

**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**

**Nation Religion King**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**

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## **Cambodia Hosts AAPP Conference**

The Conference of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace (AAPP) was held in Phnom Penh from 22-26 January 2001.

The Conference, attended by about 100 delegations, representing 27 countries, was aimed at fostering cooperation among parliamentarians to defend human rights and humanitarian principles and establishing a civil society based on democracy and justice. Moreover, the panel discussions of the conference focused on the culture of peace, the role of women and youth in strengthening peace, rights and development, good governance and strengthening the practice of human rights.

During the opening of the five-day conference of AAPP, His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah NORODOM SIHANOUK, King of Cambodia, urged Asian governments to work with their legislative branches to tackle problems of violence and poverty that afflict many of their people. "Certain places in the Asia-Pacific region are still concerned about poverty, natural disasters, wars, despair and suffering and these make your work for peace, development and cooperation even more important," said the King.

Samdech Krom Preah NORODOM Ranariddh, who was named as president of the Association replacing Bangladeshi Prime Minister, Her Excellency Sheikh HASINA, stressed that in addition to peace and democracy, the economic and social developments are needed for every country because they are the key factors to political and social stability.

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## **Speech by His Majesty the King at AAPP Conference**

Following is the integral text of speech delivered by His Majesty NORODOM SIHANOUK, King of Cambodia, at the opening ceremony of the conference of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace, held in Phnom Penh on 22 January 2001:

*Madame President,*

*Your Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

It gives me great pleasure to extend to all of you, distinguished representatives of the Asian Parliaments, a warmest welcome to the Kingdom of Cambodia.

The people of Cambodia are very honoured and applaud your decision to hold your first Conference, after the formation of your respected Association, in our country and extend to you an enthusiastic welcome.

A little over a year ago, the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace was established in the hospitable capital city of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka, where the Secretariat of your Association is headquartered and under the Presidency of Her Excellency Madame Sheikh Hasina, the eminent Prime Minister and Leader of the Parliament of Bangladesh.

At the meeting establishing your organization in September 1999, you also established a set of principles which guide the work of your organization, they include such important topics as: Prevention, Resolution and Transformation of Violent Conflicts; Disarmament and Human Security; Poverty Alleviation, Reduction of Economic Disparity and Empowerment of Women, among others.

All the above, are issues that require still a lot of attention and the concerted efforts of both governments and the legislative branches of our region and I would like to encourage you to pursue these noble ideals with the aim of improving the living standard of the peoples of Asia and the Pacific.

*Madame President,*

*Your Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The last century was one of great hope and unprecedented achievements in every field of science and technology. Yet, certain places in the Asia/Pacific region still confront poverty, natural disasters, wars, despair and suffering. These make your work for Peace, Development and

Co-operation even more important and I earnestly hope that your proceeding in our capital will be crowned by success.

We, in Cambodia, have recently been the victims of devastating flooding, the worst in seventy years. Many of our people have lost their lives and the damage to rice fields and our infrastructure has been very serious.

We, therefore, hope, that you will excuse us for any inadequacies in our welcoming and I thank you in advance for your brotherly understanding.

I would like to wish you well in your deliberations and sincerely hope that this meeting of the Association of Asian Parliamentarians for Peace in Phnom Penh will be most successful in its important work for Democracy, Peace, Development and Co-operation.

*Madame President,*

*Your Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I have the honour to declare open the proceedings of the First Conference of the Association of Asian Parliamentarians for Peace.

Thank you very much for you kind attention.

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## **Speech by Samdech the President of Senate to AAPP Conference**

Following is the speech made by Samdech CHEAR Sim, President of the Delegation of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Cambodia, to the Conference of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace, 22-26 January 2001:

*Members of the Presiding Committee,  
Samdech Krom Preah, Sdech Krom Khun, Princes and Princesses,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.*

On behalf of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Cambodia, I have the honour to warmly welcome your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, and our distinguished guests to our homeland for this historic meeting. This is the first international conference to be held by Cambodia the first year of the new century.

During the past decades, Cambodia went through terrible ordeals, all complex and harsh in nature. Under the influence of the Cold War which divided the world along ideological line, the Cambodian society suffered internal divisions.

The Cambodian people were subjected to untold suffering. The entire nation was destroyed to its roots. Worse still, we experienced the most unfortunate thing; the brutal genocidal regime which pushed the country many years backward.

National reconciliation aimed at ending the war, restoring peace and rebuilding the nation was achieved through the Paris Peace Accord on 23 October 1991 and through the legislative election in 1993 with the support of the United Nations and friendly countries from far and near. From this forum, I would like to express once again my profound gratitude for this achievement.

Cambodia has entered the new millennium with peace, political stability and cohesive unity, achieved in for the interests of the nation in the path of correct and effective national reconciliation, with His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, the King of Cambodia and the Father of peace as the eminent Leader.

*Members of the Presiding Committee,  
Samdech Krom Preah, Sdech Krom Khun, Princes and Princesses,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.*

Truth of life has shown that human beings on earth need peaceful co-existence and real prosperity, in a non-violent democratic world. These experiences are of great value for the Cambodian people.

The coming into existence in 1993 of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia once again laid the groundwork for democracy for this nation.

Seeing the importance and the need to promote democracy for all the people, the Cambodian legislative body, which earlier consisted of only the National Assembly, opened up a new chapter setting up the Senate in 1999 to mobilize national physical and mental energy to stimulate the cause of peace, stability and uphold the fledgling democracy and enable it to grow swiftly and firmly.

For the time being, the National Assembly and the Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia are working together to formulate legal norms for national development in keeping with the development in the region and in the world of the new millennium known as “ the Millennium of the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence ”.

In line with the above-mentioned ideal, the Cambodian legislative body has made constant effort to strive to build the Rule of Law in Cambodia based on good governance and transparency. At the same time, we are also trying to make sure that the foundation of freedom, equality, justice and human rights which are respect in the country, are seriously and undiscriminatorily guaranteed and protected.

A part of the task has been achieved thanks to the good cooperation between the legislature, the non-governmental organizations, the civil societies, the international community, Buddhist monks and other circles, especially the political circle which continues to work closely together as partners in order to carry out harmonious activity, thus constantly reminding all quarters and the entire nation to always attach great importance to the three fundamental tasks: respect, tolerance, patience, understanding and mutual trust; to find a solution to all problems through peaceful negotiations and by the law, and to get rid of all feelings of malice, revenge and violence.

The other part of achievement was attributable to the collective efforts made by the state and the entire society to build the nation into a prosperous state as quickly as possible aimed at improving the people’s living condition and narrowing the gap between rich and poor and between the rural and urban areas.

The policy of poverty alleviation, people’s well-being improvement and rural development plays a major role as does the drive to eradicate illiteracy and develop human resources.

To address these issues, it is necessary to have in place policies, measures and a mechanism with both the valuable financial and technical assistance from foreign countries.

We are pushing for wider friendly relations and good cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual interest with the countries and peoples in the region and with the rest of the world. In

this respect, we have done our best to maintain a durable peace and stability in our country, thus contributing to strengthening and broadening peace, security and development in the region and the world at large. We will try to enhance our conscience and sense of responsibility as part of ASEAN, Asia and the international community. We will actively participate in building a new world order, democracy, justice and equality for the sake of all mankind.

*Members of the Presiding Committee,  
Samdech Krom Preah, Sdech Krom Khun, Princes and Princesses,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.*

The Senate and the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia highly appreciate and consider the conference as a beacon leading to good experiences which will be of great help to us in strengthening and broadening the culture of peace and democracy.

With the new experiences and on the basis of broad and long-term cooperation, the Senate and the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia will do our utmost to contribute to safeguarding peace, boosting progress and promoting democracy. As a messenger and a representative of the people's will, we support and uphold any positive initiative and sincerely participate in all movements for the welfare and happiness of all mankind. We are prepared to join the peace-and justice – loving movement and the democratic mainstream in Asia and in all the five continents to enable the people on earth to live in peace, harmony and full democracy in conformity with the aspiration of the people of all nations, in every corner of the world.

