

## Phnom Penh—Bavet Expressway

(07 June 2023 — Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)



### (1) The ASEAN Highway Ho Chi Minh/Phnom Penh/Bangkok becomes a reality

Seeing the importance of the expressway, we started negotiations with our Chinese friend, the Chinese Road and Bridge Corporation, which has implemented the Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville Expressway project, to study the expressway

project of connecting Phnom Penh with Bavet town, linking up with the expressway in Vietnam. We worked with Vietnamese friends who also build an expressway from Ho Chi Minh City to connect with us. This can be an important connection. This is part of the realization of the ASEAN Highway project, which was previously only an initiative without fund to implement. Now, through the participation of the Cambodian private sector, the ASEAN Highway between Cambodia and Vietnam or Ho Chi Minh City – Phnom Penh – Bangkok has become a reality [...]

### (2) The original investment project is 1,700 million dollars, including the Mekong River Bridge

The original project investment cost, which also included the cost of building the bridge across the Lower Mekong River, was up to 1.7 billion dollars [...] it requires that people have to pay money when they cross the river. I told HE Sun Chanthol to find way to avoid taking money from people on crossing the bridge or for the company to increase the price (for use of the 135 km (expressway). The

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## Cambodia's RAJ Graduation

(06 June 2022 — Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

### (1) Training of human resources in the field of justice – judges, clerks, bailiffs, public notaries

(The Royal Academy of Justice of Cambodia – RAJC) has to move from the Royal School of Administration and relocate to this place. If we leave RAJC with the Royal School of Administration (RSA), it is clear that efforts to train human resources for justice and the judiciary will not be possible. Therefore, we have started to lay the groundwork for human resource training. We are now inaugurating *two buildings that can address (the current needs), although it is not enough at the*

*moment, but at least it can provide training of human resources in the field of justice for judges, clerks, bailiffs, public notaries as we are going along with the reforms [...]*

### (2) After the overthrow of the genocidal regime of Pol Pot, the justice sector was reor-

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## On the Road to Overthrow Pol Pot's Regime

(20 June 2023 - Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

### (1) Propose to study with a lawyer on the establishment of military history law

I would like to address the five requests of Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh. In principle, I agree, but the third point regarding the proposed law on military history, I suggest studying with lawyers to see if we can get on with it. Issuing a sub-decree on the establishment of military historical sites is possible. Request for the construction of the win-win monument – should any provinces wishes to, we can do it and each province should do it because it is going to be a place where people can rest and relax, more importantly, it is not too expensive. We can do it. (It will be) a place where people can exercise and bring their children to relax [...]

### (2) Organize the military history zone 1, zone 2; study from beginning to end about military history

The organization of military historical sites in Zone 1 and

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## Activities and Outcomes of RGC Working Groups

(19 June 2023 - Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

### (1) Deployment of field officers has been carried out since 1982

As some of you may remember, we had deployed officials (to the local levels) since 1982. If I am not mistaken, then I was at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and we sent officials, sometimes to work as deputy district governors or district chiefs at the time.

Even among us diplomats, before being sent for diplomacy mission abroad, they had to go work at the grassroots.

I can say that the practice of devolving power to the grassroots has been done since the early stage, but it was interrupt-

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## RULE's Graduation

(05 June 2023 - Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

### (1) Human resource development reaches a point of pride

[...] We have focused on training human resources as a priority for the sake of responding to our effort to build the country. I have stated that we started with "those who know more, teach those who know less, and those who know less, teach those who do not know." Gradually, *our national movement has pushed the need for human resource development to a point we should be proud of.* Although there is still a lot of demand, but we have trotted

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toll fee was still too high. It is too expensive for anyone to use that road. People would continue to use the national road No. 1 [...] and finally we decided to build the bridge ourselves. The Royal Government has invested 232,588,000 USD to build this bridge to solve the problem (of adding toll fees on) the people [...] here we have two parts – one part is the company's project of investment – which mean they build the expressway and charge toll fees. The Royal Government pays for the construction of bridge (across the Mekong) for people to cross free of charge [...]

**(3) If the Chinese friend deems necessary to help, will not be hostile to financial assistance**

[...] Would be great if China could give more help, including for the bridges. If President Xi Jinping deems it necessary to do so, USD 50 million or USD 100 million would be awesome. I am not hostile to financial help. I asked for help to build things for the people [...] the Royal Government of Cambodia [...] will start freezing the budget of USD 132 million in 2024 and another USD 102 million in 2025 – making a total of (more than) 232 million dollars [...] we will do that in 2 years. We have prepared a budget for approval [...] should the bridge complete first, it would be better for our people to use it. Should the road complete first, and the bridge is not completed yet, the investors would lose [...] His Excellency Li Keqiang, the former Chinese Prime Minister, said that in China, incomes from highways are used for small roads construction and maintenance [...]

**(4) The Belt and Road Initiative benefits as grants, loans, investments**

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the One Belt One Road Initiative and the 65th anniversary of Cambodia-China relations. On June 22, at the Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone, along with His Excellency Wang Wentian, I held a

ceremony to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative. Cambodia is a beneficiary of the Belt and Road Initiative, initiated by President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China, with 153 countries. Cambodia benefits from this belt and road initiative through grants, loans for infrastructure construction, and investment of large projects. Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone is becoming the largest economic zone and attracting large investors [...]

