

## Graduation of National Technical Training Institute (NTTI)

(27 February 2023 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)



### (1) Significant progress in vocational technical training

[...] HE Ith Sam Heng has just made a report on vocational training for the development of our nation and recalled that in 1996, when I went to hand out diplomas, there were only more than 200 students. It was difficult time to find a job. Why it was in such a situation. It was because of the fact that the war was not over and there were very little investments. On that note, there was not many students to take training, in line with job management is difficult. We did not have enough base to absorb those people who had their training here [...] I still remember that people asking for jobs in this place. I was well aware of the problems here regarding vocational training, for which I have led reforms since 1985 [...]

### (2) School of vocational training founded in 1958 by Preah Borom Ratanakaod

I went to the provinces in those days in the past. Kratie province was very strict and did not agree with the issue of reform. They did not embark on land reform too. Kratie province at that time produced a ferry. The boats in our country are not made of steel. They are made of wood.

According to the province, we still do not have technicians to repair the agricultural machinery. Even training on this issue is not available. There are machines for farmers, but when the driver breaks down, the driver does not know how to fix it. In this regard, we introduced reorientation step after step [...] *looking back here, we could see that this the school of vocational training was developed in 1958, who was the leader then? It was Preah Borom Ratanakaod. He was King from 1941-55, before he resigned and returned the throne to his father, HM the King Suramarit [...]*

### (3) If not for the 1970 war, Cambodia could have gone far already

Let me return to vocational training. The idea of vocational training is nothing new. His Majesty has taken care of it since he led the country in the late 50s already and established the Institute of Technology, the so-called (Kosamak) Technical School refers to the importance of this technical training. At this point, we raise the question that if our country did not suffer the war in 1970, how far would the country have gone? At that

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## 11th National Clean City Day

(27 February 2023 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

### (1) “Visiting Cambodia Year 2023” ... urban and rural sanitation promoted

The “Visiting Cambodia Year 2023” campaign is an important event, (and it will not be for) just this year. (Please do not be) mistaken that (efforts will be made to keep the city) clean only in 2023, and not clean after 2023. We have put a lot of effort into campaigns for urban hygiene and sanitation [...] the cities and towns have reduced a lot (of scattering plastics). But we still have some issues among our people that we need to take care of, to educate our people to understand that this is their land, everything is theirs, and they have to participate. Everyone from ordinary people

to high-ranking officials must attend. Not just the urban people, the rural people too need to improve this sanitation situation. It is not only for tourist attraction but for the sake of our people’s health and cleanliness of the city [...]

### (2) “Clean village, good rice field” extends to the countryside to attract tourists

About two decades or three decades ago, we used the slogan, “clean villages and good rice fields.” This means that we have done a lot of campaigns on hygiene issues, especially to avert some diseases, such as dengue fever caused by the lack of sanitation in the countryside

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## Graduation of University of Human Resource

(20 February 2023 - Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

### (1) Joining Efforts to Implement Health Measures and Vaccination Reopen the Country

[...] As a result of the efforts of all universities, both public and private, in general and in particular, for the University of Human Resources, especially in times of epidemics, we have through this joint effort been able to reopened the country, which is not a small issue.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the university leadership, professors, staff, as well as all the students who have contributed to the prevention of Covid-19 by adopting the health measures issued by the Ministry of Health, the Royal Government and accepting

vaccines to boost community immunity leading to reopening the country [...]

### (2) 2% to 4% of 1.5 M Students for Ancestral Professions Training

[...] I would like to request that HE Hang Chuon Naron (Minister of Education, Youth and Sports) discuss with the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Ministry of Labor on our goal is to provide vocational training for 1.5 million poor students [...] which according to my division, 2 to 4 percent are to have “ancestors’ professions” ranging from weaving/sculpture/painting or anything else [...] therefore, this

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time, Cambodia had an income of more than US\$ 200/person, while South Korea had (an income of) only US\$ 78 per person. Cambodia moved faster than South Korea. Now, South Korea pass us away and left us behind. That was due to the mistake of the leader who decided to stage a coup (in 1970s) followed by the Pol Pot regime [...]

#### **(4) Vocational training after 1979 was not successful for lacking jobs market**

Back to the day of liberation on January 7, 1979. We started to organize training in all fields. They were not going any fast due to market factors. I still remember (that) 1996 ... when there were no nob markets, our training efforts were not that successful. Sooner, the country has noted increase in number of people with technical training background. I still remember that the initiative to establish the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training was when Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh was the President of the National Assembly and I was the Prime Minister. On the day that Samdech Krom Preah and Princess Mary went to participate in the wedding of one of my children, we agreed to establish the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training. Originally the vocational training institute (located) in the Ministry of Education. Thus far the scope of work of the Ministry of Education covers a large area. Later, we created the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, which took over the vocational training from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports [...]

#### **(5) No country invests somewhere without peace, political stability and human resources**

The ministry has grown to the point where today we distribute degrees to 5,455 people, all of whom are technicians. We now have greater demand for technical expertise because the local demand is already there, but also the part that is attracting investment from outside. *If we*

*do not have enough human resources to provide them, we cannot succeed in attracting investors.* Remember that it is not a matter of addressing the job demand of so and so number alone without linking them to a multisectoral comprehensive development chain and/or macro framework coverage, such *peace, which is a clear/sufficient guarantee for development. No country would dare to invest in somewhere without peace and political stability [...]*

#### **(6) Culture to discuss with Labor on ancestral vocational training sites**

The Royal Government has set a goal to hand over to the training of 1.5 million poor young men and women, most of which will fall to the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training. I also confirmed the day before that the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts is to coordinate with the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training on the basis of training of ancestral professions. The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts may have some locations, such as in Phnom Penh or Siem Reap, but in some provinces, the Ministry may not have the needed locations. If the Ministry (of Culture) could not have such facility, please rely on the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, in which Minister HE Ith Sam Heng mentioned in relation to my offer of vocational training schools in Sihanoukville [...]

