

A Bridge over the Mekong at Kratie

(02 January 2023 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)



(1) The Longest Bridge Ever Built by China So Far

Today, we come together to inaugurate the groundwork for the construction of a bridge across the Mekong River, with the construction of 31 km of boulevards, under the funding of the People's Republic of China and the counterpart funding of the Royal Government of Cambodia. The celebration took place just over 30 hours after we welcome the 2023 New Year. This achievement is the result of our joint efforts, especially the solidarity between Cambodia and China, as HE Wang Wentian just mentioned regarding the relationship between Cambodia and the People's Republic of China. You may have remembered that in February last year, His Excellency Wang Wentian and I came to Kratie to inaugurate a section of the rehabilitation of National Road 7 that runs straight to Stung Treng, under the grant of the People's Republic of China. Only 10 months later, from February until now, I came to Kratie again to launch the construction site for this longest bridge among the bridges that China has helped in the past – a great achievement for our people of Kratie.

(2) China helps build 4 bridges across the Mekong River, 1 over the Sekong River, 2 over the Tonle Sap River, and 3 over the Bassac River

As HE Sun Chanthol mentioned, in relation to the bridges that we have already built, with the help of the People's Republic of China, there are four bridges across the Mekong River – the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge Stung Treng, the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge Prek Tamak, the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge Stung Trang-Kroach Chhma and the bridge that we are inaugurating the groundbreaking ceremony today – the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge in Kratie. We have the Sekong Bridge in Stung Treng province and along the Tonle Sap, we have two bridges – the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at Prek Kadam and the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at Chroy Changvar. Along the Bassac River, we have three bridges – the Cambodia-China Takhmao Friendship Bridge, the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at Koh Thom, and the Cambodia-China Sitbo Bridge – which also connects to the Third Ring Road.

(3) Looking for a loan to build

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5th Meeting with Journalists and Media Related Persons

(14 January 2023 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

(1) A meeting between the Prime Minister and journalists and informants/spokespersons

Today's meeting was not just a meeting with more than 5,000 journalists, but also with those who had to provide information, including spokespersons of state institutions as well as leaders of relevant institutions. It is not just a meeting between the Prime Minister and the journalists, but a meeting between the Prime Ministers and the journalists and the informants. I think that despite later (evolving) developments, such a forum should be main-

tained by future generations at some point, because it is in the interest of all to build our nation to move forward.

(2) Journalists are at the forefront of vaccination

I thank His Excellency Khieu Kanharith, Minister of Information, for his recent report on the progress made in the past. I am proud of all the efforts of the media, no matter how small or big. I should take this opportunity to value the contribution of our media for active involvement in the anti-Covid-19 campaign. Our journalists have also

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Improvement of NR 7 from Skun to Kompong Cham City

(09 January 2023 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

(1) Expansion and quality improvement of National Road No. 7 Skun/Kampong Cham City according to the expressway standard

[...] Today, January 9, we are launching the construction site for the expansion and quality improvement of National Road 7, which is only 45 kilometers, but we have to spend up to 100 million US dollars, because, as HE Sun Chanthol reported, this road becomes an obstacle (in the form of a bottleneck) when there is heavy traffic. This road obstructed (flows of traffic). Therefore, we have a need to widen this road, as shown on the map by HE Sun Chanthol, which displayed here, confirming that the future road segment is not much different from the expressway connecting Phnom Penh to Preah Sihanoukville, with two-lanes to and two-lanes from with a

width of 3 meters 75, which is the standard of the expressway.

(2) Chinese financing for roads, canals, electricity and development of the Kingdom of Cambodia

This is another effort that we have made together with the People's Republic of China to raise funds for the construction and development of our nation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chinese friends for their continued assistance, including funding for the development of roads, canals, electricity, and other areas contributing greatly to the development of the Kingdom of Cambodia. I am very pleased that Cambodia has become a comprehensive strategic partner with China. This year marks the 65th anniversary of

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a bridge across the Bassac
River in Chak Angre/Prek
Pra, Phnom Penh**

We are seeking credit to build another bridge across the Bassac River between Chak Angre and Prek Pra (in Phnom Penh). I still remember that 2018, 4 years ago, not 5 years ago, ... HE Xiong Bo, the Chinese Ambassador at that time, and I came to inaugurate officially here the Kratie University. I have confirmed to you in Kratie that we are seeking credit from a Chinese friend to build a bridge across the Mekong River in Kratie. Regarding what I was telling you at that time, today it is happening [...] in this (pamphlet says the construction will take) 42 months. The Chinese friends always put a long time (for construction), but they actually finished the job in shorter time. Once it is ready, this bridge will be used by people living in Kratie province or those who have their interests in this area.

**(4) China's Belt and Road
Initiative Brings Cambodia
Benefits**

[...] This point indicates the solidarity that I mentioned above, coupled with the speech by Ambassador Wang Wintien, which outlined our framework of friendship and the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative that Cambodia supported from the beginning and for which Cambodia can be considered a co-founder of this initiative. Cambodia has benefited greatly from the successful Belt and Road Initiative of China's foreign policy and those who want to contribute to the development of their country and within the regional framework. This year marks the 65th anniversary of Cambodia-China friendly relations. I am looking forward to getting more assistance from China friends to build other necessary infrastructure projects [...]

