



19 November 11 - Samdech Techo Hun Sen took over the ASEAN rotating chairmanship from President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia in the 19th ASEAN Summit in Bali (Reuters)

Three Issues at RGC-Private Sector Forum

23 November 2011 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

In addition to the prepared text for the 16th Royal Government of Cambodia and Private Sector Forum (RGC-PS Forum), Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen gives extempore comments on arranging for [healthcare benefits](#) for workers employed in garment and shoe factories, the opposition's attempts to [withhold the National Assembly session](#) to adopt the Law on Finance for 2012 Management, and issues relating to effort to [promote rice exports](#). As for integral text, please visit www.cnv.org.kh.

Healthcare Benefits for Garment and Shoe Workers

Now it is good that all eight working groups have reported to the RGC-PS Forum their concerns and suggestions. As is said by HE Keat Chhon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Economy and Finance, it is certainly impossible to deal with all

concerns and suggestions in one shot right now. All concerns and suggestions have in fact been compiled and I have had the time to look and address some of them. The RGC-PS working groups will need to go through other matters. In case of unresolved matters, they could be brought to the attention of HE Keat Chhon. If outcome could not be reached still, they could be brought to my attention.

As we have not got a solution for any particular issue today, in reality we have made a decision on healthcare benefits for workers in garment and shoe factories. It is known to all that related RGC-PS working groups conducted numerous meetings to figure out how to provide our workers with the healthcare benefits. They have come to an agreement that from the part of employers, every worker in the said industries would be paid five USD extra as healthcare benefits per month, while the Royal Government has been requested to delay taking the

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Inaugurating NR 3 and Building More

14 November 2011 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

Three Phase Constriction of NR 3

Today I have a great pleasure to attend two important events – putting into official use the segment of 134.8 kilometers of the National Road 3 from Phnom Penh to Kompot province and the groundbreaking construction ceremony to build the NR 33, 31 and the detour road 117 – which are in total length of 106 kilometers. The NR project has completed and the new NR 33, 31 and provincial road 117 will be completing under the soft loan from the Republic of Korea. We also celebrate the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of the National Road 3 between Kompong Trach through to the border with Vietnam un-

der loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and grant from the Australian Government's Overseas Aid Program (AusAid).

I am so glad that the NR road 3 that what we have been waiting for a long time has actually become a reality. Please allow me to take this opportune moment to share with you a brief background on how we get the NR 3 constructed. As we all know that the NR 3 is one of our long roads – over two hundred kilometers. Despite its length, because of lack of resources we had commenced the construction of the road in steps that I compared to frog-leap pace. As it is known to all now that the

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Building Second Bridge at Jroy Jangva

02 November 2011 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

Fifth Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge

It is a great pleasure today that we all are coming here in the presence of HE Pan Guangxia, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Embassy officials to Cambodia for this very important event to celebrate the groundbreaking construction ceremony for a second bridge at Jroy Jangva area (of Phnom Penh to cross over the Tonle Sap River), which is to be named “the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at Jroy Jangva.”

Please allow me to say a few things about why do we give the bridge this name. If I could recall, it was since the previous Ambassadors of the PRC - while we presided over the construc-

tion of the Bailey bridge imported from China and a number of schools - that we should look for something to be built together as iconic achievement between Cambodia and the PRC, which we will name as the Cambodia-China Friendship.

The first Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge was then built at Stoeng Treng province, which we name as the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at Sekong. From then on, we have the second Cambodia-Friendship Bridge at Prek Kadam, the third Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at Prek Tamak, which have all been inaugurated. We just organized the construction ceremony for the fourth Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at

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profit tax of one per cent per month, which has been approved previously to last till late 2013, to go on until 2015. Generally, I have agreed with the request as this will go into benefit of our workers.

Technically, as of 2012, or in more than a month from now, our workers will start receiving five US dollar per month as healthcare benefits, which is around 60 billion Riel per annum that is to be paid by the Royal Government. I hope HE Keat Chhon would today notify all concerned enterprises about the delay of the one-percent profit tax payment on a monthly basis to be carried out at end of the year. This would allow factories and enterprises to have cash in hand to pay for our workers' healthcare benefits. This should bring minimum monthly income of our workers to 61 USD. This is a realistic solution and the Royal Government will issue a statement on this decision, whereas the private sector will also have to notify its responsibility in providing the said healthcare benefits to our workers as well starting from January 2012.

Disqualifying National Assembly – Opposition Politician Attempts

It has been a good thing that we have worked out this forum so far. As we all have in our account that from 1999 to the present, this is the 16th RGC-PS Forum that we organize, though there was a time that we could not organize it for the political deadlock in 2003/4. It was owing to the two-third majority system's inflexibility though the Cambodian People's Party had then recorded a 64% of the votes it could not form the Government. The system brought about a fact that the (elected) majority was pressured by the minority to answer to their calls. It did result in one-year long stalemate.

As of present, once again, the minority seems to have intended for a pressure to be placed on the elected majority. They have even issued an ultimatum on me

(threatening that there would be four or five members of the National Assembly from the opposition parties to leave their seats so as to disqualify the National Assembly's session to adopt the Law of Finance for 2012 Management). I told them in return that "if they were to be crazy, let them be alone." In fact I even urge all the 26 to abandon their seats (so that the National Election Committee could re-divide the elected seats among other parties).

