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Addressing the Month of Cambodia-Japan Friendship



On October 29, Samdech Hun Sen and Japanese Ambassador HE Gotaro Ogawa and Madame viewed the exhibition at the opening of the Cambodia-Japan Friendship Month.

On October 29, 2003, Samdech Hun Sen presided over the opening of the Month of Cambodia-Japan Friendship, in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of Cambodia-Japan Diplomatic Relations, and the Japan-ASEAN Exchange Year with the following extensive reprint:

..., I am greatly delighted and honored to preside over the opening of the Month of Friendship and the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Cambodia and Japan, and the ASEAN-Japan Exchange Year 2003. These are new historical events, among many important events, which would help strengthen and expand the solidarity, friendship and cooperation between our two countries, Cambodia and Japan.

We are now celebrating these historical events, coinciding with our King NORODOM SIHANOUK

Birthday, our key traditional Water Festival and the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Independence Day (November 9) which is of great historical importance.

On behalf of the Royal Government and people of Cambodia and my own self, I am pleased to convey our warmest congratulation to people and the Royal Government of Japan in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Cambodia and Japan and the ASEAN-Japan Exchange Year 2003. I wish great success to these events, - so that the wishes of our people and our two countries will come true!

Historically, Cambodia and Japan have had a long-standing relationship, which has been gradually strengthened and expanded until the
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12 October 2003 [Keynote Address]

Cambodia's Perspectives on Regional Integration

Between October 12 and 14, in Singapore, Samdech Hun Sen gave a keynote address at the East Asia Economic Summit on Cambodia's Perspective on Regional Integration, which CNV provides here follows its extensive reprint.

... I would like to express my sincere thanks to the World Economic Forum and the Government of Singapore for inviting me to address this august summit. I am honored to be here today to share with all distinguished delegates some of my thoughts on regional integration and Cambodia's efforts towards this goal

at present and its beyond.

The new technology revolution and globalization have brought about profound changes to the political, economic, cultural and social fabrics of East Asia. It presents to us both opportunities and challenges.

The Asian financial crisis has brought East Asian countries together and provides a strong impetus and thrust for ASEAN and East Asia towards a regionalism with an enhanced institutional identity. In this regard, I am convinced that an
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16 October 2003

Asia Pacific Conference: Poverty Reduction Strategies

I am greatly honored and pleased to address the opening of this Second East Asia and Pacific Regional Conference on Poverty Reduction Strategies. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I warmly welcome all the distinguished delegates and participants from Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Timor Leste and Viet Nam, and the Observers from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka to the wonderful land of Angkor!

The Kingdom of Cambodia is proud and honored to host this important conference. This honor reflects our sincere efforts to address and integrate poverty issues into the mainstream of national, regional and international affairs. Thus, I would like to thank the ADB, IMF, UNDP and the World Bank for organizing this conference, enabling the gather-

ing for exchange and dialogue on tackling the poverty among people from Governments, Parliaments, Civil Society, Academic and Research Institutions, Private Sector and the Representatives of external partners.

I am certain that this conference will enable us an excellent opportunity to review and exchange on the development of poverty reduction strategies in East Asia countries and identify obstacles and challenges our region faces in designing and implementing our strategies and derive lessons. Our conference will also provide us with a forum to draw
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establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1953, - thus far it is exactly 50 years!

This friendship has enabled our people and two countries to develop the tradition of mutual respect and support, both in mental and material terms, in the development process, which covers a wide range of areas, including politics, economy, culture, social affairs and religions between our two countries. Our King, His Majesty NORODOM SIHANOUK was the first Asian king to visit Japan. He was greeted and welcomed by Japanese Emperor with great hospitality and sincerity. However, since Cambodia experienced protracted wars since 1970s up to 1990s, the diplomatic relations were interrupted.

In 1993, the diplomatic relations between Cambodia and Japan have been reestablished, closely linked by feelings of solidarity, friendship and cooperation between our two countries. Through cooperation and exchange programs between Cambodia and Japan, those between the Royal Families, the Governments, the Prime Ministers and associations and religious organizations, the friendly solidarity has been further strengthened and expanded.