**(5) Coordinating a Visit to
China with New Project
Proposals**

[...] I look forward to the opportunity (to receive further

assistance from China while) (we) are coordinating for my upcoming visit to the People's Republic of China [...] with more new projects, including the second expressway connecting Phnom Penh to the Vietnamese border [...] where we will release USD 200 Million from our budget to build a bridge across the Mekong River [...]; then, another expressway connecting the district of Lvea Em (in Kandal province) to the Vietnamese border [...]; and I will be asking China to help build a road connecting from the Cambodia-China Friendship Bridge at Sekong River in Stoeung Treng to the Lao border. I am asking Ambassador Wang Wintien to do us a favor by sending my request to the Chinese leadership, [...] the road connects Cambodia with Laos as a corridor within the CLMV framework [...]

**(6) Four National Roads in/
via Kratie 73, 377, 277 and 7
to launch construction before
Khmer New Year**

I would take this opportunity to inform you, as His Excellency Sun Chanthol reported to me, that this year Kratie will be the province to receive numerous new projects – the National Road 73, using the World Bank funding and is passing through two provinces – Tbong Khmum from National Road 7 to the border of Kratie province with a distance of 50 kilometers. We have now completed the procurement procedure, which is scheduled to be signed by the end of January 2023, with a budget of more than US\$ 15.7 million. National Road 377 from Kratie to Sambo, 35.5 kilometers long, is the second road. Sambo is a place where we have dolphins of the Mekong. Those who wish to see the dolphins will have a better road [...], the third road – 277 from Sandan to Sangkum Thmey district, 13.6 km long, has completed the procedure and is scheduled to sign by the end of January, using a budget of about US\$ 25.7 million. Next, the National Road 7, from Km 300 to Km 31, Kratie roundabout, 31.25 Km long, is scheduled to be signed in

March with a budget of about 15 million US dollars. These construction site of three of (the four projects) will be launched before the Khmer New Year.

**(7) Ask China to help build a
road from the Cambodia-
China-Sekong Friendship
Bridge to the Lao border**

I am asking our Chinese friends to help build a road to the Lao border. I would ask Ambassador Wang Wintien to send my request to the Chinese leadership as I will surely bring this to their attention. Obviously, in the past, our Chinese friends helped us build one section of it and we still have the remaining section that connects to Laos. Therefore, I would like to ask His Excellency Wang Wintien to provide information on the request I made before the people of Kratie (tho the Chinese leaders) so that we can connect Cambodia with the Lao side as a corridor within the CLMV framework, and within our ASEAN framework. We can bring all these into consideration for nation building is because we have peace. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Cambodian People's Party and also on behalf of the Royal Government, to thank the people of Kratie for providing support for the Royal Government's activities. I thank the people of Kratie province in particular and throughout the country in general for voting for the CPP to win in a landslide victory.

**(8) The CPP has been sharing
hardships as well as comforts
with the people for 44 years**

Hopefully, on July 23, 2023, the people of Kratie province will continue to vote for the CPP, because peace and development provides us all with opportunities, not to be separate achievements of the CPP alone, especially, when the country has peace and political stability. Those who are capable enough (to ensure peace and stability) are those who have been sharing hardships as well as comforts with the people for 44 years. No party can replace the CPP. Some people say that Hun

Sen "is over and needs to be changed" [...] (we have heard this) for five years. It is clear that now Hun Sen has "finished and changed." We have ended 2022 (and changed) into 2023. It will change from 2022 to 2023 and it will change from the 6th legislature to the 7th legislature. You are not yet a (suitable) rival of Hun Sen and/or the CPP [...] you may have to wait for a long time [...]

**(9) Cambodia expects Chinese
tourists to arrive as China
reopened the country**

In the speech of HE Wang Wintien ... Cambodia and some other countries are waiting for the arrival of Chinese tourists. In the past, we received about 2 or 3 million Chinese tourists before Covid-19. The pandemic has taken that (growth away from) all of us. Not only China, Cambodia also suffered. China has reopened the country with tens of millions or even hundreds of millions of tourists. Cambodia is definitely a tourist destination (or one that will be) an attraction for the Chinese people [...] those who have been strict with China may continue to be so (but not from the Cambodian part) because it provides benefits to Cambodia. Suppose the Chinese tourists may want to go to so and so country, but that country may have had certain conditions that require Chinese people to fulfill, while Cambodia does not require Chinese tourists to do anything, just come as regular [...] Cambodia invites Chinese tourists to visit the country [...]

**(10) Visit to China in 2020
showed solidarity, sent mes-
sage to students and sent a
message that "China will not
be shaken"**

I remember in 2020, when Covid-19 exploded, I went to China while other countries were evacuating their citizens from and did not dare to visit China. At that time, President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Keqiang and Foreign Minister Wang Yi hosted me [...] if we were to look back, (it was obvious that) everyone was afraid of (being in

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(Continued from page 2) and/or going to) China. I was not afraid. I went to China to show solidarity with the Chinese people in the fight with Covid-19, on the one hand, and on the other hand, I want to send a message to the (Cambodian students in) China to go on with their studies without fear, as well as to send a message to the Cambodian people that China is not shaken. (With these strong beliefs) I hope that the Cambodian economy, all sectors, will recover in the future, especially the tourism which remains slow [...]

(11) In 2022, Cambodia receives 2.2 million foreign tourists

According to HE Thong Khon, this year (2022), there will be 2.2 million foreign tourists. As China reopened, we will receive 2 million Chinese tourists (a figure that we have recorded for) the same period as before Covid-19 [...] while before Covid-19 we received 6.6 million tourists, if we receive just 4 or 5 million tourists in 2023, it will make everything work again. I hope Chinese tourists will come to Cambodia. Countries of beneficiary include Cambodia, Thailand and Singapore, which are attractive destinations for Chinese tourists. The propaganda (to oppose this trend by) any country is up to them. For Cambodia, of course, that I am calling for people to continue their vaccination is common. Whether China reopens or not, Cambodia will still call for vaccination [...] we, Cambodia and China, are in the phase of a comprehensive strategic partnership, the common destiny community and the national framework comparable to the “steel friends” [...]