I have made it clear for them already that they would not have a chance to have a negotiation as that will not happen. They have raised condition that if I were to hold no negotiation with them, they would boycott the National Assembly's session. I would have their attention that we are no longer in the two-third majority parliamentary system. While in the two-third majority system the National Assembly's session would require a quorum of up to 85/87 out of 123 seats, the absolute majority system would require a quorum of only 62 members. That presents us no problem at all as the Cambodian People's Party is holding up to 90 seats in the National Assembly. Let's make thing simple, as long as the National Assembly attains the required quorum, its session will go on smoothly. If they abandon their seats, they have to provide replacements. Although there were no replacements, nothing is different.

Let them be crazy as I won't be with them. It is not a general practice at all that the minority is putting a pressure on the elected majority. In Cambodia, the opposition party has not got a right to veto. In the whole world, it seems, only the President of the United States of America holds the right to veto, but not in France even. French President does not have the right to veto the parliament. Technically, in a parliamentary system, no one – either the Head of State or the King – possesses the right to veto. It has been defined and confined by law concerning that matter. This is for all to know as they would go to our foreign

friends to preach about a disqualifying National Assembly and its session.

Issues Pertaining to Promoting Rice Exports

I have listened to the suggestions concerning our efforts to promote rice exports. I have always made known to foreign diplomats about Cambodia's effort for exporting milled rice to foreign countries. I also pinpoint the fact that it is a great chance to turn crisis into opportunity. It is, however, in our thought not to go after profit as OPEC would do. It is known to everyone that OPEC's practice is to reduce their production when the price of oil is going low so as to secure a high price. As for rice production and export, it is the world's knowledge that Thailand and Vietnam stand at the respective top places, followed by Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, etc. in South East Asia.

It is our thought and aim that we would not seek to jeopardize the food prices in the world in time of food crisis at all. However, I would take up an issue that I wish to mention in relation to rice production, processing and marketing before going into my speech. There was this situation that I would call it "a fish trap with two ways in." This kind of fishing equipment would trap fish from two opposite directions. Literally I mean that one person could do two opposite things for his/her own sake. Though there are two opposite ways in a trap, the question would remain whether the equipment could hold fish in for long.

One person, according to our recording, went to see consumers and complain on prices of rice and or salt – "People are dying that the prices are this high." The same person, on leaving the consumers to talk to producers and said to farmers – "People are dying that the price of rice is low. How could people live on what they produce when the price is this bad? It is too bad that the Government is incompetent in formulating a policy for rice." Off to the salt farm, the

same person articulates similarly opposite view – "People are dying. People work hard to produce salt but they have to sell it a cheap price. They could not survive."

This is what I call the man of two opposite ways or a man with the trap to catch fish in two opposite ways. In other words, it is a trick to get benefit from cheating both sides. However, in real life, the equipment designed to catch fish in opposite ways could result in fish coming though a trapped way and get out through the other. As about 80% of the population in our country working in agricultural production, and only the rest 20% are consumers, I am sure the trapped fish will be less. That is how those in opposition would do to advance their greed for power.

For us in power, we give it a different dimension of vision and thought. We are looking at a wider and more complimentary benefit. The two – consumers and producers – must give and share each other's benefit. While appropriate price should be given for efforts made in production, similar reason should also serve as the basis in setting the price for consumers too. On this ground it should be clear to all that we in power are not making empty promises. It was one of their promises to give or to help a family to have some one hundred cows. According to our experience to deal with the recent flood situation where some 360,000 families were stranded, we learnt that it would not be an easy job to deal if each family has 100 cows.

Truly, it was easy to help human than to rescue animal. We have rice in stock to provide for human but it was hard to find food for ruminant animals as grass were inundated. People used tents we provided to protect themselves from rain or wind to do make cover for their animals instead. Let's imagine how difficult it would be for the rescue efforts when every family has one hundreds cows. In the previ-

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NR is now completed thanks to a *three-phase construction strategy*.

The first-phase construction of the 21.5 kilometers segment between Viel Rinh and Tro-pangh Ropeo of Kompot province started on 06 June 2001 under the soft loan from the World Bank. That was only about one tenth of the total road length to be reconstructed. The project still did not answer to people's need for traveling between Phnom Penh and Kompot. It was under the former President of South Korea, HE Kim Dae-jung, that I sought his favor to help us with the second-phase construction project, which also included a bridge at Kompong Bai River, from Tro-pangh Ropeo to the city of Kompot. The construction then started on 30 July 2004. The two projects, as you can see, funded by the World Bank and the Republic of Korea, together link Viel Rinh through to Kompot city from the National Road 4.

What remains to be a question is the segment between Phnom Penh and Kompot, which has shrunk in many parts from originally seven meters in width to either six meters or even five meters in some places. In addition to that various Bailey Bridges along the way have been small, only 4.2 meters in width. Upon the visit of former President Roh Moo-hyun the Kingdom of Cambodia to observe the Angkor Kyung Yu exhibition along with the official visit, I presented him with a number of important reasons as to why Cambodia should rebuild the NR 3. The proposed third-phase of the last NR segment was accepted for consideration but has come into action and completed under HE Lee Myung-bak's presidency.

In other words, the segments of NR 3 from Tro-pangh Ropeo to Kompot city, and from Kompot city through to Phnom Penh are the fruits of cooperation between the Cambodian leaders and two former Presidents – HE Kim Dae-jung and HE Roh Moo-

hyun, and the current President Lee Myung-bak of the Republic of Korea, who have all supported this very important road project that is responding to Cambodia's need and expectation.

