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Inaugurating World Culture Expo Angkor-Geongju 2006



20 November 06—Samdech Hun Sen and President Roh Moo-hyun of the Republic of Korea before Bilateral Talk in Phnom Penh.

Today, I am delighted to participate in the inauguration of the World Culture Expo Angkor-Geongju 2006 together with His Excellency Roh Moo-hyun President of the Republic of Korea and Madam in Siem Reap - Angkor which was an ancient capital of the civilized Cambodia and home of the marvelous Angkor Temples.

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, may I express my warm welcome to HE Roh Moo-hyun, Madam, Ladies and Gentlemen who attend the inauguration of the World Culture Angkor-Geongju 2006 which is the significant result of the cooperation and is a notable event in the history of the relations between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Korea.

The main purpose of the World Culture Expo Angkor-Geongju 2006 is to show the importance and key roles

of cultures in the relations among races and countries in the world in order to make the world a place of peace and harmony among human beings and between human beings and nature. Moreover, the World Culture Exhibition shows the diversity of cultures and civilizations of East Asian countries through their brilliant heritage which is the legacy of Angkor civilization like the giant temples which have been showing up in the international arena in conformity with the preservation policy for a sustainable development.

Personally I am optimistic that the World Culture Expo Angkor-Geongju 2006 event becomes a cultural Olympic movement which should travel to all countries all over the world for the sake of peace and harmony of human being.

Meanwhile, it is noteworthy
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10 November 2006 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

Visiting the Meh Mot Bun Rany - Hun Sen School

... In fact our presence here today is related to two important events - 1) the 30th anniversary of my eldest son (November 10, 1976) who died here (30 years ago) at 6 am. It was the bitter event in my life among all. I was not allowed to get a proper burial for my late son and to keep my wife's company at the time of such a trauma.

At that time I had to swallow all those shocks and sufferings and to restrain myself from rising up to revenge those people in command or I would not have a chance to

be alive and 2) the on-going construction of the Bun Rany - Hun Sen Meh Mot Secondary School.

Of course the Cambodian people are having different and traumatic experiences in the time of the genocide and what I had mentioned just now are those of my own family. I know that some of the Cambodian people had their members killed with their powerlessness to oppose. Some of the teachers who are present here today may not know who their

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17 November 2006 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

Visiting the New Parliamentary Building and Compound

... Please allow me to take this opportune moment to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Samdech the President and Vice Presidents of the National Assembly and HE Cheam Yeap who has led the construction of the Parliament buildings. HE Cheam Yeap has signed a proposition, which comes along with the signature of Samdech the President, requesting for July 7, 2007 as the inauguration date for the new building, which falls on the 60th birthday of the foundation of the National Assembly.

We have made an observation tour altogether of the new buildings and it is not wrong to say that there no other state building that is bigger than this one. Take for

instance we have a compound of around 3 hectares of land. It is good for us to have such an important state institution to be standing in this large facility.

Maybe I should recall a bit about the history of this place. In their capacities as the President of the State Council and the President of the National Assembly, Samdech Heng Samrin and Samdech Chea Sim respectively provided me, the Prime Minister, with all necessary supports in developing this area. Otherwise it would continue

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parents are.

It was my intention indeed to launch the inauguration of the School today but by delayed construction process because of rain, the inauguration event has been rescheduled to January 5, 2007. The selection of January 5, 2007 to inaugurate the School is a coincidence with one of my memories here in Meh Mot district of the province of Kompong Cham. I got married on January 5, 1976 so the date would in itself be a celebration of the 31st anniversary of our marriage and also the 30th anniversary, as I said, of my son's death as well.

I thank the construction company for taking this hard task and HE Mut Khiev who represents me in keeping the construction project underway, as well as HE Chea Sophara who leads the (CPP) working team here and other provincial and district officials, my advisors, etc. for making their combined efforts helping with this project.

The construction has yet to be finished and there are more works to be done. This is a huge Secondary School and in the future it could become also a university in its own right. When time comes, we would make the School a University because we have here a large place and this should be decided by the younger generation and depends on how the future would become.

I have in Kompong Cham alone 508 school buildings with 2519 classrooms and as for the district of Meh Mot I contributed in the building of 81 schools buildings with

440 classrooms. I wish to realize my vision in accordance with the Constitution that our children must get at least a nine-grade education.