All these prove that Japan is a rare and exceptional friend of people and government of Cambodia. The Royal Government and people of Japan always help and support Cambodia in all fields and in all circumstances. Thus, Japan and Japanese people is the biggest donor to Cambodia since Paris Agreement. Moreover, the Royal Government and people of Cambodia are proud to notice Japan's important role in Cambodia's national reconciliation efforts that successfully ended the prolong wars and brought full peace to the entire Cambodia.

In the rehabilitation and development of Cambodia, Japan has provided substantial financial and technical assistance to Cambodia especially for transportation infrastructure. Specifically, since 1993 Japan has helped build and rehabilitate roads and bridges across the country. Those are durable and quality constructions such as the construction of Chroy Changva Bridge, Road 6A, Phnom Penh Port, Sihanoukville Port, a scratch of road linked Road 6A to Kampong Cham's provincial town, Electrical Power Grids, Clean Water Refineries, and other works in education, social affairs, health, Buddhism and in many other areas, all that has enabled Cambodia to restore and develop the nation very quickly and worth to be proud.

Moreover, there was the construction of a new bridge across the Mekong River, that we named it the Great Bridge "Kizuna", - a great property on Tonle Bet of Kompong Cham. Kizuna means "a relationship of good treatment, great love and respect, tied one person with another or one group with another group of people". Kizuna represents "a solid friendship between the nations and countries, free of any discrimination in relation to race and religion". In this sense, this name is very thoughtful, reflecting friendly relationship and long-lasting cooperation between Cambodian and Japanese peoples.

Japan has planned to build another great bridge at Neak Leoung in the near future, which is now under technical and feasibility study, as well as to support other areas of development in Cambodia. All these are clear evidence, showing the generosity and encouragement by the Japanese Government toward the Royal Government of Cambodia, who has been undertaking sound reforms in all sectors, aimed at modernizing and developing the country.

It should be noted that besides assistance from the Japanese Government, the Royal Government of Cambodia has also received other assistance from Japanese NGOs and people, who directly donated to Cambodian people like schools, hospitals, ponds, wells, etc. This has been great contributions to poverty reduction among Cambodian people and we will never forget this generous assistance and support!

As I emphasized earlier, Cambodia and Japan has a long-standing relationship, linked by the feelings of friendship and solidarity between the two countries. Moreover, for Cambodia, what is the most precious are Japanese contributions to the process of bringing about peace, national reconciliation and economic reconstruction after three decades of protracted wars.

Taking opportunity of the presence of H.E. Mr. Gotaro Ogawa, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Japan to Cambodia, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and my own, may I request Your Excellency to convey our deepest gratitude and appreciation from the Royal Government and people of Cambodia to the Government and people of Japan, who have provided assistance which has contributed greatly to the building and maintaining of peace and political stability, and the rehabilitation and economic development of Cambodia toward progress and hope in the future. The Royal Government and people of Cambodia highly appreciate and will treasure this invaluable support forever.

In expressing our appreciation and gratitude for the great achievements supported by Japanese people and government, and in strengthening solidarity, friendship, sustained cooperation between Cambodia and Japan, the Royal Government of Cambodia therefore organize the 50th Anniversary of the Establish-

ment of Diplomatic Relations between Cambodia and Japan, and the Year of Exchange between Japan and ASEAN. The chosen date, 29th October 2003, for the opening day of the Month of Cambodia-Japan Friendship will be marked as a happiest event in the "Golden Page of the Cambodia-Japan History", that would strengthen and enlarge our invaluable solidarity, friendship and cooperation. Before I end my remarks, again through H.E. Mr. Gotaro Ogawa, Ambassador of Japan to Cambodia, I would like to extend our deep gratitude and best wishes of good health and longevity, from the Royal Government and People of Cambodia to the Emperor, the Government, and the People of Japan. On behalf of the Royal Government and People of Cambodia, may I officially declare the opening of the Month of Friendship between Cambodia and Japan. I wish this Month of Friendship become the long-lasting and sustained relations of friendship between Cambodia and Japan and will bring great successes.!

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assessment on dynamism of ASEAN and East Asia should be made based on these developments.