**(5) China not only respect Cambodia's sovereignty, but also Cambodia's decisions**

Overall, the development in Cambodia has been very fruitful. As HE Wang Wentian said, Cambodia does not hesitate to support the Belt and Road Initiative (seeing its significant role) for development, and it neither makes any country an enemy nor stops any country from developing. It has benefited us [...] as the Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia, His Excellency Wang Wentian is very busy [...] why? You see, this is how Cambodia develops [...] the Chinese side will not be disappointed [...] *we are working always in consultation. The Chinese friends respect Cambodia's request [...] that's why we work fast together. With others, if we want this one bridge, they wanted that other bridge. If we do not follow their wishes, they do not give us money [...] I give high appreciation and respect to our Chinese friends who respect not only Cambodia's sovereignty, but also Cambodia's decisions*, including those on development projects [...]

**(6) Never ever exceed the debt ceiling**

We know very well which roads are to build first, which are to build later, because our budget is limited. *We set a debt ceiling each year of how much to borrow. We are never ever to exceed the ceiling [...] the Chinese friend give us the chance to submit our plan annually. Sometimes we had to change priority of the projects submitted. China followed our re-*

*quests. This is a good point [...] two Ministers of Economy and Finance [...] know how to save money. (Thanks to their efforts) we dare take USD 232 million to build this bridge [...] we had to save money for investment [...] without the counterpart fund, even they are projects provided grant by friends, or loans, it would not be possible to start [...] for instance, I shared the news on incomes – like in March, if I am not mistaken, of 1 billion USD in the message with members of the Cabinet. I added in the message that – “Despite rising incomes, global economic health is not good. Our income tends to stagnate or decrease. Please do not see that money and make plan to spend it wastefully” [...]*

**(7) Unopulent but generous in hosting SEA Games and Para Games**

Should the Chinese friends not provide the USD 150 million (Morodok Techo) stadium we would have difficulty in finding a place to open and close (Sea Games and ASEAN Para Games) [...] *we do not aim at the medal issue as a priority. We aim at achieving friendly and safety games, and welcoming guests as a big goal.* I thank the Organizing Committee, the Heads of State and Government of ASEAN and Timor-Leste for sending more than 10,000 athletes to Cambodia for the SEA Games event. As of now, more than 2,000 Para Games disabled athletes are competing in Cambodia. *Cambodia has taken care of welfare and the facilities [...] to make sure that the accommodation for contestants will be successful. We waived the payment obligation for the competition [...] Cambodia is an unopulent country, but it is generous. We maybe poor in money, but our minds are not. Cambodia is small but has a generous heart [...] the closing ceremony will be held on June 9. Once all the guests left, it is considered a success for us [...]*

**(8) Hun Sen's concept – an ASEAN football team, hosting World Cup or Olympics**

I have said it already that mon-

ey can be spent, but the honor, prestige, and dignity of the nation will last for generations to come. *Let it be known as the Hun Sen's style [...] Hun Sen has a different point of view. We want to strengthen the unity among the more than 600 million ASEAN people through sports, traditional sports and sports for the disabled. We wanted closer people-to-people contacts through sports [...] I imagine that one day ASEAN will have a football team [...] China has 1.4 billion people. ASEAN has 600 million people. We can find the best 11 for the match. Cambodia may send two or one to the imagined ASEAN team [...] for the time to come, we can bid for hosting the World Cup or even the Olympics.* That is the concept for the future. Starting from Cambodia as a model. I hope that countries will join Cambodia's thinking [...]

**(9) Should the convict enter Vietnam, please implement the extradition agreement**

Let me confirm with the Vietnamese Ambassador to beware of (someone as a convicted person) using a French passport (to enter Vietnam). I have clearly received (information that) someone has had meal with that person [...] I am informing the Ambassador (of Vietnam) officially and openly. His (the convicted person's) plan to get in to Malaysia (had been asked) to leave. He also plans to come to Thailand. He (the convicted person) plans to enter Vietnam by using a French passport as a tourist. If he does enter, I would like (Vietnam) to arrest the person for me because (this person) has an arrest warrant. We have extradition with each other, have we not? It is a legal cooperation. If bad people as such comes (to your country), please catch him for me [...]

**(10) BM21 for warmongers and rebellion instigators**

They quickly blamed me for (threatening to) shoot BM21. How about you announced in 2019 that you would come and arrest the Prime Minister and

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away from the point where we set out after the liberation in 1979 [...]

**(2) Develop both hardware and software to stimulate economic growth and attract foreign investments**

Peace has borne fruits for us to develop (the country) in all areas. *We are working to achieve development both hardware and software.* Looking at hardware, what has been happening in our country, we have tried to address the needs of people such as infrastructure, transportation, bridges, roads or other areas related to economic growth, agriculture, canals or electricity, and other sectors to develop and attract foreign investment [...] as for software preparation, we prepared and adopted legal documents and relevant laws each year and went through stage after stage [...]