#### **(7) To attract investments in processing industry**

Now, 99% of the villages have electricity connected to them [...] I always tell foreign friends and foreign investors to focus on investing in Cambodia. It is our goal to attract investors in two main areas – *firstly, the processing industry that uses Cambodia's own raw materials [...]* Cambodia could become a country that distributes cashew nuts [...] Cambodia exports some one million tons of unprocessed cashew nut [...]

As of present, we have not yet been able to process all of our rice yet. We have a surplus of

some 6.6 million metric tons of rice, which is some 4.2 million metric tons of milled rice, far exceeding the local consumption demand [...] we have moved from a country with food shortage to one with a surplus of rice. But we did not succeed in exporting the planned one million metric tons of rice [...] we have a lot of rubber. We export them raw with not much local processing. As for cassava, some 20 million tons have been chopped into pieces and exported. For sugar cane, we have local sugar production [...]

#### **(8) To attract investments in high-tech industry**

*Secondly, we want to attract high-tech industries, which we have attracted them on a gradual basis, such as the Japanese company Minebea, which previously invested just over US\$ 30 million, and now has reached nearly US\$ 1 billion in motor production [...]* American carmaker Ford, South Korean company Hyundai, now the Japanese company Yazaki and in the near future Toyota will soon open up shops in the Phnom Penh Special Economic Zone. The big companies that traveled with the German president (to Cambodia the other day) talked about the purpose of bringing car manufacturers to install in Cambodia. I welcome this move, and in case they do, we have to have and provide these projects with the experts and technical workers [...]

#### **(9) The Oral area case in February 1996 was the first success of win-win politics, 1998 was the end of the implementation**

Sometimes, some people just say that the Samdech Techo winning politics commenced implementation in 1998. That is wrong. *I would ask the whole nation to remark that the win-win politics was not implemented in 1998, but ended in 1998. Apparently, in February 1996, the Oral area case had been the first success (of the implementation of the win-win politics).* A Khmer Rouge leader reported to the authority and Hun Sen

was satisfied to meet him and found out what would these people need so that we set out to respond to their needs [...] again, on December 29, 1998 is the end of the implementation of win-win politics. Its process is not a one-day implementation. I traveled to Oral for the integration, then to Pailin, Samlot, Kamrieng, and Phnom Proek, and also Ta Ken, Koh Sla, in 1996 [...]

#### **(10) Hun Sen and CPP complements each other**

I have here some 60K interactions to my live broadcast from the Telegram group. This means that out of 500,000 people registered to my Telegram group, some 60,000 of them are watching. In Cambodia, Hun Sen's popularity helps promote the CPP, and the CPP's helps promote Hun Sen. We complement each other [...] now bosses and those subordinates are vying for the PM's job. But wait and see how the next 4 or 5 years come out? He is now appearing to have run for prime minister position. We wanted him to come out. He does come out. Was too easy. I do not want to say about it and please do not say that Hun Sen has a lot of tricks. If you do not know politics, better not to do politics. Those who could suppress Hun Sen at this time have not yet left their mother's womb. I'm not referring to anyone [...] just wait and see the results later [...]

#### **(11) Please favor Cambodia still with concessional interest rates**

Soon Cambodia will leave its status of a less developed country. I am quite concerned. Why? *When we leave the status of a less developed country, for example, we are no longer able to borrow money at concessional interest rates but at commercial interest rates. This is something that (concerned me about). If we are poor, they will lend us at the concessional interest rate. I told them that even though we are moving into the status of a low middle income country, please favor us with a concessional interest rate.*

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*sional interest rate.* I have spoken to Japan/South Korea/China/Asian Development Bank about them continuing to favor Cambodia their concessional interest rates. We still call on our partners to provide us with concessional interest rate loans, because the heavy interest is not profitable to do business. We need helps to build infrastructures such as bridges, and the likes [...]

### (12) Encourage BOT developed high-speed rail in Cambodia

We have to turn our tracks into all-speed trains. So here we call on (and) encourage countries to join and prepare for the B.O.T (Build, Operate and Transfer) investments, since we do not want to borrow money in a large amount to build a high-speed railway from Phnom Penh to Poipet (and) from Phnom Penh to Sihanoukville. Instead of the old railroad, which now runs only 30 km/h, the expressway can run up to 130 km/h, which saves time and energy on transportation. During their visit to Cambodia, the French delegation encouraged the study and the French company would be interested in the B.O.T investment. We do not want to borrow money from anyone. If they can do in the B.O.T way, it's good [...]