Southern Corridor for Local and Regional Integration

I stayed in Kompot two nights to solve (the South Korean plane crash accident) in 2006 and noticed that Kompot province and city was barely different from the 1990s, when HE Saom Chen was the provincial governor. If we were to now look into this map, Kompot at present is embarking on a significant change. Aside from the NR 3, we now have the NR 31, 33 and the provincial road of 117 kilometers and just a few months ago we also have a NR 41 that is constructed with the financial assistance from the People's Republic of China and connects the NR 4 through Kandal, Kompong Speu and Takeo provinces through to Jum Kiri district of Kompot province.

Having brought this up, it is now known to everyone that the southern corridor of Cambodia is now being connected with many roads, which will be serving the need for local as well as regional integrations. Though it has been implemented in a frog-leap manner our ambition to be well connected by roads has been fulfilled to a great extent. In this effort, the three projects for the NR 3 has culminated in an achievement of some 122 kilometers that has been contributed mainly by the Republic of South Korea, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Australian Government's Aid Program (AusAid).

HE Chang Ho-jin, South Korean Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia has said that the road will definitely save traveling between Phnom Penh and Kompot a lot of time. As I remember, while being in Kompot during the plane crash incident in 2006, on the way back starting at 20:00 hours, I arrived home in Phnom Penh at 24:00 hours. I think the situation here is now different.

With better road condition, however, I would seek your consideration on speed while driving. I also noticed that there is this showroom of Korean pickups and trucks. The two-and-half ton Korean trucks are very popular among Cambodian people. I am sure you would say the same to the Korean motorcycles.

As is affirmed by HE Chang Ho-jin, today we are opening Korean financed roads project for the NR 31 of 54.79 kilometers from the junction at Kus through to the district of Kompong Traj, the NR 33 of 36.7 kilometers from the Kompong Traj district through to the city of Kompot, the provincial road 117 of 11.25 kilometers from Ang Sophy through to Toan Han at the border with Vietnam and the detour road of the provincial city of 3.69 kilometers from the commune of Jum Kriel on NR 33 through to Treng commune of NR 3. The construction time-frame spans from August 1, 2011 through to January 2014. The project will be implemented by Kukdong Engineering and Construction Co. Ltd and HHI Co Ltd. Joint Venture at a total cost of some USD 35.3 million.

As for the NR 33 segment from the district of Kompong Traj to the border with Vietnam, 15.838 kilometers, together with the construction of a vehicle checkpoint, which will be ready in 18 months will cost 18.8 million USD and financed by the Asian Development Bank and the AusAid with counterpart fund provided by the Royal Government of Cambodia.

Many Good Reasons for the NR 3 Construction

Well, I used one good reason among so many in my negotiation with HE Roh Moo-hyun about why Cambodia needed to rehabilitate and enlarge the current NR 3. Salt production and transportation to throughout the country is definitely our important and urgent need though it may not be the only reason. You may learn that we also have on Kompot the production of cement, while a new blue water seaport will be under construc-

tion soon. It is impossible for Cambodia to depend only on the port at Sihanoukville if we were to augment our production and increase our trade volume inside and outside the country.

It should be noted that there are so many interesting and touristic sites like Toek Chhu (water fall) and Bokor (mountain) where construction of tourist facilities and infrastructures by the Sok Kong Company have been said to be ready by early next year. It has attracted many tourists already even at this stage. I may think of going there in the late 2011 or early 2012 too. It is for this reason that so many tourists have flocked to Sihanoukville province and city one day and left there the next like what HE Thaong Khon termed Sihanoukville, Koh Kong, Kompot and Kep as "Stars of Cambodia's South West."

Cambodia to Host ASEAN Summit in 2012

While expressing thanks to the AusAid I would also share with you an information that I will be meeting with HE Julia Gillard of Australia prior to the East Asia Summit. I also will meet HE Lee Myung-bak, President of the Republic of Korea in Bali, Indonesia, too. The meeting will be on November 18, 19 and 20. HE Hor Namhong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, has already left. Though there have been some difficulties reported with regard to the Summits, I am sure we could find a way to resolve all problems within the framework of ASEAN and its partnering nations. I hope that the ASEAN meetings this year will be crown with successes.

For next year, 2012, Cambodia will be taking the rotating chair of ASEAN to organize two consecutive summits – the 20th and 21st ones. I hope we will have our overpass at the Pet Lok Sang junction ready then since the 20th ASEAN summit is to be organized in Cambodia's Phnom Penh in April 2012. As is affirmed by HE Chang Ho-jin, by this afternoon there will be a signing

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ceremony between the Republic of Korea and Cambodia on the reconstruction of the NR 21 from the city of Takhmao of Kandal province through to the district of Koh Thom and the border with Vietnam, about 60 kilometers, the shortest distance of trading point between Cambodia and Vietnam.

Flood Release Mission Phases Out

Concerning the flood relief effort, I would like to take this opportunity to send a message to all concerned institutions of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Cambodian Red Cross, the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) and local authorities who have made their efforts in solving the flood related problems for or people. As is reported, as of the moment of speaking we have provided relief kits to almost 340,000 families over the 350,000 families affected by flood. I wish our people understand and it is my apology that some families may have received more items in assistance than others, and some may have received them before others too.

One of the reasons is that some assistance is being prepared and provided by our Chinese friends and some by our Japanese friends and others. So the Chinese relief kit would contain basic items that may not be the same to those in the Japanese relief kit. Some would get the Chinese kits and some would get kits from other donors. It has been our aim to let donors and their representatives to take their relief kits to the affected people by themselves. Relief kits prepared and provided by the Cambodian Red Cross and the Royal Government of Cambodia contained almost similar items and amounts too. I therefore seek your understanding of minor discrepancies.