I would like to express my thanks to the members of the Presiding Committee, Samdech Krom Preah, Sdech Krom Khun, Princes and Princesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen for your sustained attention and wish the conference brilliant successes.

Thank you,

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## **Address by Samdech Krom Preah at AAPP Conference**

Following is the integral text of the welcoming address by Samdech Krom Preah NORODOM Ranariddh, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, at the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace Conference on "Building Sustainable Peace and Democracy for the New Millennium: A Challenge for Parliamentarians", held in Phnom Penh on 22 January 2001:

*Your Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia,*

*Your Majesty Samdech Preah Reach Akka-Mohesey Norodom Monineath Sihanouk, Queen of Cambodia,*

*The Honorable Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh and AAPP President,*

*H.E. Samdech Chea Sim, President of The Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia,*

*H.E. Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of The Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia.*

*The Honorable Dr. Najma Heptulla, President of Inter-Parliamentary Union,*

*Your Royal Highnesses, Distinguished Delegates,*

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

First of all, on behalf of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace (AAPP) I wish to express my most humble respect and profound appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Samdech Preah Bat Norodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia, and Her Majesty Samdech Preah Reach Akka-Mohesey Norodom Monineath Sihanouk, Queen of Cambodia, for their majesties' high presence at our official inaugural ceremony of the conference. His Majesty Preah Bat Norodom Sihanouk, is one of the most respected living political legends that continue to tirelessly promote peace and democracy. Your Majesty high presence and full support of the conference signify Your Majesty's commitment to promote peace and democracy and make this conference a very auspicious event.

On behalf of the Parliament and the People of the Kingdom of Cambodia, I wish to extend my appreciation and warm welcome to the Honorable Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh and AAPP President, distinguished delegates and all participants for attending this auspicious conference in the historical capital Phnom Penh. I am indeed honored and delighted that you have been able to come to Cambodia to participate in this year's most important event of the AAPP, given your very busy schedules.

I also wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia for supporting this conference.

The theme of our meeting this year is on “Building Sustainable Peace and Democracy for the New Millennium: A Challenge for Parliaments.” I am sure that you would agree with me that the theme of our conference is highly relevant and critically essential for our respective countries as we attempt to enhance our role as members of parliaments in contributing to building sustainable peace and democracy in our societies. Peace and democracy are the essence of our work and the foundation of our societies as we strive to meet the new challenges in consolidating and promoting peace and democracy in the twenty-first century. Without peace, there is no democracy. Without democracy, it would be a challenge for us to build sustainable or perpetual peace. In addition to peace and democracy, we need economic and social development of our respective societies because they are the key factors to political and social stability and security of our countries. I am sure that we have a plurality of views, insights and experiences on the themes of peace, democracy and development.

In addition to the plenary meetings, we will participate to brainstorm practical and relevant ideas in five important concurrent workshops, which in my view will deal with vital and more specific issues. The workshops will address key issues including culture of peace, role of women and youth in promoting peace, rights to development, good governance, and the promotion of sustainable human rights. I wish and hope that all of the distinguished participants will actively contribute to the dialogues and consultations of both the plenary sessions and the five concurrent workshops. Your active participation and substantive contributions to both the plenary sessions and the workshops are absolutely crucial to the success of this meeting.

Therefore, as we deliberate this meeting for the next few days, I wish that all of you would keep a good spirit of amity and cooperation, with open minds, mutual respect, and tolerance of the diversity of views. We have so much to learn from one another, to engage in constructive dialogue, and to share our experiences, insights, concerns, expectations, and hopes.

While serving as the secretariat of this important conference, the Parliament of the Kingdom of Cambodia will do its best to serve all our distinguished participants. In this regard, please let us know whether there is anything we can do to ensure that we have an excellent, productive, and cooperative meeting.

Once again, I wish to extend my warmest welcome and best wishes to all the distinguished delegates and participants.

Thank you very much.

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## **Address by Samdech Krom Preah at AAPP General Assembly**

Following is the address made by Samdech Krom Preah NORODOM Ranariddh, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, at the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace General Assembly: the First Meeting, 22 January 2001:

*The Honorable Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh and AAPP President,*

*His Excellency Mr. Quazi Md. Munzur-i-Mowla, AAPP Secretary-General,*

*Your Royal Highnesses,*

*Distinguished Delegates,*

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am deeply honored and privileged to be elected as the next president of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace (AAPP). It is indeed a source of pride and dignity to have the confidence, trust, and full support from the General Assembly of the AAPP. This is undoubtedly a special moment and recognition not only for me and Cambodia but more importantly for the AAPP itself.

I wish to sincerely extend my profound gratitude and appreciation to each and every distinguished member of the AAPP for the generous support and endorsement that you have bestowed upon me. I truly respect the essence of your decisions. I pledge to you today that as the president of the Association of the Asian Parliaments for Peace, I will do my best to perform the duties and tasks as assigned to me.

As the president of the AAPP, I have full obligations and responsibilities, with the support and encouragement of the General Assembly and the Executive Council, to take the AAPP to the next stage of institutional development and growth. In this regard, I look forward to working closely and collaboratively with all members of the AAPP, including the General Assembly and the Executive Council. Your active participation, unfailing commitments, and sustainable contributions to the AAPP will make a big difference in the future of this very important and prestigious institution in our region.

As you are well aware, despite the fact that the AAPP is still a very young and only emerging institution in the Asia-Pacific region, I strongly believe that the AAPP has already taken its rightful place in this region and in the world. It also has contributed to both regional and global peace, stability and security in its own rights. At the same time, the AAPP has actively championed human rights, freedom, democracy, and justice for all. These are our greatest tasks and the noblest

goals that we have pursued and will continue to do so today and in the future. I am convinced that we have a very important role to play in our respective societies to ensure that parliaments, which represent the popular will and aspirations of our peoples, contribute significantly to the well being of the peoples and the societies as a whole. Despite our diversity in cultures, histories, environments, among other things, I strongly believe that we are bound by collective interests, shared destiny, and common challenges.

Accordingly, I am sure that we have many daunting tasks ahead of us. But, we must seize the opportunity that we have today in order to push ahead with greater determination and collective will. In this respect, I look forward to receiving the reports and recommendations from the workshops and the plenary sessions, as adopted by the General Assembly of the AAPP and recommended by the Executive Council. In particular, I believe that we will have to work together more cooperatively and by consensus on how we can move forward in forging a timely and most relevant Charter of Human Rights for the Asian Nations. This is one of the most strategic issues that all members of the AAPP will have to consider and contribute to the maximum. I strongly feel that every one of us has an instrumental role to play. In this context, I wish to encourage every delegation, including my own Cambodian delegation, to work together with a spirit of friendship and cooperation to ensure the success of our work.

Moreover, I wish to reiterate that I have so much confidence and trust in the General Assembly, the Executive Council, and the AAPP itself. As we will have the next several days to share our ideas, our insights, and our experiences, I hope and wish that each delegation will extend its fullest support to the AAPP by actively participating in the meetings and by contributing as many inputs and ideas as possible to this most auspicious gathering the year 2001 of the AAPP.

Finally, I wish, once again, to express my most sincere appreciation to the General Assembly, the Executive Council, and the entire AAPP for the support and confidence that they have in me. In particular, I am deeply indebted to each distinguished member of the AAPP for electing me as the new president of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace. I wish each distinguished member and the AAPP itself very much success.

Thank you very much.

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## **Address of Samdech Prime Minister at AAPP Plenary Session**

Following is the integral text of the address of Samdech HUN Sen, Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia, to the Plenary Session of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace, 23 January 2001:

*Her Excellency Chairperson  
of the Association of Asian Parliamentarians for Peace  
Your Royal Highness Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh  
President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia  
Distinguished guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen*

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to be invited to address the plenary session of the Association of Asian Parliamentarians for Peace. This conference is of great significance to Cambodia in our move forward to build and strengthen the culture of peace, after we have gone through a few decades of wars and incessant violence. We hope that this important gathering will make a valuable contribution to the promotion and the enhancement of peace in Cambodia and the region. Moreover, this conference provides us with the opportunity to deliberate and share views at the international level to forge the ideas and spirit of peace from all corners of the world. Hence, we will be able to put in place an appropriate mechanism to minimize violence, which has been the primary cause of destruction and sufferings of mankind in many parts of the world.