**(3) The private sector participates in training human resources and public universities provide fees paying program**

I am affirming that my decision (for the private sector to invest in human resource training) is correct. *There are two main points. Firstly, we have opened up opportunities for the private sector to invest in human resource training. That is why (we see) dozens of private educational institutions. In addition to providing opportunities for the private sector, we also provide opportunities for public universities, to offer fees paying programs [...] through which each university, including this university, has the budget to build better buildings that form the basis for further training of human resources [...]*

**(4) The role of women in the economy ... depending on the husband's salary culture is changing**

I am proud (on this change in culture that women used to depend on their husbands' income alone) because at one of the meetings of young entrepreneurs, I observed and learnt that

women play a very important role in the economy. It is part of the responsibility in the family society. The habit of having a husband and relying on husband's income has changed. Women also have a salary. *Do not underestimate them. It is true that in the past there was a culture of dependence on the husband. Now the culture (in the relationship between men and women) is not like that anymore [...]*

**(5) The Royal Government pays for the training of 1.5 million poor youngsters**

Both formal and informal systems, women play a very important role. Let us focus on further motivating women to receive training. If they cannot receive training in the formal system, they have to have received training in the informal system. *The Royal Government will provide money to train 1.5 million poor people in the near future.* It is clear that many in the informal economy will be enrolled in the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training, as well as other relevant institutions, including the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, to have training in ancestral skills [...]

**(6) Despite the epidemic, Cambodia will reach high-middle income level by 2030**

[...] *Our country is moving forward [...] towards leaving (the status as) a least developed country. That could be happening in 2027. The country is on track to become a high (-middle) income country [...] according to the economic forecast, this can be achieved by 2030, even if the epidemic occurred in the country and in the world [...]* geopolitics becomes a hot topic [...] not just the war between Russia and Ukraine. Asia is a dangerous destination now with some countries announcing they will send ships closer in to Southeast Asia to the South China Sea [...]

**(7) US-British-Australian alliance is putting arms race at risk**

In addition, the *alliance on the use of nuclear submarines be-*

*tween the United States, Britain and Australia is becoming a concern of ASEAN and countries in the region.* ASEAN has its own uniqueness – (the declaration of the region) a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We oppose the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Even if there is no such risk, it is the starting point of a dangerous arms race. I understand that if this situation continues, the world will be in greater danger [...]

**(8) We must prevent armed conflict**

We remain hopeful that the world will find a compromise to manage relations, especially tensions between the United States and China. We need to find a way to manage this relationship. We must avoid the recurrence (of the Cold War). *Though the Cold War may have already taken place, let us prevent it from becoming a risk of war starting from any armed conflict.* NATO used to be in the West. Now NATO seems to be heading towards the Asia-Pacific area, under this/that form. It is a concern [...]

**(9) Could leave less developed status in 2027 ... be a high middle income in 2030**

Despite the challenges of climate change, epidemics and geopolitical uncertainty, I firmly believe that *Cambodia would leave the least developed countries status by 2027 at the latest and continue to reach its goals of being one of the high-middle-income countries by 2030,* as set out as the goal of sustainable development. The economic growth that we have been experiencing at present gives us the opportunity to reach that goal. But this does not depend on the efforts of the Royal Government alone. All stakeholders have a role to play [...]

**(10) Myanmar could be slipping into civil war**

Maintaining peace and political stability has a role to play. Without peace and political stability, do not talk about development. Look if they can talk about development in Ukraine? *In Myanmar, the situation is different.*

*In the past, the five points consensus was just about preventing violence, establishing dialogue, providing humanitarian assistance and finding solutions through negotiations. Now Myanmar could be slowly slipping towards a bigger civil war.* At the last ASEAN meeting, I said that we should update on this issue [...]

**(11) The Cambodian-win-win policy not applicable in Myanmar**

In some places, there have been more attacks. As the central administration struggles in national conflict, smaller states are consolidating their potential for independence. This is the point I see from watching in a distance on the situation in Myanmar. That war will last a long time. The story of Myanmar is as complicated as that of Cambodia before. It was fortunate for Cambodia. We moved out of the war through win-win politics. However, *the Cambodian-win-win policy is not certain to be applicable in Myanmar. To be honest, we are proud (of the peace we realized) and we have to walk together towards the goal we want to go to and already set [...]*

**(12) Hosting SEA Games and Para Games fulfill Cambodia's responsibilities as a member of ASEAN**

I think that by hosting the SEA Games and the Para Games, we have contributed to the role of ASEAN as a responsible member in strengthening people-to-people contacts and contributing to the strengthening of sports. We are not just performing host for the 17 million people. We have a responsibility to coordinate and strengthen relationships among ASEAN's more than 600 million people. Some people say that we spend money wastefully. Why spend on the games and not something else? [...]

Let me emphasize that the SEA Games is the duty of ASEAN members [...] for the first time in the history of the SEA

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### organized in stages

At the moment, the Minister of Justice, HE Keut Rith, has made a report to the ceremony. You can understand what has been happening in our country within the framework of justice. I should remind you a little bit because some students, when the justice reform started, were not yet born. That is why the elders need to tell some stories. *How is Cambodia's justice sector (organized from the beginning)? Not to mention the justice sector in Cambodia, everything was dead – religions, traditions [...] to be revived only after we overthrew the genocidal regime of Pol Pot. The judiciary was then reorganized in stages. I recall two important things related to the beginnings in judicial reform efforts [...]*

### (3) The President of the Court appointed by the Council of Ministers and a member of

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Games and the ASEAN Para Games, Cambodia did not charge for all accommodation, food and media fees. I confirm here that money can all be spent, but reputation will be there to stay. The reputation of Cambodia hosting the 2023 SEA Games and Para Games will be left for our descendants for hundreds of years to come [...]