It is also my intention to inform you all today that the flood relief campaign is to be wrapped up in days ahead. Except for Kompong Thom and Prey Veng province as I have instructed HE

Nhem Vanda, First Deputy President of the NCDM yesterday to expedite relief kits distribution in the two provinces already, I conclude that there are not many more that need to be done and I would leave the task to the Cambodian Red Cross to carry on. It is now time for the Royal Government to concentrate on rehabilitation which will be of a rather massive scale.

I also wish to thank my wife, who after returning from attending to my father (in a hospital in Singapore), in her capacity as President of the Cambodian Red Cross, has made it quick to visit and bring relief kits to Prey Veng, Kandal and Kompong Thom's provinces. She also has to leave with me the day after tomorrow for the ASEAN Summits in Bali, Indonesia too. I am so grateful to her.

No Boat Race – A Correct Decision

That being said, I also wish to justify that it has been a correct decision for us to cancel the boat race from the water festival this year. I wish to inform you that the seasonal Mekong flooding this year has been two meters higher than the previous years in provinces of Kratie, Kompong Cham, Phnom Penh and Prek Kadam of Kandal province. As is recorded on 09 November 2011, the level of water is 2.5 meters higher than every year. Therefore you all may understand that it is too risky for us to celebrate the boat race event in the water festival as usual. It would present us not only life risk but also a distraction of human labor from restoring rice cultivation as water subsidies.

I am so glad that our people understand it and I also would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciations to the local authorities as well as Buddhist monks for organizing boat race events in their own ability and rivers/water systems for our people's joy of traditional water festival celebration. Though the number of people from province to visit Phnom Penh during the festival has gone down for that matter still there were some of

them. People in Phnom Penh went out to Kompot, Kep, Kompong Som, Koh Kong, Siemreap, Preah Vihear provinces. I am sure that people in Dangkaio district of Kandal, those from Kompong Speu, Takeo and Kompong Chhannang provinces have come to Phnom Penh.

On Opposition's Rebuttal of Development

It has been said recently by a politician in opposition that (the CPP or the Royal Government of Cambodia have been using) development to cover things up. They said that our people have been fooled by the fact of good roads, bridges, more motorcycles and cars. They call it a trick (by the CPP and the Royal Government) to cover things up. What is in these people's mind? If the Royal Government were to do nothing, they would quickly criticize the Royal Government's lack of leadership on ground that the country is being left in poor and lacking infrastructures.

It is also their irreversible mind that once those things have been built, they blame it to be the Royal Government's tricks to cover things up. What are they talking about? Would they mean dictatorship, lack of democracy and/or freedom of expression? Let me clarify this. How do we go about addressing issues of human rights? Human rights, to my understanding, stems from access to food, healthcare and education, but first of all it is the right to life. In time of flood, some two million people are facing with hunger and health disaster.

Despite limited food in stock and resources we have made all possible efforts to address their needs. People were evacuated to safe and high grounds and provided with basic food and needs for their lives. An absolute order has been issued and effectively implemented that no one who is known to have suffered from hunger would allow to be left to die without authority's intervention and care. This I would deem the right to life, the first and foremost right that any person

must have. What have other (political) parties done? Not only did they not do a thing to help they also insult the Royal Government either for being too slow to offer help or to provide help for vote purchase.

On Opposition's Threat and Comparison to Gaddafi

I do not know what to call but it may be an unresponsive opposition. It seems internal rift that led them to take some extreme measures. When there was this event in Tunisia, they quickly compared me to (President Zine El Abidine Ben) Ali. They did not compare Tunisia with Cambodia. Why? It is because never Ben Ali holds elections. We do so in Cambodia. They later compared me to Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. The most insulting they do in contempt of my life is when they compare me to Muammar Gaddafi in Libya.

It is to everyone knowledge that Gaddafi fought a war that was unleashed with help from NATO and was finally arrested and shot to death. As far as I could recall the US also has called for an investigation on the incident too. Why did they kill him? In usual practice, no killing is to be committed to arrested leader or prisoner. No extrajudicial killing is allowed. I would find it acceptable if they were to compare me to Abhisit Vajjajiva of Thailand who had to concede to Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra after the election was conducted in every five years.

In response to what you have called for and as I have said on many occasions, I assure you, in 2013 there will be change from the fourth term to the fifth term. Hun Sen, if reelected, will be Prime Minister not in the fourth term but the fifth one. In the case that the CPP loses the elections, not even a slight concern should you have, I would appeal to all CPP members to support the electoral results. Within 60 days you could come to the Santepheap building where I would declare transferring power to you.

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However, it is the most evil thing they disdain my life as (that of) Gaddafi. How could they make Tunisia's Jasmine revolution, the war of foreign aggression in Libya and the killing of Muammar Gaddafi - a case of comparison to me? When I responded to what they said, a member of National Assembly said I made a threat to them. Well, let's be clear here who is threatening who? Did you not threaten an attempt on my life (by saying all that)? I urge you to compare me to those who lost the elections but not with anyone who was killed because s/he lost the war. If you resort to war, I would have to take precautionary measures because I have the duty to defend the Constitution and national stability.

