Intervention by H.E. CHAN SARUN
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At the Seventh Government-Donors Consultative Group Meeting
Phnom Penh, 6-7 December, 2004

-Samdech HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia;
-Samdech, Princes, Princesses, Excellencies, Lork Chumteav, Member of the Royal Government of Cambodia;
-Excellencies, Representatives of the Donors community;
-Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Today, I am very honored and delightful to present my intervention in this very important Government-Donor Consultative Group Meeting. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thank to the donor countries and international organizations that have provided their support to the development of agricultural sector, especially with the focus on natural resource management and conservation in Cambodia.

Samdech, Princes, Princesses, Excellencies, Lork Chumteav, Ladies and Gentlemen, especially the donor representatives, you all may still remember that on 28 January 2003 in Phnom Penh, the Royal Government organized a government-donor meeting similar to this one, in which I presented the annual progress report and set out a number of necessary follow-up measures while the donors also proposed a follow-up draft action plan. I think that it is now a good opportunity to reflect the achievements of the Royal Government in boosting the development of agricultural sector, in general, and management and conservation of natural resources, in particular. The main outcomes in the framework of reforms and good governance that have been achieved in the past year include:

I-Forestry

1-Forest Crime Monitoring and Reporting:

The mechanism of forest crime monitoring and reporting has continued implementing in a transparent and accountable manner. The SGS was selected and appointed by the Royal Government for this assignment as an independent monitor, in a transparent process and with the support from the World Bank. Currently, the SGS has carried out its assignment in good collaboration with concerned institutions and agencies, under the 3-year contractual period. In the mean time, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has prepared an action plan to mobilize support to continue the implementation of this mechanism.

2-Improvement of Consultative Mechanism:

-With the aim at ensuring coordination and better understanding between the Royal Government and the donors, the MAFF, on 14 July 2003, established an Interministerial Multisectoral Taskforce, including the members from the representatives of the Office of the Council of Ministers (CoM), the MAFF, Ministry of Economy and Finance (MFF), Ministry of Environment (MoE) and Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction

(MLUMPC). The secretariat of the Taskforce has carried out its duties in close collaboration with the ex-Donor Working Group on Natural Resource Management (WGNRM) led by ADB and FAO. According to the latest development, this secretariat may be replaced by the newly established Government-Donor Joint Technical Working Group on Forestry and Environment, among the 17 Working Groups approved for their establishment by the Government and Donors on 10 September 2004.

-The MAFF approved for Forest Administration to set up a Public Affairs Unit, with the purpose of implementing transparent, public disclosure of information, to provide information on forestry and facilitate with the publics who wish to receive the information.

3-Forest Management:

-The Royal Government always regards environmental protection and sustainable natural resource utilization as its prioritized duty. We have developed comprehensive legal, policy and institutional framework to ensure environmental protection and sustainable utilization of natural resources. Throughout Cambodia, We designated 23 protected areas accounting to 18% of the country's total area, and the figure is increasing due to more allocation of forested areas for protection and conservation purpose. However, we still recognize the necessity of a comprehensive reform in managing natural resources, such as forest, fisheries and land--the prominent national assets.

-The MAFF and the MEF agreed and established an interministerial committee to develop a guideline and interministerial *prakas* on forest revenue management system. The *prakas* had been put for several public consultation workshops and meetings before it was signed by both the ministers of the MAFF and MEF on 28 August 2003.

-Sustainable Forest Management Plans (SFMPs), and Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) had been prepared and were submitted to the Independent Review Team under the support of the WGNRM for its review and comments. The SFMPs and ESIAs were also put through a considerably long consultation process with the WGNRM, especially with local communities to ensure sufficient participation from the communities in the planning process, and also ensure their benefits. The results of the consultations were subsequently reported and notified to the stakeholders. The SFMPs and ESIAs have been used as a pre-condition for forest concession agreement cancellation at the early stage. Until now, the Government has not yet permitted any forest concession to re-operate.

-The moratorium on timber transportation and forest concession operation has been further imposed. However, the MAFF is considering applying domestic annual coupe as a measure to supply timber for domestic use, and as it can also help eliminate small scale illegal forest harvesting and transportation having occurred due to the local consumption needs.

-To tackle illegal forest land clearing and grabbing, the Royal Government, on 02 June 2004, established National Committee to Prevent, Suppress and Eliminate Forest Land Clearing and Grabbing for Ownership Purpose. This Committee has been implementing its duties, and plans to organize its first annual meeting to review and evaluate the performance of its provincial and municipal sub-committees in December 2004.