(12) Authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture to Jointly Protect the Dolphin Conservation Area and Endangered Fish Species for Tourism

[...] The Ministry of Agriculture must jointly protect this area. The issue falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture, but the one who is in charge directly is the provin-

cial governor, for which the authority must work out way to ensure that these dolphins are not trapped or disturbed. There is a permanent off-limit/core area. The permanent off-limit/core area must be marked to ensure that it is reserved as a tourist area. Now, a few kilometers of road leading to that place is being built [...] if fishing allowed, only a number of fishermen will benefit, but it will damage the conserve are [...] we must take measures and pay close attention to protect (this rare natural resource) [...]

(13) Current budget surplus returns with US\$ 6,145 M in customs and tax revenues ...

The economy is now recovering at 5.5% this year and with the national budget collecting up to 127%. (While I was talking about this) in Kampot, I thought that only 125% could be achieved, but in fact we have realized more than 127% with a customs revenue of 2,690 million dollars, equivalent to 104.94% [...] and the tax sector scored 3,455 million dollars, equal to 122.54%. In total, we collected US\$ 6145 million in customs and tax revenues, not including non-fiscal tax revenue. It can be said that Cambodia has returned to the current budget surplus after Covid-19, at which time we spent more than we made in revenue. At that time, revenue fell, and demand increased. With the old year passed and current budget surplus, I expect the coming year to have a continuous current budget surplus. If Chinese tourists come to Cambodia (as we expected,) the Cambodian economy will grow even more [...]

(14) To protect the peace that brings development, the happiness of the people

Since peace brings opportunities for our people and to enter the New Year, when some went for New Year's Eve in distant places such as Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri, (and) coastal areas. Our people have been enjoying their times. Without peace, there is no (such happiness). There had been hundreds of

thousands of fireworks. People just shot them up everywhere. People are happy. What is the basis for such fun? It is peace. That peace leads to the development and prosperity of the nation. Even though we (have) little money, because of peace we can be happy. We must do all we can to maintain this peace. We must not underestimate destructive force as there are still those who want to rob and destroy the peace. We do not let them do whatever they wanted to. All measures are taken. At all costs, this peace must be maintained, otherwise the country will be in obstruction [...]

(15) Twice the struggles took place in Kratie

The territory of Kratie province is a land of pride. It is the birthplace of political and military organizations established on December 2, 1978. We are now approaching January 7, 2023 – the 44th anniversary of the day of liberation (country from the genocidal regime) [...] it is strangely coincident for me that both of the struggles that I have taken up were commencing on the territory of Kratie province. The first time, in 1970, responding to the call of Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, I reported to the Marquis to fight (to liberate the country from the Lon Nol regime). My first military operation was to take out a fort in Snuol district, Kratie province. After capturing Banteay Snuol of Kratie, we were sent to help fight in Kratie province at Koh Trong [...] while we arrived at this roundabout in Kratie town, we were told that all Lon Nol soldiers had surrendered. We came back down to Snuol. The then US and South Vietnamese troops stormed Snuol district and National Road 7. I fought in Snuol district and brought the remnants of the dead and wounded in the battle on May 1, 1970 to the village of Anchanh and to Phnom Pram Poan (the 5,000 mountains) [...] The second phase was under the National United Front for Salvation of Kampuchea. On June 20, 1977, I openly came out to fight against the Pol Pot regime. The

place where I fought was not far from Prek Chriv, which is the border between Kampong Cham and Kratie provinces. Then, when I built the Armed Forces of the National United Army for Salvation of Kampuchea, I also sent armed operations teams into the country, mainly into two provinces, Kampong Cham and Kratie. My army entered the five thousand mountains area and descended as far as Chhlong district. When the time comes for the National United Front for Salvation of Kampuchea to step out publicly, we also make public appearance in the territory of Snuol district of Kratie province. This is a history related to my life journey to begin the struggle, as a soldier, for the country's liberation from the Khmer Rouge genocide. On January 7, 1979, one of my battalions stationed in Kratie province [...]

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journalists. The Ministry of Information may open short training courses for capacity building. I also call on each institution to strengthen their information person capacity themselves [...] since we have too many associations, if there is any provision to strengthen the capacity of journalists, there must be only one channel and the Ministry of Information should be in charge of this issue [...]

The name issue [...], the full title is too long. If s/he is putting pressure on you journalists, you just do not give him a chance of publicity. In the previous generation, I had even instructed a deletion. If you are a general, you have to remove the title of Okhna. Otherwise, your name and title is too long. Now the police and soldiers do not have their Okhna titles along with their names. Previously, the generals, the tycoon, the doctor, would oblige full reference to their titles otherwise they would protest. You journalists do not publish about that person [...] there is no shortage of people in the country [...]

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been reinstated as front-line officials who have been given priority over vaccinations. At that time, ... we gave the journalists priority for vaccination. At this point, there are probably not many countries in the world that would consider journalists a priority group to be protected against Covid-19 by vaccines.

(3) Journalists help disseminate health measures regarding the Covid-19

I am aware that journalists need to travel everywhere, whether there is or there is no pandemics. I remember that once at Pochentong (Phnom Penh International Airport), a Fresh News reporter asked if they (the reporters) could get the vaccine? I have included journalists as a priority group for vaccination. The benefits that the Royal Government and the people of Cambodia get in return are (that the journalists have published) health measures, as well as the Royal Government's call for the people's combat against Covid-19. Measures and appeals went through and connected with the people to understand the health measures that the Royal Government has put in place. At this point, I would like to pay tribute to our journalists who have contributed to this great work.