It was hard for Cambodia to achieve peace. UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) spent almost two billion USD to get Cambodia to a unified stand. However, they got out of Cambodia leaving us a country divided into two, with two governments and a continued civil war. It has been a great benefit for all later for the unity that we have found (thanks to the win-win policy I have formulated and implemented). Let me have their attention on one fact that the more you insult me the more you lose?

Unconstitutionality by Article 76

According to a VDO conference between France and Phnom Penh, there would soon be four heroes in a political party to leave their parliamentary positions. They hope this will put international pressure on the Royal Government led by Hun Sen. This is something that is known to just a few. As they may bring this to all foreign embassies' attention soon, I would give you a scoop. Later in another 3D-VDO conference, they have raised the reason they need to look for four heroes.

This is something to do with the Article 76 of the Constitution concerning issue of unconstitutionality. The Article 76 states

that the National Assembly should have at least 120 seats (in order to ...). They hope that with the four leaving the National Assembly, the number of occupied seats in the NA will be shrunk to 119. They believe the situation would not allow the NA to adopt the Law on Finance for 2012 Management on ground of lacking constitutionality. The four would not be replaced and they would leave for three months. I would urge them to pay attention to the point that interpretation of the Constitution is the sole competency of the Constitutional Council.

I would suggest even a better option for them. All 26 of them should all resign so as to be heroes. If they all resign, it would be easier to solve the matter as the National Election Committee (NEC) would have to divide their seats for four other parties. In the forthcoming session of the National Assembly, there will be a discussion on the law of finance for 2012 management which comprises of both internal and external financial sources. One reason here is they do not consent with us borrowing money from the People's Republic of China.

It was the same trick they wished to put pressure on the CPP in 2008. They threatened not to participate in the National Assembly session until so much was to be conceded to them. They just depend on one fact that if they did not take part in the National Assembly session, the National Assembly would have insufficient quorum.

However, to take part or not in the Assembly session is not a problem as long as the National Elections Committee declares all elected members of the National Assembly. If all 123 members were declared fully elected, the National Assembly could function. Whether you reported the session or not is up to you.

I think they should take a look into an article by France International which is titled (in translation) "Opposition Activists Faced with Exhaustion" ...■

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vive the disaster and to go on. There have been incidents that while the CPP working groups are out there giving helps, party officials of the opposition warned their members not to come to receive they consider this a dishonoring act to their party. This has only led to discontentment among their party members as they could not give them any help on the one hand but they urge them to ignore help on the other.

In one other instance, a commune assistant from one opposition party has been seen in a photo to come to collect the relief kit with others but claimed that all assistance has been provided only to CPP members. Officials of the opposition party once said at the district of Sen Sok, Phnom Penh, that despite flood relief efforts, the Royal Government's provision of assistance has been too slow as it has reached only some 10% of the affected people. It was, however in the time that our people were running for safe grounds. Once settled, we have enlarged efforts and increased assistance provision speed. They then came out and accused us of vote buying.

A Provocative Statement by the Opposition

Last October 23, the same sort of people said Hun Sen was to have similar fate as Gaddafi of Libya. What were they inferring to? Were they inferring to fighting (each other) because Gaddafi died from fighting. Do they want a fight? HE Nhek Bun Chhay already tried that once but was dealt with a blow breaking his backbone force. What can I

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ous campaign, these people lied to elderly people that they would give them forty thousand Riel per month (about 10 USD). For this electoral campaign (for communal and the Senate elections) they promise to give golden tooth to every broken or pulled one for elderly people. How could they tell these lies to our people? ...■

understand you to be when you link my future to that of Gaddafi's? As far as I understand, Gaddafi died in a war intervened by NATO bombs from the air and disguised ground force.

By saying this I take it that you want a fight. I may give you a warehouse of weapons for that. But here in Cambodia, we fought with elections every five years. Fighting is no longer an option for Cambodia. The country no longer needs weapons but elections to sort out differences. You may try to do better in the forthcoming 2013 elections. It is ridiculous, while the elections is until 2013, already they launched a campaign to seek the European Union's disapproval of the 2013 elections.

My warning is that whatever they do, please do not jeopardize peace. Let's refrain from violence. I do not want to play war with you. I also know that you do not have people to carry arms for you. There may only be clandestine group like the CFF if they are.

In another instance at Koh Sotin district of Kompong Cham province, they said that if Hun Sen wins the elections in 2013 or if the CPP wins again, Hun Sen would have to be careful. Why? What would they do to me? Would they snipe to assassinate me? I doubt if they know Hun Sen well enough. Hun Sen is still running around with a ball. Hun Sen does not have heart problem yet. The recent medical check in Singapore proves I am still healthy...

I am thankful to the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, among whom being a group of Chinese technical advisors, for their active roles in coordinating this job until we could reach a launching day today. I would like to express on behalf of the Cambodian people and Royal Government the greatest thanks through Ambassador Pan Guanxia to the Government and people of the PRC for providing Cambodia with loans for development, and the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge is one of them ...■

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Takhmao city of Kandal province. Now this is the fifth Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge, which will stand alongside the Cambodia-Japan Friendship Bridge at Jroy Jangva.

We also anticipate one more Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge also at Stoeng Treng province, which will serve as a connection between the provincial cities of Stoeng Treng and Preah Vihear. It will be the sixth one. We are also working to convince our Chinese friend to consider one more Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at Koh Thom, which will help link up the two sides of the River Bassac (a tributary of the Mekong River also flows down to Vietnam in the South before reaching to the sea). It will then be the seventh one in a row.

