



Samdech Techo Hun Sen with Visiting Lao People's Democratic Republic President HE Bunnhang Vorachith on 22 February 2017

Kompong Cham's Boeung Kok School

(28 February 2017 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Addressing the crowd to celebrate the Inauguration Ceremony of the Boeung Kok Techo Hun Sen Secondary School in the city of Kompong Cham, Samdech Techo Hun Sen made some off-the-cuff comments that CNV has selected and translated unofficially as followed:

Salary Increase and Khmer New Year Bonus for Teachers, Civil Servants, Armed Forces

I wish to inform teachers that their salary has increased one gradual step. This happens for not only our teachers but also civil servants in the whole country, the armed forces. In just one more month, the salary will increase again and you will get it before the Khmer New Year in (midst April).

The teachers and health staff will receive a minimum of Riel 950,000 as their basic salary. Considering that they will have additional regional supplementary fund of 80,000, or 100,000, or 120,000, they

will have over one million Riel as their salary.

To show you how do we think and make things happen without making a single promise, I also bring you news that at the coming Khmer New Year, we will provide a bonus of Riel 50,000 for each, and every civil servant. This will require a sum of 30 billion Riel or about 7 million USD. Last year we offered a bonus of only Riel 40,000 for the Khmer New Year. This year, while increasing salary as planned for April, we are also offering the Khmer New Year bonus. How much would we need someone go around with their promise to offer this or that much for people who are 60 and older, of whom there are about over two million of them.

That thing they say is a hoax. I would just warn them to make it happen is not simple. You will get a gist of it. People may ask why salary increase does not happen in January or why
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Interior's 2016 Stocktaking, 2017 Directives

(24 February 2017 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

In addition to the prepared text, Samdech Techo made the following selected adlib comments:

Guarantee Political Stability and Macroeconomic Stability for Country Development

... I would continue to remind that in order to develop a country the biggest issue is to maintain political stability on one side and macroeconomic stability on the other. They have dialectical relationship and are indispensable. We will allow no one to destroy peace. We will take swift response for whatever kind of actions

they may be. We will take actions to guarantee our safety in the country and allow no terrorist activity on our land as it would be fearful for our people and destructive to our tourism industry. Everyone residing in the country must abide by laws and take part in safeguarding peace and security of the country. We shall not allow anyone or political party to disguise under label of democracy or human rights to destroy national security.

... One another angle, we have secured macroeconomic stability, in which our efforts

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PPIU Graduation/Diploma Presenting

(22 February 2017 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Cambodia Becomes Chairman of LDCs Coordinators at WTO

... In addition to my recommendation for all of you to make efforts in your further study and to continue with the works in hands, I wish to share with you that Cambodia has now become the Chairman of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) coordinators at the World Trade Organization (WTO). It is not a simple position for just anyone country. Aside from coordinating the least developed countries under the framework of WTO, Cambodia has embodied the task of helping Timor-Leste in its preparation for accession to WTO. This point indicates that ascertaining economic growth is one thing but how effective our human resource has become is another. It is an honor to assume this coordi-

nating role. Cambodia will take up responsibilities of the role and in addition with that provide assistance for Timor-Leste in its accession to WTO.

Upper Middle Income Economy by 2030, High Income Economy by 2050

In the last ten years, we have been sending troops for missions abroad. It is not a simple mission. They are well-trained soldiers. In Mali, we have to send troops with reasonable knowledge of technology, take for instance regarding airports and engineering. Cambodia has to be aware and proud of

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this progress. On the one hand, we are resolving our own endeavors with bare hands to get out of least developed countries to become one of the low-income countries and lower-middle income countries. We have ambition to bring Cambodia into a status of developed country with upper-middle income country by 2030, and high-income country by 2050 [...]

Every Circle to Join in Anti-Drug Campaign

... Firstly, I am calling on the participation of our Buddhist monks and people in the anti-drug campaign that is in progress. We are taking this measure to prevent Cambodia from falling into a country of drug war like in Mexico and other countries in Latin America.

Those wars killed so many lives. We must resolve our problem through people's participation. We are not using solely legal and administrative measures. Those addicted to drugs are not criminals. Those who distribute and sell it are. We should have pity on the addicted ones and we must seek for the best way to help them, not only to put them all in one place.

... I think it would be best when the Royal Government is putting the campaign into operation for the parents and relatives to bring their addicted children and/or family members in to rehabilitation or treatment. Leaving them in the wild would push them further to danger.

I am calling on every circle to help this campaign and the addicts, some of whom have even become prisoners. Some of them may not want to go to rehabilitation concentration camps. No one would have better ability than parents, brothers, and sisters, etc. in helping them deal with the problem. The best place to treat them is at home.

... As for rehabilitation centre, there is no punishment ensured. However, in case family help does not work, they may opt to send them to rehab centre. Sometimes they have changed themselves while in the centre, but getting out there, with bad companionship, they may fall into it again. It is not purely correct to blame all on the Royal Government for this matter [...]