This is indeed a roadmap for us on how we go about investing in education. We have clusters of primary schools and there needs to be secondary level schools nearby as I have said that college education should be established on the basis of existing primary education facilities - with the efforts to build more school buildings and to provide more teachers.

The number of secondary school has also been added and in some districts we have more than one school already.

I have an intention to get Meh Mot district to start on this direction before elsewhere. Here in Meh Mot, since 2002 when I was here to declare the groundbreaking for the construction of a segment of the national road 7, there have been first level and second level Secondary Schools already.

I wish to get Meh Mot as a district for experiment on this vision. The issue here is to redistribute social labor which is in imbalance because the density of population along the Mekong, Bassac and other rivers is high, whereas the land area for cultivation is small.

At the same time we have more land available in here, where the population density is low in comparison to the land area. I remember that in between 1966 and 1970, our Heroic King-Father gave a lot of thought on this issue and launched some projects to send our people from

lower land to settle in higher land areas like Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri provinces, etc.

Unfortunately wars had brought the then Royal Government's project to a halt making some of the resettled population from lower land returning to their native villages, despite a small number continued to settle there.

In the time of the State of Cambodia, efforts had been made to give people with money so that they could claim arable land and I am sure HE Chea Chanto, who was then Vice Minister for Planning, could have remembered this. HE Chea Soth was then Minister for Planning, which was responsible in providing money to the people to claim new land up here. We had some successes in some places only.

There had been a number of factors - first, the war was not yet over and our people would not dare establishing their homes away from the residential areas. Second, there were a big issue of infrastructural condition - from roads, schools to hospitals and these were written in my book Cambodia's Ten Years March.

It was because of these we could never address the issue of imbalances between population and land accessibility. After the country achieved a complete peace and a successful implementation of integration between politics and administration, thoughts and some actions had been taken on about this issue.

However, the speed was still slow for the fact that those hindrances above were still not removed. Starting from 1999, the Royal Government

invests forcefully in rural infrastructures taking for instance the renovation and enlargement of the national road (NR) 7 by which trips to between Meh Mot and Phnom Penh has been shortened to a one day rather than a trip that required staying in Kompong Cham (in between) for one night.

This is possible because we have bridge Kizuna crossing the Mekong at Tonle Bet point and through to the Japanese Bridge at Chroy Changvar to Phnom Penh. Also as an alternative, if the road to the bridge of Chroy Changvar is congested with traffic they could also move to Prek Kdam crossing where we will soon have a bridge built too. Better still they could also travel to Phnom Penh from Meh Mot on the NR 11 to Prey Veng and turn to the NR 8 to cross the bridge at Prek Tameak, and on to Phnom Penh.

What has happened as a result of all this, and we have taken a strict measure to prevent it, is the jacking up of the price of land. Now land in Snuol, Ratanakiri, Stoeungtreng - where previously no one would care to think about, has gone on a very high price.

It is a social repercussion that we have to find a way to solve but infrastructure is what we have to do to address the issue of imbalance of population distribution throughout the country.

What I wish to have the attention of the provincial and district Governors, and also from the CPP working team here in the districts of Tbong Khmum and Kroach Chhmar is the fact that as this area has got so many

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water sources, efforts must be made to make use of the water potential because it would not require major investment - small dams and water control system.

Some people have been quite concerned about the law of military obligation. I may have your attention that this obligation is being fulfilled by any country in the world. At the time of prosperity under the Sangkum Reastniyum (Populism) there was a military obligation of 18 months.

I may set a light on this issue that we do not require millions of our people to fulfil their military obligations at all. What I see as a concern is that we may need only about 2000 new recruits while there are more people who would like to be recruited. At the time of peace there are many people who like to be soldiers. The law itself is for the sake of our country but not necessarily for all of our people to be soldiers.

We have 110,000 soldiers left now and I wish to reduce this figure to somewhere between 60 and 70 thousand. We do not need to have a million soldiers because at the biggest war time we had only 160,000 soldiers in 1988-89, 140,000 in 1990, etc. Because we do not have a law of military obligation, most of our soldiers are over 30 years old. The Royal Government of Cambodia is not that foolish to recruit soldiers to fight in other countries at all. We have sent our soldiers to Sudan but not to Dafur, whereas the mission is confined to demining only.