In this sense, I wish to take this important opportunity to share with you the experiences of our country and people, as well as my vision and efforts to achieve peace and to build and strengthen the culture of peace in Cambodia.

As you all well know, Cambodia was at the peak of splendour and glory at the beginning of the past millennium. It was using the then modern technology in architecture, agriculture and urban planning and maintenance. It had been reduced to a feeble image of its earlier glory in the last few decades of the century due to civil war and unrest fuelled by internal division and self-serving external forces. We went through many bitter periods of critical tests, making endless sacrifices with a view to restoring peace and achieving prosperity in this very unfortunate country. But, thankfully, and in a large measure due to the determination of its people and their leaders, and with advice and substantial support from all friendly countries, we are fully back on track as a united, peaceful, democratic and forward looking nation.

At present, we are proud to state that Cambodia now in one integrated, self-contained territory under one government, without separatists and rebels, without turmoil and internal strifes, for the first time in over many decades of our history. We have definitely closed, once and for all, the recent, tragic pages of our own bitter history, dominated by chaos, violence, insurrection and conflicts. This is indeed a uniquely historic, highly laudable and noteworthy accomplishment. This peace has been brought about by relentless efforts for national reconciliation, through mutual accommodation and compromise. They say politics and democracy are ultimately the fine arts of compromise towards a common cause, between individuals, between opposing viewpoints, between divergent opinions and paths.

We did achieve this compromise in 1991 through the Paris accords but under considerable influence and with involvement of external powers each with their own agendas. The external community conducted a general election for us in 1993 resulting in the establishment of a coalition Royal Government, but leaving one party to the agreement outside of the mainstream of the society, thus they continued to wage a war against the government. And differences continued and led to some bitter events. Thereafter, although with the benign help of some of our external partners, the Cambodians themselves have been in the lead to reach compromises and agreements without external influences. We passed our own electoral laws, and established constitutional institutions to conduct the elections and to resolve disputes.

Cambodians, with significant technical and financial assistance from our external partners, organized and conducted the general elections by themselves. The elections of 26 July 1998 were witnessed, observed and commented upon by thousands of external and internal observer teams from registration of voters to counting of votes. There was near unanimous view that the elections were blissfully peaceful in a land written off as in eternal strife and that the results clearly reflected the unfettered and free choice of the population. It was for this reason that people described it in such glowing terms as the “ miracle on the Mekong ”. Indeed it was a miracle, entirely brought about by calm and persevering leadership and hard work and above all by the will of the people at large.

The differences among the major parties elected by the people were resolved in the interests of Cambodians and of Cambodia’s future under the sagacious presence and influence of our beloved monarch and father of our nation, King NORODOM SIHANOUK. As a result, a coalition government between the Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) and the FUNCINPEC party was established and it works harmoniously until now.

I am proud to inform Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen that our Cambodian people are very fortunate to have Their Majesties the King and the Queen, the father and the mother of our

nation, who are of great wisdom and key to national reconciliation. Their Majesties, followed by the political parties that won the seats in the Parliament, allow us to get over and avoid any crisis, so that we can go forward rapidly.

In just 25 days of its new term, the Royal Government managed to dismantle the political and military organization of the Khmer Rouge. The remaining remnants of the Khmer Rouge defected to the Royal Government; some of them were captured to stand trial for genocidal crimes that they had committed in the past. Now in Cambodia there are no more Khmer Rouge rebels, leaders or troops. All have come into one fold. What was intended in the Paris Peace Accords of 1991 but could not be ensured by UNTAC, is now a reality because Cambodians have come together among themselves, not at the behest or prodding of external forces. Compromise is key to ensuring co-existence and cooperation and avoidance of division and conflict. In this sense, I am proud to share with you that the “win-win” policy is the core and the most important instrument of our peace philosophy. This is also the most important lesson that we have learnt, after many decades of critical tests and struggles, in order to accomplish a full peace and tranquility at present. The key point of our “win-win” policy is to recognize that there is no winner in waging a destructive war and revenge will never bring peace to the country and its people. Therefore, to end this war and internal conflicts, we have formulated three ingredients to ensure the following types of security:

**First**, ensure personal security, as an individual and their family, for those who volunteer to end the war and the battle, and return to the national fold;

**Second**, ensure employment security by providing them with the opportunity to continue their careers or to make their livelihoods; and

**Third**, ensure the security of their ownership titles without running the risk of confiscation.

The three ingredients of this policy is a panacea for healing the wounds and the rips, caused by many decades of civil wars and internal strives.

*Her Excellency Chairperson*

*Samdech Krom Preah*

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*

Peace is priceless but is difficult and demanding to attain and to keep. We are conscious about our undeniable obligation to find justice to the people, who were the victims of genocide in the past. In this sense, we are strongly committed to undertake whatever necessary to organize a trial of those who had committed genocidal crimes in the past. However, in so doing, we have to weigh carefully between the need for rendering justice to the victims and closing the dark pages of

our history, on the one hand, and a must to pursue the policy of national reconciliation and the newly restored, albeit fragile peace, on the other. In this important process, we should rely upon the principle of the respect for national sovereignty.

Therefore, in fulfilling this obligation, we are faced with the most difficult dilemma. I wish only to recall that the recent calls for prosecution and punishment of the former Khmer Rouge leaders for their past crimes come strangely from those who had actively pardoned, fed and supported them, and installed them on the seat of peace negotiations in 1991. At that time, the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge were not different from now. But what is different from before is that during the last ten years Cambodia has struggled to move toward and achieve peace on its own. Should we disturb this fragile fabric before the starches of time strengthen it; or should efforts at long drawn out revenge and retribution take Cambodia back to the dark ages? Who will be put on trial? Who will bear the responsibility and who will suffer should the war erupt again? The choices are not simple, easy or straightforward. Nevertheless, our conscience and morale will not allow the genocidal crimes, committed barbarously against the people of Cambodia during the reign of the Khmer Rouge leaders from 1975 to 1979, to go unpunished. The top leaders should assume the responsibility for this crime and their actions before the law and the people. This is the requirement of justice and the warning against any leader, who will assume the responsibility for the fate of the country and people in the future. In the end, Cambodia's past should yield to its future. The solutions to be lasting should be Cambodian remedies.

Based on this kind of thinking, we have worked scrupulously and flexibly to finalize and recently adopt a law, which forms the basis for a trial of the former Khmer Rouge leaders, in order to give justice to the people. This law can be enforced with certain security for Cambodia. We are strongly committed to do this balancing act with the aim of maintaining the equilibrium and safety until we reach other end of the rope, which is our ultimate goal.

*Her Excellency Chairperson*

*Samdech Krom Preah*

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*

As I stated earlier, the successful and peaceful settlement of the war and national division is difficult to attain. But, the continuity of peace and the strengthening of peace culture are even more demanding and difficult to keep. To this end, we should work harder and double our efforts to maintain and preserve the key ingredients of peace. This includes promoting the non-violence culture and the respect for human rights, revitalizing democracy and good governance, in particular rigorously attacking poverty in the country and improving the living standards of the people.



Without making efforts and achieving concrete results from implementing the above measures, we cannot hope to maintain the continuity of peace, which was difficult to accomplish.

In this sense, I would like to assure all of you that Cambodia and Cambodians are determined to strengthen the multi-party democracy and the respect for human dignity and human rights. Cambodians from all walks of life enjoy the freedom of expression and assembly. Unrestricted open dialogue and debate and expression of divergent views take place without hindrance or obstruction, both in all the media and elsewhere. Public security has been improved vastly in spite of more openness. We have implemented immediate measures and undertaken successive actions aimed at maintaining social order, cracking down on crimes and strengthening security.

In all these endeavors, we are committed to a true “ Rule of law ” with equality of opportunities and redress to all, through a competent and impartial judicial system. Another priority is to ensure successful implementation of the public sector reform including the following:

**First**, accelerate the reform of the state through the implementation of the action plans for demobilization, administrative and fiscal reforms with the view to strengthening the rule of law, improving the efficiency and quality of our administration and service delivery and consolidating the foundation for the market economy.