Without commitment and help from each, and every family, this is going to be a difficult problem. Families will be the first to set tears when bad things happen ... I am asking them therefore to take part in this matter.

Micro-Finance Institutions Are Private

Secondly, I am calling on our people to understand, and confirming again that micro-finance institutions are private-owned and not state-owned. There have been confusions so far that people are in debt to the state. Let me clarify that the National Bank of Cambodia has no rights whatsoever to lend people money. It is defined by law. It may allow some loans to the Royal Government because it may deposit some cash remained from the flow with the National Bank [...]

In case of shortage of cash the Royal Government may borrow from the National Bank to avoid selling bonds. In 1997, 1998 or 1999, the Royal Government did not have sufficient money to pay salary and it had to borrow from the National Bank. It repaid the principle and interest. However, the National Bank does not have right to lend money to private citizen.

It has been a major confusion that people borrowed money from micro-finance institutions and thought that they borrowed it from the state. The opposition parties also take this chance to promise to the people that they would

help erase those debts should they win the elections. It is a big disaster. What is at stake is the fact that people in debt would face all sorts of confiscation for debts they cannot repay. We have now launched a nation-wide campaign to educate our citizen that micro-finance institutions are not state-owned but private ones ... I am taking this chance to speak to every TV stations, online news outlets as well as print media to help circulate the news [...]

I am asking for one-full year campaign through media to inform users and people at large in one way or the other that micro-finance institutions (MFIs) are not state-owned ... Any media outlets neglected this request may be categorized as bearing intention to continue to confuse people.

We are not going to take any punishment measures with them but we will wait and see whether they have intention to help people beware of the debts? If people borrowed money for production, it is one matter. However, we have noticed that some MFIs offered loans to people who wished to change their motor-bikes to the latest version [...]

It Takes a Coup to Erase Debts

The opposition parties go around with tricks "voting for them they will erase those debts." I must warn you that those debts are not erasable. To erase them it may take a coup. Why a coup, it takes? It is to dissolve the Constitutional Monarchy regime and its existing laws and to commence nationalization. That may bring a regime like Pol Pot that we all know back.

I am calling on all telephone companies to include such message – "MFIs are private-owned, not state-owned" in every out-going and incoming calls or SMS ... Let us all do it and use the IT systems that we have to clear this up [...]

MFIs to Change Logos

... The Ministry of Trade has in fact carried out this job more so far. ACLEDA Bank has decided to spend money to change its logo (from placing a bird resembling to that of the Ministry of Economy and Finance). I thank ACLEDA to carry out its part in this work. There is this MFI – PRASAC whose logo carries three R letters in the middle and R is in fact a symbol of the National Bank of Cambodia.

The alphabet R (could be an abbreviation of "state" or "Riel" in Khmer) so it may confuse people that it is a state owned institution. I think we have a major task to do and the National Bank of Cambodia is playing important role with the Ministry of Information to help our people understand [...]

No Real Prime Minister, No Acting Prime Minister

... Some people complained that Prime Minister has spoken too much or all power rests with the Prime Minister. Have they just known about it? Prime Minister has every power the Constitution gives. He has the largest executive power as stipulated in the Constitution. Some said there seemed to be some problems between Acting Prime Minister and Prime Minister, when the latter is abroad. I have responded that if there were no real Prime Minister, there would not be an acting one too.

The Constitution clearly stipulates – "*when the position of Prime Minister is permanently vacant, must be carried to the appointment of a new Council of Ministers as provided for in this constitution...*"

This means that should the Prime Minister die, immediately the whole Cabinet will dissolve automatically. If there is no real Prime Minister, there is not going to be an acting

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have been to continue to realize a steadfast 7% economic growth, while urging other reforms, especially the public financial and administrative reforms, as from one year to the next demand for expenses goes up high on payrolls. We must make efforts to maintain stable exchange rate and keep (inflation rate at official target of) below 5%. If we are not able to maintain macroeconomic stability, it is certain that our efforts to increase salary for our people make no sense.

We must guarantee that while increasing salary, we are also able to keep purchasing power of the increased salary for our civil servants, the armed forces, and our workers, who have enjoyed their basic salary adjustment to a minimum of US\$ 153. With other interests included, they may receive no less than US\$ 170 or 180 (per month) [...]

Every Circles Take Parts in Educating, Eradicating Drugs, Crossed Border Crimes

I wish to take this opportune moment to express my appreciation to every institution under the leadership of Samdech Krola Haom in implementing an unprecedented large-scale campaign against drugs. Through carrying out anti-drug campaign, we have noticed that armed robberies also dwindle.

Normally drugs and robberies are ones related files. However, we must be aware that using only armed forces and court to carry out this work is not complete. We anticipate participations from our people, especially private sector, civil society, Buddhist monks, religious organizations, etc., especially those families themselves.

