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ADDRESS: N° 161, Preah Sisowath Quay, Phnom Penh - Kingdom of Cambodia

Phone: (855.23) 214.441 - 216.122 - 216.146 & Fax: (855.23) 216.144 - 216.939

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ↗ Samdech Prime Minister's Comments on International Women's Day
- ↗ Samdech Prime Minister's ASEAN Lecture
- ↗ Senior Minister HOR Namhong's Official Visit to India
- ↗ Senior Minister HOR Namhong's Address on "ASEAN-India Summit Partnership: Challenges and Prospects"
- ↗ Le Ministre d'Etat HOR Namhong Signe Convention de Financement avec L'Ambassadeur de France
- ↗ Senior Minister HOR Namhong Meets Newly Appointed Lao Ambassador
- ↗ Senior Minister HOR Namhong Calls on ADB to Study Langcang-Mekong River Agreement
- ↗ Extension of Japan-ASEAN-Cambodia Tripartite Cooperation for Rural Development
- ↗ Secretary of State UCH Kiman Meets SIDA Director General
- ↗ Exchange of Instruments of Ratification of Cambodia-Germany Investments Agreement

**Samdech Prime Minister's Comments on
International Women's Day**

Following is the integral text of Samdech Prime Minister's Comments on International Women's Day, delivered on 04 March 2002:

Please allow me to elaborate a bit out of the prepared speech. Just now Lok Chumteav Minister of Women and Veteran Affairs has expressed her thanks to men and on behalf of all the men here I wish to reciprocate in kind, including my dear wife. She is looking at the sentence written above: "Men saving women is like saving own selves" – by Samdech Prime Minister Hun Sen. Women and Men is an issue that one could not separate at all. We are all in a situation of interdependence between men and women.



Samdech Hun Sen and Madame pose for a photo with women on the celebration of the International Women's Day

I wish to offer my appreciation for the efforts made by HE Ministers, Secretaries of States as well as Under-State Secretaries in their work. In this new term of Government I have noticed a strong leadership of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. I welcome their efforts and their strivings to demand inclusion of gender principles in good governance matter.

May I give a recommendation on how to challenge with men in work. I have agreed already that the Ministry of Women's Affairs conducts discussions with related Ministries so that their agendas and objectives could be included in those ministries' five-year plan. I have approved in principle. What remains to be done is that each ministry takes actual step in incorporating the demands by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Take for example, the constitution stipulates that the

Cambodian children and citizens have to complete a nine-year education. So we have to invest in education. Of course we have activities in parallel to prevent household violence, trafficking of women and children.

Based on what is stipulated in the constitution, the Ministry of Education, and their provincial system has to work with the Ministry of Women's Affairs in drafting out a geography of education. We used to say about inequality between women and men, boys and girls. In most of my speeches in the last year, I have suggested that parents pay attention to their daughters because they would do for their sons. In fact the girl, especially if she is the eldest, would do a lot of work to assist the family, which ranges from kitchen stuff to taking care of younger ones. So it most likely that she is to drop school to help work at home and it is true that her brothers would go to school. This is the reality in our family life. This happens mostly in rural areas.

Why do I talk about geography for education? Because if the girl students finished their 06-year study in the primary education, and if the junior high school is far away from residence, it is very likely that their parents would bar them from continuing their studies. Therefore the rate of school dropout after completion of primary education is high. So it is seen as a solution to bring the junior secondary education closer to the community. This would in anyway respond to what has been stipulated in the constitution. This should help bring down the number of school dropout among the girls.

Looking at the gap between the number of girls knowing how to read and write and those of boys, I am still keeping my thought of building a hostel for girl students in post higher education and higher education so that their number could be increased in the tertiary education. As of now we have some women in the Senate, the National Assembly and the Royal Government. So help me to plan a strategy that would solve this problem because as long as our women are illiterate, the infringement of their rights is there.

In the communal election, 900 out of 12,000 women candidates have been voted in the commune councils. These 900 women are a commencing figure. They would have higher percentage if their names are moved upwards on the list. I hope that in the next election they move women candidate upward in the list. Anyhow this number of women in the commune councils is a great success and it clearly indicates the efforts pooled by women in the state institutions as well as in the civil society. We must nurture this path.

The Royal Government considers investment in health helpful in reducing the mortal rate of women and children. So HE Minister of Women Affairs should sound out whatever sector you wish

to have collaboration I will offer my support in the move to incorporate gender concepts in those demanded institutions. Like in the process of making women heads of the water use groups, it is the best decision. Women know the problem better than men. Take for instance in the boat race season, men are out boating while women are staying home and doing double duties. So care and consideration should be taken in offering women leading roles to any communities to be set up at the local level. Already implemented were community of water use and management, village development, fishing, etc. I would see that women are more capable in rural credit in the future.

Samdech Prime Minister 's ASEAN Lecture

Following is the integral text of Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen's Lecture on "Challenges and Promises of ASEAN Integration: A Cambodian Perspective", delivered in Singapore on 11 March 2002:

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor for me to address this august assembly. I bring to you all greetings and good wishes from the people and the Royal Government of Cambodia. I would like to inform you today of the recent strides Cambodia has made and how it stands ready to fulfill its role in the comity of ASEAN nations. At the same time, I wish also to share with you some humble thoughts on the challenges facing our regional community and our common responsibilities for a bright future.

Just a few years ago, Cambodia has finally turned a corner of history, putting firmly behind the darkness of its recent past history and emerging into a new dawn of its future. Following the 1998 elections, which external and internal observer teams described as the "miracle on the Mekong", we conducted a "win-win" policy leading to reach genuine national reconciliation without external influences. This policy resulted in the dismantling of the political and military organization of the Khmer Rouge and the unification of our territory for the first time during the last

four centuries. Cambodia therefore has marched into the new century with a vibrant peace, ample national reconciliation and strengthened democracy. The developments following the formation of a new government for the second term of office have laid the foundation for dramatic political, economic and social transformation that all of us have currently witnessed in Cambodia.

Soon after the 1998 elections, we worked out a new political platform and formulated a "Triangular Strategy", which has underpinned our domestic and foreign policy. The first side of this strategic triangle is building peace, restoring stability and maintaining security for the nation. The second side is Cambodia's rapid integration into the international community, especially into the comity of regional nations, and normalization of our relationships with the international financial institutions. The third side of the strategic triangle is to promote development based on the favorable conditions created by the implementation of key reform programs: military demobilization, public sector, judiciary and economic reforms including fiscal and banking reforms, land reform, fisheries reform and stringent measures taken to crack down on illegal logging and to promote environmental protection.