As you can see now that is how we call the all achievements that are born out of cooperation between Cambodia and the PRC. This clearly reflects the partnership for friendship and cooperation between Cambodia and the PRC. In addition to naming bridges like this, we also have offered name with similar definition to schools too. There is a Junior High School in my native village which is named the Cambodia-China Friendship School. Though it is yet to be inaugurated, classes have already begun in building. Also for your information, we have a Bailey bridge in Kompong Cham province that we name as Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at Prek Sdao too.

It goes without saying that once the bridge is done we will have to keep one bridge for the entrance and another one for the exit of Phnom Penh. The Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge in this case could be the one for the entrance to Phnom Penh and the Cambodia-Japan Friendship Bridge would serve as the exit from Phnom Penh.

Solving Three-Pronged Traffic

Having followed thoroughly the report by HE Tram Iv Toek,

Minister for Transports and Public Works, as well as that of HE Pan Guangxia in relation to the traffic condition in the area, I could say that at least more than half of our population are well aware of the situation. The traffic has been impossible especially on weekends and holidays. We could not prolong the bottleneck traffic situation as it causes difficulties for travelers as well as those residing along the congested routes.

It should be noted that traffic in/out of the city through this route comes from three main directions. The first traffic line is for those coming from the northern area of the country, namely Siemreap, Kompong Thom, etc. The second line is for those coming from the northeastern parts of the country – namely Ratanakiri, Monduliri, Stoeng Treng, Kratie and Kompong Cham provinces. The third line of traffic is for those coming from the National Road 8, which is also built with the Chinese financial assistance and connects Prey Veng province and a part of Svay Rieng to Phnom Penh too.

As you can see the three-pronged traffic has been served by the only one Cambodia-Japan Friendship Bridge so far and those who have travelled through this route might have known of how troublesome it was when they got stuck in a jammed traffic. To resolve the congestion, the Royal Government of Cambodia has delegated HE Keat Chhon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Economy and Finance, who also was a former minister under the Sangkum Reastr Niyum of Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk in the 1960s to work with the Ministry of Transports and Public Works to take up the project.

Another Bridge for Jroy Jangva Area Considered

We all are aware of the traffic situation these days. Over the Cambodia-Japan Friendship Bridge, from Friday evening through to Sunday evening, traffic has been unbelievably congested. According to a study, as we are now going to have a

satellite city across the Tonle Sap River further up from Jroy Jangva, it is proposed that at the current fuel depot of Sokimex company (which is about a Kilometer or so from the current Cambodia-Japan Friendship Bridge at Jroy Jangva), a bridge should be built so as to serve mainly traffic from the Phnom Penh to the satellite city which is across the Tonle Sap River.

I am sure this will work out as investors would have to put that into consideration and action as otherwise no one would come buy properties here for congested traffic. Having said so I have foreseen that in a few years to come there will be less or even no difference between those who reside either on the eastern side or western side of the River Tonle Sap. One thing I can be sure of is perhaps those who reside on the eastern side could benefit greatly for their health from better ecological environment.

Four-Lane Road Project for 2012

As we are building the fifth Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge to resolve the traffic congestion that is caused by heavy three-pronged traffics as I said above, we are also looking at the issue of enlarging the National Road 6A - from the Cambodia-Japan Friendship and Cambodia-China Friendship Bridges through to the junction to the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at Prek Kadam – into a four lane one so that two lines of traffic could be conducted in one direction to and fro.

I have brought this project with me to the PRC to discuss with the Chinese Premier HE Wen Jiabao while I visited, about ten days ago, the 8th China-ASEAN Expo in Nanning, Guangxi province, on the 20th anniversary of the establishing dialogue between ASEAN and China. HE Pan Guangxia was also present. I presented the project to the Premier Wen Jiabao and sought his kind support for seven projects, which cost roughly 500 million USD, for the year 2012.

The four-lane road project from the Bridges to the junction above has gone into agreement already. We now wait for a suitable time to launch the construction. In addition to that we also need some 150 million USD more to enlarge the current road from the junction through to Siemreap province, which is 271 Kilometers. It has been suggested in the previous study to enlarge the road to a four-lane one through to Kompong Thom province.

In recent discussion with HE Tram Iv Toek and HE Aun Poan Munirath, Secretary of State for the Economy and Finance, I suggest that enlarging the National Road 6A to four lanes should be carried out as far as Kompong Cham's district of Skun (not all the way to Siemreap). From Skun to Kompong Thom and on to Siemreap, we should enlarge the road to eleven meter width from the current 7 meters. We also plan a four-lane road from Phnom Penh to the Cambodia-China Friendship at Prek Kadam too. A commercial loan negotiation has been underway.

Adding Beauty to Phnom Penh

I wish to note that Phnom Penh has been developed and beautified from one stage to another. The overpass constructions impress me the most. You could imagine that without them, though we have one more bridge at Kbal Thnol (the bridge of Preah Munivong), traffic accident would not be less frequent. We should be satisfied now that we have had less accident since. It is also a happy moment that we will have the second overpass ready in the coming January, 2012, while we are preparing to have a third overpass at Stoeng Meanjei, in the southern part of Phnom Penh.

You may also notice that the park spaces have been enlarged and condition improved that people could go out and take exercise, and children could also get out to their playgrounds.

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Recently I took a car ride around the park at the river bank and I recommended the Phnom Penh Municipal develop further the park extension to the place where the Naga ship used to dock. We have more parks and each one has been adding on to the beauty of the whole city itself.