### (13) RGC builds the US\$ 230 million bridge across the Mekong for expressway

Soon we will launch the construction site of the expressway connecting Phnom Penh with Bavet (at the border with Vietnam in Svay Rieng), and Vietnam will build an expressway from Ho Chi Minh City to connect with Cambodia at the border. Let me share with you (that) initially the company wanted to build a bridge across the Mekong River and using the bridge will oblige payment from the people. I told them that taking money from the people on the bridge is something I cannot accept. Please think it again. After all, it is impossible to let our people use the expressway at a cheaper price

including the cost of using the bridge [...] now, *the Royal Government has decided to build the bridge, using about US\$ 230 million to connect one side of the Mekong River in Kandal to the other side, with the expressway runs through Kandal, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng. We let the company, who have the technology, build it. We will pay the company [...]*

### (14) Never rely on others for popularity, try to stand up from a young age

Please note that *Hun Sen has never relied on anyone's popularity to be his popularity. Hun Sen, for his whole life, has always tried to stand on his own from a young age residing in the Buddhist pagoda. The CPP has enjoyed the benefit from what Hun Sen has contributed. Though I am not the only one to do it, still Hun Sen's prestige is not as simple as you think.*

If Hun Sen does not have enough prestige, can the CPP stand in Cambodian politics? (When you say) that Hun Sen is a dictator, [...] I just wanted to point out that who is more dictatorial than Pol Pot, why did Pol Pot live only three years, 8 months and 20 days? While Hun Sen has been in power as Prime Minister for more than 38 years, and he is also the only person in the (royal) government for more than 44 years.

### (15) Not many can predict the Hun Sen's way

Samdech Pichey Sena (Tea Banh) always said that *"Hun Sen is a character that has always been in all situations/events/matters." There is no such thing concerning the country that Hun Sen did not know? Land reform, reforming the planned economy to a market economy (as well as) events related to the military.* This year will mark the 45th anniversary of the founding of the Cambodian National Solidarity and Salvation Armed Forces, a major source of the formation of the National Front for Salvation of Kampuchea, which immediately became a political/military organization [...]

## Meeting Mention-A Students

(27 February 2023 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

### (1) Nearly 10 years of high school exam reforms have changed attitudes across the country

[...] I am very pleased to hear the report of His Excellency Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sports on the progress of our education, in general and in particular, in relation to the high school exam, also known as the Baccalaureate exam. This (exam) reform, which began almost 10 years ago, held in the first year of His Excellency Hang Chuon Naron's tenure as Minister, has changed the general attitude. What is a change in attitude? It is the creation of the effort of the students themselves, because only with knowledge they will pass. This has ended the culture of intervening and trafficking in (exam) materials (to the exam class). Interventions have now been replaced with parents' encouragement for their children to study hard. This is a big change [...]

### (2) The CPP Mass Organizations – the Youth and the Women's Movements – Help Mobilize the Exam Reform Efforts

To meet the Prime Minister today is just (a way to acknowledge their efforts with) honor [...] the whole society has (in fact) changed. The Deputy Prime Ministers, the Ministers, the Secretaries of State, all those who have worked at the local level have acknowledged their hard works. Our mass organizations, especially the Cambodian People's Party Youth Movement, the Women's Movement, [...] have pushed this (exam reform efforts) a lot [...] we see progress and the advantage of this reform, which has now become a good national movement, especially the change in attitudes in the family [...] that they are no longer dependent on the culture of intervention, and turned to encourage their children to study hard and help provide them with more teaching assis-

tance [...] the point is that we should be encouraging to ensure that this movement is not going backwards, and it is moving forward.

### (3) Students who do not pass the exam have 3 options

Nowadays, there are many options for grandchildren do not pass the exam [...] the first option is that those grandchildren repeat the class and continue to take the exam next year. Option 2, those grandchildren can go to study for an associate's degree, and when it is time for the high school exam, (they can) return to the exam (again). Another option (is) to go to a vocational training school that will give grandchildren the opportunity to gain vocational skills to use for the development of the country as well as their own business. While in the vocational school, they are still able to return to the exam. Hopefully, the grandchildren will not give up all the efforts and they have to continue as there is still a long way to go. They are now only 17-18 years old or under 20 years old, it is not too late for them to go on with their studies options [...]

### (4) Do not overlook the peace factor/youth in the past lost the opportunity to study

The peace factor is something that cannot be overlooked. Any success gained should not overlook peace, education, sports, or the arts, and anything at all cannot live with war. It can only live with peace. Those old people on the podium (used to) go through stages of war-torn country. On this note, the youth of the past lost almost every chance, and under the Pol Pot era, their chance was completely gone. From 1970-75, the loss of opportunities (was) large, but there were still some towns/cities occupied by the Khmer Republic where there were still some schoolings. Whereas in the liberated zones, schools were closed. Youth/children

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were deprived of the opportunity to study. Even in the city, students/youth were forced to join the army to go to war. They also lost the opportunity to study. Furthermore, under the Pol Pot regime, we all not only lost the opportunity to study but also suffered numerous deaths.

**(5) If the Khmer Rouge did not commit crimes against humanity, there would not be prosecution against them**

You may not believe what I am saying but you can ask your grandparents' grandparents' parents – but I doubt if your parents were not born later than the Pol Pot generation, some may be born early – as to what they could remember about the Pol Pot era? It is like no one can hide the sun with their palms. The Pol Pot regime was tried by a hybrid court of the United Nations and Cambodia, with Khieu Samphan's as the last verdict. If the Khmer Rouge did not commit atrocities/genocide as a crime against humanity, was it necessary to prosecute the Khmer Rouge? This is also a reflection of the causes that caused harms to our people [...]

**(6) Standard schools of about US\$ 400 million help with Covid-19 patients**

After 1979, we worked hard to restore education. Even though we had been able to launch some schools, teachers and students were still threatened by war in certain areas. As of now, Cambodia is no longer divided into several control areas. We now are one Cambodia with one control area [...] we see that there are now good high schools in the former battlefield areas. During the more than 6,000 kilometers of my travels to the provinces, I offered building new standard schools, at a total cost of about 400 million USD, which were then used to accommodate Covid-19 patients as at that time schools were closed temporarily, [...] we have deployed more schools and new school-related construction through the national budget and through philanthropists funding [...]