**Second**, introduce an administrative system, based on decentralization and deconcentration, to increase accessibility of essential services to the local people at grassroots level. The communal elections to be held in the future will strengthen democracy at the grassroots level and will improve the efficiency of the public services at the delivery level.

**Third**, deepen the legal reform and establishing a national program for judicial reform; and

**Fourth**, formulate and implement with strong determination the measures outlined in the Governance Action Plan (GAP), which the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) considers as the backbone for the success of the reform programs and the poverty reduction strategy.

On the economic front, we have pursued a free-market economic policy, with assistance given to the vulnerable groups until they are capable of competing on equal footing with other rivals. Our main goal remains rapid alleviation of poverty of populace, through the implementation of wide-ranging economic reforms, mainly focusing on ensuring macroeconomic stability, improving the banking and financial system, implementing fiscal reforms, scrupulously managing the state assets, increasing public investments on physical and social infrastructure and developing human resources. In this sense, the government’s main strategy is geared toward achieving the following objectives:

1. Long-term, sustainable economic growth at the annual rate of 6 to 7%.
2. Equitable distribution of the fruits of economic growth between the have and the have-not, between urban and rural areas and between males and females.
3. Ensure sustainable management and utilization of the environment and natural resources.

I am proud to inform all of you that the implementation of the Royal Government's economic platform has been widely embraced and accepted by the Cambodian people and our external partners. As a result, positive economic growth was achieved during the last few years, although other countries in the region were hit by the financial turmoil.

Moreover, special attention is given by the RGC to social development through the implementation of concrete measures and targeted interventions aimed at improving performance in health, education and rural development. Our top priority remains improving access by girls to education to ensure gender equity, providing clean drinking water and sanitation, child vaccination and establishing a social safety net for the most vulnerable groups. Attention is also accorded by the RGC to the social and institutional structures affecting development, otherwise known as the social capital.

*Her Excellency Chairperson*

*Samdech Krom Preah*

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*

I have just briefed you on the substantive issues of the mechanism, which ensures the long-term peace and tranquility in Cambodia. Peace and development are closely correlated and inter-related. Moreover, peace is the most important pre-requisite for social and economic development. However, the promotion of democracy, the respect for human rights, the improvement in public service and governance, as well as the pro-poor development policy are sine qua non conditions for maintaining the long-lasting peace. The Royal Government is conscious of this close dialectic correlation and is determined to overcome all difficulties and obstacles to ensure Cambodia's continual progress.

At the beginning of the new century and millennium, we can say with strong conviction that Cambodia has emerged as a united nation with the aim of avoiding past conflicts and division, being a real partner in the community of nations for the prosperity of mankind. We are looking into the future with optimism and conviction, given the achievements reached through national reconciliation, unity, compromise and tolerance, by putting long-term national interests ahead of those of short-term party or personal ambitions and rigorously implementing government's social and economic policy. It is our strong commitment and conviction that in the new century and

millennium, Cambodia, filled with renewed hope and vigor, will be revitalized to contribute to the progress of mankind.

In conclusion, I would like to wish the conference great success in the common efforts to strengthen and widely disseminate, in Asia and the world, peace and the non-violence culture. I would like to wish Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen progress, prosperity and happiness.

Thank you.

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## **Opening Address of Samdech Prime Minister at the Government-Donor Monitoring Meeting**

Following is the integral text of the Opening Address of Samdech HUN Sen, Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia, at the Government-Donor Monitoring Meeting, in Phnom Penh on 29 January 2001:

*Excellency, distinguished representatives of the donor community*

*Excellencies members of the Royal Government*

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to meet, once again, the distinguished representatives of the donor community, as agreed at the last Consultative Group (CG) Meeting in May 2000. I wish to take this opportunity to extend our warm welcome to Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen at this important meeting, which allow us to follow up, monitor and consider Cambodia's past achievements and performance of the government's reform programs. It is important for us to check performance against goals over the period between the last CG meeting and the current monitoring one.

Moreover, this is the first meeting in 2001 between the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and our development partners to do a joint stocktaking and consultation. Thereafter, the RGC will host another consultative meeting, "the Government-Private Sector Forum", with the private sector on 7 February 2001. We, government and the private sector, have agreed to meet once every six months. After this meeting, on 12 March 2001 we will invite senior government officials from all parts of Cambodia to attend another conference in order to evaluate, at a national level, the progress of implementing the reform programs and the government development policy. This conference aims to entrench the momentum and the achievements of the reforms and, especially to strengthen the national consensus on our resolute move towards peace, social order, democracy, the respect for human rights and good governance, accelerate sustainable and equitable economic development and promote rapid reduction of poverty.

Through a series of these meetings, you will be able to make your own judgment about the special attention that the RGC has accorded to ensure the openness and wide participation of our development partners and government officials at all levels. We welcome the representatives of the civil society and NGOs to be part of the discussion of development issue, from formulating strategies, policies and legal framework to monitoring and evaluating the implementation and the past achievements. The RGC regards this exercise as an important ingredient of the consensus

building process at the national level and with the development partners on the issues related to all aspects of our work. This is an efficient vehicle for mobilizing all kinds of resources and mustering the support from all quarters, whether inside or outside of the country, to promote development and ameliorate the living standards of the Cambodian people.

Bearing in mind this approach, the RGC prepared and recently adopted the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IPRSP), which highlighted comprehensive concepts, policies and strategies, as well as government's determination to pull Cambodia and Cambodians out of the shackles of poverty. The RGC is pleased with the assessment and comments by the Executive Boards of the IMF and the World Bank on the process of preparation and the substance of this important document during separate meetings on 19 and 23 January 2001. The endorsement of IPRSP by the Boards of the two international financial institutions and the IMF Board approval of the second review of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) is the testimony to the progress and the irreversible process of the government reform programs. Moreover, the RGC is grateful to the two international financial institutions for providing valuable comments to the RGC on how to improve its poverty reduction strategies, policies and measures to be incorporated in the Second Social-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) and the full Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (full PRSP), which are being prepared by the Ministry of Planning (MOP). I wish to reiterate that the government's objectives are to prepare its own poverty reduction strategies, which are consistent, comprehensive, realistic, applicable, and can be monitored through the participation and agreement of all concerned. This document is for government's official use and for all our development partners.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the ADB for providing assistance in preparing a report, entitled Cambodia: Enhancing Governance for Sustainable Development, which have been distributed to me and other members of the Royal Government. As you are aware, the RGC considers good governance as the backbone of our reform programs and our poverty reduction strategy, which is our ultimate and the most important objectives. I trust that this report constitutes a valuable contribution to the RGC's efforts to build and strengthen good governance, especially to the Governance Action Plan (GAP), currently being prepared by the RGC with technical assistance from the World Bank.

Today we are going to work together the whole day and will steer our discussions on a number of important topics, which constitute our common concerns as Cambodia's development partners. Like before, I urge my colleagues in the government and our external partners to continue the traditionally close partnership and to discuss in a frank and candid manner issues and challenges facing Cambodia's reform programs.

I was informed that the sectoral donor working group met several times to discuss in details to prepare for today's meeting. It is my conviction that a good preparation would help steer our discussion into the right direction and allow us to best use our time for deliberating substantive issues. Moreover, we have prepared a comprehensive report on actions and performance for 2000 and sectoral papers on important topics to be used as reference documents for our deliberations. My colleagues and I will be happy to answer your questions or provide any clarification you may need.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep and sincere gratitude to you all, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, for your strenuous efforts and close cooperation to guide us and to help Cambodia move forward toward a bright future through poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

I wish a successful conclusion of today's consultative meeting. I would like to invite His Excellency Representative of the ADB to take the floor as the coordinator of Cambodia's donors.

Thank you.

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## **Closing Address of Samdech Prime Minister At the Government-Donor Monitoring Meeting**

Following is the integral text of the Closing address of Samdech HUN Sen, Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia, at the Government-Donor Monitoring Meeting, in Phnom Penh on 29 January 2001:

*Excellencies, distinguished representatives of the donor community*

*Excellencies, my colleagues from the Royal Government*

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and myself, I would like to express our profound gratitude to all of you, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, for participating in this important meeting. At this meeting you have provided comprehensive, candid and constructive suggestions and recommendations and paying much attention to Cambodia's development and push the reform momentum to new high.

