



**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**

**Nation Religion King**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

# **INFORMATION BULLETIN**

## **ព្រឹត្តិបត្រព័ត៌មាន**

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## **Working Visit by Indonesian President**

Her Excellency Mrs. MEGAWATI SOEKARNOPUTRI, President of the Republic of Indonesia, and His Excellency Mr. TAUFIQ KIEMAS, paid a working visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia on 23-24 August 2001. His Excellency Dr. N. Hassan WIRAJUDA, Minister of Foreign Affairs was included in the official delegation.

Her Excellency President MEGAWATI SOEKARNOPUTRI and His Excellency Mr. TAUFIQ KIEMAS were very warmly greeted on their arrival at Pochentong Airport by Their Majesties Preah Bat Samdech Preah NORODOM SIHANOUK, King of Cambodia, Samdech Preah Reach Akeak Mohesey NORODOM MONINEATH SIHANOUK, Queen of Cambodia, and by members of the Senate, the National assembly and of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

Her Excellency President MEGAWATI SOEKARNOPUTRI and His Excellency Mr. TAUFIQ KIEMAS were granted a Royal audience by Their Majesties Preah Bat Samdech Preah NORODOM SIHANOUK, King of Cambodia and Samdech Preah Reach Akeak Mohesey NORODOM MONINEATH SIHANOUK, Queen of Cambodia, at the Throne Hall, Preah Tineang Tevea Vinichhay, the Royal Palace.

During the visit, Her Excellency President MEGAWATI SOEKARNOPUTRI has received separate courtesy paid by His Excellency Samdech CHEA Sim, President of the Senate, Samdech Krom Preah NORODOM Ranariddh, President of the National Assembly, and Samdech HUN Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

During the meeting with Cambodian leaders, Her Excellency President MEGAWATI SOEKARNOPUTRI also proposed greater cooperation among ASEAN members on tourism, more investment from Indonesia and promised to build stronger ties and help boost prosperity in the region. His Excellency Mr. Nazaruddin NASUTION, Ambassador of Indonesia to Cambodia was quoted by the press as saying that Indonesia promised to give some assistance in speeding up Cambodia's integration into ASEAN. The two sides also agreed to work towards the bilateralization of trade and opening up of shipping links.

Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen made an appeal to Indonesia to put more investment in Cambodia and suggested that Indonesia should accept more imports from Cambodia in order to keep the trade balance between the two countries.

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**Joint Communiqué  
between The Kingdom of Cambodia and  
The Lao People's Democratic Republic**

At the invitation of His Excellency **Samdech HUN Sen**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, His Excellency Mr. **Bounhang VORACHITH**, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, paid an official visit to Cambodia from 15-17 August 2001.

His Excellency Mr. **Bounhang VORACHITH** and his delegation were warmly welcomed with generous hospitality by the Royal Government and the people of Cambodia, and paid a courtesy call on His Majesty the **NORODOM SIHANOUK** and Her Majesty Queen **Norodom MONINEATH SIHANOUK** of the Kingdom of Cambodia, reflecting a close and cordial relations between the two countries.

The two Prime Ministers exchanged views on variety of issues which are of common benefit to both countries with a view to further consolidating and expanding their bonds of friendship and cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural, and other fields.

Besides the two prime Ministers have agreed to ask Japan to build a bridge across the Mekong River between the two countries.

During the visit, the two Prime Ministers agreed on the following issues:

1. The two sides shall continue to develop their friendly relationship based on the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and other universally recognized principles of international law, on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and on the principles set forth in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South East Asia, especially the principles of respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity on the basis of the Treaty of Amity and Mutual Assistance signed in 1995. They further reaffirmed their respect for the principles of non-interference into each other's internal affairs, of non-use of force or threat of force, of peaceful settlement of all disputes, and not allowing one's country territory to be used by any political or military force against the other's.
2. The two sides shall continue to maintain regular high-level meetings between the Representatives of the two governments, parliaments, state institutions and military forces to promote both official and people-to-people contacts between the two nations.
3. The two sides committed to work closely with each other bilaterally and in the framework of ASEAN in the development programs such as the Greater Mekong Sub-region, the less-developed areas along the West-East Corridor ( WEC ) and the ASEAN integration.
4. They agreed to work closely with each other to combat trans-national crimes, such as drugs trafficking and other illegal activities.
5. The two sides re-affirmed the importance of bilateral economic relations, in particular, the promotion of investment and trade between the two countries. For that end, they agreed to fully utilize the existing mechanisms for bilateral cooperation, especially the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation.
6. They agreed to further strengthen cooperation in the fields of agriculture and forestry, and to exchange experiences in protection of endangered species as well as forest, especially to suppress illegal logging along the common border.
7. They agreed to strengthen their cooperation to upgrade land routes linking the two countries. They agreed to further encourage their cooperation on tourism in the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation stipulated in the Agreement on Tourism Cooperation between our two countries signed on 15 July 1995.

