

# Cambodia New Vision

Issue 40

<http://www.cnv.org.kh>

May, 2001

## May 08, 2001

### Toast at the Dinner in Honor of HE Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong

“... On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like once again to extend a very warm welcome to Your Excellency Prime Minister and Madam and all members of your delegation and to sincerely thank you for giving us another honor of your state visit to Cambodia.

Your Excellency's state visit to Cambodia this time is very significant indeed and I do believe that it reflects the growing interest Your Excellency and your government has shown the way in expanding further the excellent bonds of friendship and cooperation existing between our two nations. Cambodia and Singapore are more than just two members of the ASEAN family. We have established our diplomatic relations since 1965. Since then, our two peoples have enjoyed very active relation of friendship and cooperation in all fields.

May I take this opportunity to express my deep thank to the Government of Singapore, particularly to Your Excellency personally for having encouraged the Singaporean business community and investors to come and invest in Cambodia.

Your personal recommendation given to me in 1994 to open the sky toward Siemreap Angkor, aiming at attracting and promoting tourism, is quite significant for me and for Cambodian people, since it had provided and provides real benefit to Cambodian people, that I call Goh Chok Tong's idea. Hun Sen's decision is a picture of intellectual and spiritual cooperation between Your Excellency and myself.

On this happy occasion, may I recall with deep appreciation the active contribution of the Government of Singapore to the cause of peace and national reconciliation in Cambodia as well as Your Excellency's support to Cambodia's full membership in ASEAN.



HE Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore and Samdech Hun Sen at the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Cambodia is eager to participate on an equal footing in all ASEAN meetings in order to achieve the ASEAN Vision 2020 and the Hanoi Plan of Action, in particular to speed up the ASEAN integration process that has been regarded as an important issue in the ASEAN Informal Summit in Singapore last year. Moreover, to face up to the challenge posed by the great speed of the present-day globalization, I think that ASEAN needs to move forward in concerted steps. To achieve this, all members of ASEAN must do our utmost to eliminate or to reduce the gap existing between the new and the old members. For its part, Cambodia is already committed by all means, in cooperation with other ASEAN members, to achieve ASEAN integration as soon as possible, a sine qua non condition for ASEAN to remain a politically and economically strong regional organization in line with the potentials and possibility of the region and above all, to remain an

(Continued on page 6)

## May 01, 2001

### Message on the Occasion of the International Labor Day

“... The First of May Labor Day has been an historical event of the international worker's movement, which started in January 1886 in Chicago of the United States with an aim and intention to improve the working and living conditions of workers and employees.

This year, in the Kingdom of Cambodia, May Day continues to link with the history from 155 years ago, which is marked as Labor Day ceremony when workers and employees as well as all laborers take as holiday from works.

Today in this joyous occasion of the Labor Day, in the name of the Royal Government of Cambodia and in my own name, may I wish our dear workers, employees, laborers, unionists as well as employers further successes in their works. I would like also to offer my esteemed evaluation and express my profound gratitude to the contributions they made for the sake of progress and development of Cambodia.

With a clear-sighted, patient and persistent leadership and the spirit of sharing, solidarity, national reconciliation and internal unity, the people of Cambodia have realized for the first time by their own efforts a full peace all over the country in the last century. The healing of the past wounds, rifts and internal conflicts -- which happened always with external instigation and supports -- has been a supreme pride for the

(Continued on page 2)

#### In This Issue

1) Toast to Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong	1
2) May-Day Message	1
3) Toast to Chairman Li Peng	3
4) Speech at the Seventh Retreat of ASEAN Economic Ministers	4
5) Excerpts of Comments at the Chub Rubber Plantation	6
6) Excerpts of Address to the Annual Meeting of Tourism	7

(Continued from page 1)

nation and a primary pre-condition for the rehabilitation and development on all fields aimed at increasing economic growth and alleviating poverty of our people. Within such a favorable condition, together with an actual political platform of the Royal Government, Cambodia swiftly steps forwards and scores major achievements one after another in all work sites. Private investment has noted a substantial contribution, which eventually generates successive progress in the efforts to rehabilitate and develop the national economy and to improve the living condition of the people.