### (13) Ensuring the unity of 600 million ASEAN people is the goal

No matter at what rank Cambodia may rank, winning and losing, the big thing for Cambodia is to organize a competition that guarantees unity for the 600 million people of ASEAN. We must take good care of players from different countries. We must pay more attention since they are athletes with disability of (some form) from other countries. We need to take care of them thoroughly [...] whether we win or do not win (any medals), children, do not be discouraged. Sports always end with winning and losing. The

### the inspection team

What are those two things? *Firstly, at that time, the presidents of the Phnom Penh and provincial courts, as well as the prosecutors of the courts, were appointed by the Prime Minister or the President of the Council of Ministers. Secondly, when inspecting cases, there was always including the President of the Court as a member (of the case inspection team) [...]* after becoming the Prime Minister, I started to rearrange for the President of the Court (capital and provincial) and the Prosecutor General of the Court to be appointed by the State Council through the requests of the Minister of Justice [...] in those days we did not call them the royal prosecutors as we do now. We called them state court prosecutors because the country was not a monarchy yet [...]

### (4) As the third person holding position of the President of the Council of Ministers, de-

important thing is to do well as a host, representing the 17 million people behind it [...] hosting with responsibility (must have) the ethics as the athlete and the good services must be provided [...]

### (14) ASEAN can jointly bid to host the Olympics or World Cup

[...] Hosting responsibly is part of promoting the strengthening of sports within the ASEAN framework. I said at the opening ceremony (of the ASEAN Para Games), "I imagine that ASEAN can bid together to host the Olympics and to bid together to host the World Cup." We can do it together [...] speaking of ASEAN territory it is smaller than that of Canada, smaller than Russia, smaller than China even, (so) we can arrange for the competitions [...]

### (15) How about an ASEAN football team

I (once) shared an opinion with the ASEAN heads of state and government that we should have an ASEAN football team.

### prived power to appoint the President of the Court and the Prosecutor seconded to the Court of First Instance

I vividly remember the necessity of that time. *Appointed the President of the Council of Ministers, I immediately relinquished the rights (to appoint the President of the court and state prosecutors), that two (people) held the post before me. To me, as the third person in the position of the President of the Council of Ministers, I revoked the authority to sign the appointment of the President of the Court and the Prosecutor of the Court of First Instance.* Having done that, we have opened a procedure for the Minister of Justice to propose the candidates and the President of the State Council to approve. As the executive power, the Council of Ministers was actually the government. The president of the Council of State then was Samdech Heng Samrin [...]

We now have 11 countries. Each country member may dispatch two of their footballers to create an ASEAN team for competition with other teams [...] we can have an ASEAN football team. As we are members of ASEAN, we need to think about the future of ASEAN [...]

### Meas Soksophea apologized to the public and removed the controversial song from social media

I thank Meas Soksophea – the singer – for posting a message apologizing to the public last night for the unintentional mistake. I thank you – daughter – for deleting them on Facebook and on YouTube. I call on social media players to stop [...] making the situation worse. I already checked Meas Soksophea's Facebook [...] she even linked the posting of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (regarding the controversial song) [...] I do not try to make any more comments [...] Meas Soksophea apologized and removed from Facebook and YouTube already [...] ■

### (5) As the third person in the position of President of the Council of Ministers, removed the composition of the President of the Court from the inspection team

Also, when there was a need for an inspection somewhere, there was always a court president (in the composition of the inspection team) that they brought to me for signature. *I begged (the preparing group) to remove the president of the court from the list. The reason I gave them was if you included the President of the Court in the inspecting team, s/he was already inspecting it, and if the case was brought to court, how could he make decision? [...]* therefore, the President of the court must be removed (from inspection team) [...]

### (6) Establishment of the Court of Appeal during the UNTAC transition period

Initially, our court has only two levels – the court of first instance and the Supreme Court. *We have adjusted and coordinated with UNTAC. We established the Court of Appeal in the UNTAC era.* This is also part of the international involvement in the establishment of the Court of Appeal. We then set up an appeals court during the UNTAC transition phase. If I remember it correctly [...] we have been building the judicial system gradually. Sometimes there were stacks and stacks of cases waiting to hear because we have no courtroom. At one time, I was calling for consideration of hiring hotels as courtrooms [...]

### (7) Judicial reform commencing in the third legislative term

Even there is a courtroom, but if there are no judges, not enough human resources, what could we do? *It is necessary that in the third (legislative) term, we put in place the judicial reform. At that time, we introduced public administration reform, in general, judicial and legal reforms, public administration reform, armed force reform,*

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and public financial reform. I have said in a way from the beginning that if we carry out reforms, it is 99% we will survive. If we do not reform, it is 99% we will die. Let us not stand still. Keep up with the situation. Our judiciary still need to be further reformed [...]

### **(8) There is a need to provide more frameworks for the judiciary**

We have jointly initiated the establishment of regional appeal courts. If no regional appeals court is established, there will be more cases congested at the Phnom Penh Court of Appeal. Therefore, we established regional appeal courts to facilitate the provision of justice services to the people [...] the increase of regional appeal courts (also called) for more legal and judicial human resources [...] *it is in this development that I understand that there is a need to provide an additional framework to the judiciary regarding the conduct of tribunals, both regional and appellate courts, and including the Supreme Court. Our judges are now in their old ages too [...]*

### **(9) Ministries have their own training schools ... friends contribute to the judicial reform**

[...] I am glad to see that each ministry strives to train human resources to serve its sector – they are the Ministry of Public Works [...] Post and Telecommunication [...] Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy [...] Agriculture [...] Finance and now Justice – all have training schools. Without training human resources, we can do nothing. I thank our foreign friends, especially Japan, for contributing to the judicial reform in Cambodia [...] I am thankful that Japan helped build a civil code for Cambodia. Now Japan proceeds to help train judicial students in the civil procedural codes. All of this assistance has contributed to strengthening the rule of law and law enforcement in Cambodia [...]