8. The two sides agreed to expand cooperation in public health, to share experiences and to assist each other effectively in disease prevention along the borders between the two countries.
9. The two sides agreed to expand further their cooperation in the fields of education and training, to exchange students at university level, and to facilitate art and cultural exchange.
10. The two sides agreed to encourage their border provincial authorities to meet to promote close cooperation and assistance in all areas of mutual interests.
11. Both sides expressed their appreciation to the Cambodia-Lao and Lao-Cambodian Joint border survey teams for their joint fruitful survey and encourage both sides to continue their cooperation to materialize as soon as possible the border demarcation in the spirit of friendship, mutual understanding and on the principles of equality and good neighborliness, aiming to build a borderline of lasting peace, stability, and friendship for that will be a heritage for our two nations for ever.
12. The two sides committed to make the utmost efforts, together with other ASEAN members, to gradually realize the ASEAN integration to ensure relevance and competitiveness of ASEAN.

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**Address by Samdech Prime Minister  
to the Fourth Government-Private Sector Forum**

Following is the integral text delivered by Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen at “ the Fourth Government-Private Sector Forum”:

***Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to be here with you at the third Government- Private Sector Forum, held as we have agreed during the last meeting. We are gathering here at the time when a synchronized worldwide recession has become a serious danger. The US economy is still sluggish and showed no signs of an imminent rebound. Japan's economy is already in the doldrums, while Europe's slow growth could get slower and a financial crisis is threatening Argentina and possibly other nations in Latin America. In Asia only China is doing quite well. But other regional economies are being badly affected by the slowdown in the high-tech industry and the dot.com meltdown. The current situation has an impact on investment decisions worldwide.

The Cambodian economy has experienced an upward growth momentum, which runs counter to the slowdown observed throughout Southeast Asia. Our country has been undergoing a period of accelerated transformation and reforms. The main thrust of the implementation of the financial reform package in 2001 focused on maintaining macroeconomic stability, strengthening the banking and financial institutions, implementing additional fiscal reform measures, ensuring a sound management of public property and increasing public investment in physical and social infrastructure and human resource development. While the results of these reforms are now tangible, they are far from complete. Moreover, much remains to be done to allow reforms to take a firmer root. It may take another three years of strict implementation of the reform programs as scheduled to put Cambodia firmly on the track of sustainable growth and poverty reduction.

The restructuring and adjustment that we have put in place and actively implemented are now starting to pay off. Performance of the Cambodian economy in 2000 and the first half of 2001 is strong, with continued growth, low inflation, and further progress in the areas of fiscal reforms. Economic activity was buoyed by good performance especially in the tourism sectors. The manufacturing sector, particularly the garment industry, had displayed a strong dynamism, albeit the slowdown of the US economy has resulted in the drop in garment orders, thus negatively affecting Cambodian exports in 2001. Hence, diversification is critical to improving the health of our economy by encouraging other export-oriented, natural-resource-based and tourism-related industries, which Cambodia has a great potential. It is also crucial at the initial stage of development to gear the industrial development policies to build on the country's comparative advantages by developing natural factor of production, including natural resources, historical assets, arts and culture, physical heritage, skilled labor and entrepreneurship of the people. At the same time, Cambodia should strive to attract, as much as possible, the investment relocation from neighboring countries in the region, which have graduated from the GSP program with developed countries,

while attaining a higher degree of development. With the efforts to develop physical infrastructure and the increase in skilled labor, Cambodia's industry can progressively move towards more technologically-sophisticated and capital- using activities.

At present, a number of companies have used computers, the English language and the Internet to create employment in Cambodia. This signals Cambodia's possible entry into a world of new development paradigm, where private companies could use English language, the Internet and the computer skills of Cambodia's ambitious and yearning youth to provide basic information services to US and Canadian corporations. At the same time, I urge the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and relevant government ministries to closely cooperate with the private sector to reset the directions of training, especially by developing good curricula for general education, language and basic skill training in response to market demand.