Particularly, the industry has made a rapid progress through which many works and jobs have been created for the Cambodian laborers every year. In reality, at the present, the private sector has absorbed 350,000 strong workforce in which the garment industry is taking the lead in exports and offering jobs to the workers. The quality of the products from Cambodia have been accepted by major international markets like the United States, the European Unions, etc. ... All these are the most invaluable contributions to the common efforts at the national level for the realization of the strategies of the Royal Government aimed at rapidly assuaging the poverty of the people.

In this context, I would like to take the opportunity of the May Day occasion to express my deepest thanks to both local and foreign investors for the business investments in Cambodia. They help create work for the Cambodians, and, furthermore, along with their financial resources, share knowledge, know-how, techniques and new technology which are important in capacity building and increase productivity of the Cambodian laborers. The Royal Government has been and is swiftly making efforts to provide to every investor a favorable environment and the promotion of investment, especially peace, security, political as well as macro-economic stability in addition to legal and institutional frameworks that are efficient, transparent, accountable and predictable. With factors created for an environment conducive for investment, and counting on persistent efforts of the Royal Government for an impeccable infrastructure and human resources, a huge international markets rendered by various favoring trade systems,

rich natural resources under and on the ground, land potential for agriculture and agro-industry, plus, beautiful scenery of rivers, lakes, seas, forests, ancient temples, and favorable conditions generated by the topography and climate, I have a firm belief that investors will enjoy opportunity for investment and business operation in Cambodia.

It is true that all investments have to abide by the labor law of the Kingdom of Cambodia. By doing so, a peaceful coexistence among workers, employees and employers - which in the end will result in a "win-win" situation where each and every actor involved would benefit from the investments -- will prevail. In this meaning I wish to express my sincere thanks to the International Labor Organization, national and international NGOs for the active contribution in offering support to all forms of development programs, especially in the area of labor in Cambodia. The Royal Government and myself would like to thank the European Union, the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia and other partners for offering the favoring trade systems to Cambodia, which has become the most important locomotive for tugging the development of its industry and exports.

Professional relations or in other words the relationship between workers/employees vis á vis employers is a sort of two-ends-to-one-knot relationship. A peaceful coexistence between employees and employers bears significance for social stability conducive to the progress of the national economy, for the business operation of employers, and for the living standard of the workers/employees. Abiding by the laws related, especially the labor law is an important factor and most needed for the maintenance of a peaceful relationship between employees and employers ...

Having understood the significance of the close relationship, the Royal Government has granted a priority in strengthening the implementation of labor law and the international labor convention, focusing on the improvement of working condition and living standard, professional training for the workers and the expansion of local labor market. In this spirit, the Labor Consulting Commission, which is a forum offering consultation service by three parties, has been created and operating in accordance with the law. It has underscored a

number of successes already in its efforts to improve the living condition of the workers and employees. Furthermore, the Royal Government also consults for a unanimous view on the draft law on social security regime for each and everyone exists under the labor law that is going to be forwarded to the legal institution for examination and adoption in the near future. The law will materialize further favorable condition for the betterment of the workers/employees condition in working for the private sector.

With my deep thanks and wishes for everyone on May Day, on behalf of the Royal Government and my own behalf, I wish to place an appeal once again to the employers and the workers/employees to give consideration to a number of important points as follow:

**For employers and owners of enterprises/factories,** please continue to participate in the implementation of the laws and consider workers as partners in business operations, which will provide interests to both sides. For their own prosperity, employers and owners of factories/enterprises must take the obligation to provide an appropriate working condition, and improvement of the living standard of the workers/employees for the work they do in their factories/enterprises. This should in the end provide in return an increase in productivity of all production and labor of the workers/employees, as well as active participation by them in the safeguarding of properties and the promotion of working status of the enterprises. Owners of the factories/enterprises have an obligation to interact and communicate with the workers/employees, to take their suggestions for consideration, and to solve them in a timely manner on the basis of cooperation, understanding, and abiding by the law and the existing norms.

**For the workers/employees,** please consider the factories/enterprises as your own rice bowl. Every demands and protests should be delivered in a legal framework, refraining from use of violence and destruction, as they would bring about damages to properties and affect on the process of the factories/enterprises. This should be done in consideration of the reality by asking questions like whether or not the demand/suggestion is appropriate? Otherwise, the workers/employees themselves will become

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

the victims of the actions that are born out of lack of thought and contrary to the law.