While campaign is undergoing, the best way to handle this is that parents and family members should not allow

their children to go out and join their ranks and files or they could face arrest and place in a concentration camp. A camp is not a prison but a place to rehabilitate them.

However, if every family could educate their children and secure treatment for them at home, I am sure number of drug addicts in society will come down. I am appealing to people – parents, superintendants, etc. to make efforts in educating their children and try to keep them home for treatment rather than leaving them and having them arrested and placed in the camp.

We must also seek regional cooperation as well as offer our cooperation when we are conducting visits to other countries to combat drugs and crossed border crimes [...]

Arrested Elephant Tusk Ivory and Rhino Horns Will Go into Exhibition

I am taking this moment to express my sincere appreciation to our competent airports authority. If I am not mistaken, those elephant tusk ivory and Rhino horns arrested travelled through many airports from Latin America and caught in Cambodia. We had busted a few cases in Siem Reap and in Phnom Penh. This has clarified that there had been negligence in those airports. We do not overvalue capacity of our competent authority officials but they prove that they have not neglected their duties [...]

The Ministry of Environment the other day requested that we should keep the elephant tusk ivory and Rhino horns for exhibition. There has been suggestion from America to destroy them ... I think we will keep them and exhibit them. We will not destroy them because doing so would eliminate evidences.

I agree with the request of the Ministry of Environment to keep them and may have them exhibited. They made holes in

logs and placed them in there. Cambodia discovered them. Our officials deserve praise ... These tusk ivory and horns are rare and come from endangered animals in Africa. We may allow other countries to borrow and place in their exhibitions [...]

Checking on Requirement Services for People

We have decided to cancel collection of service costs for many kinds of paper. However, we must monitor if our junior level operational officers are actually implementing as instructed. Take for instance identity cards are not important only for claiming right to vote but it is a must-have item for our people when they turn 15 years of age.

Previously, because the country was in financial difficulty, we sought our people's contribution of Riel 10,000 for each identity card. We have removed service charges for identity card already and for other certificates such as for decease, marriage, birth, family logbooks, etc. We have deleted the prices of about twenty items [...]

With regard to markets, I wish those of you at the sub-national level seriously look into the Royal Government's cancellation of taxes on goods sold in baskets by small-scale traders. People who picked up their homestead crops and come in small baskets to market to sell them, they are free of any taxes selling in the markets. We must make sure that the policy works for them [...]

Transfer of Functions to Sub-National Level Authorities

I continue to appeal to ministries and ministers here present to transfer functions to sub-national level authorities. We should not let them pile up at the central level. I have discussed this issue with Samdech Krola Haom in the National Council for Women's meeting on district struc-

ture. We have more staff at the central level but few in the district level. They could not respond in a timely manner to demand of work. I would suggest Samdech Krola Haom discuss with the Ministry of Public Functions and the Ministry of Economy and Finance to look for a form of restructuring their work lines. For example, in production group, we may have agriculture, rural development, environment, industry, mines and energy, etc. We may group them in one cluster.

We also have a cluster of service related works, so that we could make sure there are officials to look after the matters. The one to overlook it would be the district level administration. Women's affairs must go into the cluster of social affairs. Doing so we will be sure there are bureaus and staff to take care of works [...]

We must proceed with this job in a rather speedy manner so that we could channel funds to them. In the past, the district authorities oversaw lower level administrations but they did not have budgets. Later, we had created budgets for them. Now we have budgets at national, provincial, district, and communal levels. Now that we have budget, how do we implement the works when there are only one or two staff in one bureau. They will retire any day too. That is why we must regroup them in cluster of expertise [...]

Holding Elections on Schedules

... On this point, we must focus on the fact that Cambodia holds elections regularly according to schedules. Some said we cancel elections. How could that be true when the Prime Minister declares the date of 4 June for the (communal council elections). Would that means the one who says it was slandering ... and went free, because s/he is

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not in the country. However, the main issue would be to guarantee that the elections take place because Cambodia will organize both universal and non-universal suffrages. The universal suffrages would elect communal councilors who will become electors for the senators and councilors of the municipal and provinces, districts/Khans through non-universal suffrages. The other universal suffrage is for electing members of the National Assembly. We must continue our democratic procedures [...]

I am taking this moment to share with you that there are internal conflicts within some political parties as far as candidacy lists are concerned. Some who are not happy that their names are not on top of the lists have vowed to pull down the parties' signboards. If this case is happening, please do not finger at the Royal Government.

It seems that one solution suggested by the Parties' leaders was to have internal votes if so and so is not happy with where their names are in the lists. Some are happy when their supporters did not turn up and their placements in the lists of candidates have changed, some from number one in the list to number five ... Just say it out now. The case happened. Please do not accuse this or that political party or the Royal Government of doing it [...]

Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) – Helpful, But Not State-Owned

I would take this place to reiterate my gratefulness to the media of all forms for circulating the message about MFIs as requested. The Smart phone company has attached messages about the fact that MFIs are not state-owned to every connection calls or SMS for 1.2 million users by Smart Axiata, Metfone – for two

million users, and Mobitel – for 1.5 million users. In fact, in general, I do not oppose the work of MFIs.