Overall, having taken stock and reviewed the implemented programs, we can definitely say that we have moved forwards rapidly in carrying out reforms in all sectors and achieved considerable progress, reflected in macroeconomic stability and economic growth, despite the deterioration in the world and regional economic environment during the past years, caused by the Asian financial crisis, the short-term impact of the terrorist attacks of September 11 and severe floods and drought in 2000 and 2001. In 2000, real GDP growth was 5.4 percent and inflation was contained at a very low level of almost 0 percent. Growth for 2001 is estimated at 5.3 percent. The exchange rate is broadly stable and inflation is anticipated to be very low compared to last year. The international reserves increased to cover three months of imports by the end of 2001.

The recent commune elections that we have conducted recently represent a forward step for democracy and a fundamental expression of deepened reform process in all sectors in Cambodia. The newly established commune councils represent a form of power to be delegated to local communities and will become one of the main internal organizing principles of local governance. The most apparent expression of this is through the particular configuration of public goods and services provided to Cambodians from all walks of life including the transfer of resources to the grassroots communities. These systems of power devolution and resource allocation will structure the process of change, which has become now "the blood and bone of the Cambodian", in order to achieve the anticipated progress. It is my conviction that this process will not only unleash the powerful force of financial devolution and engender a far-reaching stimulus for strengthening

grassroots democracy, but also significantly structure the social capital of local communities and promote further political stability and security in the country, which is vital for the country's march toward improvement in the living standards of our people, better respect for human rights and sustainable development.

Hence, after going through untold sufferings, the Cambodian people have joined hands with the international community and risen from the ashes to create an active, a hopeful and a prosperous Cambodia. Once a backward country shattered by genocide, internal strife and armed conflicts, Cambodia has ushered into an era of globalization and information and communication technology (ICT) and would like to become a real partner in regional and global affairs on par with many countries in the region.

As I have stated earlier, the quest for regional integration constitutes one of the pillars of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC)'s strategy to maintain peace and strengthen security in Cambodia and the region. Moreover, proactive participation on equal footing in regional and world affairs requires that Cambodia take further strides in strengthening institutional capacity and developing human resources. It also means acceleration of the pace in carrying out reforms in all areas, which will engender in turn the deepening of transformation and social and economic development in Cambodia.

As one of Cambodian leaders, I have regarded myself as the one who put forth the initiative for Cambodia joining the ASEAN family and have devoted both physical and intellectual energy to achieve this goal. Why ASEAN is attractive to Cambodia? In my view, the rationale for Cambodia joining ASEAN is fourfold:

First, ASEAN created a regional environment of security, peace and stability, allowing this region to prosper. This is ASEAN's biggest strength. Indeed, we cannot maintain the regional peace and stability without securing the involvement of outside powers. Though, ASEAN itself is the determining factor in this endeavor. Peace and stability has been achieved through a framework of efficient cooperation and consultation based on the main principles of the 1967 Bangkok Declaration, especially the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs. Cambodia considers this principle as a golden rule in the strengthening of relationships and the settlement of intra-ASEAN problems. This principle should be strengthened further and maintained for the sake of regional peace and security, a prerequisite for development and progress.

Second, ASEAN is a region for cooperation, thus plays a crucial role in fostering the community spirit among members. The consensus-building principle in decision-making process

within ASEAN is a strong foundation for the community spirit and cooperation culture. Even if there are differences in views, ASEAN leaders are trying to agree and would not allow the differences to undermine ASEAN's cooperation spirit. Indeed, with the club members on the increase, it would be more difficult to implement this principle, which is of paramount importance in educating and fostering the spirit of community and cooperation within ASEAN. Therefore, the immediate challenge for ASEAN is to try to maintain this principle.

Third, ASEAN is the region known for its strong economic growth. For more than the last two decades before the 1997 Asian financial crisis ASEAN had been a main economic growth center, which spawn newly industrialized economies or Asian tigers. It is true that the regional economies have gone through serious financial turmoil, including the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the current regional slowdown. This is the biggest challenge that all South East Asian countries should address together. Nevertheless, I am very optimistic that ASEAN will be able to cope with the current slowdown by taking adjustment measures. After this is over, the ASEAN tigers will not only get back on their own feet again, but will grow stronger and stronger.

Fourth, ASEAN is the arena for diplomacy and a major international gateway. For more than 30 years of its existence, ASEAN has established an entrenched mechanism for cooperation and consultation, by maintaining close bonds of friendship with its external partners, especially through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN+3, ASEAN+1, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APEC), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the ASEAN dialogue partners. This mechanism created an efficient network for cooperation and foreign relations between ASEAN members and their main economic and political partners worldwide. This has been instrumental for maintaining security, peace and stability in the region. It also helps strengthen economic and trade relations and promotes investment across the borders. Acting within ASEAN as the arena for diplomacy and a major international gateway, the political isolation of Cambodia, which had endured for many decades, has come to an end. Cambodia has since embraced regional and world affairs on an equal footing.

The four factors mentioned earlier are of fundamental importance in ensuring in the past ASEAN's achievements and new success as a regional association. Therefore, our tasks are to mobilize our energy to enhance these strengths with a view to building a more developed and prosperous South East Asia. In this endeavor, Cambodia wants to be an equal and efficient partner in dealing with ASEAN's affairs. Cambodia is well prepared to contribute to this process. Cambodia did not join ASEAN with bare hands. The commitment to democracy, the respect for human rights, the prevalence of peace and national reconciliation in the country and our efforts to implement reforms in all sectors - all are of paramount importance to long-term stability in Cambodia and the

region. In this sense, Cambodia's membership in ASEAN is not only an event, but also a process that requires constant efforts.