We are preparing also to

send 30 military police to East Timor. We have requests from the United Nations to send our soldiers to missions in many places ...

Cambodia would accept only humanitarian missions. This is a warning to some people who might misunderstand about the law and interpret that the Royal Government's planning to send troops to Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere.

We have had more than enough of fighting and here in Meh Mot, it could be considered the hottest battle in the time of war in May 1970, or along the NR 7. Tanks were lifted by helicopters into this area and they were stationed in the markets of Snuol and Meh Mot... We know the pain of war and we do not want our country to go on with it at all.

In Khmer we say "Unacceptable" or "Unforgivable" or "Intolerable" and those who wish to cause national disunity, havoc, or turmoil should understand this diplomatic nuance. I wish to send a message to those who have recently been quoted to have said that there is a need for regime change in Cambodia.

The press should be careful in quoting someone because it may cause a lot of trouble. There was a report that they wish to change regime and I do not know if it was said originally like that or it was misquoted.

However "regime change" in Cambodia would mean a change from monarchy to the republic, and it was like what happened in the Lon Nol time. I would suggest those politicians to choose words like change the ruling

party, the Government, the Prime Minister, etc. Regime change is not a simple thing because those who said it wanted to change from the Constitutional Monarchy to Republic, which means to overthrow the throne.

Regime change in Cambodia had brought it to Democratic Kampuchea and cahin of events and I wish to warn those who said it. In the past it was they who toppled the monarchy despite the fact that they are royalists themselves.

Actions for the country's disunity will not be "tolerated". We have lot of Cambodians from the war between 1970 and 1975 and they were never recorded as those died under the Pol Pot regime. I warn them their moves are not tolerated. I warn them at the time of a peaceful Independence Day celebration that I stand to defend independence, peace and national reconciliation.

Winning or losing should be challenged by taking part in the elections and not by assassination attempt I never forget the incident of B-40 rockets fired in 1998 at me. I do not get back to that because it was complicated.

If I were to do so it would lead to instability and further rifts. Let's compete in ballots on April 1, 2007 for the commune elections and July 2008 for the national elections. They should not do anything in contradiction to the Constitution.

I request the construction company to get back to improving their tiles and I order the holding of 400,000 dollars until the company fulfils their contract.

We have 30 houses for incoming teachers and their families. We have more teachers than we could provide housing. I suggest that those with their housing outside school should continue to stay outside and we provide them with some money to refurbish their housing.

But let me stress that these houses inside the school premise are functional - as long as you work here you could stay here and it will be given to another person if you no longer work here.

We have here the sewing class facility and I hope that the class or the school could see it as a source of income generation take for instance they could make uniforms for the rubber plantation workers. We have also equipped the school with computer labs with the equipment provided by OMC (Sharp) company and of course internet access. We also are putting in here a library for research for teaching staff and two-room library for students in different building.

I just wish to give you an idea that you may think of using computer service for generating income and I am sure the facility you have here is the most up-to-date information technology, etc. in Kompong Cham province.

All I want from everything I have given you here is only for your own progress and for my son's tomb to stay intact. HE Deputy Prime Minister Sok An and HE Secretary of State for Social Affairs - who are my in-laws - would be looking after the issue of filling your library with books and studying materials...■

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to be left as a fishing lot. Normally this place turns to be a fishing ground when the flood recedes. Then State and Government leaders came here to fish and to grow vegetable. I wish to thank HE Say Chhum and HE Kong Sam Ol for their efforts to get a contract company to drain sand from the river bottom to fill in this plot. The city was then under the leadership of HE Hok Lundy and Sim Ka. I offered the land to UNDP for its regional office building but they turned our offer away. They later came back to ask for the land and I said it was late as we had offered it for the construction of the new parliament building already.

As you can see that the Prime Minister does not give a priority to his office building but the National Assembly's building despite the fact that he has the rights to do. This building complex costs US 26 million dollars. The office of the Council of Minister costs only US 10 million dollars and if we were to give it a priority the office would be ready before the parliamentary buildings that we are observing today.