To add beauty to our city is not only to get ready to serve as host country to the forthcoming ASEAN Summits, but we have to devote to the whole idea of being a “clean city, an attractive tourist site and a great service.” You may be reminded that we have established a committee for “City Beauty Contest” to oversee the development and beautification not only for Phnom Penh but also all of our cities in the country.

On Traffic Accident Report

Having said all that, I would like to also have your attention on the issue of traffic accident. After the Pjum Ben Day (fifteen days of Cambodian traditional Buddhist rite), the traffic police filed a report with a conclusion that there has been less traffic accidents compared to the previous years. I would seek their reconsideration as to why there were lesser accidents at this time. Have you considered how many motorcycles not in traffic because of flood? Those people living in flooded areas such as Prey Veng, Kompong Cham, Kratie, Stoeng Treng, Kandal, etc. did not use their bikes.

While filing report, it should be taken into consideration the subjective factor as such. It is not appropriate to say that there were lesser traffic accidents than the previous years in this instance. What would the situation be like if there were no flood and those home-parked motorcycles were out in traffic? I have discussed with the Mayor of Phnom Penh, HE Kep Chuk Tema and also HE Tram Iv Toek concerning drunken driving issue. We have appealed people to refrain from driving while being drunk and sleepy.

On Alcohol Advertisement

The issue has come to a point that if we shall forbid all alcohol advertisements or not? I would suggest that we should not be either extremely right or extremely left. You may note that the world’s biggest wine exporter is France. French wine is the best. Even if advertisement is not allowed, everyone knows that French wine is the best. People will continue to buy and drink French wine. More still, drivers are not getting drunk because they look at the advertisement signboards/posters.

In this instance I suggest a moderate approach to the issue. I call on all advertisers to add on their signboards or posters slogan that warns people about consequences and/or things not to do after taking alcohol like what we do with the cigarette advertisements. The advertisements may consist of statement like “do not take alcohol, while driving” or “while being drunk, do not drive.” These wine and alcohol importers sponsor many major events on TV or Radio, so if it is impossible to run a statement like that, audio statement could also be an option.

A Note on National Debt Ratio

Just now HE Pan Guangxia mentioned about the fruitful negotiation that I had with Premier Wen Jiabao in Nanning. Thank you for recalling that. You all know that Cambodia has been looking to secure a loan of some 500 million USD to address its development need in 2012. Days ago, some people have come up with a figure that Cambodia has borrowed some six billion USD already from the PRC. Please allow me to bring the true figure to your attention. As of this moment, Cambodia has received from the PRC the grants, interest-free loans and concessional loans of over two billion USD.

Other (commercial) loans recorded were of private sectors for building hydropower stations, etc. They are not government’s debt. The only guarantee

from the Royal Government of Cambodia in those instances is to purchase produced electric power. If we could not purchase them all, we would have to cover their losses. This is guaranteed by law. Among other things there has not been any one country on earth that is not in debt. Maybe China is because it has a lot of money. However, look at Europe, Greece for instance.

Everybody knows that Greece is a country with famous long civilization. Now everybody also knows that Greece is in bad debt situation and is looking for 50% debt slash. Banks that loaned to Greece would have to lose 50% of their lending and interest. Taking this situation into consideration, why do not we consider ourselves to be lucky while lenders are not that worried to give us loans? Why these people do not think that it is China, Japan and/or other bigger lending institutions that are to be worried about that?

You may look at one example - the French company that is investing in renovating, building and running the Phnom Penh International Airport, the Airports of Siemreap and Sihanoukville provinces has been taking loans from International Finance Corporation (IFC). In this case you may see that the Chinese companies are so lucky that they have been provided with capital to invest in our country, especially in the area of power generation that is in need for Cambodia. You may note that a sum of over one billion USD has been put in hydroelectric power.

Our sovereign debt-to-GDP ratio at this stage is recorded to be 27.7% or 28% which is lower than the 40% benchmark ratio. You may remember that when Prime Minister of Thailand Abhisit Vijjajiva left office, he declared the country’s public debt-to-GDP ratio of 40%, which means Thailand owes a debt of 40% of its GDP, while Cambodia owes only 28% of the GDP. More than that, countries that give us loans know full well that their recipients have got the po-

tential to repay.

The Chinese Four Types of Financial Assistance

Even more interesting, it is the people who benefit from the infrastructural developments that are either constructed or under construction, whether from interest-free, concessional and/or commercial loans. Let me clarify that the People’s Republic of China has carried out four types of financial assistances – the grant, interest-free, concessional and commercial loans.

As far as commercial loan is concerned, the Royal Government of Cambodia has not yet made with any one country yet. It is the private sector that borrows this type of loan so far. Since there will be a National Assembly session tomorrow, I would give this as information because it is predictably possible that those in opposition will bring this issue up.

Hailing the Chinese Space Program

Take this opportune moment, on behalf of our people let me share with the Chinese people and Government the joy that a pair of robotic Chinese spacecraft docked in orbit for the first time ever. I wish the spacecraft successful mission and safe return to the ground. The Chinese success in space program is also a success of countries in its neighborhood, Cambodia is also included.

Premier Wen Jiabao has mentioned in Nanning that “having a good friend is better than having gold.” I agree no less. It is nonsense to have only gold but losing all friends around. In this note, as one of China’s neighbors, I would like to wish more successes to the Chinese space program and hope that the mission will be a key step toward China’s goal of building a space station and permanent manned presence in space, which is not only for China’s own research and development but also for the region and the world.