It took 32 years for ASEAN to materialize its Founding Fathers' vision of ASEAN-10. In this context, I wish to take this solemn opportunity to pay tribute to the ASEAN Founding Fathers for having proposed this vision at the time when the cold and hot wars dominated our region, when outside powers and foreign ideologies pit us one against the other and divided us into opposing blocks. We should pay our due respect to this courageous and wise vision. We should also express our admiration to the leaders and governments of ASEAN-10 for making ASEAN-10 happen before the beginning of the new century. More importantly, we transformed South East Asia from a region stricken by conflicts, confrontation, wars and enmities into an epicenter of friendship and cooperation under an umbrella of ASEAN-10. Thanks to Cambodia's contributions, the division of Southeast Asia into two blocks has ended and the ASEAN-10 vision of the ASEAN founding fathers has come into reality.

We are conscious that regional economic integration will generate positive externalities in stimulating economic development in Cambodia. It is our conviction that membership in ASEAN would help the country achieving its economic goals of higher rates of industrial growth and development based on an expansion and diversification of exports and improved productivity and competitiveness of import competing industries. If these goals are to be achieved to any significant degree, our resources must be employed in their most productive uses. In this sense, the private sector can play a dominant role in allocating resources. Given Cambodia's small market size and low per capita income, membership in ASEAN will result in market expansion through trade creation and impact on investment and production. From our own experience during the 1990s, trade creates and sustains higher growth. Therefore, trade liberalization within the framework of ASEAN membership is good for growth. Also as our experience in promoting trade in garments has shown growth in trade reduces poverty. Therefore, the RGC has taken serious strides to prepare for the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and other initiatives for ASEAN economic cooperation.

Allow me to take your precious time to highlight Cambodia's efforts and reaffirm our position with regard to the important initiatives for ASEAN economic cooperation.

ASEAN membership is the requirements of both geopolitics and geo-economics of Cambodia. In order to accelerate ASEAN economic integration, especially to narrow the development gap between newer and older ASEAN members, Cambodia has prepared itself for active participation in various ASEAN initiatives, especially the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA),

the ASEAN Industrial Cooperation Scheme (AICO) and the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA). It is our conviction that these mechanisms will strengthen further the economic and trade relationships, as well as promote foreign direct investment.

In this sense, the RGC has doubled efforts to meet the demands of ASEAN membership - from changing laws to bringing finance, investment, commerce and trade sectors into alignment with ASEAN standards. Under AFTA, Cambodia has firmly committed to reduce the majority of tariff lines below 5 percent by 2010 and the remaining tariff lines (mainly applicable to sensitive agricultural products) by 2015 within the framework of the Common Effective Preferential Tariff Agreement (CEPT). In preparation for this, the RGC introduced in April 2001 tariff restructuring by reducing tariff bands from 12 to 4 with the maximum tariff rate falling from 120 to 35 per cent. We intend to reduce the unweighted average tariff rate to 14 per cent by 2002.

The granting of ASEAN GSP called ASEAN Integration System of Preferences (AISP) for export products of newer member countries will promote their exports to the original ASEAN member countries and attract foreign direct investment to newer member countries. This will help narrowing development gaps between older and newer countries. At the same time, I believe that ASEAN should be pro-active in enhancing intra-ASEAN cooperation in other areas by utilizing all ASEAN internal growth potentials, such as cooperation in tourism. This can be implemented by transforming ASEAN into a single tourism destination (T-ASEAN). In this sense, Cambodia expects that the forthcoming ASEAN Summit in 2002 will put special emphasis on the promotion of cooperation in tourism, in which all ASEAN members have great potential, which has not been totally utilized.

The RGC recognizes that common efforts to narrow the digital divide is key to poverty reduction, improvement in the living standards of the population and strengthening competitiveness of each nation in the quest for sustainable development in the era of globalization. The development of telecommunication infrastructure, especially the development of information technology is crucial for narrowing digital divide in the region and successfully implementing the E-ASEAN project. In this sense, Cambodia is preparing for the liberalization of this sector by strengthening the capacity of the regulatory body and opening up for fair competition. This will ensure that the state interests are protected, and at the same time, providing guarantee that the telecommunication operators will receive equal treatment and that the rules of the game will not bend in favor of any strong player. Moreover, the government's priority is to encourage the activities and the participation of the private sector in the development of information and communication technology

by providing adequate incentives to the companies to import technical expertise and state-of-the-art technology to promote development.

Cooperation in human resource development is of paramount importance for Cambodia. The RGC is conscious that in the new economic system of the globalization era knowledge, human resources and intellectual capital have become increasingly crucial to transforming comparative advantages of the nation into its real competitive factors. In this spirit, Cambodia has always given priority to the cooperation in human resource development. Within the ASEAN framework, we have actively supported the initiative to establish a new ASEAN training institute and to strengthen the existing institutes by focusing on the development of programs for Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. Cambodia will continue to take strides to promote the use of English as a language for communication in order to boost ASEAN's competitiveness based on knowledge in economics. In this sense, Cambodia has embarked on the reform of the education sector by implementing the following educational policies, notably universal education, modernization of education, linking education to market demand. Teaching quality is being upgraded by improving curriculum, textbooks, teaching methodology and equipment for teaching and training, equipping schools with teaching instruments and research infrastructure. Another priority is to widely promote computer literacy among Cambodian school children and students and expand the coverage of Internet to facilitate e-education, which will increase the efficiency and modernize the education sector.

The ASEAN-10 vision of the ASEAN founding fathers was crystallized three years ago. However, ASEAN-10 is facing with many challenges from the first day of its birth. In my view, along with the many challenges facing ASEAN related to the re-adjustment and changes in the structure of the world economic and political systems, such as the slowdown in the world economy, especially the electronic crisis, which has negatively impacted on ASEAN exports; the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks; and China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), which has absorbed FDI from our region, and hence, required ASEAN to strengthen its own competitive advantages; and etc, the development gap among ASEAN members is the most important issue associated with ASEAN's internal structure, otherwise known as issues arising from the realization of ASEAN-10. In this sense, "eradication" or more realistically "narrowing" development gap between older and newer ASEAN members is instrumental for successful integration in the region with the realization of ASEAN-10.

In this sense, Cambodia has voiced full support for the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), proposed by H.E. GOH CHOK TONG, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, at the

Third ASEAN Summit held in November 2000 to narrow development gap in ASEAN. To promote further this initiative, Cambodia has actively participated in various ASEAN meetings on this issue until an agreement was reached to take measures aimed at strengthening institutional capacity of the body in charged of ASEAN integration. This includes the establishment of a Working Group consisting of representatives of newer ASEAN members and the ASEAN Secretary General, the creation of an IAI Unit at the ASEAN Secretariat and the organization of a Workshop on Narrowing Development Gap in ASEAN held in Phnom Penh from 20-22 November 2001. Cambodia has also supported the idea of setting priority for cooperation in IAI focusing on four sectors: human resource development, information technology, infrastructure and regional economic integration.