Use their service properly, MFIs are useful and profitable for our people who needs capitals for businesses. The Royal Government in many instances suggested to MFIs to help reduce interests, especially when people in certain areas faced with natural disasters. The Royal Government would ask MFIs to reschedule their payment period and/or even reduced interests for people in the affected areas too.

I watched an interview yesterday on CNC's TV program at about 8 o'clock in the evening with an executive director of a microfinance institution. The presenter asked him what could be the causes of such confusion, among many causes, he stressed on the fact that some politicians went to the people and told them they would clear all debts for the people if they won the elections. This has proven that MFIs themselves admitted that politicians are the ones who did all this mess.

Using the word Angkar (organization) to refer to MFIs also has connotations because the term had understood to mean the "state" under the regime of Pol Pot and people bore that in their minds [...]

That is why in this campaign, some MFIs have had to change their logos. Thank you so much. I am calling on all MFIs to explain the people directly that that so and so borrows money from MFIs, s/he is borrowing from private-owned institutions and not that of the state. Some people, thinking that they borrow money from the state, would not think about paying back.

They would just think of voting to a different political party who they hope will clear all their debts to the "state." I am reiterating my explanation that to clear such debts, ones need

to have a revolution to overthrow the Constitutional monarchy regime and replace it with power that is different from it. That would be the country's danger. I am calling on MFIs to follow instructions given by the National Bank of Cambodia and the Ministry of Economy and Finance relating to examination of reasons for loans and their ability to pay them back.

You may have remembered that in time of financial crisis and economic downturn, we took precautionary measures to increase reserve requirement ratio by private banks from 8% to 16%. It was to make sure that all banks would have cash flow for customers' withdrawals. Secondly, any loans for property purchases would get the approval for 15%, not 100%, of the value of to-be-purchasing property [...]

Claiming MFIs Is State-Owned and to Clear Debts If Elected Will Face Arrests

... We will arrest on spots. Opposition parties may not take it as a measure aiming at them because there are many political parties that are not in the Royal Government. Whoever says "when I win (the elections), I will not allow so and so to pay such debts" or "to pay on their behalves," will risk arrest on spots. We will bring them to justice. It is a violation of law.

With what rights do they make such promises? What law and in which part of it says that one can pay no debts? We may not reach everyone with this message but I hope many will get it. Some would continue to score political gains in a hidden way because they think they would gain votes doing that [...]

Traders Can Transfer or Sell Their Market-Use Rights

I must clarify too about rights to do business in the markets.

It means that when one already has done trade in any-one market, s/he could give that right on to his/her children, and/or sell it to other interested parties. They may give the rights to their children. Their children may not be interested to carry out business their parents had been doing. They may want to sell the rights to other people who are interested. We have issued an instruction that people doing trade in the markets, where they normally have a set period of using the market space, will be able to trade in their whole life and have right to transfer on to their children, relatives, or sell it to other interested parties. This has ended rumors spread in whisper by some politicians that they will extend term for them when they win the elections [...]

Guarantee Safe, Free, Just, Fair, Acceptable Elections

... We must guarantee that the 4-June-2017 elections will be fair, and the authority must guarantee safety for every candidate of political parties. This morning I approved request from the National Elections Committee (NEC) through the Ministry of Public Functions concerning issue of maintaining benefits for contracted officials for this job [...]

This clearly shows functional relationship between the NEC and the Royal Government. NEC is independent in its function but the Royal Government is to pay for its works. Our duty is to guarantee that there will be security and enough financial supports for NEC to conduct its business.

We must guarantee that the coming elections will take place. Winning or not winning is a matter for political parties. As the Royal Government, we must take up the responsibility to guarantee that the elections will take place in a safe, free, just, fair, and acceptable environment./■

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one. Please do not be mistaken that the Prime Minister is without power when he is abroad. I just wish that analysts listened carefully to this point.

One Person's Freedom Ends Where another Person's Begins

... In Cambodia, there are people who analyze, who just speak out, and who scold. I am fond of people who analyze things but they need to be real analysts. I do not like people who scold others. They may have to face with legal matter for the guilt they committed ... Some make accusations in his/her analysis ... people may listen to the clips. I just wish to remind you that a person's freedom ends where another person's begins. Some said that a person would be popular to scold Hun Sen and from there they may win elections. I do not see any signs that s/he would win.

I wish they rather waited until they actually win it to declare their victory. Some even extrapolated that they will win in 2018, and when they do, they will vanquish us. Well, they should wait for the elections results, the Constitutional Council, and the National Elections Committee to declare who the winners are officially, why do they say it from now? How comes they declare their victory when the elections have yet to happen [...]