One of Cambodia's biggest challenges is to provide training that meets market demand. Even though during the past decade the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has opened up education for the private sector's participation, Cambodia is still being considered as lacking skilled labor. Therefore, the RGC will make further efforts to reform the education system, both public and private, by focusing on vocational training and developing appropriate curriculum. This will help investors secure skilled labor, while providing well-trained youth to find relevant jobs. I am confident that all investors should play an active part in this important endeavor.

The drop in new investment approval by the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) is worrisome for all of us. In 2000, a total of 96 investment projects with US\$269 million fixed assets were approved, a decline by 40 percent as compared to 1999. During the first half of 2001, 27 investment projects were approved with US\$56 million in fixed assets, a further decline by 36 percent, compared to the first half of 2000. We have however noticed that expansion of old projects and investments in tourism-related sector, such as expansion of the airport and hotel construction in Siem Reap, are still vibrant. Overall, even though the new investment approvals decreased, FDI inflows into Cambodia were estimated at US\$150 million per annum. Moreover, total investment consisting of FDI and domestically funded private investments, which are not reflected in the CDC figures, did not drop, but increased by 7 percent in 2000 compared to 1999.

Nevertheless, what is the signal for Cambodia? Even though Cambodia can secure sustainable development over the short to medium term, with the increase in public investment and ODA inflows, the declining FDI poses a serious concern for the prospect of economic growth over



the long term. Indeed, the decline does not happen only in Cambodia. The drop in new investment approvals can be observed throughout Southeast Asia, which has experienced a net outflow of funds. Net FDI outflows from Singapore alone were US\$10 billion in 2000. But China could attract US\$40 billion last year, buoyed by the prospect of the country's accession to the WTO and investors' rush to get a share of this huge market. Nevertheless, this should not be used as a pretext to circumvent our efforts to improve the investment and business climate in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Attracting and promoting investments, both domestic and foreign, is a pre-requisite to achieving sustainable development and poverty reduction.

In this sense, I would like to turn this Government-Private sector forum into a brainstorming session on how to make Cambodia attractive to investments. The RGC recognizes that improving the business climate and establishing an enabling environment for private sector development is a key prerequisite for fostering growth-reducing poverty and achieving sustainable economic development. The RGC recognizes that there is somewhat of a herd effect with would-be investors following where others are already operating successfully. This is the reason why that as the Head of the Government I pay much attention to improving business environment for the existing investors. This is the reason why the seven, sectoral, joint Working Groups with the private sector were established and meet on a regular basis in order to improve investment environment and address investors' concerns. The RGC hopes that this initiative will allow private sector's effective participation in the efforts to improve the quality of policy making with respect to investment and to ensure its consistency. In this sense, policies with respect to the private sector should be based on the following:

First, supporting the massive small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the unrecorded economy; and

Second, promoting and facilitating big investors.

The SMEs and the informal, unrecorded sector play an increasingly important role in the Cambodian economy, creating substantial employment for Cambodia's poor. The lack of credit for establishing new or expanding the existing enterprises is currently one of the biggest challenges. Hence, as the Head of Government I urge the Rural Development Bank to conduct a study as soon as possible on fostering cooperation between commercial and specialized banks and microfinance operators, which are capable of providing loans to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the

small-scaled, unrecorded sector involving in rice milling, food processing, animal feed production, furniture-making and handicraft production, which are important sources of revenue generation for the poor.

At this morning's meeting, apart from listening to the presentations by the representatives of the seven working groups, I wish to set the tone and the direction of the discussions during this forum and within the working groups, which are operational between the fora. I would like to take this opportunity to consider together how best we -government and the private sector -could do to improve the regulatory and legal regime and ensure a level playing field for both existing and prospective investors, whether domestic or foreign. I understand that the private sector has aired their concerns and made suggestions to relevant government bodies through our joint working groups to ensure an equitable and fair treatment, as well as fair competition.

In this sense, the RGC has a role to play to ensure free, fair and transparent competition. In this regard, it is important to have an Accounting Law and an Audit Law applicable for private firms based on international standards. This law should ensure transparent operations, and fair and equitable distribution of tax burdens on private companies. In this sense, the RGC has encouraged thorough discussions of this draft law with wide participation from experts, the private sector and regulators, especially within the framework of the Working Group on Legislation, Tax, Governance and SMEs. It was a time consuming process, but it ensures that the job was well done, thus facilitating smooth implementation.