You have spent the whole day listening to the presentations and thorough clarifications of my colleagues on major topics related to the government's reform programs. Therefore, there is no need to repeat the details raised in the presentations. I wish, however, to take this opportunity to sum up the achievements resulted from the efforts deployed by the RGC to push forward the reforms during past year and highlight the government's resolve and determination to speed up the reform momentum. By doing so, we have made our utmost to address all the challenges and remove the impediments to ensure the sustainability of our actions, which are critical to the survival of our nation and the Cambodian people.

Overall, year 2001 is another turning point for Cambodia's reform agenda, as we have reached the mid-term of office for this government. Therefore, it is time for us to do an evaluation of the past achievements, draw experiences and lessons that we have learnt and set new directions to accelerate and deepen the reform programs. As you are aware, I have reiterated that the RGC will push hard to maintain and move this momentum further regardless of the difficulties or challenges.

During the last two years after the July 1998 elections, Cambodia has witnessed considerable developments, notably the collapse of the political and military organizations of the Khmer Rouge and the integration of their forces into the mainstream of the society. This has brought peace to Cambodia for the first time over many decades. Having enjoyed peace, security, stability and unity of territory, which were difficult to attain, the Royal Government has adopted the most important agenda of speedy poverty alleviation and economic and social progress. We have

formulated and subsequently implemented the "Triangle Strategy" with the view to getting over political games, to cleaning up internal and external political environment and creating conditions to put the country on the path of reforms.

Since the CG Meeting held in Tokyo in February 1999, I had announced to the whole world that our reform programs are truly national requirements and not to please donors. I am confident that after monitoring and following up on the implementation of these programs during the last two years, you are even more convinced that what we had said is true. Our policies and measures have been translated into reform actions, which have become encouragingly fruitful in all the fields.

With the Royal Government's strong determination and resolve, the efforts and support from the people from all walks of life, as well as the generous assistance provided by our external partners, we have definitely achieved national reconciliation, restored peace and stability in the country. Cambodia's image on the international arena has rapidly improved and the country is now fully involved in regional and world affairs. Moreover, our economic performance has been good, with positive growth during the last few consecutive years, while countries in the region were mired in a financial turmoil. Notwithstanding these achievements, we should not be complacent. The RGC is conscious that its own capability is still limited and is deploying considerable efforts to further strengthen and improve those achievements. The year 2001 will witness a number of important developments, such as the organization of a tribunal to bring the Khmer Rouge leaders to justice and the organization of the commune elections with a view to promoting decentralization and strengthening democracy at the grassroots level.

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

After making the above introductory remarks, I would like to proceed to the evaluation and sum up the achievements made by the RGC in 2000, highlighting the strategies, policies and concrete measures put in place and implemented by the government to speed up the reform programs.

The performance of economic and fiscal reforms was strong, despite the most severe flooding in 70 years. Cambodia is moving decisively forward on the path of economic reforms, designed to maintain macroeconomic stability, strengthen the banking and financial institutions, implement fiscal reform measures, strengthen public expenditure management, ensure a sound management of public property and increase public investment in physical and social infrastructure and human resource development.

Having rigorously deepened the reform programs, real GDP rose 4.5 percent against the 5.5 percent projected, despite the unusually severe flooding. The inflation rate (4<sup>th</sup> quarter moving



average) declined from 0 percent in December 1999 to -0.8 percent in December 2000. The exchange rate was fairly stable ranging around 3,900 Riels per USD. The international reserves increased 16 percent, covering 3.3 months of imports.

To strengthen the banking system and corporate governance, the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) proceeded to bank relicensing, in compliance with the Law on Banking and Financial Institutions, with the view to closing nonviable banks, either voluntarily or through liquidation process. These measures are necessary to establish a sound banking system, promote savings and increase the confidence of the public in the banking system.

With rigorous implementation of the fiscal reforms and strict management of public expenditure, we have received encouraging results, with improved revenue mobilization and expenditure restraint to make room for flood relief advance payment of CR 73 billion or 0.6 percent of GDP.

Having rigorously implemented the fiscal reform measures, domestic revenue increased by 7 percent compared to 1999. At the same time, we recognize that we have experienced some difficulty in the collection of certain tax and non-tax revenue. Measures have been put in place by the RGC to strengthen customs administration to prevent the decline in international trade tax. Special measures are being implemented to improve collection of revenue from PTT and improve the efficiency of non-tax revenue collection.

With increased revenue collection, overall public expenditures was contained to make room for flood relief expenses. Even with increased contingency funds for flood relief, current budget surplus for 2000 was estimated at 1.6 percent of GDP, compared to 1.3 percent budgeted. This surplus was used to finance counterpart fund and locally financed projects, as well as debt amortization. The share of defense and security spending has gradually declined from 43 percent in 1999 to 37 percent of current budget in 2000, while civil administration outlays increased from 57 percent in 1999 to 63 percent of the current expenditure in 2000. Since 1994, defense and security expenditure dropped from 6.38 percent of GDP to 3.9 percent of GDP in 1999 and to 3.5 percent in 2000.

To ensure stability and social order, the RGC has decided to introduce a 10 percent salary rise for the public servants and retirees from 1 January 2001. At the same time, the RGC has displayed its strong willingness to continue the implementation of the administrative reforms as scheduled.

The Royal Government places a high priority on social and economic spending, notably on Education, Health, Agriculture and Rural Development. Actual disbursements and advance to the priority sectors, including advance payment on flood relief, which accounted for CR 73 billion,

increased by 55 percent compared to last year. In nominal term, current disbursements to Health increased 25 percent (83 percent of budget target), Agriculture - 13 percent (91 percent of budget target), Rural Development - 161 percent (104 percent of budget target) and Education - 24 percent (99 percent of budget target).

The RGC recognizes that increased spending on priority sectors is key to ensuring successful implementation of its social policy and reducing poverty. In this sense, the RGC has taken measures to improve the expenditure framework and budget execution for the social and economic priority sectors, especially through the Priority Action Program (PAP). The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) is committed to fully disburse the 2000 PAP appropriations and the spending for the Accelerated District Development (ADD) as budgeted. PAP coverage for 2001 will be expanded to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Rural Development.

*Excellencies*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

Senior Minister Sok An presented a comprehensive report on the plan and the implementation of the government demobilization program. Our primary concerns at this stage, is the delay in fund transfer to finance the demobilization project. Even with the delay in disbursement, the RGC is strongly committed to ensure successful completion of the Pilot Demobilization Project, whose lessons can be drawn for the preparation of the full mobilization of up to 15,000 soldiers in 2001. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the World Bank for increasing its commitment from US\$5 million to US\$15 million, accounting for one third of the expected cost of the RGC's full demobilization project.

To ensure the implementation of the full demobilization project before the rainy season, I wish to urge the Council for the Demobilization of Armed Forces (CDAF) to do an evaluation and arrange for an audit of the pilot demobilization project to ensure transparency for donors' decision to finance the full demobilization program. I am aware of the concerns voiced by many donors, regarding the procurement process for goods and services. I would like to take this opportunity to assure all donors that the RGC will do its utmost to ensure transparency and prevent corruption during the implementation of the demobilization program. In this sense, I urge the Council for the Demobilization of Armed Forces to discuss thoroughly with the World Bank the procurement guidelines and procedures in order to speed up the implementation of the project. Moreover, attention should be given to strengthening financial management capacity of CDAF.