Secondly, a person's freedom ends where another person's begins. No one should violate this. When you infringe upon other's right and freedom, there will be conflict, whether it is matter between an individual and individual, an entity and entity, or between individual and entity.

Even in a state, there has to have a clear boundary as well. Take for instance the Ministry of Planning must have a sub-decree about its organization and functioning. It must not infringe upon other institu-

tions' areas of coverage. I like people who analyze and I am one of them. Should I not do so, how could I be able to understand situation and bring the country out of the Pol Pot's regime, prevent them from returning to power, bringing peace to the country, and develop it as in the present?

Take for instance the US presidential elections, 99% of analysts in Cambodia said that Hilary Clinton would win and only 1%, included me, said it otherwise. I told the Women Association yesterday, why my analysis concluded that Donald Trump would win [...]

No Local Officials to Involve in Confiscations

...I hope that our Buddhist monks would also help with telling people about danger of drugs and/or indebtedness when they do the preaching. I would reaffirm to the MFIs that they must be strict with their rules to lend no money to those who borrow only for upgrading their motorbikes to the latest version, while they do not have the ability to pay it back.

However, there are those who like them to borrow so that from indebtedness they could not repay, confiscation ensued. In some cases, they just hastily locked the door to take it away from borrowers for just hours of late payment. If they are carrying out such cruel measures, we may consider stripping off their licenses.

So far there have been many illegal actions in the name of Angkar (organization). The word widely misused under the Khmer Rouge regime to mean the state. Now, when people owed money to private money lending institutions, (people) think they owe it to the state. While MFIs carries signs with almost similar symbols to the state financial insti-

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not increase in April all two increases together. Why is there a need to increase salary at two different times?

Well, release of cash would have to abide to the norm. The exchange rate at this moment is Riel 4010 to a USD. We must make sure that increasing circulation a big amount of cash before the Khmer New Year the exchange rate will stay the same or the Khmer currency will not devalue. At least that is what we hope. People will spend their money while we will get it back through income collection.

In May, we will not make payment day in the fourth week but in the third week to ensure a not-too-far gap between the two paydays in April and May. As this is not an empty promise, we must consider every factors involved.

The Bridge to Kompong Trom Island Is Coming Up

I thank the Buddhist monks for taking their times to participate in the inauguration of the school for our teachers and students, and parents who are here present. I hope the school will offer great benefit for human resource training. Cambodia in this era has travelled a long distance from time and parts of hardships to a better status. I had a bird eyes' view just now of the bridge that is going to link the city to the island of Kompong Trom. I have strong belief that this year some will be able to use it, especially for those who use bicycles or motorcycles.

As for this year, we have another unfortunate thing that the water in the Mekong River is receding at a slower pace. This has created difficulty for the work of construction. I have seen they are pumping sand to level up ground base for their work. The bridge has only a few more spans to connect after which people can just use it to go to and from the island

of Kompong Trom. Would anyone imagine that we would have the Kizuna Bridge across the Mekong? The area of Boeung Kok of Kompong Cham city was a decisive battlefield.

In August 1973, when Sar Hao replaced Srey Ya as governor, napalm bombs dropped breaking down the Boueng Kok dam. (Boeung Kok literally means the lake of egrets).

Water flowed forcefully in and many died of the incident. Soon after, there were not many people living in Kompong Cham. At present, however, the city stands out just like any others. I hope that we continue to carry out works to satisfy our people's needs.

People Will Witness More Changes

There is a saying that goes tens of river cannot satisfy a sea. Human aspiration and requirement continue to grow and we must make efforts to bring about positive change for Cambodia's future.

We have already put in place many changes and continue to do so. Take for instance in this place, months ago it was a building about to collapse. Now it has become a new and beautiful building. Soon many more places will witness changes, including the football field of Kompong Cham. We are also wiring electricity from Phnom Penh to Kompong Cham, and connecting it to Kratie and Stoeung Treng provinces.

In September, we will have one turbine running from the hydropower station of Se San, and will send electricity from Stoeung Treng to Kratie, to Kompong Cham and on to Phnom Penh. Since the Se San hydropower will be 400 Megawatts, it will exceed demands in Kompong Cham and Kratie. We then will run it to Phnom Penh and perhaps some other provinces.

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debts. Let me tell you that these institutions are of private owner and not of the state. They would have to launch a revolution to remove the current regime and replace it with another one. In the course of doing so, the country would turn upside down, like what Pol Pot did to the country. I am appealing our people to understand this complication. They should be careful about borrowing money from them. Some borrowed money for purchasing motorcycles and they later could not pay interests. This has led to having their homes, lands, etc. confiscated. Making them believe that microfinance institutions are the state actors, people bear anger at the ruling party.

National Bank to Certify “Non-State Actor” to Microfinance Institutions

... Some politicians tell people that should they win the elections, they would eliminate all debts. There is no way for them to do that unless you are going to remove the regime of Constitutional Monarchy. It is not a regime that I created alone. I am just the Prime Minister of the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia. It is a Constitutional monarchy regime. Unless they remove it and create a new regime like Pol Pot did. I am appealing to the institutions to certify themselves as private institutions. The National Bank of Cambodia must take this matter seriously. All microfinance institutions must certify to clear people's mind and to know that those are no institutions of the state.