Within the ASEAN framework, we have taken serious strides to deepen economic integration, leading to the formation of an ASEAN Economic Community by the year 2020 as the ASEAN Leaders have discussed in Phnom Penh in 2002. The Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) signed at the recent 9th ASEAN Summit in Bali, provides a roadmap for achieving these noble objectives. I believe that in the near future the nations of ASEAN will be living together in a community where goods, services and people move more freely, where personal security is protected.

Cambodia fully supports the recommendations of the High-level Taskforce on ASEAN Economic Community, especially the degree of flexibility that enable those member states that are ready to proceed first can go ahead towards the ASEAN Economic Community. However, to ensure that such flexibility will not lead to widening development gap within ASEAN, which is the key impediment to our move towards a full economic integration in the region, ASEAN has to give priority, particularly to resource mobilization from both inside and outside the region to expedite the implementation of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), including the expansion of the coverage of "the ASEAN Integration System of Preferences-AISP". This will allow less developed member countries to fully and effectively participate in an ASEAN Economic Community and can benefit properly from ASEAN integration.

ASEAN Countries have agreed that intensifying sub-regional cooperation is a part of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI). Based on this

philosophy, last year in Phnom Penh we have taken a step further to intensify GMS development which, we all expect, will greatly contribute to the diminution of the gaps among the ASEAN economies.

In this regard, Cambodia is also keen to strengthen economic cooperation with neighboring countries by promoting a triangle development area between Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam, as well as between Cambodia, Lao PDR and Thailand, called "emerald development triangle", and by implementing the initiative on the Economic Cooperation Strategy (ECS) between Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand (CLMT).

We are convinced that these initiatives will provide us with unique opportunity to increase trade and investment, enhance competitiveness and generate more employment and improved income and quality of life in the sub-region, in which most are the less developed new members of ASEAN.

Within the ASEAN+3 framework, we have introduced a number of initiatives and concrete projects, aimed at accelerating regional integration and building an identity of East Asia such as: the Initiative for the Development in East Asia (IDEA) initiated by Japan; the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) and East Asia Study Group (EASG) proposed by South Korea; Framework Agreement on ASEAN - China Comprehensive Economic Cooperation; and similar arrangements between ASEAN and Japan; as well as the ongoing discussion between ASEAN and the Republic of Korea on trade liberalization, investment, and economic cooperation including the establishment of ASEAN-ROK free trade area.

The final report of the EASG presented to ASEAN Leaders in

Phnom Penh last November, provides clear direction for the ASEAN+3 cooperation through the 17 short term measures and 9 medium-to long term measures. ASEAN warmly welcomed prompt actions taken by our +3 partners in implementing the short-term recommendations proposed by the EASG namely, the implementation of the East Asia Forum (EAF) by Korea, the establishment of East Asia Think-Tanks Network by China, and the ASEAN+3 Study Group for the Facilitation and Promotion of the Exchange of People and Human Resources Development by Japan. Speedy implementation of these initiatives is important in order to promote and deepen cooperation in East Asia.

Thus, in general, I am of the view that the most critical challenge for ASEAN and East Asia now is to ensure that these initiatives work as a "synergy" and complement to the establishment of a strong regional community in the long run.

In this spirit, we have agreed that the building block approach is the best way forward for the evolution of ASEAN+3. Therefore, ASEAN and the +3 countries decided to give a special attention to the acceleration of sub-regional FTAs that so far can help to maintain East Asian development in a good shape. To point out, ASEAN-China FTA negotiation is well in progress, and ASEAN-Japan Closer Economic Partnership (CEP), and ASEAN-ROK CEP is about to start its consultations/negotiations in the near future.

I am of the view that sub-regional FTAs would likely work best as a building block, because promoting sub-regional FTAs between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries can ensure that no one members will be left behind and ASEAN could also maintain its driving seat in the ASEAN+3 process.

Cambodia is very proud of being able to specifically and appropriately contribute to regional efforts toward firm security and peace since the first days of its membership in ASEAN.