I instruct CDAF to cooperate with the Ministry of Land Management, Territorial Planning and Construction and other relevant ministries to resolve the question of land and shelters for

demobilized soldiers and their families. I would like to appeal once again to all donors to speed up fund disbursement and provide some degree of flexibility to facilitate expedient and successful implementation of this important project. I am very seriously concerned about this funding issue, since with no funding or the delays in disbursement, the whole reform project will fail or will be implemented with some delays. Given the sensitivity in the implementation of the reform program, it will not be possible for the RGC to commence the implementation of this program so long as committed funds for this project has not been transferred to a trust fund account in Cambodia. Otherwise, the RGC would run the risk of swallowing political pains, due to the negligence in implementing this program. Moreover, Senior Minister Sok An also raised a number of issues, which constitute the impediments to the efforts to speed up demobilization at this stage, including uncertainty in funding for the project and the CDAF secretariat and the red tapes in implementing certain procedures. I would like to appeal for mutual understanding, cooperation and flexibility in expedient resolution of these issues.

*Excellencies*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

I have reiterated on many occasions that my political career depends on the implementation of forest policy. I even went further to announce that I would resign from the current position if the Royal Government has failed to crack down on illegal logging and ensured the implementation of the reform program to improve forest management. With such determination, even with good performance and achievements, the RGC has always been vigilant. In this sense, the RGC established and has provided full support for the Forest Crime Monitoring Unit (FCMU), which acts as a watchdog and assists the RGC in monitoring illegal logging in order to effectively stamp out corruption from this sector. At the same time, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) should prepare a legal framework to ensure efficient monitoring and prevent rogue concessionaires from using loopholes in the existing laws to fight the authorities back. The new legal instrument shall include provisions for surprise control visit and provisions ensuring the security and safety of investigators. Efforts will be deployed by the RGC to maintain the participation and full support by the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF), relevant authorities at all levels, the civil society, NGOs and Cambodia's external partners in the forest sector.

The government's Progress Report on Forest Policy Reform, prepared by MAFF illustrated the achievements attained by the RGC in this area, reflecting the main directions of the reform process underway. Over the immediate to short run, attention will be given by the government to establish and strengthen a mechanism to monitor forest crimes and ensure sustainable management of forest concessions. I order the authorities at all levels to conduct serious investigations on findings identified in Global Witness Forest Crime Investigation Report, notably the increased

illegal logging in some forest concessions and continue to take actions to crack down on illegal sawmills mentioned in the report. The continued monitoring of illegal logging, coupled with measures put in place and planned to improve the concession system, will enhance revenue mobilization from the forest sector and ensure sustainable utilization of these 1 vital natural resources.

The RGC is strongly committed to forest reform and has deployed all our energy to prevent and combat illegal logging, as well as to improve forest management. With technical assistance from the World Bank, the RGC has commenced the implementation of the Forest Concession Management and Control Pilot Project with the view to ensuring smooth implementation of the sub-decree on forest concession management passed by the Cabinet meeting in February 2000. Relevant ministries and agencies should ensure effective implementation of this sub-decree. The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) and the MAFF should ensure a proper and transparent sale of government shares in any joint venture concessionaire and should prevent the sale of government shares to any concessionaire, which had been involved in illegal logging. Such a sale of shares would undermine the prestige of the Royal Government in forest reforms.

Another crucial matter, which should receive our immediate attention, is the preparation and adoption of the Forest Law. To shore up our legal framework for forest management, a draft Forest Law has been prepared by the RGC with technical assistance from the ADB. A public consultation was launched for this draft law in July 2000. However, the draft law still contains some ambiguities, especially regarding the assignment of responsibility and jurisdiction among the Ministry of Environment (MOE) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). Moreover, the provisions regarding the structure of the Department of Forestry and Wildlife (DFW), forest registration and procedures for the collection of timber royalties are still unclear and require further elaboration. Thus, I order the MAFF to submit this law for discussion at an inter-ministerial meeting to allow relevant ministries to contribute to the provisions that are specific to them, finalize the draft law as soon as possible and submit it to the cabinet meeting by end February.

*Excellencies*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

There is a strong correlation between sound natural resource management and poverty reduction. The plight of the poor can be improved by widening their access to forest, fisheries, water resources and other public goods. Therefore, providing access to fisheries and water resources is critical to improve the living standards of the people living in the Tonle Sap and riparian regions. Realising the importance of such actions, the RGC has introduced a pro-poor policy by canceling or reducing the size of official fishing lots to improve access by the poor to traditional fisheries with a

view to ensuring equitable distribution of the fruits of economic growth. Over the past weeks, the RGC cancelled a total of 495,000 ha of fishing areas, accounting for some 53 percent of the total fishing lots to allow the poor to eke out their existence from fisheries.

To maintain social order, the RGC has accorded priority to the preparation and implementation of land policy, which will focus on land distribution, land management and land administration. The core program of the RGC land policy consists of the development of a national land policy, improved management of the national land stock, commencement of systematic land registration, tax reform, the establishment of a legal framework to enforce property rights, the establishment of provincial, municipal and national master plans and zoning and the development of rural housing. A draft Land Law was adopted by the RGC in July 2000 with a view to securing land tenure, providing a basis for reduction in land ownership conflicts, and facilitating land management, natural resource monitoring and state property protection. With technical assistance from the Federal Republic of Germany and Finland, the RGC has conducted a pilot systematic land registration project using state-of-the-art technology and delivered land title certificates for the first time to the inhabitants of Samrong District, Takeo Province.

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Today the meeting also thoroughly discussed the government's project and actions in the implementation of the administrative reform, which includes strengthening good governance and judicial reform in Cambodia. The RGC is conscious that the administrative reform is key to ensuring successful improvement in service delivery and strengthening governance. The experiences of our neighboring countries show that there is a strong correlation between improved public service quality and accelerated economic growth and poverty reduction. We have successfully completed the civil service census and established a computerized payroll at the central level. The next step will be establishing a computerized payroll at the provincial level, issuing ID cards to public servant, formulating a strategy for rationalization of civil service and strengthening the human resource management information system.

With rigorous implementation of these programs, the RGC has commenced the preparation for the implementation of next phase of the administrative reforms, namely,

1. Preparation and adoption of a legal framework for public service management;
2. Formulation and implementation of a strategy for the establishment of priority groups;
3. Continued conduct of a functional analysis of government ministries;
4. Preparation and implementation of deconcentration and decentralization;
5. Preparation and introduction of a new remuneration system;

6. Preparation of a human resource management master plan.

As you are aware, the RGC is committed to rigorously implementing deconcentration and decentralization in order to ensure the devolution of power from the central to the grassroots level. The RGC expects that the forthcoming commune elections will contribute to further strengthening democracy and improving the efficiency of public services at the grassroots level. I would like to assure all donors that the RGC has strong political will and commitment to complete the implementation of this program as scheduled.

*Excellencies*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I have stated on many occasions that the RGC is conscious that good governance is a sine qua non condition for promoting social and economic development and sustainable social equity. A draft Governance Action Plan (GAP) was prepared by the RGC and distributed for discussions at the meeting.

The GAP identifies two categories of governance reform where action will be critical to Cambodia's development over the near-and the medium-term. The first category involves four cross-cutting areas:

- 1) ***Judicial and legal reform:*** improving the legislative process, promoting dissemination of laws and regulations, developing a legal framework for private sector, developing human and material resources and infrastructure, enhancing the integrity of the judiciary and meeting private sector's needs for the arbitration of commercial disputes;
- 2) ***Fiscal reform:*** streamlining customs control, combat smuggling, developing a modern customs administration, improving VAT refunds, undertaking a comprehensive reform of investment incentives, ensuring integrity of the budgetary process, improving performance of spending units, strengthening the public investment management program, enhancing the banking system and the management of state assets and natural resources;
- 3) ***Civil administration reform:*** rationalization of employment structure, review of remuneration and establishment of management system, enhancing productivity and motivation, reinforcing transparency and participation, ensuring a close link between administrative and financial decentralization and developing human managerial and human resources at the sub-national level; and
- 4) ***anti-corruption:*** setting ethical standards, enacting special anti-corruption legislation, enforcing the sub-decree on public procurement, strengthening enforcement and scrutiny, and operationalizing the National Audit Authority.

The RGC recognizes that without credible actions in these areas, the basic virtues of good governance will not take hold in Cambodia. We have genuine willingness to implement all these programs. In fact, we have been implementing some of the above programs, thus achieving encouraging results.