**(7) Phnom Penh Capital Hall and the Ministry of Education find a place to build more dormitories**

I would request HE Khuong Sreng of the Phnom Penh Municipality to check more where we can build another dormitory. Although it may be a bit far [...] because soon we have to accept foreign students, as well as students in the country. I would like to ask Phnom Penh Capital Hall to look into the possibility of using some land to build a dormitory for poor students, especially female students. I want another 200-300 beds for our students [...] because the problem now is related to our lack of accommodation. Male students can go to the Buddhist pagodas, but female students cannot go there for lodgments [...] may the Capital Hall (of Phnom Penh) with the Ministry of Education and Sports, study available possibilities together and we already have land there. We can make use of the land and start the dormitory project right away. We can do it a little bit a year [...] so that we can increase the number of our female students, and welcome foreign students who come to study [...]

**(8) Imbalance of education needs – student growing number and shortage of schools and teachers are reduced**

Previously, we had an imbalance in the need for education where there were shortages of schools and teachers (comparing to the growing number of students). Now this imbalance has been reduced and the number of schools has reached out to students at the grassroots level. The number of high schools in the districts is also increasing. In Takeo province, there is a district where Mr. Chan Sarun (former Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) worked (on behalf of the Cambodian People's Party), Tram Kak district, there are up to ten high schools. In the 2004 Proclamation at Santuk district (of Kompong Thom), I declared at the time, "A commune should have a secondary school." However, we now

have used the term "at least one secondary school in a commune." This means that in a commune there can have more than one secondary school. That is the relentless strengthening of the promotion of human resource training, which is a priority of our policy.

**(9) We are presently at the stage of budgeting linked to policy**

For public financial reform, we are in the budgeting linked to policy phase. In the next few days, I will announce a public financial management reform program or what we called "marching on with reform". It is very effective that we are budgeting in linkage to policy. That we are laying out objectives for education, relating to human resource training, we must increase (budget) to this sector. Driving the movement forward. We cannot place education as a priority, but the budget is so small that it does not meet the needs of the education sector. We must continue to work together [...]

**(10) To host the SEA Games and to organize Angkor Sankranti (Khmer New Year) responsibly**

This year, Cambodia will host the SEA Games. Today, we are 92 days until the SEA Games. Our country must work hard to host with responsibility and safety (the events) for our players (and) of the participating countries, and all the fans, while they are in the Kingdom Cambodia. Phnom Penh is the largest venue of the competition, but there are also a few other provinces with competitions – Sihanoukville, Kep, Kampot, and Siem Reap. Be well prepared as a responsible hosting. This year, along with the SEA Games, we also are celebrating the Angkor Sankranti. Everywhere celebrates Sangkanti. We will have Sankrant Tbong Khmum, Sangkant Kampong Cham, Sangkant Takeo, Sangkant Svay Rieng, Sangkant Prey Veng in addition to the main sangkant event in Siem Reap's Angkor Wat. This year, our people will have more op-

portunities to hang out [...]

**(11) 1.5 million youth of poor/at-risk families to train at state vocational institutions**

In connection with this vocational training issue, the Royal Government will organize the training for up to 1.5 million young people, for which training not only that they are free of charge for students, but the Royal Government will also give the students a salary for their education efforts. I wrote my instruction down on the request of Lok Chumteav Pheung Sakona (Minister of Culture and Fine Arts) and sent it to HE Aun Porn Moniroth (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance), my cabinet, [...] and (Labor Minister) Ith Sam Heng that we will reserve 2% to 4% of these 1.5 million training opportunities for the so-called ancestral professions [...] so far managed by at the school under the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts – sculpture, pottery, painting or whatever ... lest it disappear.

**(12) The current government to attend 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summits**

I have already confirmed that before hosting the SEA Games, there will be Angkor Sankranti/Khmer New Year. According to the preparations, the ASEAN Summit will be from 9 to 11 May (2023) in Jakarta. The day we open (SEA Games) requires my presence is on 05 (May 2023). It does not overlap [...] I open (SEA Games) and then leave for the ASEAN summit in Jakarta. I will go for the closing of the SEA Games on my return from Jakarta. The 43rd Summit will be on September 4-7, 2023. It is obvious that (the current Royal) government will attend the summit after the election [...] July 23 (2023). The formation of the (Royal) Government (in) estimation (will be in) mid-September or a little later, because at least 60 days later, the National Assembly will convene under the chairmanship of HM the King. Well, according to this, the present

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[...] this campaign refers to the city (but) I wanted to extend (its coverage) to the countryside, by which people in the countryside can improve their health. Sanitation will lead to better conditions in the villages and communes, and attract more tourists' visits [...] we do not do it for one year. This movement will take many years and expand from the capital city to the countryside, [...] "clean villages, good rice fields" is a movement that drives development, which prompts changes in local situation. This requires the attention of the authorities at all levels. Things have to happen at the grassroots. It never comes anywhere but in/from there. We at all levels must contribute to promote this movement [...]

### **(3) Exports on the spot and encourage uses of local products**

Firstly, we need to use the potential of tourism to continue to implement the concept of export on the spot. Our concept of export is not limited to export to markets outside the country, but when we receive tourism, the hotels can buy the products of our farmers, who raise livestock, and/or grow vegetables. In addition to finding markets abroad, we must strive to enable them to supply the local market. Therefore, (secondly) perhaps the Ministry of Tourism remembers my recommendation that when giving points (on competition among hotels) to hotels that are using the most local products rather than imported ones [...]