-In conformity with the Forestry Law, a vertical management line of the Forest Administration was put for implementation.

-The MAFF, besides its principal mandate, has closely cooperated with the MoE in protecting and cracking down illegal activities in the protected areas. Both ministries now are reviewing Draft Law on Protected Areas, and it is expected to be finalized soon.

4-Implementation of Sub-decree on Community Forestry:

We highly recognize the role of local communities and empower them through the establishment of a several hundreds of forestry and fisheries communities throughout the country.

The Sub-decree on Community Forestry was drafted with provisions to ensure local participation and benefits. The Draft Sub-decree went through series of transparent consultations. On 02 December 2004, the Royal Government issued the Sub-decree, and it has now been implemented to establish forestry communities.

II-Fisheries

-Fisheries reform has been carried out since the second mandate Royal Government. So far, 538,522 ha equaling 56.46% of the total fishing area was released for family fishing ground.

-Draft Law on Fisheries was finalized through a number of consultations with relevant stakeholders. The Draft was submitted to the National Assembly at the end of the second mandate Royal Government.

-Draft Royal Decree on Mekong Dolphin Conservation was submitted to the Royal Government for review and adoption.

-Draft Sub-decree on Community Fisheries has been improved many times in a long consultation process with local communities. With close collaboration and support from UNDP, FAO and DFID, especially from the Government, 360 fisheries communities were established country-wide. As it is new for Cambodia, we have unavoidably encountered some difficulties, both financially and technically.

-The MAFF has also been preparing and developing additional regulations to ensure sustainable fisheries management.

-The MAFF has also taken actions to control illegal fishing. For instance, 5,520 electrocuted and 25,000 mosquito net fishing gears were confisticated and destroyed, in 2003.

-For the purpose of enhancing fisheries research and conservation, the MAFF established Inland Fisheries Development and Research Institute, in February 2003. The conservation of brood fish has also been at our high attention. In this connection, 97 deep pools were found and have been under preparation for establishing Mekong dolphin sanctuaries. Besides that, the MAFF has also actively promoted local aquaculture to generate incomes and improve people livelihoods, and to reduce the pressure on natural fisheries use. From 1998 to 2003,

the number of farmers participated in the activities increased significantly about 10,000 with the fish production of 87,000 metric tons.

-In order to increase natural fisheries stock, and encourage the farmers to participate in aquaculture and participate in natural resource protection, the Royal Government decided to annually organized National Fish Day on 01 July, to release fingerlings to natural reservoirs.

III-Agriculture

-With the aim at facilitating and boosting investment in compliance with the contracts, and effectively and sustainably utilizing land, the MAFF had established an interdisciplinary working group to monitor and evaluate the investors' performance. The report of the working group is used for judgment of investors' performance. The MAFF is committed to not leaving the land losing its potential and unused. The non-compliant companies will be subject to contract termination.

-In order to avert conflicts arisen from land disputes, the Royal Government has decided to develop and implement Land Policy, Sub-decree on Social Land Concession, and Sub-decree on Economic Land Concession etc. The RGC adopted the statement on Land Policy on May 2001 and adopted the interim Paper on Strategy of Land Policy on September 6, 2002 and a set of policy papers and four sub-decrees, including **policy paper and Sub-decree on Social Land Concessions (March 2003)**, Sub-decree on the procedures for Establishing the Cadastral Index Map and Land Register (May 2002), Sub-decree on Sporadic Land Registration (May 2002) and Sub-decree on Organization and Functioning of the Cadastral Commission (May 2002).

-The Sub-decree on Economic Land Concession is now under preparation and will be finalized soon. To implement the Sub-decree on Social Land Concession, mechanisms at national, provincial-municipal and district level have been established, and the pilot projects have been implemented at 3 communes and 1 sankat, in Battambang, Kampot, Kampong Speu and Phnom Penh. Based on the results of the pilot project implementation and the study on poverty impact assessment of a social land concession project, Council for Land Policy in collaboration with development partners is now developing Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development (LASED).

-The Ministry produced training manuals and provided training to 1200 staff, which is approximately equal to 50% of total staff of the ministry. As the education is a prioritized key factor, the Ministry managed to establish a Faculty of Land Management and Land Administration, and operating from 2002 to date with more than 100 students.

Based on the assessment of specialized capacity and the scope of responsibility, the Department of Land Management, Urban Planning, Construction and Cadastre of eight provinces and municipalities, respectively received the delegated power to sign on cadastral documents granted by the Ministry, and another three provincial departments are expected to receive so in 2005.