**For related ministries and institutions as well as authority at all levels**, please continue to take further measures for the coordination of the investment procedures and for the protection of legal rights of all partners involved -- both the rights of workers/employees and those of the owners of factories/enterprises. Every ministries/institutions of the Royal Government must take initiative roles in resolving and strengthening partnership and peaceful coexistence between workers/employees and employers/owners of factories/enterprises.

In this meaning, I wish to propose to the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor and Youth Rehabilitation to give consideration to the promotion and strengthening of consultation among the three parties involved -- the Royal Government, the employers and the employees -- as an effective mechanism for peaceful coexistence and partnering relations..."

**Toast on the Occasion of the Official Dinner in Honor of Chairman Li Peng and Madame**



" ... On this auspicious evening, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, on behalf my wife and on my own behalf, I would like to extend once again my warmest welcome and best wishes to HE Chairman Li Peng, Madame, and all members of the delegation for conducting the official visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia.

The visit of the top delegation of the National People's Congress of China to the Kingdom of Cambodia adds one more historical page of friendship between Cambodia and China - a special relationship that His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk has steadfastly cared, expanded and strengthened in years and decades.

In the glorious period of Angkor as well as that of prosperous Sangkum Reastr Niyum, the relationships between our two peoples - Cambodia and China - were brightly recorded.

The Kingdom of Cambodia is very grateful to HE Li Peng and Madame, in spite of their busy schedule to pay such an official visit, which will further consolidate and expand the fraternal friendship relations between Cambodia and China. The People's Republic of China has taken remarkable and praise-worthy steps in its cause of development of the country.

The five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence of its foreign policy have served as a mean to nurture relationship between China and other countries, including Cambodia. Cambodia always and highly appreciates the clear-sighted leadership of the Communist Party of China, the National People's Congress and the Government of the People's Republic of China, as well as its policy of friendship and cooperation. Cambodia also values the achievements scored by the Peo-

ple's Republic of China in all fields.

China's assistance has increased annually without condition, with sincerity for mutual interests both at present and in the future. Taking this rare opportunity, please allow me to recall here the souvenir of the initial meeting between Your Excellency and the SNC (Supreme National Council) delegation in 1992, in which I was one of its members in my capacity as the former Prime Minister of the State of Cambodia.

Your Excellency's recommendations at that time to all the Cambodian Parties, which was of great value for me in my effort to bring a solution to a national reconciliation, was that" the Cambodian problem must be resolved by the Cambodian themselves, and no foreign country can do that."

Your recommendation in your capacity as Head of the Government of the People's Republic of China had clearly reflected a principled policy of the People's Republic of China and its people, who steadfastly adhere to the principles of respect to independence, sovereignty, self-determination, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Re-affirming its consistent adherence to the One-China policy, the Royal Government of Cambodia would like to express once again its gratitude to HE President Jiang Zemin, HE Chairman Li Peng, HE Premier Zhu Rongji, the National People's Congress, the Government and the entire People of China for their continuous assistance and support to the cause of the development of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

In this splendid evening and with a very happy sentiment of this historical visit of HE Chairman Li Peng and Madame, may my wife and I propose a toast...

Siemreap, May 3, 2001

## Speech at the Seventh Retreat of the ASEAN Economic Ministers

"... On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), I take the pleasure in welcoming Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, to Angkor, Cambodia and extending my warmest greetings to all of you upon the opening of the Seventh Retreat of the ASEAN Economic Ministers in Siemreap, surrounded by the soaring towers and exquisite bas reliefs of the Angkor Wat, which ranks among the wonders of the World ...

Cambodia is proud to host the Seventh Retreat of the ASEAN Economic Ministers, exactly two years after the country's admission into the ASEAN family.

During the last two years, the Royal Government of Cambodia has doubled efforts to meet the demands of ASEAN membership - from changing laws to bringing finance, investment, commerce and trade sectors into alignment with ASEAN standards. The Royal Government has also worked very hard to develop the human resources necessary to fully and effectively participate in all ASEAN affairs and initiatives.

In this sense, Cambodia is well prepared to contribute to this process. The commitment to democracy, the respect for human rights, the prevalence of peace and national reconciliation in the country, especially the dismantling of the political and military organization of the Khmer Rouge - a major source of long-term instability in the country and the region - all are of paramount importance to ASEAN.