### **(4) Tourists' arrivals in Siem Reap and Sihanoukville are picking up**

Agriculture needs to improve the quality of cultivation and husbandry, avoiding use of chemicals and/or other substances that affect the health of tourists/consumers [...] Okhna Sok Kong, whom I asked on my way in, says that the uptrend of tourists' arrivals in Siem Reap now seems to have started, with 300, 400 or 200,300 rooms per day. The number in Sihanoukville is also picking up

[...] we have seen the flow of tourists starting to increase, and on the other hand, the Cambodian people now can afford to stay in a five-star or four-star hotels [...] well, it is a blending number of local and foreign tourists, [...] we need to adjust all aspects so that we can receive more tourists [...]

### **(5) Good hospitality, security, sanitation and hygiene make tourists come again**

I have always said in the past that to attract tourism, we did not need to broadcast on CNN, BBC, but mainly through all the tourists who come to our country. We must think of way to make a visitor want to come again, and not coming alone, but bring family and friends together. That is the key point [...] the real solution is when tourists come, we receive tourists with good hospitality, we have good security, we have cleanliness (because of sanitation and hygiene), [...] that should be the points the entice tourists to return [...]

### **(6) Protect the environment, forests and wildlife to attract tourists to rural areas**

Let us Cambodians work hard, because this is in the national interest and it has spread the growth of the country from having more and more tourists' arrivals to the countryside. The good thing is that the number of domestic tourists on weekend – Saturday and Sunday – is no less than 300,000. They go to the coastal areas because we have now convenient road infrastructure. Those of you who have coconuts can pick and sell it or other fruits that tourists can eat. That would provide a lot of work, accompanied by education to protect the environment, not to cut down trees, not to destroy wildlife, and use the environment to attract tourists [...] who like to see the forest and the animals [...]

### **(7) Cambodia takes actions on plastic wastes at sea, lakes, rivers, and canals**

Another thing I have to have your attention is about the plastic wastes. Let me thank the

most beautiful beach convention held in Sihanoukville recently for including my recommendations in its decision on plastic. Plastic can be serious in the next 20, 30 or 50 years because it flows into the sea, rivers, lakes and other waterways. This plastic does not melt like paper [...] Cambodia has to contribute to this efforts with other countries [...] for we have many rivers – Tonle Sap, Mekong, Bassac, Sekong, Sre Pok and canals [...] Cambodia has paid attention beyond this – not only worried about the plastic in the sea, but also in the rivers, canals and lakes. We need to work together within our national framework and with our partners to reduce or eliminate (this non-degradable stuff) challenges. Eliminating it might be difficult, however, we can take measure to reduce wastes thrown into the lakes, seas, rivers, canals [...]

### **(8) Former youth groups in opposition support the Royal Government**

Days now, there is a lot of insults on social media, after some youth groups came to see me (and told me) that they had carried out a lot of activities, and in those activities against the Royal Government, they did not get anything in return. Now they see that the only way (forward) is to join the CPP and support the Royal Government. It is my will to accept and meet those children. The movement is now in momentum. But as the movement shifted its support from anti-government groups, the opposition attacked these young children. This is a lack of respect for democracy. When anyone support them in their course against the government, they say that those people are good. By the time those people cooperate with and/or support the Royal Government in development projects, for instance related to environmental protection, the opposition considered them bad element (selling their ideals out) [...]

### **(9) Political parties and politicians not to paint color on former opposition youths**

I am just sending a message that if you think about the democratic process and the rights of citizens in politics, you do not attack these children. It is not a matter of democracy. When they support you, they insult the government, you think they are good. When they see that it is best that they join the government, you consider them betraying their ideals [...] youth in many organizations are supporting the Royal Government [...] the wind is changing direction. I am calling on political parties and politicians not to paint color on these children. They had previously participated in anti-government protests. Now they do not do that anymore. They asked to join the government to do the works that they have been doing [...] I warn you to be careful, not to push these children until they lose patience [...] They are all intellectuals [...]

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per person). The Cambodian students are paid in Laotian Kip, a denomination of US\$ 180, which the exchange rate between the bank and the market is different. In real term, they received only USD 90 due to the depreciation of the Kip [...] I asked the Prime Minister of Laos that we should agree to cash them in US dollars. We give dollars to Lao students in Cambodia and Laos gives dollars to Cambodian students in Laos [...]

### **(9) RUPP completes the basic requirements to proceed to PhD candidate in Political Science**

[...] I thank the university leadership as well as the university students who last year awarded me an honorary doctorate. I am proud that this university had done its part to "complete the basic requirements" for me to become a candidate for a Ph D in Political Science. In fact, you are all my junior university mates, based on the degree provided by the Royal University of Phnom Penh [...] if I did not have a bachelor's degree, I would not be able to study for a master's degree and a doctorate [...]

# Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) Graduation

(24 February 2023 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

*We have 70 days more until the SEA Games in Cambodia. We will be hosting the SEA Games together.*

## (1) For 44 years, the education sector has modernized; more young people will become Deputy Prime Ministers/Ministers

I am very proud to have contributed, with my compatriots and teachers, in the past 44 years to restore the education sector from a pile of ashes to a gradual modernization and with the quality enhancement. I would like to express my special appreciation to His Excellency Dr. Hang Chuon Naron for leading the reform of the education sector during these two terms, which shows that the young people are able to lead the institution. In the future, more young people will become ministers, deputy prime ministers, and even Prime Minister in replacement of the previous generation [...]