Moreover, I wish to stress that the key to accelerate intra-ASEAN economic integration, especially the integration of older and newer members, is the development of transport infrastructure, road, waterway, air and rail transportation. Without physical integration, which concentrates on the development and implementation of transport-related infrastructure projects, all policy efforts to facilitate the inflow and outflow of goods, services and people, as well as measures aimed at increasing income for the people in the region will not make much sense nor have considerable impact on the outcome. At present, ASEAN has two important infrastructure projects in the pipeline: the construction of the Singapore-Kunming rail link and the ASEAN Highway project. Our most critical issue at this stage is to find finance sources for the proposed and agreed projects. I think, the project that ASEAN can realize first is the construction of a rail link between Singapore and Kunming. Cambodia has voiced full support for the recommendations made by the third Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC) in Chiang Rai, Thailand, on 8th - 9th October, 2001 and the decision by the ASEAN Leaders at the Fourth ASEAN Summit in Brunei to build the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link as priority project and their endorsement of the recommended route configuration No 1, which passes through Cambodia. Cambodia needs US\$500 million for the construction of the missing links between Poipet and Sisophon and between Phnom Penh and Loc Ninh a border town of

Vietnam. We are working actively with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and other donors to seek financing for this project.

Furthermore, ASEAN should speed up the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Goods in Transit to facilitate land transport in the region and lower its cost in the process. In this sense, we should give high priority to the expeditious implementation of the trans-ASEAN energy networks consisting of the ASEAN Power Grid and the trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline project; which would help ensure the security and sustainability of energy supplies in ASEAN.

Therefore, I wish to stress that ASEAN needs massive investments in physical infrastructure in order to ensure full physical integration of the region, notably to establish transport networks among new members, as well as between newer and older members. Given all those needs, but with limited resources, it is necessary for ASEAN to encourage other forms of cooperation that complement its own initiatives, such as the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Program and the promotion of development triangle areas among ASEAN members and between ASEAN members and non-ASEAN economies. May I elaborate further on this important issue?

Cambodia gives considerable importance to the development and cooperation within the GMS framework. In a developmental sense, the importance of the GMS cooperation is attributable to the following factors:

First, the GMS countries are endowed with both natural resources and energetic, skilled and dedicated human capital. The Mekong River provides great potentials for power and sources of invaluable natural resources. The GMS is rich in terms of development potentials in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and is renowned for its historical monuments, forests, mountains and lakes with beautiful scenery, the most important attractions to international tourists. Moreover, this huge region covering approximately 2.3 million square kilometers and populated by some 300 million inhabitants represents a big market. In this sense, GMS consists of countries with complementary endowments in terms of natural resources, human capital and historical sites. Should they have adequate capital and make wise investment, this subregion could generate rapid, sustainable economic growth.

Second, the GMS, comprised of five ASEAN members-Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam-, and the Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China (PRC), is a region with great potentials for economic growth and development. In this sense, the GMS is an important economic gateway linking Southeast Asia to China, which is a political and economic super power in East Asia.

Third, most of the GMS countries are ASEAN new members with lower level of economic development, compared to more developed older members. Therefore, development of the GMS will constitute an effective measure aimed at narrowing intra-ASEAN development gap and the capacity development for newer ASEAN members will remove the impediment and pave the way for regional economic integration.

In this context, a number of initiatives have been proposed under the umbrella of various organizations and bodies with a view to promoting the development of this sub-region, including the Mekong River Committee (MRC), which was established with the assistance of the United Nations, the ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC) proposed by ASEAN Leaders and the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), initiated and supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which comprises six riparian countries: five ASEAN members and a province of China. Consultations between and among countries concerned resulted in the development of more than 100 projects in eight important sectors, such as transport, power, telecommunications, tourism, environment, human resource development, trade and investment. Moreover, there are many other projects that have been proposed by various donors and countries in the region.

In this context, Cambodia considers that the major challenge at this stage is to ensure coordination between and among various GMS cooperation initiatives and projects. Considerable resources have been invested on the conduct of studies and design of projects. Therefore, most importantly is to ensure that all proposed cooperation projects and initiatives are complementary, rather than conflictive or competitive. The crucial factor in this is to ensure effective coordination among cooperating countries with a view to maximizing the complementarities and ensuring the ownership of various projects and initiatives, rather than leave these projects and initiatives to the discretion of donors.

In this regard, in my capacity as Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I have proposed to establish a joint working group with members drawn from representatives of ASEAN, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, the ADB, ESCAP and other donors to review all proposed initiatives, studies and projects and design a comprehensive master plan, which sets tone for the cooperation and development of the GMS for the next 20 to 25 years. Indeed, such development plan should be realistic and includes prioritization of concrete projects, measures for resource mobilization and investment programs.

This initiative has been the subject for discussions during the subsequent ASEAN and ASEAN plus three Head of State and Head of Government meetings. Summing up the discussions on this issue at the Third ASEAN Summit held in November 2000, H.E. GOH CHOK TONG, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, proposed that Heads of State and Government of the GMS countries meet to make a decision on the above initiative. Subsequent discussions that I have promoted in my capacity as the Cambodian Head of Government among relevant players led to an agreement to organize a Summit of the Greater Mekong Sub-region within the framework of the

ADB's GMS program to be held back-to-back with the ASEAN Summit in late 2002 in Phnom Penh.

It is my conviction that with the assistance of all our development partners the GMS Summit to be held late this year will pave the way for the transformation of the Greater Mekong Sub-region of the 21st century from a region stricken by backwardness, internal strife, instability and poverty into an epicenter of peace, security, stability, cooperation and development in all sectors. This will largely contribute to narrowing the development gap in ASEAN.

Coupled with the efforts to promote development cooperation within the framework of the Greater Mekong Sub-region, our priority is also given to the optimal utilization of economic potentials by ASEAN newer members sharing common borders. This represents a complementary arrangement to the regional and sub-regional efforts, aimed at promoting integration of Southeast Asia, especially narrowing development gap within ASEAN. In this sense, on 26 of January 2002, Vietnamese Prime Minister PHAN VAN KHAI, Laotian Prime Minister BOUNNHANG VORACHIT and myself met for the second time to discuss ways to establish a Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Triangle Development.