It is because NA is the representation of the people's power that we have given it our priority. Unlike what they said about people power in the Philippines, in Indonesia or in Ukraine some years back. I would say that is informal people power. The real and formal people power is the one that is bestowed by elections upon their deputies to represent them in the parliament. I would not call the demonstration to cause a President or a Prime Minister to step down as a real people power at all.

In 2003 there was an attempt

to bring about the situation in Cambodia on that path and I warned them with my opposing might. I at that time prepared to get into the city some 320,000 people as what they called "people power" in opposition to their mobilization.

They wished to get things going the Georgian way as the country got stuck after the elections. I warned that their people power would be put to test with mine. But to reflect the true meaning of the people power, we should try to decide our power in every five years. It is this respect that I think we have made the right decision to get this top people power building built in this very right place. It is indeed going to be an historic building for Cambodia.

Many foreign guests have seen the current office facilities of the Council of Ministers, and I quickly wherever I can get their attentions that the building is yet a good one but what is the most important for us is our effectiveness and efficiency. If the Royal Government is to keep the US 26 million for public infrastructural building, we could build more roads and bridges but we could not afford to leave the top institution representing the people's power in a poor condition at all. As far as I know each member of the National Assembly has got a private office in the new facility.

Because of the fact that we have a small population, I would suggest that we should maintain the number of MPs at 123 and what is more important is that they all come to work. As of now I learned that some members of the Parliament do not attend the parliamentary ses-

sions at all. For the time being the National Assembly has piles of laws to be adopted. So when we have this new building and the session continues to take place only one morning, the number of laws to be adopted would continue to be in less number, I warn you of being blamed by our people that it took them to pay US 26 million dollars for the building but there is not much to get from.

We have made every efforts to build this new parliament building not for own sake or anyone else but the Khmer generations to come. It is not for CPP or Funcinpec or any party at all. Whichever party gets the people's support will have the right to work in here. I wish to take this opportune moment to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to those workers who help build the parliament and I admire what truly comes out of the real Khmer effort, creativity and patience.

I wish all those who worked here be registered. We have documented all the Parliaments of Cambodia in the past except the one under Pol Pot regime that we do not know where it was. If we were to find no parliament in that regime, there is no point of hunting as it was not a parliamentary regime anyway. Pol Pot was the one who held the whole power. I wish to inform Samdech President of the National Assembly that I would suggest to return the current National Assembly building to the Supreme Court which is also the symbol of top legal power. I do not wish to interfere in the court's affairs but it is a duty to see that the court has got a decent place for its work and dignity. The court as we know is the one

to enforce the law. The current Supreme Court's office is to be offered to the Court of Phnom Penh. It is good to see that some of the MPs have already started moving in and I would urge the Municipality of Phnom Penh to attend to the matter of electricity urgently so that the facility would be complete.

At the time when we had the political stalemate after the elections, the Royal Government got a 1 on 12 expenses to continue its work. The CPP MPs were allowed to borrow US\$ 1000 per month but the CPP later did not demand their returns as they could use the money to help people in their constituencies. In 2008 we would not be suffering with similar stalemate anymore. We already have adopted for the 50 + 1 in replacement of a two-third majority in the formation of the Royal Government, and relevant amendments in the Constitution have already been made. CPP got a 53% support since 1998 and now 60%. In the future whoever has a smaller majority would have to go talk to the bigger majority party.

It is important to see that the more democratic we become, the less number of vote for an adoption we need. In Canada they do not talk about percentage. Whoever gets the most votes can form the Government. But as far as the situation here is concerned we all from the majority to the minority parties in the parliament have collaborated in this office of the National Assembly construction and achievement. We could get an arrangement in the near future for our students to tour the new Parliament...■

27 November 2006 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Graduation at the Royal Uni. of Laws and Economics

... Today I have a great pleasure to return to the Royal University of Laws and Economics (RULE) after my previous visit in June 2005. In the name of the Royal Government of Cambodia and in my own name, I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to our graduates who have made efforts in their studies in the past years - of which one group is scholarship and another is fee-paying students. I wish to also express my sincere appreciation to their parents and spouses who have saved money and time for those graduates to keep studying till they finally finish their studies today.