### **(10) Majority of Cambodians will grow older and the num-**

### **ber of young people will be small**

Usually there is a forum between the Prime Minister and the Royal Government with partnering organizations – the United Nations Agencies in Cambodia, facilitated by UNDP. The forum was interrupted by the Covid-19. When Covid-19 is under control, we have been able to call for it. The partner organizations raised their concerns for the future that – *“more in the Cambodian population will grow older, and the number of young people will be small” [...] I replied – “if this is the case, Cambodia should strengthen its traditional culture.”* What are the Cambodian traditional customs and culture? Older parents and grandparents are not sent to retirement homes [...] we need to strengthen our customs and traditions of giving respect for elders. In Buddhist teaching, as the Buddhist monks always shared, including the teaching of Kram Ngoy and Bundit Ou Chong – the Cambodians are taught to never forget about their Gods in the house [...]

### **(11) Trial by virtue, rich or poor receive the same justice**

Encourage mediation outside the judiciary, with the participation of the judiciary, non-profit lawyers, and local authorities at all levels and relevant institutions ... that is the way to solve problems in society. And avoid the challenges that will arise in the event that any grievances occur, what is important is virtue. How to make an impartial trial and research thoroughly. Of course, do not let people say that only the rich win all cases. Don't have that language. Whoever is rich or poor must receive the same justice. Some people just see that the rich know, but the rich are wrong. Some people think that only the poor think all right...

### **(12) Trial by virtue, rich or poor receive the same justice**

I encourage mediation outside the judiciary system, though with the participation of the judiciary, non-profit lawyers, and local authorities at all levels

and relevant institutions [...] that is the way to solve problems in society and avoid the controversial challenges [...] in the event of a legal case, what matters is virtue. Efforts must be made to ensure an impartial trial. There must be a thorough research. It is true that we must not let people say that only the rich win all cases. Don't let that language come out. Whoever it is – poor or rich – must receive the same justice. Some people just see that the rich are always wrong. Some people think that only the poor have good thinking [...]

### **(13) Rich or poor – stop deforestation immediately**

[...] I sent a voicemail message to the provinces already [...] as long as the election season arrives, there will always be encroachment on state land and seizure of land [...] there has been logging activities in Pursat province [...] the governor told me about it [...] some provinces provided information that [...] *there has been deforestation and logging groups [...] when are take action, they make footages to destroy us during the election campaign [...] whoever, no matter poor or rich, (I demand them to) stop immediately. This is the land of the state, the forest of the nation.* In the past, in one night, they mobilized to build 500 houses. If we dismantle them, they will record and propagandize that the CPP violates the law to demolish the houses of the poor [...]

### **(14) Sending deforesters/land encroachers to jail – no need for their votes**

Officials, if involved in this matter, cannot be left within the state framework or the military framework or the police framework, or generally speaking, the framework that receives state salaries, even the court officials [...] *as soon as the election is near, (those crooked always think that) the Royal government will not do anything [...] because they needed their votes. This time, that will not be the case. Send them to jail before*

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I am figuring out now who will go to which province. After the election, we will be re-organizing (the RGC working groups) because some may continue, and some may not continue.

Even if some in the previous government teams continue, we still have to organize new teams, making sure that members of the Royal Government will continue to go to the local levels.

This is to connect with the whole process of the nation, especially to connect with the grassroots to promote the implementation (of political platform and strategy of the Royal Government of the 7th legislature of the National Assembly) [...]

### **(5) Pentagonal Strategy – collect elements of rectangular and add new elements**

In the future, the rectangular strategy that has been implemented in four stages will be changed to a pentagonal strategy with five angles, not four angles. We started by implementing a triangular strategy, then we implemented the first, second, third, and fourth rectangular strategies [...] we are developing a pentagonal strategy, in which the elements of the rectangular strategy are recomposed and one more angle of new items is inserted [...]

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had the army turn their cannon on the Royal Government? That were the reasons that I had to use BM21. You yourself said it. You have not taken your words out yet. If you do not take that word away, I would still talk about using the BM21. That was my last resort. You came in to make war [...] why did Mr. Hun Sen talk about using BM21? The reason is you threaten to stage a coup, you came to make a war, you came to arrest Hun Sen, and you called for the armed forces to shoot Hun Sen. If it is so, you are coming to make war, is it not? If you come to make war, you are to be destroyed [...]

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Zone 2 is also possible. We can study a little more broadly. Our country's military situation is not just about fighting the Khmer Rouge. The military history of our country began after the coup of March 18, 1970. Should we expand the study to cover the whole aspect of the war? All of this leaves the possibility for the Commission to continue. We want to talk from beginning to end about the military situation in Cambodia, and the history of the emergence of the armed forces, which is the core of the current force, that began on May 12, 1978, which this year marks the 45th anniversary. All points require agreement with all studies. (Historic) framework (of the Armed Forces in) our country is rarely a match to others. Cambodia was a country with a many control areas and different armed forces, after which we have united them [...]

### **(3) Should I not get out to find a way to liberate the nation, what would happen?**

The question to ask is, if I did not decide to do this (escape to Vietnam to organize forces to fight the genocide) then what would happen next? [...] I can only confirm two points. First, if I did not decide to do so – (revolting, escaping, organizing forces against the Pol Pot regime), I do not know what will happen next, because I could have been really dead. We cannot ask for survival or for the rights and freedoms from the Khmer Rouge's Pol Pot. I have no way of knowing whether everything that I have told you about was going to happen or not? Or whether there was going to be another Hun Sen characters? [...] secondly, I can say that from June 20, 1977 to the present, I have been present in every event, big or small. I have been in all (national) events [...]