On the economic front, the RGC has taken considerable strides to boost economic growth. Hence, even after the most severe flooding in 70 years, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) is committed to taking necessary measures in order to reach the GDP growth target of 5.5 percent.

According to the latest estimate of the National Institute of Statistics, real GDP growth was 5.4 percent in 2000 against the projected 5.5 percent. This testifies to the fact that growth momentum, which commenced in 1999, was maintained. It is necessary to recall that, according to our new national accounts data, after tepid growth of 3.7 percent and 1.5 percent in 1997 and

1998 respectively growth rate for 1999 reached 6.9 percent against 4 percent projected.

Manufacturing and public investment financed by both the budget and external assistance have been the main engine in driving output growth. Growth and investment in export-oriented industries such as garment and footwear were particularly strong. Boosted by strong export performance, Cambodia is expected to sustain economic momentum in 2001 and 2002, with real GDP is projected to grow by 6.1 percent. Inflation will remain low and the exchange rate will be broadly stable.

This meeting is taking place at a crucial juncture. The recovery from the 1997 financial crisis has been remarkable. After a drastic contraction in 1998, growth for the ASEAN economies turned positive in 1999 and reached 5.3 percent in 2000. The recovery was buoyed by favorable conditions of the global economy after actions taken by the national governments to introduce structural reforms.

However, the global outlook for 2001 is becoming significantly more adverse, with the unexpected economic slowdown in the United States, lower growth in Europe and problems in the Japanese economy. This is compounded by weakness in the global IT sector, with some ASEAN economies heavily depend on the production and exports of electronic goods.

I am sure that this meeting will provide you with much needed opportunities to discuss ways to sustain the recovery of ASEAN economies, to build up business and investor confidence and to mitigate the impact of China joining the WTO on the regional economies.

The task before us is sustaining the momentum of growth in our individual countries and the region, thereby securing greater economic stability and resilience, which is crucial for long-term, sustainable development.

We also need to remain focused on the longer-term issues including trade liberalization. In this regard, Cambodia is firmly

committed to contribute in establishing the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) by the time that we have agreed upon (2010) and to eliminate all tariffs by 2015. Cambodia is also committed to promote other economic cooperation like the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA), Liberalization of Trade in Services, and ASEAN Industrial Economic Cooperation (AICO), in the region.

I strongly believe that with ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), we will be able to increase our competitiveness against other regional groupings, to increase our trade and investments amongst ourselves and to the third countries so that we will achieve higher growth of our economies; and with growing economic prosperity in ASEAN, economic disparity between ASEAN members and within each country will be reduced, and peace and stability in the region will be also strengthened.

In addition, because our economies have been more or less depending on economic developments in North East Asia, European Union and United States as well as other groupings, I think, we have to look for ways how to deepen our trade and economic cooperation with those countries as well.

In this sense, it is my conviction that the consultations between ASEAN Economic Ministers and Ministers from the People's Republic of China, Japan and Republic of Korea tomorrow will find further ways to extend our economic cooperation for mutual benefits and to set milestones for future cooperation.

In this regard also, Cambodia would like to support the decision of the Second Senior Economic Officials meeting of the 32nd ASEAN Economic Ministers to create the Working Group on Regional Integration (WGRI) to look into the possibilities to establish ASEAN-China and ASEAN-Japan free trade arrangements as well as to look into the modalities to establish the ASEAN-CEP (Australia and New Zealand) Close Economic Partnership.

We all have recognized that the reduction of the gap between the original and new members of ASEAN is very significant for  
**(Continued on page 5)**

(Continued from page 4)

our long-term interests and mutual benefits. I wish therefore to draw your attention to some crucial aspects, which, in my view, need your high consideration:

**First**, to promote an effective integration and involvement of ASEAN new members in the regional affairs, ASEAN founding members have made great efforts to provide substantial technical assistance, at bilateral level, to Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

However, to allow the new members to capitalize on immediate benefits from regional economic cooperation and to accelerate the pace of their economic development, as well as to have rapid reduction of economic disparity between original and new members, it is necessary, in my view, to take some more new measures on top of what have been implemented.