(4) Holding the position of Prime Minister for 38 years and participates in ruling for 44 years

[...] (I have been) the Prime Minister who holds office that is marking today the 38th anniversary. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the monks, as well as the leaders and the people who wished me of the 38th anniversary of my day as Prime Minister. To count in time when I was the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, through to the time when I became the Prime Minister – it has been a span of 44 years, almost half a century, that I am participating in governing and leading power in this poor country [...] How do I listen to the voice from below? whether small or large, to deliver infor-

mation from the bottom to the top and retrieving information from top to bottom is essential.

(5) Pay attention to providing and receiving information, no matter how small or large

Even one little thing, you can all notice the attitude of this Prime Minister. At the beginning of Covid-19, we took measures to disseminate information to people on how to protect themselves. At that time, the locals used mobile motorbikes to advertise [...] in TikTok a young fellow posted a clip of him riding his motorbike after the driving speaker van just to get a complete message [...] I got that and instructed the authority to change their way of disseminating information – from announcing the measure on a mobile van to on van in a station with repeated message for at least two hours at a time [...] even on small issue like this, (as Prime Minister, I have taken it seriously by) striving to (make sure that) people have (access to) information.

(6) Transfer information from online sources to relevant institutions and provinces to search for and solve problems

I thank all the media for their contributions to the combat against inaction. (Those medias) have these days made life easier for me. I would like to sincerely thank those helpers – including radio and television are one thing, but the online network on the other who helps a lot. I always forward (story) from the online press to concerned province (of issues reported in the broadcast/publication/posting for them) to check. Probably some ministers, some provincial governors had received those forwarding, such as through the telegram system [...] some information gives us the opportunity to immediately search for and solve existing problems at the grassroots level. People need justice or solutions and we may have not addressed for them or that are our gaps.

At Phnom Damrey Romiel in Takeo province, there is this issue regarding an invasion of mountainous land. It is not the

media who broke out the news but the people who provide the information. Finally, we found out that there was such action involving both the military and the administration on the issue of deforestation in the Damrei Romiel mountain area of Takeo province. As of this time, a settlement operation at the site is underway. I would express my appreciation for this story, firstly (about the efforts to provide information) on the issue of Covid-19 and secondly, the information published and researched by the media, including hot news related to the problem of opening casinos, for which I issued regulations [...] for (us to know and) disseminate and take action [...]

(6) Sharing the 40th and 41st ASEAN Summits successes with all journalists

I am taking this opportunity to express my appreciation for the efforts of the Ministry of Information, especially Minister Khieu Kanharith, who did a good job during Cambodia's chairmanship of ASEAN last year. For the past year, no journalists have complained about having no food and/or about the lack of internet access. We did a lot of work. Many journalists have come to cover the events in Cambodia. We have done a good job with the excellent results of the 2022 rotating presidency. The Ministry of Information, together with journalists, both public and private, participated in promoting this good work. I am sharing these successes with all the journalists present here [...] even in difficult year, we did a good job. This is not a normal happening [...]

(7) Both the press and the media are more responsible

The year 2022 has passed, and in the past three years – 2020, 2021, 2022 (period), we had worked together and overcame difficulties, particularly, the fight to protect the lives of the people in the presence of Covid-19, an invisible enemy. All of this is the fruit of all our efforts. Cambodians should be honored as their lives protected. I am

pleased with the institutions that provide information. Now, although there are still some weaknesses in some institutions and some provinces, compared to the past, the journalism profession and the informants – whereas today, various ministries and institutions have gathered here their spokespersons, have had higher responsibility. Recipients get more information than ever before [...]

(8) Leaders of national institutions/sub-national authorities shall not take journalists as enemies

I should say to the leaders of national institutions as well as sub-national authorities not to take journalists as their enemies. It would be a serious mistake of leadership if you all considered journalists to be enemies. I do not object to (reserved consideration regarding) some media that are useless. I would not even talk to. But journalists who have good intentions to provide information about the truth to the public should be considered and communicated in order to link the information we provide to the public. For some media outlets, which only know how to insult/scold, who requested for interview, there is no need to meet. I do not blame you, but the press in our country that works professionally right, you should be in touch with because it will make the fastest line (of information sharing) [...]

(9) Connection with digital online information system is useful

My mobile phone has been connected a number of online media [...] I am not sure if the Minister, Secretary of State, Undersecretary of State, Provincial or District Governor, our civil servants are all having connected to the media or information outlets online. This is the digital age, the age of not having to read a hardcopy newspaper, because it is in the online system that we can connect with it. On the TV side, we can also download into our phone that can watch both live

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(Continued from page 4) and other broadcasts. There are many of them on Facebook platform. What is useful we should strive [...]

(10) Lots of work to be done in the coming months, including dealing with floods in the dry season

We have a lot of work to do in 2023. With only a few months to come, the SEA Games will arrive. Further, we also proceed to the 7th legislative election on July 23, 2023 [...] the floods of the dry season are also harassing some provinces, including the outskirts of Phnom Penh. This is rare. Through the press and the provincial authorities reports to the Prime Minister (has given us the scale of the problem). It may look a small issue, but it is a big problem for the people. For instance, the Pursat province, people suffered double jeopardy. I provided them with rice seeds after they were hit by the first (rainy season) flooding. While from those seeds rice is ripening, the (dry season) flooding is coming again. They are facing damages again. How do we deal with them? The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is addressing this issue. I am also following this work [...] today I am meeting you here, but tomorrow I will make an official visit to strengthen relations with the Republic of Maldives [...]