We have agreed that the development triangle should cover seven provinces, notably Rattanakiri and Stung Treng of Cambodia, Attapu and Champasak of Laos and Kon Tum, Gia Lai and Dac Lac of Vietnam. Overall, this vast area possessed of a variety of natural resources and has the potential for economic development and will become a new frontier of our economic growth. Hence, this triangle concept is designed to develop the seven provinces and turn them into agricultural, agro-business, commercial and investment areas. In this sense, improving infrastructure will create opportunities for the expansion of production, trade and development in other sector, such as tourism, as well as promotion and improved cooperation in those provinces.

The meeting also agreed on a number of major principles regarding the establishment of this development triangle:

First, such growth triangle arrangements are designed to complement overall ASEAN economic cooperation. The Fourth ASEAN Summit and the ASEAN Vision 2020 have mandated the establishment and promotion of sub-regional economic arrangements among ASEAN members and between ASEAN members and non-ASEAN economies.

Second, the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam growth triangle should constitute an integral part of our tremendous efforts to promote cooperation and development in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

(GMS) and other sub-regional initiatives such as the ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMDC). In this sense, the CLV growth area is a "cooperative arrangement", linking the disadvantageously remote areas of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to the development programs and projects within the regional and sub-regional framework. In this regard, expansion of key transport corridors in this border area to economic corridors and linking them to the GMS initiatives and other projects is also crucial for regional and sub-regional cooperation. This will significantly contribute to each country's efforts to reduce poverty and improve the living standards of the people living in these areas.

Third, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam are newer ASEAN members with a lower level of economic development, compared to older members. Therefore, concerted efforts in promoting the development in the border zones are the only effective resolution in addressing the problem of economic gaps within our own countries. These cooperative arrangements are also designed to reduce poverty and socio-economic disparities in ASEAN, especially between the newer and older Members States. It will pave the way for economic integration in the Greater Mekong Sub-region and ASEAN.

By linking the regional growth efforts to important ASEAN initiatives, such as the CEPT for AFTA, the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) and the Agreement on the Facilitation of Transit Goods and other agreements within the GMS framework, this development triangle will be able to attract greater investment flows. Our resources will complement one another, enabling manufacturing firms to achieve vertical integration in their operations as well as economies of scale. The creation of a wider agricultural, agro-industrial and manufacturing base with resources that are similarly complementary should induce the private sector to consider the sub-region as a whole in expanding their business activities.

In this juncture, to promote fruitful cooperation in the promotion of the development triangle, attention should be given to the following priority areas:

First, propose priority projects to link crucial infrastructure network in the development triangle by clearly identifying the sources of financing consisting of each country's budget resources or co-financing arrangement or self-help mechanism established by participating partners or external assistance.

Second, conduct a feasibility study and establish a joint power transmission network in the development triangle.

Third, cooperate to establish public warehouses and wholesale markets at major border checkpoints, decision-making structures have to be simplified and streamlined customs and trade control formalities have to be established. Moreover, it is also important to discuss cross-border transit facilitation arrangements in order to give improved access to seaports of participating countries and facilitate partners to utilize international seaports.

Fourth, conduct a joint study on the establishment of an export-processing zone to facilitate exports to Europe under the GSP scheme and develop joint tourism packages for the development triangle.

Bearing in mind the above principles, it is my conviction that this development triangle should offer to businessmen and investors immense opportunities for the exploitation of the region's rich resources and the complementary locational advantages which could easily suit any corporate strategy. Therefore, it is important to give priority to link transport infrastructure, implement facilitation measures and establish a very competitive environment to make the development triangle an attractive base for trade and investments and transform this growth triangle into a center for growth and prosperity.

In developing this triangle area, Cambodia is working with Thailand and Laos to organize a Summit of the Prime Ministers of the three countries with the view to establishing a Cambodia-Laos-Thailand Growth Triangle.

So now, at the dawn of the 21st century, Cambodia is firmly back on the rails as one unified nation. The Cambodian people look to the future with great optimism, borne out of our own achievements through the implementation of government's sound economic and social policies. In this manner, our government has laid the foundations for a genuine cooperation within the ASEAN framework, built on the aspirations of our people to improve their lives, to live in harmony as good neighbors with one another and to be common stakeholders in the destiny of their own lives and the development of our region.

As I have noted earlier, it took ASEAN 32 years to achieve the ASEAN founding fathers' vision for ASEAN-10. Right now ASEAN-10 has less than 20 years to realize its second generation vision of ASEAN 2020 which aims to establish a sharing and caring society by 2020. Indeed, this is an ambitious vision if ones take into account the diversity of political, social, cultural, religious and psychological settings, in particular the different development level of the ten members states. However, we are still confident in this vision and we are optimistic that together we will be able to

achieve this ambitious goal. As I have stated earlier, Cambodia is well prepared to fulfill its own part of this endeavor.

Senior Minister HOR Namhong's Official Visit to India

At the invitation of the Government of India, His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, led a delegation to pay an official visit to India from 13-15 March 2002.

On 14 March, His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong paid courtesy call on and presented the invitation letter of Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen to His Excellency Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India to pay an official visit to Cambodia and to attend the upcoming ASEAN-India Summit held in November this year.

Senior Minister HOR Namhong informed the Indian Prime Minister that Cambodia was very pleased to host the summit meeting between ASEAN and India, which had been initiated by Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen during his official visit to India in February 2000. There would be an Inaugural Statement of the First ASEAN- India Summit, added the Senior Minister.

Three Agreements would be signed during Indian Prime Minister's visit, namely: Agreement on Air Link between India and Cambodia, Agreement on the Restoration of Ta Prom Temple and Soft Loan Agreement, said the Senior Minister.

The Senior Minister also briefed the Prime Minister on the successful results of the commune elections, the endeavors of the Royal Government in the economic development, and poverty alleviation which was one of the priorities of the development plan.

On 15 March 2002, Senior Minister HOR Namhong met with His Excellency Mr. Jaswant SINGH, Minister for External Affairs of India.

During the meeting, Senior Minister HOR Namhong told his counterpart that the future visit by the Indian Prime Minister would be very important, not only for bilateral relations, but also for the promotion of the ASEAN-India cooperation.