In this sense, I would like to voice my support for the ASEAN Secretary General's proposal to consider about introducing ASEAN Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) for the new members of ASEAN. I believe that this initiative would become a stimulating factor for trade expansion in our region and to the third countries and this would also promote an increased inflow of investment to new members with low level of development and weak production base.

According to the past and present practices of the developed economies, I understand that it is up to the GSP giving countries to unconditionally provide GSP to the GSP beneficiary countries. However, if possible and if we want to get positive results from it, ASEAN GSP Scheme should be comprehensive and have a wide range of product coverage.

**Second**, another significant component for supporting initiative of reducing the gap between the original and new members of ASEAN is the development of physical infrastructure in the Great Mekong Subregion (GMS) where all new ASEAN member countries are located. With sufficient and effective infrastructure in the region, we will be surely developing our economies faster and all of us will be benefiting from this development.

I would like to reiterate my full support for the initiatives of establishing ASEAN Highways for facilitating goods in transit, the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link as proposed by Malaysia and of developing West-East Corridor (WEC) in the GMS and other ones which aim at improving or developing regional infrastructure.

These are realistic concepts and projects, which aim at developing a network of physical infrastructure linking regional countries and turning them into tourism, investment, trade, industrial and agricultural zones.

**Third**, as we already know, *human resource development has played a very significant role in overall development of our countries*. However, Cambodia is still lacking skilled workforce in many areas including in area of implementing strategies for regional and international integration.

Therefore, Cambodia enthusiastically welcomes all initiatives that have been proposed in this area. I strongly believe that ASEAN, in particular its new members would take advantages for example from the following initiatives:

- China's initiative presented at the fourth Informal ASEAN Summit last year in Singapore to provide US\$ 5 million to the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund for the support of human resource development;
- Japan's initiative announced at the G 8 Summit to provide US\$ 15 billion over the period of five years to assist developing countries in telecommunications and information technology;
- Republic of Korea's initiative to invite 100 youths from East Asia to study IT for one year; and
- Singapore's initiative announced at the fourth Informal ASEAN Summit last year in Singapore to provide S\$50 million over the period of five years to assist new ASEAN member countries in Information Technology Sector.

The above initiatives and many others are crucial opportunities to support human resource development in ASEAN and for ASEAN's efforts to reduce the regional

digital divide, the gap between ASEAN and its partners, and especially to achieve the objectives of the e-ASEAN project.

In this sense, I would like to appeal to relevant ASEAN bodies and ASEAN's partners to pay attention in implementing these initiatives so as to allow us to share our "win-win" situation ...

<b>The May-2001 Releases Available at <a href="http://www.cnv.org.kh">www.cnv.org.kh</a></b>	
01/05/01	A Message on the International Labor Day
03/05/01	Address to the Seventh Retreat of the ASEAN Economic Ministers
08/05/01	Toast to HE Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore
14/05/01	Address to the Initial Tapping of Rubber in Chub, Kompong Cham
15/05/01	Address to the Sixth Informal Meeting of the ASEAN Environment Ministers
17/05/01	Address to the Annual Meeting of the Ministry of Tourism
20/05/01	Toast to HE Chairman Li Peng of the People's Republic of China
21/05/01	A Press Release of Rumors about the Removal of the Governor of Phnom Penh

(Continued from page 1)

portant partner of other countries and regions.

I am glad to note that all ASEAN members, old and new, understand and share the same concern with regard to the present challenge facing ASEAN. The Royal Government and the people of Cambodia wish to convey our sincere congratulations to the people and the government of Singapore for the great success you have achieved in all fields. You have transformed the Republic of Singapore into a modern and developed nation associated with high technology and a strong economy.

Present-day Singapore has become one of Asia's DRAGON ECONOMY which has shown that great economic development is not necessarily the reflection of the size of the population or of its land or of its bountiful natural resources. The human resources endowed with good quality has brought Singapore with no natural resources, to a surprising high level of development.

The intellect resources of the Singaporean people and their leaders have become an invaluable sources of inspiration not only for Cambodia but for the world as a whole. I am very pleased to have an exchange of views with Your Excellency the Prime Minister on various issues in the framework of bilateral as well as international cooperation, in particular, those related to our South East ASEAN region. These exchanges have deepened further our mutual understanding. I am convinced that the outcome of these exchanges will further strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation in all fields between our two countries for the mutual interest of our two peoples as well as for an early ASEAN integration which will benefit ASEAN as a whole.