Cambodia's strict adherence to the principles of democracy, respect for and protection of human rights, ensuring peace and genuine national reconciliation, the elimination of the Khmer Rouge political and military structure have been significant and meaningful contribution for ASEAN and East Asia.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has doubled efforts to meet the requirements of ASEAN membership- from changing laws to bringing finance, investment, commerce and trade sectors into alignment with ASEAN standards. Indeed, Cambodia's agenda does not end up only with the membership in ASEAN and the implementation of other related forms of cooperation such as ASEAN+3 and ASEAN+1, but Cambodia has a greater ambition. Our agenda is to integrate our national economy into the world trade system at large.

To achieve this goal, Cambodia has prepared itself through utmost effort during the last several years to achieve the accession into the WTO at its Ministerial Meeting on 12 September 2003 in Cancun, Mexico.

Cambodia has been commended for being able to meet the stringent and voluminous conditions for WTO membership. This highlights the fact that Cambodia has been on the correct track by committing herself to democracy, respect of human rights and transparency, and modernization of national economy, and in particular, liberalization of trade and investment in order to enable the people of this poor country to benefit from globalization.

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However, the government is conscious that becoming an effective member of the WTO may even be more difficult than the process of attaining membership. To this end, Cambodia must exert its utmost efforts to face the numerous challenges, difficulties and obstacles by forcefully implementing and deepening the reform programs in all sectors, especially by strengthening production base, diversifying export, revamping legal and judicial system, building institutional capacity and developing human resource, a process which takes time and requires strong commitment, determination and political will.

During the last five years, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has been actively implementing reform agenda in all sectors. These efforts generated a powerful momentum, reflected by Cambodia's robust economic performance. Over the period of 1999-2003, the economy grew at an annual average rate of 6.7 percent, while the exchange rate was stable. Inflation was kept very low under 3 percent. The level of its international reserves has almost doubled.

Nevertheless, the Royal Government of Cambodia admits that reform is not built in a day nor completed in one giant step. It must be a steadfast and continuous process. In *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), the Nobel laureate F.A. Hayek said that "If we are to build a better world, we must have the courage to make a new start." In this regard, I am proud that the Cambodian people and government have a clear understanding that Cambodia has no better way, but to continue the reforms that we have started in all our earnest. I thank you for your attention.

02 October 2003

Presenting Diplomas to Pedagogy's Graduates

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to participate in this ceremony today with all of you, and I thank you for inviting me. Today I will help present the diplomas to the 8th batch of graduates of the program to train Secondary School Teachers, and the 5th batch of graduates from the Primary School Teacher of French Language training program in our Faculty of Pedagogy.

Dear graduates, on behalf of the RGC I congratulate all of you as you receive your diplomas today! I am extremely pleased to share this important day with you. I am sure you have all worked hard and studied very intensively to deserve your diplomas as new teachers! Your profession is the most respectable and plays a crucial role in our today society. Moreover, I highly appreciate the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for its excellent performance in implementing the reform program of education system and promoting HRD in order to build a highly educated and culturally vibrant Cambodian society.

In addition, I wish also to highly appreciate the Faculty of Pedagogy for excellent works in developing teachers so far. Also, I always recall, when coming here for any inaugural ceremony, that 20 years ago this place, where we are gathering now, was an empty place with neither teachers nor students and all school equipments and facilities were almost completely destroyed by Pol Pot geno-

cide regime. Indeed, only after the Liberation Day, 7 January 1979, we started to rebuild our nation from scratch in all sectors, so that we have achieved a fully operated educational system to provide normal training to our students. Not all these achievements could be happen if there has not been the important role of the Faculty of Pedagogy in supplying teachers to all academic institutions in all the provinces and municipalities across the country.

I believe our graduates, who will receive their diplomas now, would actively contribute to fulfilling an important mission to realize our common goal of building and mobilizing more and more intellectual capital, - that is to strengthen Cambodia's competitiveness within the fast changing globalized world.

Indeed, human resource development is a tremendous work, which consumes a great deal of time and financial resource. Thus, taking this opportunity I wish to thank all the donors such as the EU, UNICEF, Japan, France and other country for their active participation in restoring and building the educational system to be prospering at elementary, secondary and tertiary levels. In this occasion, the Royal Government highly appreciate Japan, good friend of Cambodia and Cambodian people, for its leading role in helping train human resource in Cambodia as well as in the region.