The Senior Minister requested India to take part in the Mekong River Development in the framework of the four Mekong River-related organizations:

- 1- Mekong River Commission (MRC)
- 2- Organisation of Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific of the United Nations (ESCAP)
- 3- Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS)
- 4- ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC)

Senior Minister HOR Namhong also appealed for India participation in the ASEAN integration process: Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS), Singapore- Kunming Rail Link, and in the fields of Human Resource Development (HRD) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Senior Minister HOR Namhong also had separate meetings with Minister of Tourism and Culture, and Minister of Finance. The meetings focused mainly on ASEAN-India cooperation.

Senior Minister HOR Namhong also delivered a statement on “ ASEAN-India Summit Partnership: Challenges and Prospects ” organized by the Indian Institute for Research and Information.

**Senior Minister HOR Namhong's Address on
“ASEAN-India Summit Partnership:
Challenges and Prospects”**

Following is the integral text of an Address on “ ASEAN-India Summit Partnership: Challenges and Prospects, delivered by Senior Minister HOR Namhong in New Delhi, India on 14 March 2002:

*Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. At the outset, I wish to take this opportunity to express my most sincere appreciation to the “*Research and Information System for the Non-aligned and Developing Countries*” for inviting me to speak at this important gathering under the “ASEAN-India Eminent Persons Lecture Series.” I am pleased and honored to be here and to share with you my views and insights on the “*ASEAN-India Summit Partnership: Challenges and Prospects.*” This topic is not only very timely but also very significant in the context of the upcoming ASEAN-India Summit, which will be held in Cambodia, in November this year.

2. Today, I wish to outline three important areas, namely, ASEAN-India Cooperation, Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, and the upcoming ASEAN-India Summit in Phnom Penh. On the ASEAN-India Summit, I will focus primarily on what I consider to be the key challenges and prospects for ASEAN-India relations. I will also highlight the major areas that ASEAN and India could cooperate or strengthen in the future, as the ASEAN-India partnership has been elevated to a higher level of importance.

I. ASEAN-India Cooperation

3. I believe that the first important turning point for ASEAN-India relations was when the ASEAN Heads of Government unanimously agreed at the Fourth ASEAN Summit in January 1992 to award India the status of Sectoral Dialogue Partner. In the following year, the Sectoral Dialogue Partnership was essentially formalized through an official exchange of letters between ASEAN and India. The decision of the ASEAN Leaders to upgrade relations with India was mainly in recognition of the strategic role of India in the subcontinent South Asia and in building better relations with a key regional power. As a regional power, India has important economic and political potentials for ASEAN.

4. However, ASEAN-India relations did not stay only at the Sectoral Dialogue Partnership level. In fact, three years later, at the Fifth ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, the ASEAN Leaders further decided to enhance ASEAN-India relations by awarding India the status of a full Dialogue Partner. In this capacity, India could then officially participate in the Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) or the meeting between ASEAN foreign ministers and dialogue partners, and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), a regional multilateral security meeting. In July 1996, India seized the opportunity and participated in the 29th PMC and the Third ARF. India’s participation, I would argue, helped raise the profile of ARF and at the same time positively contributed to the ASEAN-India ties within the dialogue partnership context.

5. To further advance the relations between the two sides, ASEAN and India established the ASEAN-India Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting (JCC), and the first ASEAN-India JCC was held in November 1996 in New Delhi. In February 1998, ASEAN and India also started the political dialogues and consultations at the Senior Officials level, given the growing political, economic and security issues at the time. The political consultations between ASEAN and India have been very important in light of the challenges facing our regions and the international community, and especially after the recent terrorist attacks on the United States.

6. However, in order for ASEAN-India relations to become more institutionalized and more effective, both sides agreed to establish mechanisms to coordinate and facilitate the works, specifically at the professional and technical level. In this context, ASEAN and India agreed to set up the following working groups:

1. ASEAN-India Working Group on Development Cooperation
2. ASEAN-India Working Group on Science and Technology
3. ASEAN-India Working Group on Trade and Investment
4. ASEAN-India Business Council

7- These working groups are operational at the technical level, and they have contributed to the improvement of ASEAN-India ties in various sectors of the economies. Certainly, the Working Groups

will have to identify more specific areas for joint projects and programs of activities so that they are more results-oriented.

II. Mekong-Ganga Cooperation

8. In addition, there has been another level of important cooperation between ASEAN and India in the framework of the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC), which is comprised of five members of ASEAN, namely the riparian states of the Mekong (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam). Although the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation has been more recently established, its Inaugural Ministerial Meeting took place in Vientiane, Laos, in November 2000. In the Vientiane Declaration, the MGC ministers identified several key areas for cooperation, such as culture, education, tourism, transport and communications.

9. In January 2001, the Senior Officials for MGC met to follow up on the decisions of the MGC ministers to set up the five experts working groups in the areas of culture, human resource development, transport and communications, tourism, and programme of action. The

establishment of the Experts Working Groups was to focus on key areas where the MGC member countries could cooperate. At its first meeting in Hanoi in May 2001, the Experts Working Group on the Programme of Action drafted the “Hanoi Programme of Action for MGC,” which was later adopted by the Second Ministerial Meeting of MGC. In essence, the main areas of cooperation within the MGC are culture, education, tourism, and transport and communications.

10. I wish to emphasize that the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation is a very important initiative that could bring great benefits to all its members, including India. At the same time, the MGC could help bring ASEAN and India closer together as they work in the spirit of amity and cooperation and in equal partnership.

11. As related to the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, this year Cambodia will also host the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Summit. The GMS is an important subregional cooperation which has been mainly supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). In the GMS framework, the cooperation is extended to the five member-states of Southeast Asia and the Yunnan province of China. There have been various subregional projects in the GMS, but they are categorized into eight key sectors, such as transport, energy, telecommunications, tourism, environment, human resource development, trade, and investment.

12. The GMS Summit will be the first high-level meeting to be held, and Cambodia will be hosting it preceding the Eight ASEAN Summit. Given the inter-related Mekong and Ganga development—I hope that India will be interested in the development of the GMS as well as its various schemes and projects.