However, what I want to stress here is that the GAP is very comprehensive, thus requiring prioritization, establishing a checklist, costing of the projects and setting concrete schedules to facilitate implementation and monitoring. Moreover, we should select low-cost projects that can be implemented immediately. Therefore, the key to successful implementation of the GAP is a human factor. The RGC is required to provide incentives to civil servants and the court personnel. As you are also aware, our resources are limited and do not allow us to implement the above wide-ranging programs over a short period of time.

*Excellencies*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

2001 is a crucial turning point for the people of Cambodia, paving the way for development of our country in the new century and millennium. To this end, we have introduced and implemented sectoral reform programs. However, to ensure their sustainability and the continuity of the reform momentum, a number of conditions should be met:

- 1) Maintaining favorable conditions for peace, security and national reconciliation, which were so difficult to attain recently;
- 2) Creating a sound and enabling environment for promoting economic growth and development through rigorous implementation of the government's poverty reduction strategy;
- 3) Ensuring ownership of all reform programs and strengthening a genuine partnership with all players involved;
- 4) Strengthening good governance, which is the backbone for successful implementation of the government's reform policy and poverty alleviation strategy.

*Excellencies*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Our practices have clearly shown that the Kingdom of Cambodia is among only a few countries that open the door to their external partners to be involved in discussions, provide opinion and recommendations, ensure the monitoring of the reform programs by checking performance against goals. We have confidence in this open partnership and we expect that all Cambodia's external partners would understand and would be convinced about our sincerity and candor. In

return, they will respond by enhancing effective cooperation to meet the real needs of Cambodia in ensuring fruitful implementation of these ambitious reform programs.

After the whole day's deliberations, you can see that the RGC has strong political will and commitment, as well as clear policies, strategies, programs and action plans to address these pressing challenges. Indeed, our own resources are limited. Therefore, we are in need for generous assistance from our external partners in order to achieve our ultimate goals set earlier. I hope that you will share the same view that cooperation and joint efforts, coupled with due coordination, will help put Cambodia on its own feet and ensure that Cambodians will become the master of their destiny and programs.

In conclusion, I would like to extend to all of you my best wishes for your good health, the success of your missions and all the best.

Thanks for your kind attention and I am delighted to announce the closing of this Monitoring Meeting between the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Donor Community.

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## **Bangladeshi Prime Minister Visits Cambodia**

At the invitation of Samdech HUN Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Her Excellency Sheikh HASINA, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, paid an official visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia from 21-23 January 2001.

Her Excellency Sheikh HASINA was granted a Royal Audience by His Majesty the King of Cambodia. Her Excellency Sheikh HASINA paid a courtesy call on Samdech CHEA Sim, President of the Senate, and held a bilateral meeting with Samdech HUN Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

During talks with Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen, Her Excellency Shiekh HASINA sought Cambodia's support for becoming a dialogue partner of ASEAN. At the same time, the two sides agreed to promote bilateral relations in all fields including trade and commerce for mutual benefit of the two countries.

During her official visit, Her Excellency Sheikh HASINA attended the Conference of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace (AAPP) to be held in Phnom Penh, from 22-26 January 2001, in her capacity as the AAPP President.

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## **Cambodia-Laos Joint Commission Meeting**

As agreed upon by the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Fifth Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic was held in Vientiane, Laos, on 22-26 January 2001. The Cambodian Delegation was led by **His Excellency Mr. HOR NAMHONG**, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and the Lao Delegation was led by **His Excellency Mr. SOMSAVAT LENGSAVAD**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

During the visit to the Lao PDR, **H.E. Mr. HOR NAMHONG** paid courtesy calls on **H. E. Mr. KHAMTAY SIPHANDONE**, President of the Lao PDR and **H. E. Mr. SISAVATH KEOBOUNPHANH**, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR, and visited the Kaysone Phomvihane Museum and some economic bases in Vientiane province.

The meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding reflecting the traditional bonds of good neighborliness, friendship and close relations existing between the two countries. Both sides had frank discussions on the promotion of bilateral cooperation on political and security, economic and technical, and cultural and social fields.

The two sides will continue to materialize the outcome of the official visit to the Lao PDR by **H. E. Samdech HUN SEN** from 21 - 23 October 1999, the official visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia by **H. E. Prime Minister SISAVATH KEOBOUNPHANH** from 24 - 28 April 2000 and the Informal Meeting among Prime Ministers of the 3 countries, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam which was held on 20 October, 1999 in Vientiane.

Both sides believed that the success of the 5th Meeting of the Joint Commission will strengthen further the existing traditional ties of friendship and cooperation between the peoples of the two countries, and contribute to peace, stability, cooperation and prosperity in the region as well.

The Meeting of the Joint Commission was preceded by a preparatory meeting at senior officials level on 22-24 January, 2001 under the co-chairmanship of **H. E. Madame SUN SAPHOEUN**, Under Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia and **H. E. Mr. BOUNKEUT SANGSOMSAK**, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR.

**His Excellency Mr. HOR NAMHONG**, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia invited **H.E. Mr. SOMSAVAT LENGSAVAD**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's

Democratic Republic to the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between Laos and Cambodia that would be held in the Kingdom of Cambodia in the year 2002. The precise date will be communicated through diplomatic channel.

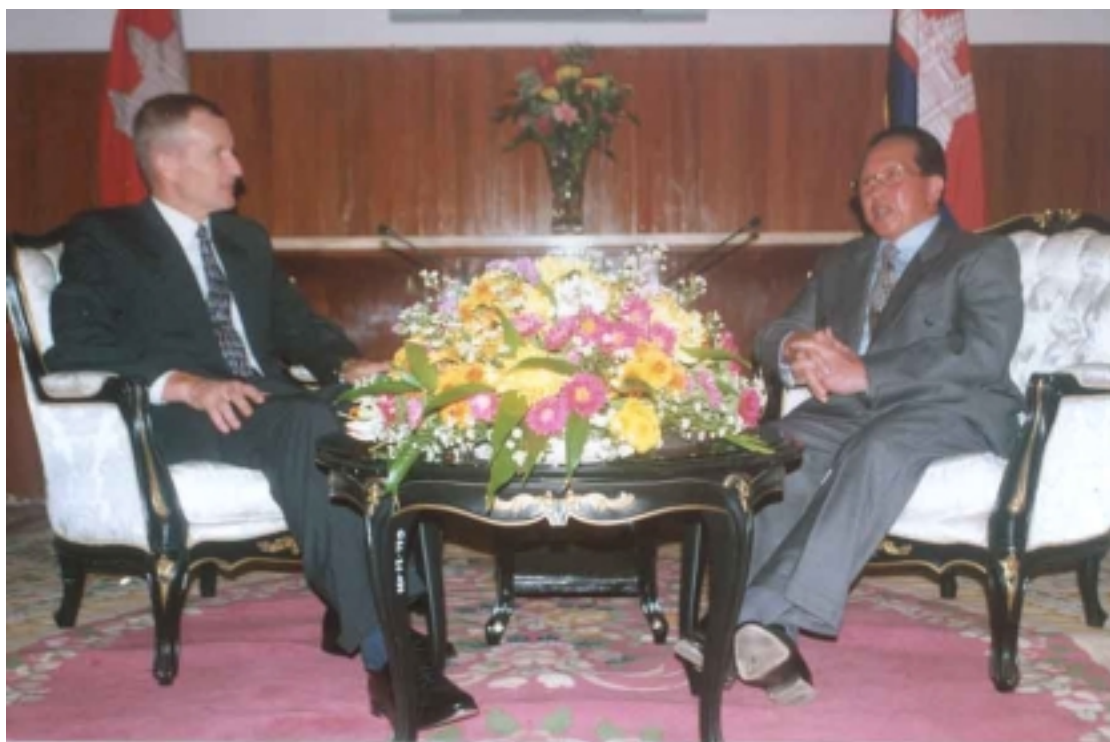
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## Senior Minister Receives US Military Delegation

On 13 January 2001, His Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, received a delegation of the United States of America headed by Admiral Dennis Cutler Blair, Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Command, who was visiting Cambodia on 12-13 January 2001.