I am also convinced that, at the dawn of the new century, all South East ASEAN Nations will score greater progress thanks to their unity, mutual assistance and strong solidarity within the ASEAN family. As a result, ASEAN will have a more crucial role to play in the political as well as economic fields through cooperation between ASEAN and other regions. Furthermore, a politically and economically stronger ASEAN will further promote an expansion of multi-sided cooperation in the framework of

14 May 01 - Kompong Cham

### Excerpts of Comments at the Initial Tapping of Rubber at Chub

#### On Rubber Affairs

"... Today I am very glad to be back here again ... It recalls me of the wedding between my wife and me in Chrab commune - a place not far from here ... There were then thirteen couples of newly weds ... On June 22, 1996, my wife and I came back to this place to join with the General Director, officials and workers in growing new rubbers, which I will be tapping ... Today, we will grow more rubbers in the hope that I will be able to join all of you again to milk them in 2005-6 ..."

"... I wish to express my highest appreciation to all efforts made by the Chub Rubber Company, which as a public enterprise, is recovering from all economic difficulties, especially at the time of financial crisis in the region ... This is a success not only for the Company and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, but also the Royal Government of Cambodia ... According to Mr. Oknha Mak Kim Hong's report, the price for rubber has fallen sharply from US\$ 1,700 per ton to around just US\$ 400 and currently US\$ 577 per ton ... This brings about a reduction of salary for the workers and officials in the company ... But, it is a remarkable experience that the company refrains from closing down, which could have laid off the workers, and continues to further invest in growing more new rubbers as well as new production technol-

ASEAN + 3 leading to a closer cooperation between Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia. Moreover, a politically and economically strong ASEAN, will enhance its role as a Primary force to maintain and strengthen peace and security in the Asia Pacific region through the strengthening of Confidence Building Measure in the framework of ASEAN Regional Forum, ARF. Finally, may I propose a toast to ...

ogy... Not only in Chub Company, in all Rubber Companies, processing plants have been established ..."

#### On Remarks by Opposition Party

"... There had been demand for me to follow the path of the Communist Party of Vietnam ... with an intention for me to resign ... They should straightforwardly voice their intention as 'Please resign, or I will not be able to win you.' Before this happened, there was a foreigner approaching me with an idea that 'I should follow George Washington that even he knew that he would win the election, still he walked out.' How could I do that as they (these opposition politicians) are preparing to bother me? Therefore I wish to announce today that I will propose my candidacy for another ten years ... Even if I would not have enough support for holding the position as Prime Minister, I would still have a parliamentary immunity, which would then allow me to be an opposition politician... I will be adhering to the role of a strict opposition parliamentarian, in which I would never call on the donors to suspend their assistance to Cambodia ... I would give my appreciation and praise to positive achievements, and would offer my constructive advice as what could be best to do to redress the negative outcomes ... In fact I used to mention to Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Rannaridh that we should act as elder brothers and give the younger generation an opportunity to work together ..."

"... As one could notice already that when I am in the Prime Minister's position everyone lives in peace all over the country... With regards to the establishment of another political party taking after my name, I wish to declare hereby that this will never happen ... No one would even think of implementing a policy that drops a stone on either of his/her foot ... Chea Sim and Hun Sen are the two feet (of the Cambodian People's Party) ... The crippling of either foot would not be acceptable ..."



**May 17, 2001** (Please visit [www.cnv.org.kh](http://www.cnv.org.kh) for full text)

## Excerpts of Address to the Closing Ceremony of the Annual Meeting of the Ministry of Tourism

"... On behalf of Royal Government, I appreciate very much the improvement in the tourist sector in 2000, with the MOT playing a crucial role in this. We are proud for having almost half a million of foreign tourists (466,365 people) visiting Cambodia last year, an increase of 27%. Of this figure visitors traveling by air increased by 34% ... Indeed, for the first quarter of 2001, the number of tourist arrivals increased by 40.14% compares to last year and we can expect an annual increase of about 25 to 30 percent. Therefore, Cambodia will be able to attract one million visitors or more in 2003 ... The sector generates about US\$ 200 million per year in income for the government and our people, creating about 100,000 jobs, thus contributing to the country's economic development. With the assumption that a visitor spends at least US\$ 500 then it helps to feed two of our people for one year ...