I wish to take this opportunity to also express my sincere thanks to the Ministry for Education, Youth and Sports for making its efforts in leading education sector throughout the country, especially its attention paid on the betterment of quality education after the secondary school education. We have just heard HE Kol Pheng, Senior Minister and Minister for Education, Youth and Sports, who recommends you to pursue your career after graduation. I also thank HE Yuok Ngoy, the Director of RULE for his report in relation to your education.

I am glad that in the past ten years I have come to RULE eight times -- once on August 6, 1996; again on September 8, 1997; on May 2002; on April 26, 2003; on June 25, 2003; on June 29, 2004; on June 15, 2005 and today for the celebrations of graduation and inaugurations of building C and D in 2002 and 2004 respectively. I have noticed that the number of graduates from RULE have increased from 296 in 1996 gradually to

1,161 this year. The reason for such an increase is because the state Universities have been allowed to accept fee-paying students in addition to those who attended on a scholarship basis. It is a positive thinking among other means to get as many students as possible to attend the post secondary school education.

We have done the same for other state Universities take for instance the Royal University of Phnom Penh for the same reason. We used to have between hundreds of graduates each year and that has gradually changed year after year because of the policy of responding to fee-paying students demand in addition to sole scholarship. In addition to this we have implemented the policy of allowing the establishment of private universities and education institutions from kindergarten to tertiary level of education. This is a two pronged policy as it on the one prong provides education access to the increasing number of students and the other to get the Universities to think of self financing in that matter.

According to the report we have here, in addition to the 1,161 graduates today, we have 9951 students in this school year - this means that in all the University has enrolled a sum of over ten thousand students. This is a good sign for our human resources development program for the country's development demand. Some Universities also take their presence in other major provinces with more students enrolled there too. Last week the Cabinet meeting conducted a meeting about the establishment of a center for hydrology and meteorology. HE Minister for

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 that the foremost result of the cultural cooperation between our two countries, which has never happened in the Kingdom of Cambodia and become a great event on the tourist agenda of Cambodia for the years 2006-2007.

Indeed, this event is an achievement among others that the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of Korea have realized during the last ten years after the resumption of the diplomatic relations between our two countries.

On behalf of the architect from the Cambodian side of the fruitful relations, may I take this opportune moment to express my profound thanks to the people and Government of the republic of Korea for their multiform supports for our efforts for the development of Cambodia. All these efforts are vital for reconstruction of the country and for poverty alleviation of our people to achieve real progress and prosperity. We are extremely proud as the Kingdom of Cambodia is a nation possessing tradition, incomparable cultural heritage, rich of precious assets, archaeology, beautifully ecological system and diversified nature which give most favorable condi-

tions to be chosen as the venue of the World Culture Expo Angkor-Geongju 2006 event.

I believe that the organization of the World Culture Expo Angkor-Geongju 2006 enables us to find more deeply the significance of the relations between cultures and tourism aiming at strengthening the long-lasting and fruitful partnership in order to enhance the sustainable tourist development of our two countries.

Once again, may I thank HE Roh Moo-hyun, President of the Republic of Korea, who has sent experts to work together with the Cambodian experts as they not only contribute to the efforts to make this exposition successful but also transfer their knowledge and skills to the Cambodian officials. This is a generous gesture for the human resource development of Cambodia. To conclude, may I once again express my deep thanks and wish Your Excellency, Madam, Ladies and Gentlemen as well as the multi-national artist groups who are contributing to the support of the World Culture Expo Angkor-Geongju 2006's great success, good health and have a safe and pleasant stay in the beautiful land of Angkor. ■

Water Resources and Meteorology expressed his concern about training in this field and HE Minister So Khun (Posts and Telecommunications) who formerly was director of department of hydrology of the Ministry of Agriculture suggested the reason why no one is interested in taking up this study. His argument was that they would have a hard time to find a job with this knowledge. He said those who finished their studies in

this field would be instructed in their line of duty to oversee canal digging, dam making which make them dislike the subject.

This is an issue to be resolved. If we were to get the Royal University of Agriculture to introduce this curriculum, and perhaps the College of Agriculture in Prek Leap as well, we should go about thinking of their career development.