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lessons to help formulate a shared view of next steps for each country and for replication in other developing countries.

Moreover, I warmly welcome the recent regional efforts in engendering the poverty reduction strategies. I have also been informed about the 2nd Regional Workshop on Gender and PRS held in Seam Reap last month, a follow up of the 1st Hanoi Workshop. I hope that the outputs from these previous meetings are considered in this conference.

Please allow me to share with all of you some background on Cambodia's own efforts and experience in preparing and implementing the NPRS.

As you know, Cambodia is not the only country that has undergone the PRSP process. Over the last few years, the PRSP has emerged as an important aspect of the process of ensuring that there is consistency and synergy between the poverty alleviation programs of Governments and its development partners, both national as well as international. In Cambodia, we took the process of formulating the NPRS very seriously. We worked hard to ensure a fully open and participatory process, enabling all sectors of society to join in the discussions and consultations. There were at least five national workshops on the NPRS, as well as many more sectoral and technical meetings and consultations.

Indeed, poverty reduction strategies go to the heart of the development thrust of our government. For the Royal Government of Cambodia, the war on poverty is not just a policy but a passion. Poverty reduction defines and drives the substance, the content, the heart and soul of our entire strategy of Government. Poverty reduction is not just a requirement of social justice, an action

of conscience, but also pragmatic economic management.

The biggest challenge faced by the Royal Government in its quest for development is to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of the Cambodian people. The Royal Government is fully conscious of the burden of poverty and considers such a heavy cost to the economy and society. This burden is socially destructive and morally unacceptable. Therefore, based on this philosophy, the Royal Government has embarked on the NPRS, which has the following key elements:

(i) *Strengthening peace, security, stability and social order through measures aimed at improving the rule of law and the protection of human rights and democracy, enabling a favorable political and security environment for long-term sustainable development;*

(ii) *Ensuring high, sustainable growth at 6%-7% over the long run;*

(iii) *The equitable distribution of the fruits of growth between the rich and the poor, between the urban and the rural and between males and females, and*

(iv) *Ensuring the sustainable use and management of our environment and natural resources.*

From the broad and comprehensive strategy in the NPRS, we have set out and implemented a package of consistent, complementary and reinforcing policies based on effective agendas, those include: creating opportunities, ensuring security, strengthening capacity and empowerment. In the process of implementation, we have gradually fine-tuned those policies into a national poverty reduction strategy with the following pillars:

1. *Maintaining macroeconomic stability to foster broad-based sus-*

tainable economic growth, with the private sector playing the leading role;

2. *Enhancing rural livelihoods by improving the access of the poor to basic services, focusing on implementation of policies, programs and concrete measures to increase the income of people living in the rural areas. Those include: land reform and policies on water, agriculture, forestry and fishery as well as other projects in construction and maintenance of rural transport infrastructure;*

3. *Creating employment opportunities, focusing on creation of jobs and other businesses through the development of private sector; promoting export, promoting development of light, medium and processing manufacturing and industries, and the expansion of tourism;*

4. *Improving the capacity of people, focusing on improvement in education, health care and nutrition;*

5. *Strengthening institutions and improving the governance environment through effective implementation of the Governance Action Plan;*

6. *Reducing social vulnerability and strengthening participation, and dealing with other key issues including disaster management especially floods and droughts, clearance of mines inherited from wars, management of the disabled and those affected by AIDS, orphans, street children, the homeless, and food insecurity;*

7. *Improving gender equity, focusing on reducing the gender gap in all aspects of life; and*

8. *Giving priority to demographics and population through reproductive health programs, family planning for the poor and increasing of primary education enrolment rate for the poor, and finally job opportunities for*

the rural poor.

Indeed, in our efforts to spur and manage national development over the past decade, we have faced many challenges. However, with our strong determination we have overcome the challenges successfully, achieving considerable and bold results which are now having positive impacts on strengthening the pillars of the society and the culture of peace, security, safety and social order, democracy, respect of human right and people's dignity. Indeed, we have opened up new horizon of opportunities, providing hope for the future.