I would like to take this great opportunity to give some specific recommendations to the management and officials of MOT for consideration and effective implementation in order to boost the tourism sector. Following are government's tourism development strategies:

### 1. Tourism Infrastructures and Management and Development of Tourism Destinations

With our enormous potential in cultural and natural heritage, our tourism policy should be geared toward cultural and eco-tourism. Thus, development should ensure the sustainable development of cultural and natural environment in a way that the environmental protection should not be considered as an impediment to development ...

**The first zone is the Angkor Complex and its Surrounding Areas**, which is a special zone. The Angkor temple is the world's priceless heritage and belongs to the all mankind. Therefore, we should have a proper master plan and take protection measures for its development. My observation is that the development of this area is considerably slow. Besides the roads which I pushed very hard last year during the MOT annual conference on 3 May 2000 and the open Cabinet meeting on May 4, 2000 in

Siemreap, it seems nothing has been improved. There are no road signs for direction, no rest rooms and no other facilities to serve visitors. This work has to be done as soon as possible by having a project planned and disseminated to private investors for their participation, if we want to attract tourists to stay longer and spend more ...

Besides the Angkor area, *we have other cultural and eco-tourism destinations such as the Kulen Mountain, Kos Ker temple, Preas Vihea temple, and Ta Mok house in Anlong Veng*, which can be used as a historical tourist destination. These areas can be developed as a big cultural, historical, and ecological recreation zone, which should not be limited to Angkor. In addition, Tonle Sap Lake has a great potential for developing eco-tourism, such as the water bird area and the fishing villages. In the central zone, we have the Sambo Prey Kuk temples to which a road was built. Therefore, MOT has to cooperate with the provincial authorities and relevant ministries to study and prepare an appropriate master plan for properly development and management.

*The Road from Poipet to Siemreap has to be completed by July 2001.* I think this road has to be paved, because the flow of tourists on this road can reach more than one thousand each day, thus generating US\$ 600,000 per month from entry visa fees.

*The Siemreap Airport terminal needs expansion as soon as possible to meet the technical standards.* But the problem is also the landing area and passenger terminal, which have to be enlarged quickly. Many airlines have expressed their interests to fly directly to Siemreap, but were unable to do so because the Siemreap airport does not fully meet internationally recognized technical requirements ...

*The Road from Siemreap to Kompong Tom should be completed as soon as possible.* We had launched the construction site for a 17-km stretch from Roluas to the Siemreap provincial town, with funding from Japan ...

**The second zone is Phnom Penh**, which is the capital of Cambodia, the commercial

and industrial center as well. In addition, Phnom Penh and the surrounding areas also have potential tourist destinations such as the Mekong river landscape/view, the Preah Raja Trop Mountain, the Chiso Mountain, handicraft production areas, silversmith, silk and mat weaving, and as well as the important historical holocaust center. At present, Phnom Penh also plans to expand the Pochentong airport ... The expansion will enable Boeing 747 or Airbus 340 flying from big cities in Asia Pacific, America, and Europe to land. When National Road number 1, from Vietnam to Phnom Penh, is completed and fully operational plus the opening of boat tours from Vietnam-Phnom Penh-Siemreap; Phnom Penh will become the country's commercial and tourism center on par with the Siemreap Angkor zone.

**The third zone is the Coastal zone**, which received a cruise ship to test the water to develop this kind of tourism. We have the port development project, which is on its way, financed by a loan of US\$ 40 million from the Government of Japan. The port will become fully operational at the beginning of 2002. However, while rehabilitating and developing the port, we should also think about having a tourism port where big cruise ships can land including a passenger terminal for passengers and a border checkpoint ...

We should give prompt consideration to the development of the Sihanoukville airport, particularly action has to be taken in pushing the Ariston's investment plan to start without any delay. The reconstruction of the National Road from Viel Rinh to Kompot is underway. However, we have to quickly rehabilitate other infrastructures and improve the quality of services within this area such as accommodations, restaurants, golf courses, beach sports, fishing, and as well as diving ...