Most investors have expressed their legitimate concerns with regard to the proposed amendment to the Law on Investment, which will impose on investment firms appropriate tax burdens, used to finance government's efforts to upgrade the physical infrastructure, in exchange for improved governance, facilitation and services. The later includes streamlining of bureaucratic red tapes and irrelevant procedures, improved customs and tax administration and eradication of corruption, for which the RGC needs resources and time to do. It is true that sometimes it is very difficult to weigh between immediate costs and future benefits.

You may have seen that the RGC has taken very seriously the problems facing the private investment sector and businesses, such as:

- i. high operating costs, in part brought about by poor infrastructure and overpriced utility services;

- ii. excessive layers of bureaucracy that add to production costs and introduce uncertainty;
- iii. 'hidden' transaction costs and smuggling -a heavy burden for investors and business people;  
and
- iv. a lack of transparency and accountability, especially a sound legal and regulatory framework.

Though most problems are long-term in nature, thus time is needed to address all the impediments. With strong determination, the RGC has achieved encouraging results. In my address to the third forum, I elaborated on government's efforts to rehabilitate the country's infrastructure and measures to reduce electricity and telephone tariffs. There is a progress in this area. Road and bridge infrastructure has been rehabilitated. The telephone tariffs were reduced. The RGC has made massive investments in the electrical power sector with improved institutional capacity. This has been done to facilitate and promote economic activities and investments in Cambodia. The RGC needs substantial financial resources to rehabilitate, build and maintain these works. In this sense, the RGC relies on active and appropriate participation of the private sector in this endeavor.

At the same time, the RGC recognizes that much remains to be done, especially those related to governance. To this end, we have adopted and implemented with strong determination the Governance Action Plan (GAP), aimed at improving the efficiency of public services, ensuring transparency and predictability of the public services. In this context, the RGC is implementing a US\$6 million Strengthening the Economic and Financial Management Project by closely cooperating with the international financial institutions and a number of donors in order to accelerate the reforms, strengthen customs and tax administration, and public expenditure and treasury management. The objectives of this project also include expanding the tax base and establishing an equitable and modern tax system. Overall, the RGC will make further efforts to implement the four- pronged reform package with a view to creating an enabling environment for private sector development.

Nevertheless, I wish to clarify the main principles for the review of the Law on Investment.

First, it will be proposed as a package, which offers investment facilitation and the review of tax incentives;

Second, the review of tax incentives will be carried out with caution to a certain degree that ensures a transparent, fair and equitable treatment, acceptable to all and without discrimination. This is the most important factor, which maintains Cambodia's attractiveness as compared to countries in the region.

Third, the RGC will continue intensive consultations with the private sector and other players concerned with the review of this Law on Investment.

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

One cannot talk about improving the legal and regulator framework for investment without reforming the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC). In this sense, I signed on 27th July a subdecree to strengthen the organization and the functioning of the CDC by appointing the Minister of Commerce as another CDC Vice Chairman and expanding the composition of the CDC to include representatives from all government ministries, agencies and provincial/municipal governors. The main objectives of this restructuring are to enhance the one-stop shop for investment by expanding the scope of this coordination to the provinces and municipalities, where investment projects are being implemented. Moreover, it will ensure a close coordination between policies and strategies on trade, industry and investment, including the establishment of a Free Trade Area, an Export Processing Zone and a Special Industrial Zone. It also reflects government's strategy to link investment to exports, which have played a critical role in employment creation for our population and accelerating economic growth.

Within the context of the restructuring, the CDC should organize a workshop with the participation of representatives from all government ministries and agencies, as well as provincial/municipal governors -members of the CDC to raise awareness and facilitate investments in Cambodia. The government's philosophy with regard to investment is facilitation and provision of all kinds of services to investors at all stages. Using commercial and marketing terms we should provide investors with the after-sale and after-care services. Thus, I urge the CDC to pay attention to this new concept, redirect and re-adjust its own mechanism, structure and workplace to strengthen efficiency. As H.E. KEAT CHHON, Chairman of the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), has stated in his address to the forum, the efforts deployed by the RGC, especially the CDC, are geared to improving the legal and regulatory framework and procedures to

strengthening the government's institutional capacity. This is to promote and facilitate investment and business activities in the Kingdom of Cambodia in line with this philosophy. From this report I have noticed that all working groups have met regularly and have made some positive results. I strongly hope that through this close cooperation a wise partnership between the government and the private sector will be further strengthened.