III. ASEAN-India Summit

13. It is interesting to note that Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen was the first to raise the idea of an ASEAN-India Summit with Indian leaders during his official visit to India in February 2000 and now Cambodia will host the first ASEAN-India Summit in Phnom Penh.

14. Initially, the ASEAN Leaders considered the Indian proposal during the Fourth ASEAN Informal Summit in Singapore, but there was no consensus. Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, however, continued to strongly support the proposal of having the ASEAN-India Summit. At the Seventh ASEAN Summit in Brunei Darussalam in November 2001, the ASEAN Leaders unanimously agreed to invite India for an ASEAN-India Summit back-to-back with the Eighth ASEAN Summit in Cambodia in November 2002. The strategic decision of the ASEAN Leaders to

go ahead with the ASEAN-India Summit marked another important milestone in ASEAN-India relations.

15. While it is not clear at this stage whether the ASEAN-India Summit will be held annually or biannually, it will be up to the leaders to decide at the upcoming ASEAN-India Summit in Phnom Penh. Cambodia's position is strongly in favor of an annual ASEAN-India Summit in order to give important recognition and significant value to the relations and cooperation between the two sides.

16. Moreover, I strongly believe that an annual ASEAN-India Summit would bring mutual benefits and clear advantages to both sides. For ASEAN, I am convinced that we need to deepen relations with India at the highest level, given the emerging role of India as regional power. With her population size, geography and economic development, there is logical reason to believe that ASEAN-India economic cooperation will be beneficial for both sides.

17. Given the current speed of globalization and the global political and security uncertainties, it is important for ASEAN and India to have regular consultations on geopolitical issues and strategic challenges facing them. To be sure, what happens in South Asia has direct and indirect repercussion on ASEAN. Therefore, an annual ASEAN - India Summit would provide timely and important venue for leaders' close consultation.

18. Furthermore, India is no stranger to ASEAN. In fact, India is the only major power in the region that ASEAN at present does not have regular consultation with at the highest level. For this reason, the ASEAN-India Summit would offer a great opportunity for senior leaders from ASEAN and India to meet and consult one another on issues of mutual interests. In this context, it is my view that the upcoming ASEAN-India Summit in Phnom Penh will be a landmark meeting of historic importance and it will usher in a new era of ASEAN-India strategic relations.

Challenges

19. I believe that ASEAN-India relations needs to overcome several key challenges in order to further advance relations.

First, ASEAN and India have to value their relations more significantly and give greater priority to their present relationship. This is vital in shaping the perceptions and the public opinions in both ASEAN and India. Considering the geographical proximity between ASEAN and India, both sides need to promote greater exchanges at all levels and to build a closer and more

constructive partnership. For ASEAN, I believe we need to look not only at the East (China, Japan and ROK) but also at the West (India).

20. *Second*, both ASEAN and India have been facing major political and security challenges, as a result of the September terrorist attacks on the United States and the subsequent widespread terrorist networks. The threats of terrorism are real, and ASEAN and India will need to enhance their cooperation in areas such as intelligence and information sharing, as well as the suppression of financing of the terrorism networks regionally and internationally. In essence, ASEAN and India need to coordinate jointly in their efforts in combating terrorism.

21. *Third*, I believe that ASEAN and India could do more to curb international crime, such as the illegal trade of small arms and light weapons which constitute the sources of terrorism. Therefore, in the current political and security situations today, how can ASEAN and India do more to enhance cooperation in these sensitive areas and thus promote regional peace, stability and security?

Prospects

22. Nevertheless, I think that ASEAN-India relations today have better prospects than ever before. There are a number of key areas of cooperation that ASEAN and India will push further. These areas of cooperation are not only vital for their economies but also for building a closer relationship:

- First, trade and investment: Both ASEAN and India should do more to further explore ways and means of promoting trade and investment between the two sides. Concretely, both sides should seek to promote Indian investment in the ASEAN region and vice versa.

- **Second, science and technology: Given India's strength in this area, especially software development, India may wish to share its experience with ASEAN in the areas of information and**

communication technology (ICT), as well as software development training. These are important areas in which ASEAN could work closely with India.

- **Third, human resource development: As part of India's support for training program, especially in the IT-related courses, India should emphasize the needs of the new members of ASEAN in order to promote ASEAN integration. In the context of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), an important theme of ASEAN today, I believe that India can play an**

important role in supporting the implementation of the IAI flagship projects, which will be adopted by ASEAN leaders during the fourth coming summit in Phnom Penh.

- **Fourth, transport and infrastructure:** Another area in which ASEAN should encourage India to support is the building of transport and infrastructure networks, especially within the context of the Singapore-Kunming Rail-links (SKRL) and the promotion of more air links between the two regions. In this context, I think that India can also be involved in the Mekong development as stated above.

- **Fifth, tourism:** ASEAN and India should do more to promote joint tourism development by introducing joint promotions and other programs. There are great opportunities for both sides in terms of connecting ASEAN-India destinations to attract more tourists. At the Eight ASEAN Summit this year, ASEAN's leaders will sign the ASEAN Tourism Agreement as another significant step toward promoting regional tourism for all the ASEAN member countries. Perhaps, the ASEAN Tourism Agreement could be extended to the Plus Three countries of East Asia (China, Japan, ROK) as well as India.

- **Sixth, people-to-people interaction:** ASEAN and India should promote more people-to-people contacts, such as academic exchanges, cultural programs, and more linkages between the two sides. We need to go beyond the current people-to-people interaction.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Le Ministre d'Etat HOR Namhong
Signe Convention de Financement avec L'Ambassadeur de France

Le jeudi 7 mars 2002, à 16h30, au Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et de la Coopération Internationale, Son Excellence Monsieur HOR Namhong, Ministre d'Etat, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères et de la Coopération Internationale, et Son Excellence Monsieur André-Jean LIBOUREL, Ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de France au Royaume du Cambodge, ont signé une Convention de Financement entre le Gouvernement Royal du Cambodge et le

Gouvernement de la République française pour l'exécution du projet d' "Assistance à la maîtrise d'ouvrage dans le domaine de la gestion et du développement urbain ".

Cette Convention de Financement permettra la mise en oeuvre d'une aide française de huit millions de Francs Français destinée à l'appui aux travaux menés par la Municipalité de Phnom Penh dans les domaines de l'assainissement, de l'urbanisme et du cadastre.