**The fourth zone is Cambodia's Northeast.** I commend the MOT for its cooperation with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to conduct a study and develop a master plan for tourism development in Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri provinces. I urge them to complete the master plan as soon as possible for submitting to

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

the Royal Government for approval. The Tonle Bet Bridge is about to finish soon and the construction of the National Road 7 is underway. However, I think at least we should do two things for the airports in this region:

1) *Improving safety*: the quality of runway has to be checked for meeting technical requirements and proper security standards. If needed a fence has to be put in place and the airport controlling system need to be improved.

2) *Passenger terminals*: for the time being we should not spend much on it. A simple hill-tribe style, wooden terminal is good enough. But a good air controlling system, security, safety and services need to be put in place ... Once our infrastructure is in place, the number of visitors will pick up, the regional economy will improve and people's living standards will ameliorate ...

I would also like to take this opportunity to appeal to some companies, whom the Royal Government have granted an approval to manage and develop some tourist zones, to immediately design a master plan for submitting to relevant ministries for approval and start to develop as soon as possible. For the National Parks ... MOT has to build a strong cooperation with the Ministry of City Planning, Urbanization and Construction for preparing tourism sector master plans ...

## 2. Improving Quality of Services in the Tourism Industry

The MOT has to continue to take the lead and assume the responsibility for improving the quality of services, including accommodations, food, transportation, and guides in response to market demand. We receive diversified tourists who come from different countries and have different preferences; therefore, to attract visitors we have to conduct a research study and develop a clear plan with an improvement of partnership with private sector. Establishing associations is an important mechanism in improving quality, but associations should know how to manage, be able to provide professional skills for good business, and learn from other countries' experiences ... We should be concerned about cultural performance/show organized by restaurants ... A proper organization will not only be able

to show visitors the Khmer culture but also to promote Khmer culture, to improve performers' living, especially if restaurant serving Khmer food can organize along with the performance would be perfect ... The MOT has to cooperate with Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MCFA) and effectively and efficiently work on these issues.

At the same time, relevant authorities have to pay attention in improving visitor's facilities at international gates because this issue has not been worked out properly yet. I think it is necessary to build a proper passenger area and agent office at all international gates ... I appeal to all officials who work for consular services, at international gates, including consular officers, policemen and customs officials, as well as all business and service providers to actively implement government's tourism policy. Their day-to-day activities should be guided by this principle.

Furthermore, to strengthen and improve the quality of services in the tourism industry, regulation is very important. We recognize the lack of laws and regulations for this sector. Therefore, the MOT has to quickly draft laws and regulations necessary for an effective and efficient management ...

## 3. Market Study and Advertising

I would like to commend the MOT for devoting efforts in improving this work in the past, however more work has to be done because I have not seen any MOT's Homepage on the Internet yet. Although several broadcasts in the CNN and others have showed Cambodia in their programs, we have to continue to promote advertising for trade purposes in short program with other international TV broadcasts in other languages as market needs for attracting tourists. Private enterprises within the tourism sector should participate in producing/publishing and disseminating all kinds of valuable/attracted information with careful monitoring by the MOT. Our airlines and foreign airlines can be our advertisers if we know how to organize and cooperate in information dissemination ... There is a mechanism within the ASEAN context and the three big markets like Japan, Korea, and China which also referred to as ASEAN plus three mechanism such as ASEAN Center in Tokyo through cooperation among MOT and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

International Cooperation ...

## 4. Human Resource Training and Education

Since our officials still lack experience, then additional training plan has to be set up ... Therefore, MOT has to cooperate with Ministry of Education Youth and Sports in monitoring quality of training in the field of tourism and through additional training in pedagogy and major subjects. On the other hand, due to the enormous demand, I think it is necessary to set up a tourism school at the national level and all related ministries have to draft a sub-decree for establishing this school ... Thus, tourism sector links to the benefits and living conditions of people especially those who live in the tourist area and priority in receiving this benefit has to be given first to them. Relevant authorities have to educate people in the local community ... for participating in the maintenance and protection of cultural patrimonies such as temples, forest, environment, and sanitation for tourism purposes and their benefits ...

In the coming January 2003, as the ASEAN member, Cambodia will have to host the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) and we also have to organize the Visit Cambodia Year which is the national tourism exemplifying with deeply meaning and integrity of our nation and Cambodia people ...