## (2) State universities still attract students/play an important role in human resource training

The Royal University of Phnom Penh continues to play an important role in human resource training. I continue to call on all public/private higher education institutions to make efforts to promote quality human resource training. Some used to study under the roof of our schools but they argued that students get degrees but never show up in class. These people were students under the roof of (our) schools from primary to high school. They insulted/blamed schools where they studied. If they insulted the schools to be incapable, why else they who learnt there are any different? [...]

## (3) The research fund of this university helps acquire research capacity

According to the achievements that HE Hang Chuon Naron just reported, the research fund

at this university, which provides funding of US\$ 100,000 annually for research activity, is very important to train people to do their own research. Higher education is the level at which research is used as the basis for human knowledge, not the plagiarism which does not have the ability to research and innovate for growth [...]

## (4) Royal University of Phnom Penh is the work of Samdech Preah Borom Ratanakaod since the 1960s

The Royal University of Phnom Penh, the work of the King, which he built in the 1960s, is the oldest university in the country. It opened since then and was abandoned during the Pol Pot era. We also started rehabilitation after we gradually liberated the country from the Pol Pot regime and we have opened this place for human resource training until now. Through the training here, a large number of students leaving this school has contributed to solving human resources, including issues related to the shortage of teachers/professors in universities/high schools [...]

## (5) Continuing learning/research, standstill is in backward and conservative mode

I call on all the students who have graduated to continue their efforts to strengthen/enhance their abilities. They cannot stand still after receiving a degree or knowledge that we have learned from the university. The situation is evolving so fast and we cannot stay in idle mode. Standstill is tantamount to backwardness and conservatism, which creates obstacles to development or even hinders the progress of the next generation. We need to continue to improve the quality by continuing to learn – the “Learn for Life” movement, because there is no end to learning [...]

## (6) Geopolitical conquests lead to wars, sanctions, energy/food crises

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government will have to attend both ASEAN Summits [...]

## (13) Many tourists to come to Cambodia. Oversea Cambodians to visit the country

I have to participate in the opening and closing events of SEA Games. Will stay tuned and be watching online. Through Angkor Sankranti and through the SEA Games, there will be more tourists coming to Cambodia. Now the number starts to increase gradually. Last year, we received 2,200,000 tourists. This year, it is expected that (the number of tourists arrivals) will increase to between 3-4 million people. I would also like to take this opportunity to invite Cambodians living abroad to visit Cambodia to see for themselves the progress of their country through the New Year in Cambodia, either by attending Angkor Sankranti in Siem Reap or any other places at their free will, and come and watch the SEA Games. I urge you to visit the country so that you are not deceived by the unfortunate propaganda of those who want to distort the situation [...]

## (14) Cambodia – the country of Cambodians

[...] The global situation is being affected in part by geopolitical seizures. The war in Ukraine, the issue of sanctions, will lead to the energy/food crisis, especially the energy crisis, which is causing inflation in countries [...] in terms of oil prices, it is a bit cheaper compared to the previous few days (which was more than US\$ 85/barrel). This morning, as of now, it is (worth) US\$ 82.89/barrel. At this stage, oil (that are available) between US\$ 50/barrel and US\$ 70/barrel is considered good for consumers/manufacturers [...]

## (7) Strengthen food supply capacity and resilience; inflation under control

Today is also the first anniversary of Russia's troops sent to Ukraine. We are waiting to see (which) countries make state-

I should also talk about this. I am very surprised that some of our Cambodians (abroad) – because they used to support the opposition party, used to insult the Royal Government on Facebook – are worried and dare not to visit the country. The day before, I met Mrs. Hem Chantha [...] she was afraid to come (visit Cambodia) because she had insulted the (Royal) government [...] I would like to take this opportunity to prove that this country is Cambodia, and it belongs to every Cambodians. Only the person who have the court order to arrest (may have that sort of feeling). Even though s/he has insulted the (Royal) government, but there is no complaint to the court, s/he has no problem [...] some of the Cambodians abroad are confused that if they support the opposition, they do not stand a chance to enter Cambodia. It is not a matter. Please come. Even those who have arrest warrants, if they want to be arrested, it is not wrong to come because they have the right to do so [...] a little war of words is not a topic of finding false for a lifetime. For myself/the CPP, even the Khmer Rouge who fought with us life and death, we can find a way to live and work together [...]

ments and how [...] food security is another important issue. We are strengthening our food supply capacity and resilience. No matter what happens, Cambodia should not be in trouble on food issue. The exchange rate in Cambodia is relatively stable. Inflation is still under control, but we wanted inflation to lower. It cannot go lower though for external reasons [...]

## (8) A reciprocation principle with Laos on scholarships proposed

[...] I met students who are studying in Laos. I listened to their difficulties [...] in that we have a policy of supporting Lao students (studying in Cambodia) and Cambodian students (studying in Laos a scholarship of) US\$ 180 alike (per month

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training can be deployed by vocational training schools managed by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, and for the “ancestral professions heritages” section, by the school managed by the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts [...]

This is just an opinion. We have set a training target for 1.5 million people, a large number of students belong to the poor families, which the state must provide not only vocational training (but also stipends). This is just a suggestion for everyone to think about and prepare to share? There is training at the regular schools. We can also rely on school of private sectors [...] and we also provide funding for students to study there [...]