Economically, we have achieved positive and encouraging results despite regional uncertainty and crisis. Through 1999-2003, the Cambodian economy grew by an average of 6.7% per annum. The exchange rate has been very stable and inflation rate maintained at below 3% while the level of international reserves has been doubled.

Cambodia, or any country, cannot solve all the problems inherited from almost three decades of destructive wars, genocide and internal conflicts in just one term of government. National recovery and growth is a long-term task. Thus, the challenge faced by the Royal Government in its third mandate is to maintain and advance the achievements that our entire nation has attained with much sacrifice and effort, in the 2nd mandate of the Royal Government. It is indeed crucial to advance all reforms so far attained and to widen and deepen their positive effects, to ensure the sustainability of development that will permanently reduce poverty among our people.

In this context, the third mandate Royal Government will vigorously continue to implement its policies, focusing on a number of priorities, of which the development of the rural economy is the key. More specific-

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cally, for rural and agricultural development the RGC shall focus on five specific strategies as follows:

First, decentralization: ensuring that democracy is firmly rooted at the grassroots levels, and which will improve the quality of public services. The participation by local people in decision-making, including planning, resource mobilization, implementation and the equitable delivery of services shall enable the people themselves to fully and effectively tackle the task of poverty reduction. Citizens are key players in the different mechanisms of decentralization.

Second, investment in rural infrastructure that support the three elements of poverty reduction: (i) creating opportunities, (ii) ensuring peace and security, and (iii) strengthening capacity and empowerment.

Third, promote trade and economic liberalization, especially through generating employment and increasing income for the poor. However, the Royal Government is conscious that liberalization can also have undesirable side effects. Liberalization has also exposed Cambodian farmers and businesses to stiff competition with imported goods and services. Nevertheless, it is our conviction that we will need to manage the process of economic liberalization carefully so that the benefits are indeed much greater than any costs.

Fourth, strengthening the development of the private sector as a catalyst of growth and employment. To this end, our government's policy is to tackle governance issues in order to improve management and efficiency, infrastructure, reduce transportation, and port handling and utilities costs in order to make Cam-

bodia a competitive production center.

Fifth, development of agriculture: to use the great potential of growth and expand the base of growth that enables our vast rural areas of Cambodia to appropriately benefit from such growth.

It is my strong expectation that the points I have highlighted above will become basic sine-qua-non elements of Cambodia's development strategies for the third mandate of the Royal Government from 2003 to 2008.

Overall, we have produced a good first NPRS for Cambodia. Indeed, we realize it is not perfect. We will further refine and improve this strategy by incorporating the NPRS into the Five Year Social Economic Development Plan. The Royal Government has initiated the linkages of the NPRS with the national budget and has thoroughly reviewed many other sectoral issues. In particular, we will further rationalize the economic and fiscal aspects of the strategy by linking it to MTEF. Moreover, we will incorporate more inputs into the strategy as governance and realities evolve, including new visions and key economic concepts obtained in the continuing consultation and review process.

Indeed, we still have a long way to go and will encounter countless obstacles. We all must recognize that we cannot solve all the issues of poverty in one day or one month or one year. What we all should remember is that the environment of security must be strengthened and development must be promoted continuously to reduce poverty and enhance rural livelihoods. Thus, this concern will remain part of the priority policy package of the RGC throughout the next term. Furthermore, in this process, the efforts by the government alone are not sufficient. Success shall require the active participation of all

stakeholders and development partners, especially by the Cambodian people themselves.

The RGC shall intensify its efforts in advancing reforms in all sectors, and pay special attention to agriculture, which among most sectors has the potential for higher and broader growth, thus contributing to a bigger share of GDP. This would allow most people equitably benefit from the growth in this sector, compared to other sectors, which are narrow based and more sensitive to external shocks.

Once again, I would like to thank the World Bank, the IMF, the ADB and UNDP for organizing this conference. In addition, I deeply thank all the development partners of Cambodia and the NGOs for your close cooperation with the Government as well as with all the local authorities everywhere to contribute to the mission of poverty reduction and improvement of living of people in rural areas. In this context, I wish to call on all the development partners of Cambodia, especially the donor community and NGOs to continue your support in developing the institutional capacity of Cambodia, especially that of the provincial and municipal and commune leaders so that they will become the real actors and owners in the fight against poverty...!