(11) Law on the right to receive information to issue in the 7th legislative term, digital broadcasting in early 2023 and analog broadcasting over in 2025

(Here are some) recommendations for ministries, institutions, capitals, provinces, as well as journalists to implement:

First, the Ministry of Information must push for a draft law on the right to information (to) be ready in the seventh legislative term and prepare to launch digital TV in Cambodia in early 2023, and to shut down analog television broadcasts in 2025 as planned [...]

With regard to the law (of the

right to have access to information), it is clear that there are only a few months left until the election. Therefore, we would expect that the right to information law is issued in the seventh legislative term, which after the election is likely to be between 2024 or 2025. This delay is not an isolated case. If we just use the state's right to decide, it will be easy. The Minister would just send the draft law to the Cabinet for approval, and after the approval, send to the National Assembly. However, we have been careful to gather opinions from all directions so that this law can benefit everyone. But we have observed that some NGOs are overly demanding. Excessive demands are what the Minister needs to mediate [...]

Dealing with digital issues, we have coordinated for the arrangement and there are 3 TVs, including Bayon TV, Hang Meas and BCS as a group, together with the Ministry of Information that have been working on building a digital nursery. CNC, CTN, MYTV also joined together. We need to create digital broadcasts instead of analog systems and shut down analog systems by 2025 [...] we do not have to procrastinate on the use of digital systems in place of analog systems [...], which interferes the 700 MHz frequency bandwidth, but also the flight system [...]

(12) Authorities and the media as partners in the investigation of crimes

Second, the state media must participate in maintaining peace, political stability, security, and social order through safe villages and communes by disseminating and urging the authorities and competent institutions to listen to and take action against all kinds of crimes, drugs, gambling, gangsters, robbers, armed robbery, traffic accidents, etc. that occur in their localities to build a Cambodian society to be safe, orderly and maintain the honor and dignity of Cambodia on the international stage as the host of the historic 2023 SEA Games [...]

This is one of the advantages of contributing to the implementation of the roadmap for maintaining security and social order, namely the safe village/commune policy [...] we cannot live with robberies, drug gangs. Therefore, journalists should be involved with the authorities, and the authorities should also take journalists as their partners in investigating crimes, for example: gambling or drug problems. Let's do this job well together [...]

(13) To meet sportsmen-women on April 4, 2023

Thirdly, on January 25, 2023, all media should join the campaign to promote the 100-day countdown of the 32nd SEA Games 2023 in Cambodia for the people both inside and outside the country. Recognize and inspire athletes to train hard to get more medals in the upcoming competitions, encourage our youth and people to support and love sports under the slogan "sports in peace, one person plays one sport/game, Cambodia reduces traffic accidents, and Cambodia is clean" [...]

Is there a need for me to meet the sportsmen/women or not? Normally, there is a meeting between the Prime Minister and the sportsmen/women on April 4 every year, but we did not hold such meeting the past years for Covid-19 [...] let me announce that I will jot in my schedule to have the meeting with sportsmen/women in the evening of April 4, 2023 at a suitable place [...] I would like to ask all of you to inspire and encourage our people to exercise, practice sports for health and raising awareness regarding the lives of our people [...]

(14) Delivering the RGC's political program to the people, bringing the people's concerns back to RGC

Point 4 – the media must establish a partnership with the Royal Government and act as a bridge between the state institution to the people and from the people to the state institution, both the political program of the Royal Gov-

ernment and the practical implementation required more active involvement of journalists in maintaining peace and national development [...]

In my 44 years of experience in power, I have used media outlets to connect with people, and reach out to the outside world. Hun Sen in the past, If you know, does a lot of press conferences. Sometimes I just waved to the journalists to come and I talked to them [...] how can we do this so that we can push the political program of the Royal Government to the people and bring back the concerns of the people. It is not that everything we put out satisfied the people. We must figure it out as sometimes what we put out does not reflect the reality of the situation [...]

(15) Provide a lawyer to defend journalists who dare to reveal the truth with sufficient evidence

Fifth, continue to participate in the campaign to fight inactivity, irregularities, corruption and injustice in society and to build Cambodia into a clean, transparent society and ask the media to join the Royal Government in pushing for state reform for transparency, which requires journalists to fulfill their professional roles, be competent and study the problem in depth, dare to reveal the truth, do not distort the truth, while continuing to destroy opportunists who seek personal gain under the label of the press that undermines the value and prestige of journalists in general and the press institution in particular [...]

I will provide a defense lawyer for journalists who dare to reveal facts. I have said it once and here that I accept (to offer my lawyers') legal counsel and defense where there are appropriate factual and legal facts [...] but I do not accept to offer such help for cases that the journalist was the one who caused destruction and asked me to send (a lawyer) to participate [...] such helps are for any jour-

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nalist dare to reveal the truth with sufficient evidence [...]

I reiterate that I will not send a lawyer to defend the slanderous media [...] I have said that “**as journalists, one should do not abuse others, and do not distort the truth.**” Now I should add, “**as journalists, one should spread the truth, not fabricate mistakes and pass it to someone else.**” We have two slogans [...] sometimes, with a Facebook account and a smart phone, someone spread insults, and at some point make himself a judge [...]