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The same Cabinet's meeting discussed a proposal to set up a University of Defense. By all means we would see that the University of Defense would enroll more students because studying in the University of Defense would mean they study not only defense but also informatics, finance, etc. Those who finished their studies would be recruited to the Ministry of Defense and also to private sector. They would be eligible persons for leadership because the University would train them to be a leader, like the US Military Academy at West Point, graduates of which were recruited by many private companies into their management level.

However, what concerns me most is the fact that we would have difficulties in enrollment for hydrology and meteorology. We are in the process of speeding agricultural sector -- take for instance bio-agricultural sector in the form of training people to know about new seeds, soil preparation, and compost making through an agricultural extension with participation from our people.

Taking this opportune moment I would like to give in addition to the recommendations made by HE Senior Minister Kol Pheng that some of you might have jobs already before coming to study and some maybe self-employed as we have here only 219 scholarship students while 942 are fee-paying students. No matter what sort of students you may be you all may agree with me that to get your study finished at the tertiary education you have to go 18 years (12 years in the general education, 4 years to get a bachelor and two years for a master).

In the span of time you devoted to study, your parents and spouses are working hard in order to let you have time to concentrate on your study. Tomorrow we have this 16-day Campaign against Violence on Women and Children and we will see to how we go about that in real life. Issue of gender would also be brought into discussion in this span of time.

I wish to have your attention on three situations - 1) the partiality in favor of son and not daughter in the course of taking up education. In addition to study, daughters are obliged to help with family work while sons are left to play or enjoy themselves.

In the poor family with many children, daughters would be responsible for looking after their younger ones. When they are grown up their parents do not allow them to go to schools away from home. Most of them dropped out at the primary level. That is why we have built more schooling facilities closer to their homes; 2) parents would pay similar attention to sons and daughters and we should try to promote this group of examples. We also have group 3 which would not allow their daughters to do anything at all.

They have been made idled by their parents' attitudes, especially those in the urban areas. Their daughters do not know even how to cook. Though this is still a small group, it is advisable to try and fix this problem before it is getting out of control.

There have been incidents that youngsters - young girls from the above category included -- drove cars in race and caused problem to public order. At the time of the Water Festival, we have many people to man-

age in Phnom Penh. At that time we had about 3 to 4 million people to get into Phnom Penh. The Municipality of Phnom Penh has taken a serious responsibility to keep security and public order and they deserve our appreciation and thanks. In the last two weeks or so there was a rumor that there was a move to replace the current Mayor of Phnom Penh. I wish to react to those who got this information on publication that if we were to do so you may not know in a long advance as such, because two days is enough for this to be done. You should pay attention to your career as writing something untrue could result in the damage of your journalistic career.

We now get back to seeing that more libraries need to be built as for these students to go to library at the Royal University of Phnom Penh is a bit far. That is why we raised a sum of US\$ 350,000 to build a library in the College of Boeung Trabek where the cornerstones have been laid already so that our students who do not have access to information resources could do their research and access internet resources for research from distance. My argument to have four priority areas from 19 years ago continues to be correct.

As the President of the Council of Ministers in 1987, I announced four areas of priority -- 1) water 2) roads, 3) electricity and 4) human resources. Though we have more priorities to be added to this number, the four basic priorities are still intact. We need to address the need for more electricity especially we have the hydro-power at Kamchai on the move, no matter who would give their contradicting arguments.

We have to pay attention to the betterment of human resources and it should be covering two important and inter-related areas - education and health. You all are waiting to hear from the adoption of the national budget in the near future. Education makes up the most budget - about 20% more than the armed forces.

The reason is because we have the need for more teachers and there are up to 3.5 million students. During his recent visit to Cambodia HE Roh Moo-hyun, President of the Republic of Korea said to me while seeing many students standing along the street to greet his arrival that they are the most important resources and it is in line with our planning budget to give them the most part.

One more priority area is healthcare because one could go to study and/or work only if one is in good health. It is in this remark that we have pushed for a change in the face of efforts against diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Dengue, Malaria, Bird Flu, etc. This year the Kingdom of Cambodia has been welcoming many foreign guests ranking from the head of state, government to the head of the Parliament. In a few days we will be hosting the visit of the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, etc.