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In the same instance, I would also hail the recent Congress of the Communist Party of China, which set out numerous reform measures, a major part of which is the development of peaceful foreign policy. It is a great feeling to note that Chinese development is no threat to anyone. I have noted in my speech on behalf of ASEAN that we are pleased to see our neighbor becomes a major power with so much progress. I also thank the PRC for its approval of assistance for Cambodia's infrastructural development.

Flood Consequences Mitigating Efforts

Concerning our efforts to deal with high flood this year, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all national institutions in giving responses in a timely manner to manage and mitigate the flood-related critical situations. I would like to take this opportune moment to thank the provincial/city/local authorities for the efforts they have offered over the past two months.

According to the report of HE Nhem Vanda, First Deputy President of the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), as of 29 October 2011, relief kits have been dispatched and offered to some 230,000 families already. To include more relief efforts on 30 October 2011, and 01 November 2011, I think the figure could have reached 250,000 families. It is my encouragement that all concerned authorities need to go on with this momentum until we bring help to all those in need.

I am so proud that the mechanism established for dealing with flood situation this year is way better than that we had in the year 2000. Then, because we just had full peace and were not well informed of expecting flooding, our response mechanism experienced various interruptions before we could reach to a smooth flow. As we have in the past years established structures of mechanism to respond to the disaster at all national and

sub-national levels, with Prime Minister staying as chairman of the commission, we have done a much better job.

It should be noted also that the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) has been playing effectively its role to assist the public authorities in the field of humanitarianism while integrating with local authorities, whose governors and deputy governors were also honorary presidents and vice presidents of the CRC at the provincial level, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces also included, for such an effective and timely response to address the situation.

I have got a report already on the amount of rice distributed so far by the Ministry of Commerce, the Cambodian Red Cross, charitable persons, the CPP working groups, etc. We are grateful to our Japanese friends for providing us with 300,000 USD relief assistances, the PRC with close to 8 million USD in relief assistance, mainly medications, for the Ministry of Health to administer help for the people in affected areas. During my visit to Nanning, Premier Wen Jiabao offered 1.5 million USD in cash that I recommend it be used to purchase and stock rice.

Assistances also come from friends like Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Singapore, the United States of America, France, Australia and the United Nations as well. I would like to thank HE Pan Guangxia for joining the trip with HE Hor Namhong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, to co-preside the distribution of relief kits to people in flood-hit areas. I also thanked HE Kuroki, the Japanese Ambassador, for being present together with HE Nhem Vanda, First President of NCDM, in providing timely response to those in need.

It is a pride that no one of our people has been left to die of hunger without our awareness and assistance, except over 250 persons who died of flood-related incidents such as snake-

bite and boat-sink.

I also take this time to express my sincere thanks to Deputy Prime Minister HE Keat Chhon, who always adheres to an austere financial policy, for giving a certain amount of money to the Ministry of Commerce to purchase and stock rice, and to the Ministry of Agriculture to purchase and stock rice seed. It has paid well when we really need it in such short notice. We have rice for consumption and seed for re-cultivation in stocks.

Rice Situation after Flood Receding

According to HE Chan Sarun, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, with whom I consulted yesterday, the flood has damaged over 220,000 hectares of rice in the field. This should be about 9% of the total 2.4 million hectares of rice cultivation. What has been our concern this year is that for every year as of this time our people complete about half of their flood recession/dry season rice cultivation already. This year the speed is slow because the water recedes at slow pace. Between yesterday and tomorrow, the River Mekong in front of the Royal Palace will be recording a difference between 9.52 meters and 9.43 meters only.

It is a good thing that we decided to cancel the boat-race from the water festival. As for the area around the Tonle Sap Lake, the flood level also recedes at slow pace, which would then prolong the inundation situation in provinces of Kompong Thom, Kompong Chhông, Siemreap, Battambang, Pursat, etc. This has prompted me to check with HE Nhem Vanda to see where and how many people would have to prolong their stays on safety grounds. These people would need more assistance.

However, as of this moment, our people already start harvesting rice. Not to mention other crops like cassava, corn, bean and rubber, rice has been a major food crop to take into consideration. The flood has brought about four different groups of

rice farmers. Firstly, *those whose rice fields are not flooded and their rice are in good yield.* These farmers are now harvesting their short-term rice. They then proceed to harvest their medium-term and then long-term rice. These are the happy group of rice farmers.

Secondly, *those people who only cultivate dry-season and flood-recession rice.* This group of farmers lost no rice from the flood but only fruit crops around their homesteads. This group of farmers also does not wait for our seed but start their cultivation wherever and whenever the water recedes. Thirdly, *those farmers who cultivate rainy season rice and part of it damaged.* These farmers are to a certain extent unhappy. However, this group of farmers could still recover some of their loss. Fourthly, *those farmers whose rice completely devastated.* This is the group of people that we need to concentrate our effort to provide help.

We should arrange help in form of food or rice for works but only for digging small canals as building roads like before would not be viable. However I recommend that the amount of rice in exchange for labor be more than the previous set as labor cost has now increased to some 15,000 (about 3.75 USD) Riel/day.

Unproductive Opposition

As people in the whole country, the Buddhist monks also included, are busy providing help to those in need, those in the opposition have sued us to the National Election Committee that we are buying votes from the people. This is quite unfortunate for our country and people. In time of disaster, the most urgent matter to take care of is to help save human life. Assistances poured in from all sources irrespective of political faith or tendency.

The CPP working groups who bring assistance to their party bases do not distinguish who from whom to give assistance. Our goal is for everyone to sur-

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