Today I want to talk less, but to listen more. Thus, I think that it is time to give you the floor so that you can air in a frank and candid manner your grievances, concerns and suggestions, so as to help the RGC to re-shape policies and improve further the business environment in this country.

I encourage all my colleagues in the government present here and the representatives of the private sector to continue our good tradition of close partnership and to discuss in an open and candid manner all issues and challenges, and explore ways to establish favorable conditions to attract investments to Cambodia.

My colleagues and I will be happy to answer to your questions and provide comments on any issues that have been your concerns or that you consider as impediments to doing business or undertaking investments in Cambodia. As in previous fora, most members of the RGC, senior officials and provincial/municipal governors are in attendance. Thus, I will consider the decision to be made today as those made legally made during the Cabinet meeting and the meeting of the CDC. I would like to sincerely thank you all for your kind attention.

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## **Working Visit to Cambodia by Honduran Foreign Minister**

His Excellency Mr. Roberto Flores Bermúdez, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Honduras, paid a working visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia on 28-29 August 2001.

During his visit, His Excellency Mr. Roberto Flores Bermúdez met with His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The

discussion was mainly focused on the exchange of information and experiences relating to the cooperation among ASEAN member countries and between ASEAN and its main trading partners.

It should be noticed that His Excellency Mr. Roberto Flores Bermúdez is also President of the Central American Integration System, a group similar to ASEAN, which will work to bolster trade within the Central American countries and with their main trading partners Canada- Mexico and United States of America.



*Senior Minister HOR Namhong Meets with  
His Excellency Mr. Roberto Flores Bermúdez, Honduran Foreign Minister*

While in Cambodia, His Excellency Mr. Roberto Flores Bermúdez also met with the Mekong River Commission.

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### **Senior Minister Meets with Thai National Security Council Delegation**

On 28 August 2001, His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, met with His Excellency Mr. Prakit Pachonpachanuk,

Deputy Secretary General of the Office of the National Security Council of Thailand and Head of the Thai National Security Delegation, who was on a three-day visit to Cambodia from 27-29 August 2001.

During the meeting with the Senior Minister, the two sides discussed on various issues relating to security cooperation between both countries such as transnational crimes, drugs and arms trafficking and illegal immigration.



*Senior Minister Meets with His Excellency Mr. Prakit Pachonpachanuk  
Deputy Secretary General of the Office of the National Security Council of Thailand*

The Senior Minister expressed his concerns over the transnational crimes, the necessity in establishing a direct cooperation between local authorities of the two countries in order to fight against the transnational crimes, including drugs and arms trafficking. The Senior Minister stated that the opening of more new border checkpoints would create favorable conditions enabling the local authorities of the two countries to control better the situation.

While touching on the cooperation in the field of tourism between the two countries, the Senior Minister said that the security from Poi Pet to Siem Reap will help promote more tourists to travel from Thailand to visit Angkor Wat Temples. The Senior Minister requested the Thai side to find out ways to help the Cambodian labors to receive legal status in Thailand. The Senior Minister

also renewed the Royal Government of Cambodia's commitment to combat against all kinds of the illegal trafficking.

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### **Senior Minister HOR Namhong Meets with New Representative of WFP**

On 2 August 2001, at 9:30 a.m., at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, received Ms. Rebecca Hansen, new Representative of the World Food Program ( WFP ) to Cambodia, who had taken up her appointment on 30 July 2001.



*Senior Minister HOR Namhong Meets with New Representative of WF*

After presenting her credentials, Ms. Rebecca Hansen highly appreciated the great efforts made by the Royal Government and people of Cambodia in the development process of the country. Ms. Rebecca Hansen assured His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong that she would try her best to find out more effective measures in providing food aid to the poor people in the remote areas through the Food for Work and School Feeding Programs.



His Excellency the Senior Minister welcomed the assignment of Ms. Rebecca Hansen and praised the activities of WFP in providing foods to the poor people living in remote areas, especially to the flood victims last year. The Senior Minister affirmed that the Royal Government and the concerned authorities, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation would continue their cooperation as a good partner of WFP in carrying out its assistance program in Cambodia. His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong also acquainted the representative with the current situation in Cambodia, with a stress on the development achieved by the country.

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### **Senior Minister HOR Namhong Meets with Congo Ambassador**

On 7 August 2001, at 9:30 a.m., at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and

International Cooperation, met with His Excellency Mr. Pierre PASSI, Ambassador of the Republic of Congo to Cambodia.