### **(3) From eating to survive to eating full and delicious, and now eating for good health**

Our country has departed far from the situation (that we had encountered) after the liberation in 1979, when we tried our best to survive. We did not think how eating would affect our health. We just wanted to live on. Later, we reached the stage of doing whatever we could to get full/delicious. Now we (enter) the stage of eating full and delicious, and will ensure good health. We have to be careful with what we are eating because chemicals ... can have a long-term effect on body. Some foods can be harmful to human health.

As for me, doctors forbid almost all (food items). That is the duty of the doctor. Though my health has not yet reached the stage of diabetes, the doctor ordered reduction of sugar, including carbs such as rice. Some people (say) that in the past, people were not allowed to eat. At present, doctors earned us of certain food intakes [...] we should listen to the doctor [...]

### **(4) The budget for the SEA Games in Cambodia is not 40 but 120 M dollars**

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the efforts

of the Organizing Committee for the upcoming SEA Games in preparing and organizing this event. I asked the President of Laos (to join the ceremony). He will come. This Saturday, I went to Hanoi for a meeting between the two parties, and I invited the Vietnamese Prime Minister to fly for a while to attend the opening ceremony. We have been waiting for 64 years (to have this awesome sports event). He will check the time.

At least the President of Laos will pay an official visit and attend the SEA Games in Cambodia. When Laos hosted the SEA Games, I went to the SEA Games opening ceremony in Laos. We have put a lot of effort, and Samdech Pich Sena Tea Banh, HE Thong Khon, HE Vath Chamroeun are doing a good job on this. The project has taken not 40 million as planned but 120 million, regardless of the construction of the stadium to run the games.

### **(5) Let us improve the quality of hygiene for the SEA Games**

This morning, there was a Bayon TV report on a Cambodian athlete who is having his training in China. We have sent athletes for training in Japan and to other countries to prepare for the 2023 SEA Games in Cambodia. Hopefully, the bridge across the river here will be ready and put into operation for traffic during the SEA Games. We do well. Winning a medal is one thing, but to be a good host and to manage the event smoothly is another matter. That would include calling on the people of Phnom Penh and other cities where there will be competitions in the forthcoming 74 days to increase efforts for hygienic quality.

I think not only the cities where there are competitions (including) Phnom Penh, Kampot, Kep, Kampong Som and Siem Reap, but all over the country need to be hygienic because we not only welcome the athletes but also their fans. They could visit provinces other than the games venue [...]

### **(6) The SEA Games in Cam-**

### **bodia is a joint national event, not the CPP government**

Our sports training has been busy. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which governs sports, is taking care of training programs for the competition. Let our people join together for the pride of the nation. It is not the separate story of the Royal Government or the ruling People's Party, but the common story of the nation. Even political parties that are not in the Royal Government also have their shares. Some of them does not praise, however, but insult us. There are not many parties like that though. There are more parties that are celebrating the efforts of the athletes who will compete for the country.

### **(7) Calling on Cambodians abroad to visit Angkor Sankran and watch the SEA Games**

For security and order, we have had experience protecting ASEAN meetings and partners, the destination, hotels and other places. As far as the SEA Games event is concerned, if we look at how to protect participating athletes, it is not more difficult because we have a house for athletes to stay. The problem, however, is that there will be a lot of fans coming to this place. We can't stop him. Let them go wherever they wish but we have to work hard to keep the security for the athletes from all over the world, for the games and for the fans. Besides watching sports/games, fans may visit this or that place too [...]

I have called on overseas Cambodians to visit the country too. There will be two events – the Khmer New Year or Angkor Sankranta, and the other is to attend the SEA Games in Cambodia, [...] I have reserved appreciations for the leaders, the athletes, and commend the efforts of all the relevant teams in terms of security and funding, for their joint efforts leaving the preparation spotless for the Prime Minister to take care of. The Prime Minister, in response to the request of the Minister of

Economy and Finance, has instructed freezing some 30 million US dollars a year as we could not take out a big chunk in just one year [...]

### **(8) VOD story insulted and created distrusts in the Royal Government**

[...] Well, I should say a little so as to clarify an issue that some have insulted and divided the Cabinet. One thing we cannot tolerate is (the broadcast) that Hun Manet signed, on behalf of his father, to release funds to contribute to the humanitarian assistance for Turkey. This is not a separate attack on Hun Manet, but an insult to and a mistrust among the (royal) government [...] spending money is not a trivial matter [...] they have debated whether it is right or not right when my son did not know anything about it. Am I, on the one hand as the Prime Minister and on the other the father, to accept such insults? [...]

### **(9) In freedom of expression, ... do we fight with fake news?**

[...] As the world is currently battling fake news, any foreigner who would be to meet me and if the person raised with me (questions regarding VOD issue), I would briefly ask [...] do you or do you not consider the information that Hun Manet, my son signed on my behalf (to release assistance contribution for Turkey), when he has not, was a right of expression or an act of spreading fake information? If you agree that this is a right of expression, I do not need to talk to you. But if you admit that it is a fake information intention, let me clarify if we fight with fake information, right? [...]

### **(10) Will Women's Affairs and civil society organizations respond to the insults to the cases of my late sister-in-law and wife?**

[...] Some (in the opposition) insulted my wife, my family, even when I am in my bereft. (A social media person) Pheng Vannak spoke with a slight

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negative impression on women, some 40 organizations came out. I voiced a message (to) Lok Chumteav Ing Kuntha Phavi, (Minister of Women Affairs) and also posted a message to the 40 NGOs, if they have seen their cases as women? It is clear that these NGOs are formed to oppose the (Royal) Government and they did not take any action to protect the women. With a slight mistake in his speech, Pheng Vannak was forced to (sent a letter of apology) to the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Posts, Ministry of Culture. But while my sister was insulted in her death, and my wife was insulted, non one is out to protect them? [...]