(16) Explaining the truth immediately and clearly, neutralizing false information

Sixth, continue to participate in the fight against false and fake news/information in the national and international framework. As we now have media representatives in the ASEAN national framework, it requires our institutions to fight against false and fake information more actively because false and inaccurate news/information is a psychological instigator that causes social unrest, political instability, social insecurity and hostility with foreigners.

This is the point is not just a matter of Cambodia (but) in the world. In (reading) speeches at the United Nations, I sat and listened for a while before I delivered mine, no one forgot to mention about false and fake news. On YouTube, in Khmer, there are (false and fake) news that either Mr. Hun Sen is dead or Mr. Hun Sen's wife is waiting for the day when Mr. Hun Sen remove oxygen. Where does this information come from? (they are coming from the opposition and the) opposition is the dirtiest group [...]

False information (characterized a) bad psychology [...] we have to fight against it. With what do we use to fight it? It is the facts and we have to explain the facts immediately. It must be fast, rapid and clear. This false information cannot be allowed to last long. There must be counter interpretation immediately.

Relevant institutions must be ready to provide the truth to dissolve false information. Only factual information can be used to eliminate false and/or fake news/information. Institutional officials must be quick to look at information and able to distinguish which is true and which is not [...]

(17) Let all Information/Media Institutions Build Capacity [...] for Quality Improvement

Seventh, the Association of Journalists must continue to cooperate with relevant ministries and institutions to provide vocational training to their staff and agencies to keep up with the development of digital media technology, which works quickly and up-to-date, and create opportunities to deal with future unpredictable challenges.

(I am calling on) all information/media institutions to work on capacity building. As of present, we have quantity (of press) [...] and I encourage you all to step into quality improvement. With only quantity and without quality, we would just be called a country with a lot of media [...] Our country has a population of 17 million, but there are ways too many media institutions. It would be impossible for the media to perform their jobs only with quantity and without quality. There are also many journalists' associations [...] I am calling on information/media institutions to focus on capacity building for journalists. The Ministry (of Information) also has to do this work with associations [...]

(18) Participating in promotion of Covid 19 Vaccination

The eighth point of the recommendation is to participate in disseminating educational information to the people on vaccination against Covid-19 and to implement the measures of the Royal Government and the Ministry of Health consistently. Covid-19 has not yet reached its end.

(19) Five-year duty-free import of foreign films, equip-

ment in use not in the risk area to register, those interfere the aviation to be replaced with safety equipment

I confirm the request of HE Khieu Kanharith regarding the import of foreign films. We will continue duty waving on import of foreign film for another 5 years. In addition, regarding technical issues [...] I would suggest a three-way cooperation among the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication and the Civil Aviation Authority [...] if the processing device is in use, and if it is not in the risk area, please allow them to register [...] however, in the event of an accident in the flight zone, where it may interfere with the flight, it should be replaced with safety ensured equipment [...]

(20) 621 small-type online media patent tax will be in the state burden, the license fee for the establishment of a new media unit reduced by 50%

Other than that, [...] regarding fiscal and non-fiscal proposals. My solution is as a New Year's gift [...] regarding patents [...] now the total number of online media is 621, and about 97% of which are small-scale, [...] I am declaring this patent “a burden on the state for five years.” You all have to meet with the units responsible. Do not take the pretext that (your tax is in the burden of the state and) created illegal issue. You must go in (and ask for the permission accordingly). This patent is therefore in the burden of the state for 5 more years [...]

Now the non-fiscal part. In that regard, for the payment of the license fee for the establishment of a new media unit at the Ministry of Information, I did not consult with HE Kanharith, and my decision today would reduce the revenue of the Ministry of Information, but the Ministry of Information, which is the chief of the media should favor it. I would like to offer a 50% discount. Kanharith did not ask for that because it is the income (of the Ministry) [...]

Q&A

Club of Cambodian Journalists: [...] Currently, there are journalists who have undergone training and who have not undergone training. The Club of Cambodian Journalists thought about how to train them [...] but this is related to budget issue. In some countries, there is a form of training in the form of contribution (from) companies and partly with the help of the national budget. This is the first request [...]

There is now a request. So far, relating to the use of certain words. When a person provided information, sometimes he obliged journalists to state his name and a long protocol title/s. That has put pressure on journalists [...]

Another point, [...] sometimes spokespersons of state institutions give information using too much administrative protocol of the RGC to the media, [...] I suggest ministries and institutions help reduce the protocol so that it does not take too much time [...]

One last point about the spokesperson, [...] s/he was not active in answering the journalists questions, and last but not least, he changed his phone very often [...] making it difficult for the journalists to contact him/her [...]

(21) Need time to review the fund for journalists' capacity building

Samdech Techo: ... it is a bit loud in here that it is difficult for us to listen to each other. I do not know if those who listen to me can hear me or not? Now let's talk about funding issue. I wonder, first of all, why there are so many media associations? If there are a lot of media, I do not say, but there are a lot of media associations. In terms of funding for journalistic capacity building, I need time to look at what we can do. This matter cannot be handed over to any particular association [...]

I have to think it over within the framework of the Ministry of Information, if necessary, to fund the capacity building of
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Cambodia-China friendship. We got a loan to build the road. I made this point during an online conference on the Future of Asia in 2021.

(3) China granted vaccines and sold at low prices to Cambodia

The facilitator said to me that “you seemed to be too close to China.” I replied to him that “if I am not dependent on China, who should I rely on? [...] **if I do not rely on China, who will help me?**” [...] **I also pointed out that the vaccine that Cambodia has been giving to the Cambodian people every day, if I do not rely on China, who should I rely on for it? At that time, how many countries would give us the vaccine?** They did, but in very small amount that we cannot meet our much-needed demand for our citizens. Chinese friends have both granted and sold to us, while they also have high demand for the Chinese people. It is known that there are up to 1.4 billion Chinese people and friends abroad also need from China, but out of understanding, our Chinese friends have both granted and sold at a low price to/for us [...]