### **(4) The answer of the commander at Koh Samraong/Koh Chrouk, September 1974, raised suspicions**

I began to have doubts about the Khmer Rouge (ideology and policy) in September 1974. The suspicion arose when my forces

were sent to defend Koh Samraong in the upper part (of the city) of Kampong Cham. I brought my concern to the commander (regarding the shelling from the Lon Nol force that caused destruction to the people's houses). His answer took me by surprise and cast doubt (about the regime's intentions). He replied to me, "well, that is a good thing. After the liberation, there will be no rich, no poor, no big house, no small house." I was thinking, what would happen? [...] I have doubts whether this is a mistake which comes from upper or lower class [...] we were all hostages of war. We cannot go anywhere. At that time, in Cambodia as a whole, everyone was the hostage of the war [...]

### **(5) September 1975 – started a weak network at P2 Hospital**

We have no third choice. We began to suspect the name 870 or the number 870. We also had doubts about who Pol was [...] I had my eyes operated in September 1975. At that time, I was in putting together the secret forces at P2 Hospital (among those who) were in the hospital together. Some of my friends who used to be soldiers in the same place and all of them are close friends went to the hospital together. We could organize but not yet a strong network [...] I have 4 options. First, I might use the military force at hand. This regiment had more than 2,000 men and was very strong. From that generation, it was said that good forces were mostly in the district armies. The regional forces were well armed, but the soldiers were not so good. The second option was to withdraw and reorganize the resistance. The third option was to do nothing, and let the Khmer Rouge do whatever they wanted. The fourth option is to commit suicide. Eventually I took the second option – leaving [...]

### **(6) The decision to leave made at Wat Tambe while studying politics on June 18, 1977**

The decision to leave (the regime to organize struggle) was made at Wat Tambe when I

went to a political course on June 18, 1977 [...] the person who taught the course was the present day HE Ouk Bun Chhoeun. Let me address His Excellency Ouk Bun Chhoeun by name because the movie has been released too. Those who asked the question who was the one asking (me) "if I have the ability to build my wife to become a proletariat – a working class?" It is the present His Excellency Ouk Bun Chhoeun. It's time to reveal [...] someone asked, "whether he was dead or is still alive?" I said, "he lives and I let him (work) in the time of the People's Republic of Kampuchea and the State of Cambodia. I had him as the Minister of Justice. Now he is the chairman of the National Assembly's legislative committee."

### **(7) Was there a connection between the question on the wedding day to my wife's labor in the field**

In the film, I only addressed him the deputy district chief, but the real character is HE Ouk Bun Chhoeun [...] I got married on January 5. On the 6th (of January), we left and on January 08 we arrived at my work place. On the 12th (of January), my wife was separated from me. A medical staff, she had to work on rice field levees. Is this a response to the question, "can comrade build your wife into a working class?" I had the taste of separation from my parents, grandparents, siblings, and on January 12, 1976, the separation from the newly married wife. I kept wondering if there was a connection between the question on the wedding day and the way they discipline my wife [...]

### **(8) Those rebelled before 25 May 1978 were regarded traitors to the revolution**

The day before, HE Ouk Bun Chhoeun attended the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the Cambodian National Salvation Army. I did not know he was there. I was talking up to the year 1978 after the Eastern Zone uprising. The Eastern Zone rebelled and fled to take refuge in the areas that my force

occupied – Memot and Snuol districts, especially Memot district. Until then, *I was still defined as a traitor to the revolution. They regarded insurgents by May 25, 1978 as patriots or revolutionary. As for those who escaped before that date were regarded as traitors [...] as for the historical factors that existed in the past – the story of Viet Minh or Issara force, I had no idea. I was very young. But what I was sure of was that in the 1970s, responding to the appeal of the Kampuchean National United Front, the Vietnamese army came together to attack the Americans, the South Vietnamese and Lon Nol soldiers [...] where could I go? Thailand, Laos, Vietnam? [...]*

### **(9) Memories of events from 1977 to 2005 go public in ten years**

I said that (the cause of national liberation) came to me when I had my eye surgery in September 1975. Although my network was small and some were captured, I did not become a murderer. I recognized myself as an aggressive person, but when it came to political decision, I am the most serious person [...] *we cannot talk about the past and go to the past to change it. It is a matter of whether we dare to reveal those pasts or not? This book (- the transcript of my audio notes would probably take about 10 years) to release [...]* I recorded my memories of events from 1977 until 2005, which included additional constitutional issues of package elections, what had happened? It is not yet time to publish this book [...]

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*the election. No need for their votes. Let us do it this way. What has been the issue here is that some authorities have seen but refused take actions. That is the reason why I sent out the message [...] we are working for democracy and the rule of law. Democracy without the rule of law is anarchy. Just thinking about enforcing the law without opening up freedom is dictatorial. democracy and the rule of law must go hand in hand [...]* ■

# Inaugurating Buildings of School of Justice

(26 June 2023 — Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

## (1) Court of Appeal was established in connection with the presence of UNTAC

At this point, I should also point out that the *Court of Appeal* was established in connection with the presence of UNTAC. Previously, we only had the court of first instance and the Supreme Court. The other day, at the inauguration of the Judicial Vocational Training School, I also confirmed that UNTAC requested that we set up this Court of Appeal. That is why there are three levels of courts.