**(11) Where does VOD radio get money from? The one who refuses to apologize is a foreigner**

I could have asked the Minister of Interior for a required report (to me) as to where did the shut-down radio (VOD) get the money from, if we need to audit to confirm (where) the money comes from? I did not go that far. We have the right to do so. (The Ministry of) Interior or the Anti-Corruption Unit can take actions to find out where the radio got its money from? Foreigner's money? You blamed me of using power. I will show you how I use power for you to see. If I were to not use power, you would still say that I am dictator using power, and so on. If I am to be labeled the power user leader, why should I not use power [...]

I asked for confirmation, but he refused to answer [...] I posted another message on Facebook reducing the time from 48 to 24 hours (to) apologize. I know who refuses to apologize.

It is a foreigner. There is a girl named Vicheka (saying that) "Samdech! they have used the word tolerance." she may have to remember that if the word "tolerance" is equivalent to an "apology," Samdech (Sangkharaja) Chuon Nath, (Khmer dictionary person)

could have removed the term apology a long time ago. (In sating so,) she also helped end the life of the (VOD) radio [...]

**(12) Shutting down (VOD) radio does not stop the press freedom in Cambodia**

I voiced a message to (Minister of Public Functions) Prum Sokha (on the case of recruiting former radio staff for government jobs) to take in only those who are in the payroll and not the contracted officials. If they can find other works, (like they said) climbing the palm trees or farming, they may do so and that would clearly show their nature of being in the opposition from the beginning to the end [...] do not hope that you can revive (the radio) by relying on this/that foreigner.

If it were possible, the party that has dissolved/died could return already [...] shutting down this radio would not stop the freedom of the press in Cambodia. It does not die. It strengthens, on the contrary, the journalism profession, the ethics of the press properly [...]

**(13) Foreigners may not intervene in VOD radio**

Foreigners should not be involved. Cambodia is not your country. Look at India. As a democratic power in Asia, they sent forces to raid the BBC (office in India). Now India still holds the position that they have taken right actions because (the BBC) has spread bad news about their Prime Minister. They did it. In our case, it was a good thing that I did not use my power to do such raid to find out what documents you have in that place? [...]

**(14) Not allowed to paint or insult the CPP without legal retaliation**

I would take this opportunity to talk a little about Som Dara (another opposition social media show person). You have had enough already. First, I am asking you for a haircut and mustache cut. It is disgusting [...] he has gone that far to level himself as an eagle and (Hun) Manet as a toad [...] in the CPP,

according to him, no one has the as far a vision or knowledgeable as Som Dara [...] (local political parties) inside the country are very good (about) competing in political programs. The CPP has stated its position that "as of now and to the future, no one is allowed to paint or insult the CPP without a legal response" [...] we do not degrade the political program of other political parties and you must not discredit the CPP's political program such as accusing my party of being a puppet party and a party that steals votes. The CPP must act legally [...]

**(15) More than 44 years of diplomatic career, give priority to meeting poor countries**

I apologize to the President of France (Emmanuel) Macron that today I need to speak about you because (what some of the French Cambodians spoke about me) is unfair. I am asking the French Ambassador to send this message to the President of France. The message has blamed me – and I quote – "Hun Sen started the new year choosing the Maldives, a small country to visit because of what? It is because no other countries would accept him. They detest Hun Sen. When Hun Sen was chairing ASEAN, Hun Sen went to meet this person/ that leader, and even to seek a meeting with the French president."

I would let the French come out and explain. I have been a diplomat for over 44 years, was the Minister of Foreign Affairs since the age of 27, and had been the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs since the age of 29, and have been the Prime Minister since the age of 32 – more than 44 years of diplomatic career. I am not used to meeting rich countries. I give priority to meeting poor countries [...]

**(16) Sen and Emanuel – reaching interpersonal and brotherly relationships**

Dear Cambodians of French nationality or those who are staying in France may want to be clear on this point. (Between

France and Cambodia, on) state relations, we have bilateral cooperation, but more importantly, we have worked together on security, regional and international issues that I cannot speak out [...] the French president gave me his phone number. *We promised to stop using the last name, which means I can call him Emmanuel because Macron is the last name, and he can call me Sen, not Hun Sen. We have a relationship [...] you think I went to meet the French President using the role of ASEAN chair.*

*(In diplomatic experience,) countries in the world, if they do not plan to meet you, they will never do [...] you should know that. Even though you tried to your death, they would not care. But I went beyond that. We have reached a stage of interpersonal and brotherly relationships. Macron calls me brother [...]*

**(17) Emanuel to Sen – should stay one another 3 to 4 years as a partner**

[...] I have never used my relationship with the President of France through text messages as the superior to show others [...] I can tell you that (we have discussed) bilateral relations and cooperation on regional and international issues related to peace [...] *I brought up the relationship between Hun Sen and Emmanuel Macron to enlighten some people [...] I show respect for the personal role of His Excellency the President of France, who has done a good job in dealing with international issues.*

*At the same time, he also respected the role of Cambodia and said to me from his mouth that "His Excellency still has the strength and should stay one (as the Prime Minister) for another 3 to 4 years as a partner [...] what a reversal thought to have say I use the role as ASEAN chair to visit France. Only France can confirm this. But sometimes the French side understands that there is no need to answer to this gangsters' group [...]* ■