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Currently, the Royal Government and people of Japan are providing assistance for reconstruction and building of our nation in many sectors, such as in economic and social areas, health and education so on and so forth. More specifically, a JICA project at the Faculty of Pedagogy has been providing training to teachers of science and mathematics to improve the quality of education.

Thus, I urge the management of MOEYS to focus greater attention on training in science and mathematics, which are the foundation for the development of modern technology, and I hope that solidarity and cooperation between Cambodia and Japan will bring excellent results even more in the future.

The success and completion of your study this time happen as Cambodian people have voted in the general elections of 27 July 2003 to elect new members of the third mandate national assembly, according to their will and the principles of democracy, freedom and multi-party system.

This is indeed a national proud that reflects the obligation and right of people in selecting their representatives that links to the objectives of defending, building and developing our nation for the future of our successors, our children and youth.

Also, this time is a coincidence with the event that Cambodia was recently honoured and entrusted to be

another member of the WTO. The WTO Ministerial Conference has officially adopted and signed the protocol of admission on 12 September 2003 in Cancun, Mexico. The membership in the WTO reflects the right-track and wise leadership of the Royal Government in its efforts in implementing economic and structural reforms, modernizing legal system and building institutional capacity and human resource.

Thus, it is indeed a great political and economic victory for the Royal Government of Cambodia in implementing its "Triangle Strategy", and it is a "diamond" opportunity for Cambodia to promote her long term development, and that will serve as a firm foundation for the third mandate Royal Government to move forward.

This is also an opportunity for the Royal Government of Cambodia to implement its political agenda, thus ensuring enhanced implementation of its reform policy of education based on the existing achievements through the on-going plans, programs and priority actions.

In this regard, the Royal Government of Cambodia continues to consider strengthening the scope and quality of education, particularly, at the university level and specialized skills training in order to effectively respond to national economic changes and needs.

The widening of the scope of education is to enhance multiple specializations in training, for students to have

more choices in their study and for more relevant choices to meet national labour market's demand for growing new jobs.

At the same time, the strengthening of education quality is to ensure the provision of knowledge, know-how and professional capacity relevant to international standards, for students to respond to the requirements of labour market, including state institutions, social civil institutions and private companies. This is the main underlying factor for success, ensuring the continuity of each education institution.

The simple reason is that if any education institution produces unqualified human resource, the institution will surely face the failure and end up with closing down.

This is also because of the facts that graduates without job offers will bring bad reputation to their institution of origin and fewer students will choose not to enter the school.

Therefore, once again let me take this very occasion to call on and remind all educational institutions, both public and private, to focus on steadily improving education quality, for the cause of national development and their own interest.

I think this is a good occasion for you all to finish your study, at the time, when Cambodia is undergoing the stages of active socio-economic changes and reforms. You all now have gained and are embodied by knowledge. You will soon

leave your university and take up your relevant life-long jobs, profession and career.

Thus, I would like to share my sincere advice that, after your graduation, you should use your knowledge in a good sense free from social aversion. You should adopt the three fundamental principles, which are:

1. **Honesty:** you should not be selfish and avoid unfair treatment and offence to others, and should put national interest above all.
2. **Caring:** you should admire your work, actively participate in exchange and dialogues to find solutions to constantly improve quality of your personal work and capacity and to take care of your colleagues.
3. **Obedience:** you should know what is right and what is wrong, be filial to your superiors and act accordingly to the laws, adopt good ethics and behaviour.

I am convinced that, through all the efforts in your study, you surely become the ones with national conscience and good moral, and a good member of your own family and a dignified person of the society.

I also hope that you will carry out your duties in accordance with pedagogical principles, develop your personality and identity as a teacher, by bringing all your knowledge embodied and gained from university to practice your profession. You should become model teachers and should be "second to parents" for stu-

08 October 2003, Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia
Addressing the ASEAN+3 Summit: "Deepening East Asia Cooperation"

I would like to join the ASEAN Leaders in welcoming the participation of the Leaders of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Japan and the Republic of Korea at this summit.

