage is about 3,000 tons. Eating is inevitable and we now have to exercise proper hygiene and food safety standard.

What worries us is that our people do not have the habit of cleaning up and/or collecting garbage. How could people working in garbage collection clean them all [...] if people throw wastes out of trash bins? They would not place the trash in the bin, even though it was close by [...] I am appealing to the people who live in Phnom Penh or come to visit Phnom Penh, to exercise hygiene. This sanitation practice is for all of us [...] (we must work together) to prevent plastic bags or rubbish from accumulating, flowing into rivers, into lakes, into sewers. Let us work together for our clean city [...]

Anyone with Evil Deeds Destroying CPP and People – Not Supported

Let me be clear, now I am the Prime Minister. Soon I will be the father of Prime Minister. I have set a rule for my grandchildren that 20 years later they must run for the post of prime minister. Then I will be the grandfather of the Prime Minister. Why children of other people can do it and [...] my children, who have had such education cannot? Let me be clear, if they performed evil actions/deeds, I cannot support them. I cannot let the CPP in destructive position because of them (in that case). I will not let the people be destroyed by my children. For other people's children, whether those belonged to the opposition, I have never blamed or humiliated anyone. Although they blamed my son for honorary degrees at West Point, [...] at the University of New York, [...] at Bristol, [...] I praised their children. They may strike at me [...] let me tell you [...]

You accuse my wife of being the wife of the Vietnamese

leader. My child is the child of the Vietnamese leader. If I do not react, I am not human. I told the leaders of some countries that I could not accept it, whatever consequences it may be. If you do not compensate me, even the next life, there will be a fight. I cannot accept such insults. My wife and children are very unfortunate. Before we could meet each other again, I had no idea if my children and my wife were dead or alive [...] I have already scheduled a posting on the morning of the 24th (February). I will narrate in it. I will write in short, not long. They are things that people never hear or see on my Facebook. Posting will be at 7am on the 24th (February). It is about the 43rd anniversary of the reunion between my wife and me [...]

Three Goals of Myanmar's Visits

I went to Myanmar with three goals – *the first one is to stop the violence, including the ceasefire*, which is in the first point of the five-point consensus. The five points of consensus are about patience, and we start talking from there. *The second one is how to have a coordination mechanism to provide assistance for the people of Myanmar in need.* Thirdly, *encourage dialogue between all stakeholders.* This is the goals of my visit to Myanmar, and anyway, is not the case to go back in the morning and return in the evening (with fruitful results). Some seemed intentional that when I came back, it was fruitful. Myanmar was already a country of 70 years under military rule [...]

I thank our Japanese friends for supporting this process. Only those who understand the situation can (know) how to solve the problem. Those who do not understand think that going there in the morning and returning in the evening (with results) would not go anywhere. That is not what you can find. I have already said that it is not a one-time negotiation. It is necessary to negotiate many times, with both issues on the table and under the table [...]