Also in just a few days we will host the visit of the former President of the United States of America - Bill Clinton to discuss about HIV/AIDS issue. It is indeed important so to speak to invest in human resources because to invest in gold mine, one day it will run out of gold, but to invest in human resources we will only have better brain which is never exhaustible...■

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women not only resulted in women being tortured by inhuman act, loosing their dignities and respects, but it also force them to live in an unequal status as men in the family, community, and society which impede the women participation in the socio-economic development.

The 16-Day White Ribbon Campaign on Anti-Violence Against Women and Children is the actual implementation in restoring and improve the vulnerability situation of women and children that the Royal Government has always been implementing with active participation from relevant institutions, civil society and national and international NGOs.

Indeed, in its **“Rectangular Strategy”**, the Royal Government has stressed that **“women are the backbone of our economy and society”** and reiterated that **“children are our next generation.”** The future of the nation need close attention, especially on their rights of living and their access to education and health.

In this regards, the abuse and violence against women and children is the destruction of the national economy and society’s foundation as well as a self-destruction as always been mentioned in this campaign before such as “ending the violence against women and children will bring about the development for family, community and the nation”, “ending the violence against women allows women to effectively participate in development”, “the violence against women is not the way to solve the problem, but to make it worse.”

The topic being raised here is

similar to what I have pointed out in the speech at the International Family Day which was held in May 15, 2006 that:

“if the family is broken, its economic status will be in trouble, this in turn will create serious problems and difficulties for the development of the country. Thus, having a good society and a developed country requires nurturing and improving the family’s education so that the people can be united with good moral and possess appropriate knowledge to address the unexpected challenges and to acquire sufficient capacity in improving their living standard”.

Generally, in the society we often talk about promoting the women’s role by considering that Women have significant role to play in various activities. More importantly, we always consider women as our grandmother, mother, wife, first teacher who provides education and takes care of our children so that they can become a person with moral and knowledge and a person that is beneficial for our society.

Because of all these we can conclude that women play a very significant role; they are the mother of all mankind in the world; and they are the potential labor force, which is reflected through their direct or indirect contributions in increasing the family’s income and contributing to the national economic growth.

In this sense, to transform the consideration of women’s role into reality, we must work together to promote the women’s living standard through maintaining the tradition, respecting the moral,

norm, and dignity of the nation.

At the same time, we must jointly prevent and eradicate all forms of violence in the family and society by totally combating against the abuses and trafficking on women and children, encouraging children participation in school and improving the children and infants’ health by giving value to the notion that **“children are our next generation”** and **“women are the backbone of our economy and society”**.

Meanwhile, I would like to confirm that **the campaign against the violence on women and children** is not the government’s sole responsibility, but the collective duties of all sectors, institutions, communities, families as well as each individual to build a society for Cambodia without violence and the trafficking on women and children. Indeed, to eradicate these negative incidents is not an easy task that can be achieved immediately since it requires permanent cooperation from all sectors.

However, I would like to highlight that based on the adopted laws and those that are being discussed relating to human trafficking and the use of violence on women and children, we still taking firm action in punishing the offenders and will not allow those who abuses the law to be let out free.

In this spirit, may I appeal all institutions- legislative, executive and judiciary as well as all civil societies to closely cooperate with one another in order to eliminate and eradicate all forms of violence, especially domestic violence, the violence on women and children and to further support

this campaign.

I would also like to appeal to all women to help themselves and highly value their self-esteem and call for all men to consider that helping women means helping themselves. Finally, I would like to appeal to the whole society to do everything it can for the children’s future since they will become our successors for many generations to come.

Once again, I would like to declare my support and appreciation for the Ministry of Women’s affairs and all the concerned institutions-ministries, especially the Gender and Development for Cambodia and Cambodian Men’s Network for organizing this **16-day of White Ribbon Campaign on Anti-Violence Against Women and Children**, which will be served as a tool to protect our women and children from all forms of violence.

May I also express my gratitude to the ministries, institutions, development partners, private sector, civil society, national and international organization for their supports and contributions in promoting the women’s status and role in the economic, education, and health sectors, protection the victim of domestic violence and human trafficking or other sectors relating to social and cultural development in Cambodia.