-The Ministry has issued 293,500 land titles of which 280,000 land titles were from systematic land registration in 11 provinces and municipality and 13,500 land parcels and condominium were from sporadic land registration in the whole country. Currently, the

Ministry is involved in systematic land registration and collecting data for about 20,000 land parcels monthly.

-Up to now in the whole country, the cadastral commissions at provincial! municipality level which are involved in a land dispute resolution mechanism throughout the country, have completely resolved 493 cases, canceled and/or handed over 161 cases to the court and issued temporary decisions for two emergency cases.

-The Ministry developed strategic development plan of Kamreing district in Battambang province, and continues to implement in four Districts along the border area.

The Ministry also developed industrial zoning plan for Neang Kok in Koh Kong province; conservation zoning for Preah Reach Troap Mountain; master plan for Kampot provincial town (sub-degree are being drafted), Pailin town (awaiting comments from the town authority), Chloung district in Kratie province (awaiting comments from the province authority) as well as a master plan for the conservation of cultural heritage buildings in Battambang town (sub-degree are being drafted), a master plan of historical tourist site of Anlong Veng (royal degree are being drafted). Actions are now being taken to prepare a master plan for the provincial towns of Kampong Chain and Mondulkiri, and the municipality of Phnom Penh.

-To carry out the Sub-degree on Social Land Concessions at national; provincial/municipal; and district/Khan level, mechanisms have been formed. Pilot project activities within three communes and one Sangkat in Battambang, Kampot, Kampong Speu provinces, and Phnom Penh are in the process. Based on the pilot project activities and poverty social impact assessment study on social land concessions project, the Council of Land Policy in collaboration with various development partners, are currently involved in designing the program of Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development (LASED).

-Besides land, water is also a main natural resource, and is very crucial for agricultural development. In this sense, the Royal Government has put a vast investment in irrigation systems, and put many efforts in the reform of management and use of water.

-National Water Policy Paper, Law on Water and Sub-decree on Association of Water Users had been developed by Ministry of Water Resource and Meteorology in collaboration with relevant institutions.

Samdech, Princes, Princesses, Excellencies, Lork Chumteav, Ladies and Gentlemen

With the above proud achievements, I would like to briefly present to you, especially the donors community, the main follow-up measures to enhance agricultural production and natural resource management to reflect our commitment as follows:

1-Forestry:

-To further develop regulations to enforce Forestry Law;

-To further establish forestry communities in conformity with Sub-decree on Community Forestry;

-To continue collaboration with concerned stakeholders to review Sustainable Forest Management Plans and Environmental and Social Impact Assessments;

-To further prevent and crackdown illegal forest land clearing and grabbing in conformity with provisions of the Forestry Law;

-To designate annual logging coupe to supply domestic timber consumption for the people, and as a contribution to forest crime reduction;

-To continue forest crime monitoring and reporting mechanism, through the current independent monitor;

-To further study and designate forest biodiversity conservation areas.

2-Fisheries:

-To conduct study and research, and consultations to transfer some would-be contract-expired fishing lots that are biologically and geographically suitable for fish conservation areas, with the aim at increasing natural fish stocks, and maintaining and enriching endangered fish species;

-To study and evaluate to allocate more fishing grounds for people's use;

-To further develop all forms of aquaculture to meet fish consumption needs, and to reduce the pressure on natural fisheries resource;

-To further establish fishery communities to increase effectiveness of fisheries resource utilization;

-The MAFF is ready to implement Fisheries Law when it has been adopted by the Legislature Body.

3-Agricultural Production:

-To finalize Draft Seed Law;

-To establish an effective control system to ensure distribution of good quality of agricultural inputs in the markets;

-To develop a master plan for agricultural research;

-To continue divestment of state-owned rubber estates;

-To continue divestment of Kamfimex and AIC;

-To continue collaboration with relevant institutions to implement regulations and guidelines relating to the management and utilization of land and water resource;

-To postpone economic land concession granting until the Sub-decree on Economic Land Concession has been issued.

Samdech, Princes, Princesses, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The above mentioned follow-up measures to be implemented in the framework of good governance, indicate to us that we still have a long journey to go to achieve our objectives, and inevitably these can not be done in just today or tomorrow, regardless of many technical measures to be coincidentally undertaken.

Therefore, the active support and close cooperation to be extended by the donors community and development partners are necessarily needed for the course of enhancing sustainable agricultural development and natural resource management and conservation.

Finally, I would like to once again thank you all for your kind attention, and extent my gratitude to all the donors for their past and future assistance.

Thank you very much!