(4) Even at the beginning of the 21st century, some financial institutions improperly assessed Cambodia development as well as road construction need

Speaking of this road, HE Sun Chanthol reported a that in the past year, this road was built with a grant from Japan. The road was then repaired by fund from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. As we can see, based on this road 7 experience, **even at the beginning of the 21st century, there were still incorrect assessment by some financial institutions regarding the development of Cambodia, such as the construction of only 7 meters or 9 meters width roads [...] now, even though we expand the road width to 12 meters, it is still small, and requiring us to expand even bigger.** This has shown the pace of development of Cambodia, which a few days

ago we celebrated the 44th anniversary of the liberation of the country from the genocidal regime of Pol Pot, and the 24th anniversary of the day we completed peace through win-win politics, and completely unified the country.

(5) National Road 7 – a backbone for the growth of the central zone, with connection to the northeast

This peace factor gives us opportunities for development, as the Ambassador HE Wang Wintien just mentioned. I will talk about this a little bit later. Regarding the National Road 7, it is the backbone for the growth of the central zone with connectivity to the northeast. From the central region, it connects to Kampong Cham, and Kampong Thom, and to other parts in the north. To the northeast, this road connects us to Prey Veng, which can also link with Phnom Penh via National Road 11 and/or via National Road 8 [...] more importantly, it links us to the connection with the border with Laos [...] **so it can be said that this national road (is making many connections and) needs to be restored, (to get rid of) the bottleneck trajectory that makes it difficult to travel between Kampong Cham and Skun.**

(6) After the signing, we can launch the construction

Today we rejoice together after the 44th anniversary of the January 7 Liberation Day to inaugurate the construction site. I would like to take this opportunity **to thank China once again for the financing for the implementation of this project, for which the signing ceremony was held when HE Li Keqiang paid an official visit and attended the ASEAN Summit.** From November to this moment is not a long time. We plan immediately for the construction to start. This means that we are not waiting for approvals of many levels, but just the seals of the two prime ministers. After signing, we can launch the construction site immediately [...]

(7) Four investment priorities:

people, roads, water, electricity; no roads/bridges, no development

[...] Next to us here is a rice mill. There is a rice mill in this place. Well, if the road is bigger, the transportation of rice at this mill or transporting the milled rice from this place to another place for supply or export will be better. No road, no bridge, one cannot develop. **What I put out in 1987 – more than 30 years ago – is still valid until now and will be valid for another 30 years. That is, concentrating on investing in water, roads, electricity, people, which we now call “people, road, water and electricity priorities,” and we will prioritize for our investments [...]**

(8) Imbalances between multiple means of transportation and road size

It is quite unimaginable. I have written in my book, “10 Years of the Cambodian Journey,” which I wrote about Cambodia’s challenging efforts to meet numerous imbalances. Among them, there was an imbalance between the need for travel and the lack of means of transportation. **Now this imbalance has shifted to an imbalance between too many means of transportation with too few lanes. The stages of each are not the same.** We need to update the actual requirements so that we set the right investment goals. Otherwise, we will surely make mistakes in nation building.

(9) In 2023, Cambodia will host the SEA Games with the help of China’s Techo Heritage Stadium

For example, the SEA Games hosting. I have asked our ASEAN partners for understanding that Cambodia would not be able to host the SEA Games because I needed to raise funds to build roads, bridges, canals, hospitals, and schools. Our friends in ASEAN understand. This year we will be hosting the SEA Games. In this SEA Games, **if we do not receive a huge grant, from the Chinese friends, that is worth about 200 million US dollars**

for building the stadium (Techo Heritage), we may find it difficult to host the SEA Games still [...] if we were to use the money we earned to host the SEA Games, it would be called erratic dancing. While people did not have roads, we spent for the stadium. Now that we have had continuously developed, we must respond to the needs obligated as ASEAN leaders and as ASEAN members, to host the games. Last year, we made efforts to host the ASEAN Summit. That is the effort to boost economic growth, and when we have good roads, electricity supply, and everything, it is clear that peace will come and stay for the people [...]

(10) Without the participation of the people cannot succeed in ruling Covid-19

One of the more obvious efforts is related to the combat against the Covid-19. **No matter how smart I was, without the support of the people, I would not be able to succeed in managing Covid-19. If the people do not accept the health measures [...] as well as the vaccination, what the situation in Cambodia would be so far [...] we do not know yet what other forms Covid-19 could turn into.** Therefore, it is necessary to call on our people to continue to receive the vaccine, and do not wait until it is too late to rescue. There is no shortage of vaccines now. We have more than 7 million doses left in the warehouse, with another 15 million doses on standby in China [...] and with another 5.5 million doses promised by the United States [...]

(11) Holding position indefinitely for 44 years; Cambodia’s Mines-Free in 2025

At the moment, HE Wang Wentian talked about some issues related to myself as well as the CPP and the (Royal) government led by me. By now, **I have been in power for 44 years. And with only a few days left, I will be the Prime Minister that hold the post for 38 years on which day I will**

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meet with the media. This year, maybe I will leave some opportunities besides my impromptu speech [...] to let our journalists ask questions [...] so that we can communicate on some issues [...] our country is flooded with war after the coup of March 18, 1970 (when the Lon Nol and his clique) overthrew Prince Norodom Sihanouk [...]