Admiral Dennis Cutler Blair expressed his appreciation to the outstanding support and good cooperation provided by the Royal Government of Cambodia to the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action program and told Senior Minister HOR Namhong that his visit was aimed at enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries. Admiral Dennis Cutler Blair also informed Senior Minister HOR Namhong of the military relations between both countries through the provision of humanitarian aid to the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces including health, demining, engineering, and demobilization.

Senior Minister HOR Namhong expressed his sincere thanks for the humanitarian assistance provided by the United States, and recalled his consideration towards MIA a humanitarian issue made during his visit in Washington, D.C. in 1992 as well as Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen's intention to have cooperation between Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam-United States on MIA program.



*Senior Minister HOR Namhong receives US Commander in Chief Admiral Dennis Cutler Blair*

His Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong acquainted the delegation with the economic and social benefit getting from the demining in Cambodia, the financial difficulties facing Cambodian Mine

Action Center, the military reform undertaken by the Royal Government of Cambodia and its commitment to the armed forces demobilization. After informing the guests of the political stability enjoyed the country since the formation of the new coalition government and the total peace brought about by the win-win policy of Samdech HUN Sen, Senior Minister HOR Namhong stressed that the political stability and the total peace had been allowing the government to concentrate on economic development. The Senior Minister also stressed on the interest of the enhancement of the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

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## Senior Minister Meets with Indonesian Ambassador

On 4 January 2001, His Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, met with His Excellency Mr. Nazaruddin Nasution, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Indonesia to the Kingdom of Cambodia.



*Senior Minister HOR Namhong meets with Indonesian Ambassador H.E. Mr. Nazaruddin Nasution*

During the meeting, His Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong expressed his deepest thanks, on behalf of the Cambodian Red Cross as well as the Royal Government of Cambodia, for the humanitarian assistance in the amount of US\$ 10.000 provided by the Indonesian Government to help the flood victims in Cambodia.

Senior Minister HOR Namhong and Ambassador Nazaruddin Nasution had an exchange of views on the promotion of bilateral cooperation, the convention of the future Meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between Cambodia and Indonesia, the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries on Cultural Cooperation, and the cooperation in the ASEAN framework.

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## Senior Minister Receives Ambassador of Norway

On 30 January 2001, His Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, received Her Excellency Mrs. Ragne Birte lund, who has just presented on the same day to His Majesty the King her credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Norway to the Kingdom of Cambodia.

After exchanging information on the current situation in their respective country, Senior Minister HOR Namhong and Ambassador Ragne Birte lund had discussions on the promotion of bilateral relations between the two countries. Senior Minister HOR Namhong expressed interest in having cooperation from the Norwegian side on demining, Mekong development projects, and human resources development, and suggested the establishment of the Joint Commission for bilateral cooperation between both countries.



*Senior Minister HOR Namhong receives Norwegian Ambassador H.E. Mrs. Ragne Birte lund*

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## **Senior Minister Receives South Korean Ambassador**

On 30 January 2001, His Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, received His Excellency Mr. KIM Won Tae, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, in a farewell visit at the end of the envoy's diplomatic mission in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

His Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong informed His Excellency Mr. KIM Won Tae of the Ministry's plan to open the Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Seoul before the official visit to the Republic of Korea by Samdech HUN Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia, that was scheduled for the near future.



*Senior Minister HOR Namhong receives South Korean Ambassador H.E. Mr. KIM Won Tae*

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## Senior Minister Signs LOU with WFP

On 4 January 2001, a signing ceremony was held between His Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Ms. Monika MIDEL, Country Director of the UN World Food Programme in Cambodia, on a Letter of Understanding on Food Aid for Recovery and Rehabilitation in Cambodia.

The assistance, with the total amount of US\$ 58,301,454, will be provided through five components: provide additional income and temporary employment in rural and urban areas through building and rehabilitating essential assets; enhance systems of social support for poor and disadvantaged people; support national emergency preparedness and response; advocate for the needs and rights of the food-insecure poor population; and build capacity for enhanced ownership and empowerment. The project will be implemented during the period from 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2003, and assist an estimated on average 1,500,000 beneficiaries annually of chronically food insecure communes.

During the signing ceremony, Senior Minister HOR Namhong highly appreciated the WFP's current aid and its many years of support to Cambodia.



*Senior Minister HOR Namhong signs LOU with WFP's Country Director Ms. Monika MIDEL*

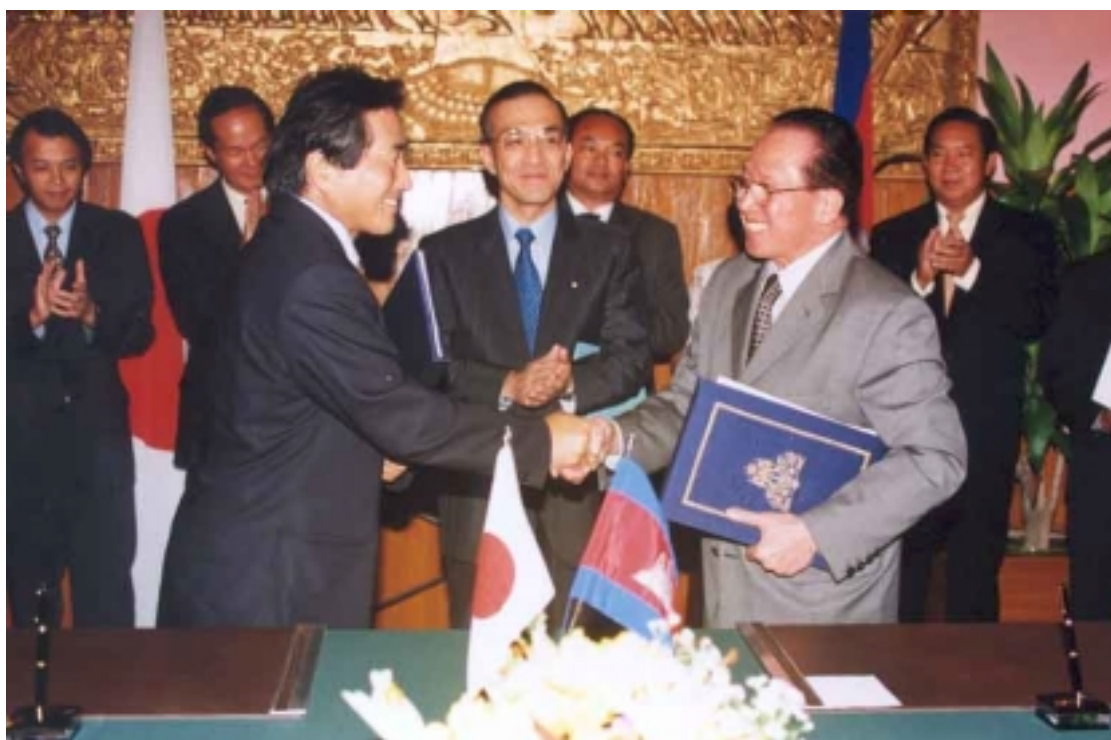
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## Senior Minister Signs Two Exchanges of Notes with Japan

On 9 January 2001, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, a signing ceremony was held between His Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and His Excellency Mr. Gotaro OGAWA, Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of Cambodia, on two Exchanges of Notes on a grant aid up to the amount of ¥138,000,000 (one hundred and thirty eight million yen) provided by the Government of Japan to the Royal Government of Cambodia for the execution of the following two projects: the Project for Expansion of Phum Prek Water Treatment Plant (¥60,000,000); and the Project for the Rehabilitation of National Road No.7 Kampong Cham province (¥78,000,000).

The grant aid will be made available during the period between the date of coming into force of the present arrangements and December 2001.

Also present at the signing ceremony was His Excellency Mr. Kiyohiro ARAKI, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan, who was visiting Cambodia on 9-10 January 2001.



*Senior Minister HOR Namhong signs two Exchanges of Notes with Japanese Ambassador H.E. Gotaro OGAWA*

It should be noticed that while in Cambodia, His Excellency Mr. Kiyohiro ARAKI paid courtesy calls on Samdech HUN Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and His

Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and attended the Opening Ceremony of the Road Construction Site at Roluos, Prasat Bakong district, presided over by Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen.

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