During the discussions, the Senior Minister welcomed the appointment of Ambassador Pierre PASSI to Cambodia and recalled the good relations between the two countries, especially the visit of Samdech Prime Minister HUN Sen to Congo in the year 90s and the support of the Congo Government to the peace process in Cambodia.

The Senior Minister briefed the Ambassador of the good evolution of the Cambodian situation after the general elections in 1998, especially the formation of the coalition government and the collapse of the Khmer Rouge organization, which brought about political stability and full peace enabling the government to concentrate on the economic development and poverty alleviation.



*Senior Minister HOR Namhong Meets with Congo Ambassador*

His Excellency Ambassador Pierre PASSI expressed his impression with the difficulties faced by the Cambodian Government in developing the nation and pledged to work for the promotion of the bilateral relations. He also highlighted the peace process in Congo and the rehabilitation of the country.

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### **Speech by Senior Minister HOR Namhong at ASEAN Night**

Following is the integral text delivered by His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, at the ASEAN Night on 8 August 2001:

*Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,*

It is a great pleasure for me and my wife to attend this special and joyful “ASEAN NIGHT”.

I wish first of all to express my heartfelt congratulations to all ASEAN Diplomatic Missions in Phnom Penh and the working group for organizing this significant function to commemorate the 34<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of Association of South East Asian Nations ( ASEAN ).

My warm appreciation also goes to the ASEAN Women Circle ( AWC ) in Phnom Penh for its precious contribution to make this “ASEAN Night” possible especially for organizing the cultural performance and the parade of the 10 ASEAN nations with their bridal and traditional costumes. These performances reflect the colorful diversities and richness of our cultural heritage.

I am also heartened to learn that spouses of ASEAN Ambassadors and other ladies of ASEAN Diplomatic Missions and their community have spent many hours and efforts to organize and practice the show which will be shortly presented to us and it would be, I believe, a beautiful one. This is truly the spirit of ASEAN.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation together with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts are proud to be associated with this “ASEAN Night” cultural program. Since we are in the same family of ASEAN, we believe that the more we interact the closer we get. In this regards, I am encouraged that Cambodian ladies from various institutions and ladies from the ASEAN Embassies have got close cooperation leading to the enhancement of friendship, closeness and mutual understanding among ASEAN members. This is also the spirit of ASEAN.

***Excellencies,***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

We are very proud that nowadays all the ten South East Asian nations achieved the long-cherished dream of the ASEAN founders.

I wish to note that, after more than two years that Cambodia has become full member of ASEAN, Cambodia has committed itself to take all practical measures at its disposal to discharge its duties and obligations in good faith and with strong belief in the Association. We are serious in our ambitions to actively take part in various ASEAN activities, and in particular the acceleration of the ASEAN integration process so as to ensure overall ASEAN to move toward with the same pace to keep its relevance and competitiveness in the face of challenges confronting us in the globalized world.

I am confident that with our solidarity and our strong commitment to work together, we will be able to overcome these challenges and to realize the ASEAN Vision 2020: a concert of Southeast Asian Nations, outward-looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies.

Last but not least, I would like to wish the ASEAN Women Circle ( AWC ) many more success in its endeavors to increase the awareness of ASEAN. I reaffirm my support for their noble activities.

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### **Senior Minister Signs Exchange of Notes with Ambassador of Japan**

On 21 August 2001, at 4:00 pm, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, a signing ceremony was held between His Excellency Senior Minister HOR Namhong, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and His Excellency Mr. Gotaro OGAWA, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom of Cambodia, on an Exchange of Notes concerning a Grant Aid of up to three hundred and eleven million Yen ( ¥ 311,000,000; approximately equivalent to US\$ 2,500,000 ) for the purpose of the implementation of the project for human resource development scholarship.



*Senior Minister HOR Namhong and Ambassador Gotaro OGAWA  
after signing the Exchange of Notes*

According to the Japanese Embassy's Release, the project started in Cambodia last year for Cambodian youths, mainly for master degree. Apart from the Human Resources Development Scholarship, through which, annually 20 young Cambodians go to Japanese universities, the Government of Japan has been offering various scholarships such as Japanese Government Scholarship (Monbukagakusho Scholarship, approximately 200 students have received this scholarship).

The project would contribute significantly in the development of human resources, which had been one of the top priorities in the Royal Government of Cambodia's development programs, stressed Senior Minister HOR Namhong after signing the Exchange of Notes.

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