Although the war had been over for 24 years, **landmines have not been completely destroyed. We are pushing for a minefield free by 2025. Kampong Cham is the target province for demining and declaring a mine-free province,** starting from demined villages/communes/districts to mine-free provinces, and reaching the whole of Cambodia without mines by 2025. So far, we have invested heavily with other development partners to clear the remaining more than 700 square kilometers of land [...] still under mines [...]

(12) The dialectical connection between peace and development

For us now, (we must) maintain peace for development [...] **peace cannot exist without development. This is the dialectical connection between peace and development. If you want to develop, you have to keep the peace, and if you want to keep the peace, you have to develop.** If left unchecked, the people will start demanding this/that until they form armed forces or insurgency created due to poverty or the neglect of (the Royal) Government. Therefore, peace and development must go hand in hand [...]

(13) The main strategy of the Cambodian People's Party – the right to life

This is the main strategy of the Cambodian People's Party. **Before talking about other issues, we must deal with the right to life. Without this right, there would have been no other rights. As in the Khmer Rouge era or the 1970**

-75 war, bullets recognize no human rights? It kills people. (Does) the Khmer Rouge know anything about human rights? They do not. That is why it is our request to keep the peace, and through that golden/diamond opportunity, we need to promote development. We make development to strengthen peace. And we make peace to promote development [...]

(14) CPP does not accept the word "votes thief"

We will not let you accuse us of being thieves for life. I would like to say that **the protesting culture after the election must end. The CPP cannot accept the word 'votes thief'. Whoever dares to say this, we must file a lawsuit, even to the Supreme Court, we must do it** because by calling it freedom of expression, you accused CPP of being a thief. The CPP cannot accept your word blaming us all "someone who steals your ballots." Well, there are only two options [...] either enforcing the law through the courts or I have to gather the People's Party supporters to protest [...]

(15) January 7 is not the exclusive property of the CPP, but of everyone who wants to overthrow Pol Pot regime

The CPP already knows how to defend itself and sell its goods. How much has been achieved on Cambodian soil is the result of the CPP's efforts. I would also like to make it clear from here that **January 7 (victory over the Pol Pot's regime) is the property of all, not the exclusive property of the CPP. Anyone who hates the Pol Pot regime and wants it to fall is having a share for January 7. You need to understand January 7. It is not hostile to anyone. January 7 – takes the Khmer Rouge as an enemy only, and not anyone else as an enemy [...]**

I have reserved (understanding for Kong Koam) because we used to be together. But you do not understand me. You do not understand the CPP that gives you peace. I hit Kong Koam today. I am warning Kong Koam not to be too arrogant. To

satisfy the "outside prisoners," whom you attacked over the past few years, you now attack the CPP? He himself served in the CPP, and became a member of the Central Committee and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but he broke the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [...] **if you wanted to leave (please) leave all out. If you are to stay, (please) enter all in. There is no head in and tail out [...]** I beg you to act in the manner of a dignified political party [...] you just described the political program of your (Candlelight) party. It is not necessary to hit at the CPP. If you do, and if the CPP hit back, please do not say (that I did not warn you) [...]

(16) Single nationality law for politicians to consider

Since they like to say that this person has this nationality, that person has that nationality, and so and so with so and so nationality has been sued or imprisoned, I said, **"then I also have to think about the Cambodian Constitution, whether it should be limited to one nationality (or not for politicians in Cambodia) so that things would not be difficult [...]** like this person coming from this country, and s/he was convicted. The ambassador said that s/he has this/that nationality. If so, we may immediately conclude that all politicians must have only Khmer nationality [...] **(on this issue, let us) consider further whether requiring civil servants, the armed forces and politicians having one nationality should be included in the Constitution? I have to think [...]** I believe that my words are taken by all embassies and translated. Maybe some ambassadors are even listening to it now [...]

(17) A neutral and peaceful political environment for elections requires contributions from all political parties, not just the CPP

I would like to warn and **send a message to all political parties, especially a political party that launches repeated attacks on the CPP, and specifically Kong Koam [...]** to be care-

ful, or we may not be patient [...] if you do not cause trouble, you are hit by lightning strike or what? January 7 gives you your life. When you were with the CPP, you praised January 7 repeatedly [...] when you joined others, you insulted January 7, the CPP [...] please do not take side with any political parties [...] **please watch out and do not move into cases (that is prohibited by) the law on the political party, whereas with foreign support, parties would face with what and how [...]** (if we all) want a neutral and peaceful political environment for the election, **there must be contributions from all of you (political parties), not only the CPP [...]**

(18) CPP will take the court as basis of actions

As President of the Cambodian People's Party, **I want concerned levels to hold tight this issue. There are lawyers of the CPP at all levels. Where the issue takes place, process the lawsuit right there. It is not that when things happen in one place and the lawsuit will process in Phnom Penh.** If the case happens in Kampong Cham, the lawsuit will be in Kampong Cham, if it happens in Tbong Khmum, the lawsuit will be in Tbong Khmum [...] it is a normal process of the court [...] **while it is possible that you hit someone, that someone hit back, is the right thing to do. You snatched someone, in a quick reaction, the person hit back and you may be knocked out. You are small and not yet a worthy challenger. Do your best (to get known) and not to hit others. If you hit them, and surely they will hit you back [...]** ■

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Now let's talk about the spokesperson. I admit that some spokespersons have never met the minister. A previous government spokesman had never met with the Prime Minister [...] here, it is advisory that the Ministers work closely with the spokespersons, because the information released must be approved by the Ministers prior to releasing it [...] ■