We must carry out this task both ways – educating people to understand what they are exactly, and more importantly, the microfinance institutions themselves must do the clarification. If they ignore the plea, just withdraw their licenses. In every institutions, their major headquarters, they must state somewhere in big and visible

letters that they are not state but private foundation. Their staff must be the first to tell people that their services are private and not those of state. You may have this option to print it out as a book to clear it once, and for all. I must state that the state has no right to lend people money or people cannot borrow from the National Bank. All banks that either lend or receive to deposit are private banks and microfinance institutions, which have their agents working in your communities.

Examining Legal Ways on Those Who Urge People to Borrow

I think we should understand each other better in this case and political parties should not use this trick. They go around whispering to people to vote for them so they would clear people's debts in return. Should there be such an act in flagrante delicto, they must face arrests and face justice. I am urging a study of all legal tools to see if we can deal with this issue because while doing so, it is like urging people to borrow more. It is no difference to killing people for their votes. I am also asking our people to think thoroughly what to do with the loans before going for it. Some microfinance agents also are too fast to confiscate people's properties. In some cases, we were able to intervene. If it happens in that case, we must take actions against the microfinance institutions.

In fact, microfinance institutions have important roles to play in providing loans for people. I am appealing to all microfinance institutions to reserve understanding for people who borrowed their money but are falling into hardships such as from flood, drought, and are not able to pay in principle and interest on schedule.

I am asking for your understanding that you may re-

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tutions, people easily confused. ACLEDA spends more than three million USD to change its logo. I would urge PRASAC to change it quickly [...]

Let Cambodians Resolve Its Problem

Finally, I may send a message that there would be no one who likes Cambodia than the Cambodians themselves. It is true that we need their assistances, do business, and cooperate with you, but you should not interfere into Cambodia's internal affairs.

When you dropped bombs over my country killing my people, had you ever thought about human rights? Now you made public statement regretting bombarding Cambodia, supporting the Lon Nol group to overthrow (then head of state) Preah Norodom Sihanouk, and continuing to support them to destroy and sent bombs to Cambodia. They also supported Pol Pot at the United Nations [...]

Laws in Cambodia, adopted by the National Assembly, are not for killing the Cambodian people as you did to them in the past. I do not mention by name. As a sovereign state, we have the right to tell you to respect our sovereignty and

schedule the term of payments. This is an elections time ... a whispering season. If we could gather proof, we may send one to the court on charge of cheating people. Let us find out in which legal tool we can proceed [...]

Request New Administration of Donald Trump to Call off Cambodia's Debts

... Well, let me bring up just one more matter about requesting the Americans not to demand for Cambodia's debt payment. We have discovered many more, not only clustered bombs but also chemical bombs. The Americans fought

territorial integrity. You have many ensuing problems of destroying countries and we still have to remove many UXOs from the time you brought war to us. Look at what you do to Iraq, Libya, Syria, etc. Have you seen tragedies over there? Would you like to create a problem for Cambodia again? As a cooperation partner and working with equal right and footing, Cambodia finds foreign interferences unacceptable.

We are a small country but we need to protect our independence and sovereignty ... We are writing and adopting law for national unity and for everyone to respect it. Why do you say we are reducing rights? We are not formulating law for national division.

The law clearly stipulates whoever seeks secession or national division is punishable by law. This means that a country must be in unity. Is it your intention to launch a color revolution that you try to keep points about allowing no creation of armed forces or secession? [...]

Cambodia once divided severely because of you. I would seek you not to repeat what you did in our history. Analysts must be clear and do not just scold and brag around. ▣

us and demanded us to pay. It is impossible to understand. We have movements that demand cancellation of debts from the new US administration. I hope that political parties in Cambodia also support the call for the US to cancel debts. Well, being close to the US, the opposition may not demand that perhaps.

However, they denounced Trump as dictator. It is a mess out there. Let us wait and see the clash between presidential power and that of the court. Who will emerge? It seems they have on-going demonstrations too. ▣

Prek Pra Buddhist Temple Inauguration

(08 February 2017 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Every Pagoda Should Write a History Book of Its Own

[...] I am so happy today to be able to join with all of you to cut the ribbon to inaugurate the Buddhist temple and achievements in the Prek Pra pagoda ... I am so proud with achievements realized in this old Buddhist monastery. I have read information about the pagoda before coming to this event from this booklet. I am so fond of with the story telling about this pagoda. I hope that every Buddhist pagoda should write a history of its own and those without ones should start writing now. It is helpful for everybody to get to know the history and evolution of each, and every pagoda from one stage to another.