## (2) The trial process was slow due to the lack of court rooms, judges and lawyers

We should recall the past a bit. Many times that there were cases that did not go into trial. This situation requires the Royal Government to help. Not to help the trial, but to speed up the congestion of the case. At that time, the court informed the Royal Government that there was only one or few court-rooms. I said, if so, let us rent a hotel room to hold a hearing. At that time, Ang Vong Vathana (was the Minister of Justice). There was a case that I received from Stung Treng. According to the law, the person in case was tried to serve a two years imprisonment. However, the said person had been detained for up to four years without trial [...] there had been many issues [...]

## (3) Strengthen the judiciary at all levels and increase the number of judges to ensure a timely trial

Not only that justice was not found, but also it was unfair to the defendants. When it comes to the trial, how do you repay them if the law required him to be imprisoned for only 12 months, but he had been detained for 36 months already. So how to repay that? To give the person longer sentence, it would be against the law. To give the person the sentence the law says, he had been detained 24 months more than the law

required already [...] how do we solve that problem? [...] our judges need to do a lot of works. I do not think it will be the same as it used to be when our judiciary at all levels has strengthened, including by increasing the number of judges in the judiciary and by increasing the number of regional appeals courts [...]

## (4) Use all possible mediation rather than trial in all civil cases

His Excellency Keut Rith made a report just now. I would like to read it again – “*conflict resolution through mediation is allowed both in the judiciary and outside the judiciary. According to the Cambodian Code of Civil Procedure, judges can mediate and mediate between the parties to end the civil dispute in the case, and this mediation can be done at any stage of court proceedings. Reconciliation by a court is of strong legal value because the record of a settlement resulting from a conciliation settlement by a judge is just as effective as a final judgment, and a successful settlement of a dispute by a judge will help resolve disputes quickly and be acceptable to all parties.*” It is very important in this point. *I encourage all judges to use all possible means of mediation rather than trial. This can be done in all civil cases.*

## (5) In order to ensure peace and political stability, the Royal Government, through the Ministry of Justice, must control policy on crimes

(The) criminal case is a different story (from the civil case). Our judges find it difficult and are incapable of mediating because criminality is a different matter. As a representative of the Royal Government in the Supreme Council of the Magistracy, the Ministry of Justice needs to maintain a strong policy regarding crimes, especially in times that the country is threatened by

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ed by those who intended to destroy (the process) [...] they wanted to kill the local level foundation because they knew that it is the foundation of the CPP.

After the 1993 election, they intended to weaken the local access (of the CPP) [...] one province (was limited to a sum of) only 1 million Riel per month [...] if at that time they followed what the former State of Cambodia did, the pace of sub-national democratic reforms would have been many times faster [...] we have given more power – empowering both the army and the police and we called it a unified command. Sending officials to help work at the local level is not new.

For the party, we have always done (that all a long) [...] I observed that when the officials from the central level went to offer help, it did not eliminate the responsibility of the locals. Instead, they work together to solve problems [...]

## (2) Amendments to the election law to protect the entire electoral process

We have amended the (election) law to this day, not only to reform the candidates to run for the election, but we must take measures to protect the entire electoral process [...] so that no one destroys democracy in your country [...] they are confused now about what will happen next. We must act intolerantly against anyone who intends to undermine the practice of democracy in Cambodia [...] the amendments will come into force [...] we also want to know where the strong heads would come from to boycott the election.

We call on you to boycott (because it) is tantamount to killing your political rights [...] if you do not vote on July 23, you will lose your right to vote in 2028. Even if you went to the polls in 2027 for the commune election. Conditions in the draft law for standing for election to the National Assembly require the candidates to vote twice [...] in that case, if you did not vote this time, (and you are going to) vote in 2027 (of the commune/Sangkat council election) and in 2028 (general election) to be eligible to stand your candidacies in 2032, you should be reminded that you are now in your 70s [...]

## (3) The policy of “where there is Si, there will not be Sen” from 2003 has come to there is only “Sen”

(They have issued and pursued) this politics of “where there is Si, there will not be Sen or versa.” It has been twenty years now from 2003 [...] it is right now that there is only Sen. That is what you have said it yourself [...] (having gone through such policy) no pardon will be given. If the next generation comes (to power), they will not forgive him either. There is no way that they can enter the country forever. The latest situation has made it even worse [...] they all are over 70 years old. How many 5 years left for them? They have no successor. Compared to the CPP youth, there are hundreds or thousands of successors in turn. As for them, how many would be in succession?

## (4) From July 27, continue to visit workers 10 more times

After the election, the Royal Government would be out of office once the new government was sworn in [...] this morning, I announced this to the election campaign, I am going to be active. I only suspended my actions only from the campaign day until the election day on July 23.

From July 27, I have to continue to meet with workers 10 more times [...] after the Royal Government of the 7th legislature of the National Assembly took office (we) will review and adjust the composition of the Royal Government working group to help the capital and provinces to set out policies and measures to continue to strengthen and enhance efficiency [...]

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extremism. Therefore, the Royal Government, through the Ministry of Justice, is required to hold on tight to the policy regarding crimes. This point should not be underestimated. Why there are armed clashes in our neighboring countries?