Since the last Phnom Penh Summit, ASEAN+3 countries have made a substantial progress in intensifying our multi-faceted cooperation.

Cambodia highly appreciate the concrete actions taken by the +3 countries in implementing various initiatives aimed at accelerating ASEAN integration, such as: the Initiative for the Development in East Asia (IDEA) initiated by the Prime Minister of Japan, the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) and East Asia Study Group (EASG) proposed by South Korea, and Framework Agreement on ASEAN - China Comprehensive Economic Cooperation.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank the Republic of Korea for the pledge of US\$830,000.00 for the feasibility study of Singapore-Kunming rail link, which passes through the new ASEAN member countries namely Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. Specifically for Cambodia, thanks to Malaysia's commitment to building the missing link from Poipet to Sisophon.

In order to complete the whole project, I would like to propose to the +3 countries to help build the missing link from Phnom Penh to Ho Chi Min City.

Cambodia warmly welcome prompt actions taken by our +3 partners in implementing the short-term recommendations proposed by the EASG namely, the implementation of the East Asia Forum (EAF) by Korea, the building of

East Asia Think-Tanks by China, and the ASEAN+3 Study Group for the Facilitation and Promotion of the Exchange of People and Human Resources Development by Japan.

Speedy implementation of these initiatives is important in order to promote and deepen cooperation in East Asia.

Despite the significant progress and development were made in many fields of our cooperation, ASEAN+3 still faces many challenges, which required concerted efforts to deal with. Particularly, the existing gap of development level in East Asia is the key main challenge.

In this regard, the successful conclusion of the first ministerial meeting of IDEA was highly complementary to ASEAN+3 process to deepen the cooperation and integration of East Asia. IDEA has its importance and strength as synergy to deepen East Asia cooperation and integration.

Moreover, Japan's emphasis on the close links between ODA, FDI and trade facilitation for developing countries shows Japan's strong support and commitments to ASEAN's continuous efforts to accelerate ASEAN integration, thereby helping reduce gaps between Northeast and Southeast Asian development.

Cambodia was so pleased with the result of the Fukuoka Symposium on the IDEA held on 30 August 2003 in Japan. The symposium took place as a follow-up activity to look for ways and means to implement recommendations of the IDEA-1 Ministerial Meeting.

By now, I believe, government officials, academics as well as private sector have taken the IDEA into their heart.

Thus, to keep the momentum and translate the IDEA into implementation, Cambodia welcomes Japan's offer to host the second IDEA Ministerial Meeting, so that we can look into concrete development issues and strategic areas of cooperation such as infrastructure, HRD, ICT, and other forms of regional economic integration.

Besides HRD cooperation, the success of this our region still much depends on mutual-understanding among people in East Asia. So far our people don't have a strong sense of East Asian identity, which is of significant for having people realize the common fate of the region and to change the way of thinking on future regional community.

The final report of the EASG presented to us in Phnom Penh last November, provides clear direction for the ASEAN+3 cooperation through the 17 short term measures and 9 medium-to long term measures. We agreed on the vision of the ASEAN+3's gradual evolution into East Asian Summit and eventually East Asian free trade area as our long term objectives.

Since we have also agreed that building block approach is the best way forward for the evolution of ASEAN+3, Cambodia is of the view that ASEAN and the +3 countries have to further accelerate sub-regional FTAs as so far we have witnessed East Asian development in good shape.

To point out, ASEAN-China FTA negotiation is well in progress, and ASEAN-Japan CEP is about to start its consultations/negotiations by next year.

I am of the view that sub-regional FTAs would likely work as building block and could help to ease an

establishment of EAFTA more than a network of bilateral FTAs which would be possibly difficult to hammer out the differences in terms of FTA coverage, trade and investment regimes and especially the rule of origin, if we are seeking an EAFTA is our regional ultimate goal.

Specifically, Cambodia views that by promoting Sub-regional FTAs between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries, no one members will be left behind and ASEAN could also maintain its appropriate role as a driving force in the ASEAN+3 process.

Once again, I highly appreciate the initiatives and generous support provided by our ASEAN+3 Partners that have contributed to the development of our region!