According to the record kept in this book, the Prek Pra pagoda has been in existence 226 years to the presence. Built in 1790, it is now 226 years old. Maybe in those days I was one of the boys living on and serving the monks in this pagoda that today I have had the fortune to come here and cut the ribbon to inaugurate the temple, while meeting Buddhist parishioners in every directions of the event. Let us consider it a chance that because of our previous lives' devotions, we are here together once again to celebrate this event.

7 January Liberates All Religions

As we all know, the Buddhist temple all over the country, not only this Prek Pra pagoda, suffered ill fate from the genocidal regime of Pol Pot. We made every effort to stand up again to rebuild the country, Buddhism also included. Buddhism has been an important part of the country's progresses. We have been able to bridge development of secular and Buddhist, or religious worlds, along with develop-

ment in other areas. I wish to take this solemn occasion to express my sincere appreciation and thanks for efforts made by every Buddhist monks, especially those becoming ones after the regime of Pol Pot. Under the regime of Pol Pot we not only lost Buddhist pagodas but also human lives. The liberation on 7 January 1979 liberated not only human lives but also all religions [...]

Measuring Political Framework of the Ruling Party

Let me elaborate on what prompted the progress and development in the field of Buddhism and/or every religion as a whole? We could think about what the development measures or infers. I understand that there has now progress in the field of Buddhism, or for a wider coverage, religion – Buddhism, Muslim, Christianity, and others. What has caused such development? I think there are no less than four factors.

Primarily, it measures the political framework or platform of the ruling party. How far does it allow freedom of faiths for our people? This is an important factor relating to the platform of a state. We have a true example of the Popular Socialist regime of the late Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, Preah Borom Ratanakaod, in which he allowed people to go for any faith they might like to.

However, after the coup in 1970, a number of pagoda buildings transformed into military barracks and numerous sites had become targets of the US and/or South Vietnamese regime's bombardments, or even the Lon Nol's own bombs.

Buddhism Will Last Till No More Faith

(Continued on page 8)

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This is requirement of a country in development. Presently, younger generation does not know what a torch looks like. Some parents of medical students and teachers here would not know what it is. After the torch era, we then have kerosene lamp. People now would not have it for their permanent need anymore because they may have a mobile phone that has a light beam as lamp.

I wish to share with you also the news that on April 1, 2017, while we increase salary, the price of electricity will go down. People who use up to 50 KWH and below will pay Riel 610 per KWH and Riel 480 per KWH for those who use only 10 KWH and less. According to a calculation, about 70% of or population would consume 50 KWH and below of electricity. For those who consume electricity over 50 KWH (per month) from national lines and who spend Riel 800, 900 or 1,000 will also pay only Riel 770 per KWH [...]

People Who Promise and People Who Do

Soon there will be people coming around and offer bid prices. They would promise that they would increase salary, not one million and more as we do, to three million Riel. They would also promise to offer a cheaper price for electricity, perhaps Riel 200 per KWH.

They would also promise old people to give them a monthly allowance of Riel 50,000, 200,000, 300,000. I just suggest to our senior people that they should opt for things that are real and in their hands. You may need to be careful to go after promises, by which destruction and turmoil are on their ways. You may remember. When the country underwent change from Preah Norodom Sihanouk to Lon Nol, war came as a result. How many died? The regime of Pol

Pot entailed. War went on and it has taken us long time and hard efforts to end it.

For those bad things we had in the past, Hun Sen stepped out and do them away. Now Hun Sen is also getting old. I do not have the strength to do such thing anymore. At whatever cost in this case, we must understand that peace is hard to find and people of many generations died. In the time when the US (was here) nearly half a million died or maimed. Under Pol Pot, three million died. That we have secure peace now, we would not allow anyone to destroy it.

People may look at what happened and what do people receive from promises in Libya, Syria and Iraq? People die every day. That is because of a promise. They wanted Saddam Hussein dead, but many more come to life in Iraq. When they wanted Muammar Gaddafi dead, how many Gaddafi come to life? How many died? To topple Assad in Syria, how many have had to die? If they wish Hun Sen dead, what would come after that? If that happened, would anyone be able to sit here? Every day we hear their message of strangling the rich to give to the poor. That sounds Pol Pot, nothing else.

Kompong Cham's Pedagogy to Offer 12 + 4 Teachers Training Formula

... As for our teachers here, you may want to remember that some people are blaming Cambodia diplomas useless. Whatever they say, we have students in our schools. In the time to come, the school of pedagogy in Kompong Cham will upgrade its teachers training formula from 12 + 2 to 12 + 4 (Secondary School Diploma with a four years pedagogical training program). This will ensure better quality teachers. As of now, we have over 3.5 million students of all levels. It is not an easy job to carry out this task [...]