Some (criminals) are running and hiding in our country. Why is there an insurgent armed force in Russia? This is an issue that should be explored. Why did Russia, a great power, have mercenaries who did not attack Ukraine but invaded Moscow? Therefore, in order to ensure peace and political stability of the country, it is obliged that the Royal Government must administer policy regarding crimes [...]

**(6) The Supreme Council of Magistracy approves before Royal Decree is issued for judges, whereas the Minister of Justice proposes appointment of the prosecutor**

We are using the French system. The procedure of appointments is different. The procedure for appointing judges has to go through the Supreme Council of Magistracy (SCM) and a Royal Decree will be issued. But for the prosecutor, it is the Minister of Justice who will propose. The difference is in that point. Please do not use the words “standing judge” and “sitting judge.”

The word “standing judge” is used to mean the prosecutor. In the case of civil disputes, as is reported by the Justice Minister HE Keut Rith, I urge our judges to use mediation as a basis. Unless it is impossible, you do the trial. However, we encourage all levels, including the authorities, to act as mediators until the case goes to court. It remains to be the competent authority to mediate the civil cases [...]

**(7) In civil cases, there are no winners, so it is better for the judge to help with conciliation to end the dispute between the parties**

Now let me raise one thing about divorce. Do not encour-

age divorce. Call the parties in and mediate first. After a while, they would be back together. Sometimes it happens. They went to court and the court was about to issue a verdict to delete the marriage certificate, but a good mediator intervened, the parties are congratulated with another pregnancy [...]

Look at signs along the stairs. The winner has only one pair of pants left. The one who lost the case has nothing but his buttocks. My grandmother used to be a case supporter (a lawyer) and she went up and down between the court in Kampong Cham and in Phnom Penh [...] she pointed out that the parties to the land border dispute, who are poor siblings, both sides had become poorer [...] no one benefits. I would like to encourage all judges to pay attention to reconciliation to end disputes between the parties [...]

**(8) Expanding the point of agreement, narrowing the point of disagreement in resolving civil disputes**

First of all, the judge must know how to use the conflict resolution method. We need to find out which ones are compatible and which ones are not. You need to find those points first. For example, even in political negotiations that I used to go through, such as the negotiations in Fere-en-Tardenois between me and the late King Father, we always examined what were the points that we could agree on and points that we were not able to agree on. We found a way to solve this mismatch point. We enlarge the match point and reduce the size of the mismatch. Finally, we reached a complete agreement. I encourage (the study of) this point so we can all solve problem in a win-win approach [...]

**(9) Even after leaving the local administration to the court, the judge should assume the role of mediator**

When the trial is over, the winner always says the court is fair. As for the loser, they would say the court is unfair. So our court is in the middle between one side saying that we are right and

the other side that we are wrong. So the court is in the mouth of a pliers. No matter how we ensure justice, the word is still there.

Opposition groups used this trick too. With the winner, they said it is a collusion with money to pay the court. The loser is drawn to the opposition. In this regard, I suggest we use a win-win solution. If this matter has not yet reached the court, the local authorities should intervene to solve it so that the matter does not reach the court. But if the case already left the administration to court, our judges still have a role to play in mediation [...]

**(10) If there is no re-election, on August 28, the National Assembly will meet and on August 29 the Royal Government will be ready**

We need to schedule the law-making program in the next legislature. We must get ready to go. I should have told you about the preparations for the future. I can inform the public (about the procedure) regarding the upcoming election on July 23, 2023. If there is going to be no re-election anywhere, we are waiting for the resolution process by the NEC, and after the inspections/resolution of the Constitutional Council until the announcement of the official results and the elected candidates, we need to set aside some time. As planned, the National Assembly will convene for the first time on August 28 (Monday) [...] under the presidency of HM the King [...]

**(11) The new Government could meet on the 30th or 31st (of August)**

On the evening of August 28, the National Assembly will sworn in. On August 29, in the morning, the Royal Government is formed. In the evening, the Royal Government will be sworn in [...] this is the calendar for the formation of a new government after the upcoming election.

In case the CPP wins, I have a duty to organize like this. If the other party wins, let them pre-

pare [...] if the Royal Government has to meet on the 30th or 31st (August), it will be on the full moon day and it will be on the month of Srap, when I was born in the year of Dragon [...] we are making this preparation to match with the HM the King's work calendar [...]

**(12) Specialized courts such as commercial courts should be ready in the next legislature**

Thus, in the draft law, it is called the program of building legal testimony. The law on commercial courts should be expedited, because we now have bigger problem. We are a (developing) country and we need to strengthen investors' confidence for doing business in Cambodia. I suggest that efforts should be made to push for the issuance of a law on commercial courts in the coming legislature. Set up this commercial court to try (business related) cases. As of now, we are using the present court to try everything. Our court decides everything. We need specialized courts [...]

**(13) No more appointment of the President of the Court and the Prosecutor of the Court of First Instance by the Prime Minister**

I would like to remind you of that [...] I mentioned about this story that I took away my rights when I took office as Prime Minister [...] originally, the judge, the president of the court and the prosecutor were all appointed by the Prime Minister. I stripped myself of that rights. I said it was not right. The judiciary is a separate power, why they had to be appointed by the decision of the Prime Minister? Doing that, the court must bow to the Prime Minister.

Therefore, even if the Prime Minister makes a mistake, they dare not indict him for fear that the Prime Minister would remove them [...] it was at the time we established the Supreme Court. We have reorganized this appointing procedure now that we have the Supreme Council of Magistracy, for which HM the King is chairing, to organize this work [...] ■