Finally, may I wish you all with the Five Gems of Buddha’s Blessings. May I now declare the opening of the **16-Day White Ribbon Campaign on Anti-Violence Against Women and Children** from now on and wish this campaign with great success.■

Today, my wife and I have a great honor and pleasure to join the celebration of the **16-day White Ribbon Campaign on Anti-Violence Against Women and Children** organized by Ministry of Women Affairs in collaboration with Gender and Development for Cambodia and Cambodian Men's Network with close cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice and other relevant institutions.

In this auspicious occasion, on behalf of the Royal Government, my wife and myself, I would like to express my support and encouragement for this campaign to proceed in a way that widely disseminates the information on preventing and combating against all forms of violence in order to protect women and children from trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Indeed, the campaign will also raise the understanding on the root causes of violence against women and children as well as recognize the changing role of men in fighting against the violence. Moreover, the campaign also reflects a key action for Cambodia in its journey to eradicate all forms of violence against women and children in order to build a nation full of security, safety and happiness both in the present and future.

At the same time, I honestly appreciate the achievement made by the Ministry of Women Affairs in promoting the roles and status of women as well as encouraging the change of attitude and views on discrimination against women in the society. These are the key factors contributing to economic and social development, especially for

reducing poverty and upgrading the living standard of the people that are the main objectives of the Royal Government.

ades of prolonged war did in fact almost completely destroy the hard infrastructure including roads, schools, and hospitals, but it also demol-

etc. which requires a lot of time to recover.

Therefore, the Royal Government is determined in changing its attitudes and rethinking its views on discriminating against women and put an end to domestic violence as well as combating against human trafficking through the effort of protecting women in the legal sector in order to provide enough opportunity for them to equally participate in all sort of social works.

In this sense, the Royal Government has paid very close attention in the building the capacity for women, ensuring their rights and opportunity in receiving healthcare, education, professional training, economic resources as well as their equal participation in the socio-economic development and legal protection so that they can be protected from violence, trafficking, rape and many other forms of violence.

Another importance thing that we are paying attention to is to increase and maximize the proportion of women's participation at all levels of national institutions, that is from the central all the way to local level.

Currently, we recognize that violence on women still exists at all classes in the society of every country around the world. Moreover, the violence against women and children which includes physical and mental torturing within and outside the family circle, women trafficking and sexual abuses, is not the issues of a few people or a family, but also the issues of a whole nation since it is after all the abuse of human right and it violates the constitution.

It is clear that violence against
(Continued on page 7)

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16-Day White Ribbon Campaign on Anti-Violence Against Women and Children

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- **Rectangular Strategy** — the Royal Government stressed that “**women are the backbone of our economy and society**” and reiterated that “**children are our next generation.**”
- ... if the **family is broken**, its **economic status will be in trouble**, this in turn will create serious problems and difficulties for the development of the country. Thus, having a **good society and a developed country requires nurturing and improving the family's education** so that the people can **be united with good moral and possess appropriate knowledge** to address the unexpected challenges and to acquire sufficient capacity in improving their living standard...
- ... the campaign against the violence on women and children **is not the government's sole responsibility**, but the **collective duties of all sectors, institutions, communities, families as well as each individual to build a society** for Cambodia **without violence and the trafficking on women and children...**

Cambodia has exerted utmost efforts for more than two decades in overcoming countless obstacles and challenges for rehabilitating and rebuilding the country from the prolonged war and the genocidal regime until achieving peace, national unity, democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and their dignities.

These were mainly done to develop the Cambodian socio-economy toward a sustainable progress and prosperity with the objective of ensuring Cambodia's control of its destiny and to be able to equally participate in all regional and international affairs as a country that was once being respected and recognized by others.

Not only that the three dec-

ished the soft infrastructure such as the legal system and institutions as well as causing a massive change in the morality and mindset of Cambodians.

Indeed, during the last decade, the Royal Government of Cambodia has placed tremendous effort in restoring all types of infrastructure in all sectors in Cambodia.

However, our experiences revealed that the rebuilding of physical infrastructure including roads, schools and hospitals is, indeed easier and quicker to realize comparing to the rebuilding of the soft infrastructure such as the mindset, legal system, the respect for human rights and their dignities, and the discrimination against women