Le Ministre d'Etat Signe Convention de Financement avec L'Ambassadeur de France

Il est à noter que la signature de cette Convention de Financement constitue l'application de l'accord-cadre de Coopération culturelle, scientifique et technique conclu le 10 mai 1994 à Paris entre le Gouvernement Royal du Cambodge et le Gouvernement de la République française.

**Senior Minister HOR Namhong
Meets Newly Appointed Lao Ambassador**

On 20 March 2002, His Excellency Mr. HOR Namhong , Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation , received a courtesy call on paid by His Excellency Mr. Thouane Vorasam, who had been appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to Cambodia .



Senior Minister HOR Namhong Meets Newly Appointed Laos Ambassador

The Senior Minister, on behalf of the Royal Government, expressed concern over the impacts of the Quadriparties Agreement on Commercial Navigation on Langcang-Mekong River between the Mekong River upstream countries on the two downstream countries, especially Cambodia and stressed on the assessment made by Cambodian and foreign experts on the grave impacts of this agreement on environment, aquatic life, ecology, and other harmful effects.

After referring to the proposal made by Samdach Prime Minister Hun Sen to Laos Prime Minister during the Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia Summit in Hochiminh city early this year, the Senior Minister urged Laos government to re-examine this agreement as well as its impacts on Cambodia.

The Senior Minister and His Excellency Ambassador also had an exchange of views on strengthening relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries, especially making the friendly and peaceful border and pushing the implementation of bilateral agreements signed by both countries.

Senior Minister HOR Namhong Calls on ADB to study Langcang – Mekong River Agreement

In the efforts to prevent the impacts of the Quadriparties Agreement on Commercial Navigation on Langcang – Mekong River between the Mekong River upstream countries on Cambodia, His Excellency Senior Minister Hor Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, requested the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to help thoroughly study the project and its impacts on Cambodia and Vietnam as the two Mekong River downstream countries. This proposal was raised during a courtesy call on the Senior Minister paid by Mrs. Yuejiao Zhang, Deputy Director General of the Mekong Regional Department of the ADB Headquarters, on 20 March 2002.

The Senior Minister drawn the attention of Mrs. Yuejiao Zhang to the assessment made by Cambodian and foreign experts on the grave impacts of this agreement on the two downstream countries, Cambodia and Vietnam.

The Senior Minister also informed Mrs. Yuejiao Zhang about Cambodia's preparation to host the Greater Mekong Sub- Region (GMS) Summit and ASEAN Summit at the end of this year , as well as the arrangement for the participation of ADB President in GMS Summit and certain programs in the framework of ASEAN Summit.



Senior Minister HOR Namhong Meets with Deputy Director General of MRD of ADB

Mrs. Yuejao Zhang promised to convey all the Cambodian concerns to ADB and the Mekong River upstream countries. Mrs. Yuejao Zhang also told the Senior Minister that ADB would support and closely work with Cambodia in the preparation for the success of the GMS Summit.

Secretary of State UCH Kiman Meets SIDA Director General

On 4 March 2002, there was a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation between H.E. Mr. UCH Kiman, Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Mr. Bo Goransson, Director General of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

During the discussions the two sides exchanged their views on the future promotion of direct cooperation between the Royal Government of Cambodia and SIDA, particularly the assistance provided by Swedish government for rural development, education, mine clearance, and democracy and human rights as well.

Three agreements on Development Cooperation (2002-2004), General Terms and Conditions for Development Cooperation (2002-2006), and Consultancy Fund to be signed by the governments of the two countries were also touched on

H.E. Mr. UCH Kiman, after highly appreciating the efforts made by SIDA in helping Cambodia since 1979, briefed his guest on the current situation in the country.

**Extension of Japan-ASEAN-Cambodia
Tripartite Cooperation for Rural Development**

On March 28, 2002 at 04:00 pm, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, His Excellency Mr. LY Thuch, Minister of Rural Development, His Excellency Mr. UCH Kiman, Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, His Excellency Mr. GOTARO OGAWA, Ambassador of Japan, His Excellency Mr. NAZARUDDIN NASUTION, Ambassador of Indonesia, His Excellency Mr. A. H. ANUAR, Ambassador of Malaysia, His Excellency Mr. CHATCHAWED CHARTSUWAN, Ambassador of Thailand, and Mr. Arkia D. Batua, officer in charge of the Embassy of the Philippines signed a Record of Discussions that would make possible the extension of the duration of the implementation of " The Rural Development Project in Cambodia up to 31 March 2003 .



*Japan-ASEAN-Cambodia Sign a Record of Discussions
on the Extension of Tripartite Cooperation for Rural Development.*

The Rural Development Project in Cambodia aimed at promoting food production, income generating activities and other rural community development activities in Kompong Speu and Takeo provinces through joint technical assistance provided by the Governments of Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Cambodia.

According to the Japanese Embassy's Release, the " Tripartite " cooperation, which was initiated in July 1992, by Japan, Cambodia, above mentioned four ASEAN countries, UNHCR, and UNDP, was a comprehensive technical cooperation for rural development in Takeo and Kompong Speu provinces, comprised of various activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, fish farming, public health, education and vocational training aiming to transfer the technical skills necessary for development in the Cambodian rural population.

Japan had provided all the necessary funds for this " Tripartite " cooperation, which amount to US\$ 14,840,000 by the end of March 2002. Beginning from 1994, total numbers of 240 ASEAN experts, 51 JOCVs (Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers) and 24 JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) experts had been dispatched to this project, added the release.

**Exchange of Instruments of Ratification
of Cambodia-Germany Investments Agreement**

On 14 March 2002, at 10:00 a.m, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, His Excellency Mr. CHHOEUNG Chamroeun, Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and His Excellency Dr. Helmut OHLRAUN, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany, exchanged Instruments of Ratification of the Agreement concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investments between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Federal Republic of Germany.



*Secretary of State CHHOEUNG Chamroeun Signs Exchange of Instruments of
Ratification with German Ambassador*

His Excellency Mr. CHHOEUNG Chamroeun, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, highly appreciated the good results brought about by the close cooperation between the two countries and stressed that the above mentioned Agreement would pave the way for the flow of German investment into Cambodia and thus contributing to enhance bilateral trade

His Excellency Dr. Helmut OHLRAUN highlighted the importance of the Agreement and shared the hope expressed by Secretary of State CHHOEUNG Chamroeun.