(Continued from page 7)

When the regime of Pol Pot came, it did not allow people any rights or freedom to believe or practice any religion at all. This is very important point about the political platform of a state, especially those in the framework of liberal democracy. I may have your attention that a shadow is naturally bigger than a true object it reflects. The Cambodian People's Party political platform is not a shadow. It is a true object in the last 38 years after the country was liberated. There was a time when we three – the late Samdech Chea Sim, then President of the National Front, Samdech Heng Samrin, then the Head of State, and I, then Prime Minister, sat together to find out the best answer to respond to slanderous propaganda. It went: “the regime of Heng Samrin took Buddhism as a shield to hide itself and would eradicate it any day.”

We three came to conclusion that the best answer that would do the trick was that Buddhism would last as long as there is faith. It was the most logic answer. It depends on the fact that if the people continue to have faith in Buddhism, it prevails [...] (Under the leadership of the CPP) Buddhism started from one monk who was a member of the National United Front (for the Salvation of Kampuchea) and we now have over four thousands pagodas and some 50,000 Buddhist monks. Along with this, we also have Islam, Christianity, and others, including those who do not believe in any religion. It is a tool to measure the political platform and concept of a ruling political party about religion [...]

Measuring Followers' Belief/Faith

Secondly, it reaffirms followers' belief/faith in any given religion. Actions to build pagodas and/or to celebrate

religious events will show that. A number of countries in the world have their own people who do not believe in any religion at all. I do not have to name them. In Cambodia we do. This year we will celebrate the end of the Monkey year and enter the Rooster year at 3am. We will go to Angkor Wat to celebrate the Sangkranta. That is why I am saying it is a tool to measure people's faith on their own pagodas. I would seek the Buddhist monks' help in assisting each other as some pagodas may have more than enough to survive on, while other do not.

Measuring Progress of People's Living Condition

Thirdly, it is a tool to measure how much progress people make in their living condition. I am talking within the framework of Buddhism, for which people are building temples and residential halls. If people had difficult living condition, our Buddhist monks would also face with hardships. When people are in hardships from flooding, drought, etc., they would not be able to offer descent alms for the Buddhist monks. However, when they have good crops or do profitable business, they would offer the Buddhist monks their best foods and provide religious buildings and other achievements in pagodas.

We are lucky to keep on practicing religious as the country is in peace. At the time of war and genocidal regime of Pol Pot, no Buddhist monks were able to save just themselves. They had to disrobe against their wills to work in the field as other people and some were killed ... That we had started from empty hands together to this day that we can organize big religious event altogether, it is a good thing. This time of year, it is a time to enjoy festivity in rural area. They may have performance arts, etc. However, for those closer to

the city, they have access to TV show, they would have less interest for that.

Measuring Progress of Secular and Buddhist Worlds

Fourthly, it also tells about progress of relation between Buddhist and secular worlds. Should there be no progress of secular world, there would not be a room for smooth survival of Buddhism too. When the country is at war, what would happen? What would they do? Sometimes they even put the pagodas on fire. Now it is different. In secular world, we had been able to put out the war in the whole country, in addition to infrastructural development that makes every pagoda within reaching distance. This has shown progress in the field of Buddhism. We must hold that tightly in hands. Do not lose it because of empty promises. Think about what I said – shadow loomed larger than the true object it reflects.

Cambodia's Harmonization of Race and Religion

... These above are the four major things that general development of Buddhism may reflect. Cambodia is in harmony of race and religion – Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, etc. I have seen over there the presence of our Muslim people. You see, there is no conflict. They are not here to change their faith or religion. They are here as a show of solidarity and to welcome the country's Prime Minister. When the Buddhist monks are on their sermons, they would just think of Allah. This is a true example that the Cambodian People's Party has been in the lead of harmonization of race and religion and people can co-exist. Muslims can also come to the Buddhist monastery. So do the Christians. When it is the inauguration of a Mosque, Buddhist followers would also attend. This is the good point of our country, while many in the region and

the world torn by war and religious fight.

Buddhist Monks to Warn People of Drugs

I have two more points to make appeal on this occasion. First, the Royal Government is in its campaign to fight against drug. I would urge Buddhist monks and our people to take part in this campaign altogether. Would it be a better way to keep your children in prison for drug or to keep them homes? In some countries, their wars against drug users and traffickers have led to many thousands of lives loss. In Cambodia, we are not going on that course. Samdech Krolar Haom Sar Kheng is busy taking the lead of the Royal Government's campaign to combat and eliminate drugs and its consequences. We had made so many arrests every day. However, the best option is their parents to help educate their children [...] If our people can keep them homes and rehabilitate them, I think it would be better than allowing them to go on rampage, for which actions the authority will have them caught [...] I would urge parents to find ways to keep them homes because this campaign is in operation without interruption. I am urging our Buddhist monks to use every preaching session to warn people of the negative consequences that drug would do to them and the traffic rule also.

Microfinance Institutions Are Not State Actors

The second think to appeal is to reaffirm to our people to understand that under whatever names they may be, microfinance institutions are not state actors. There have been confusions that microfinance institutions are those of the states. They have ripped people off their houses, lands, etc. Some have even campaigned that should they win the elections, they would clear all their

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