

ADDRESS

BY

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AT

THE 2nd ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

7th-8th November, 2007, NEW DELHI, INDIA

First of all, in the name of *Samdech AKerk Senapadei Dekcho HUN SEN*, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia and President of the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), I would like to express my great pleasure to be able to participate in the "2ND ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION", today. I sincerely support today's conference that happens in a needed circumstance compliant with the situation of recent disasters that occurred in Cambodia, in the region and in the World. On behalf of the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia, I would like to convey our sincerely compliments to the Government of India who initiated and hosts such important conference. I hereby take this opportunity to express my profound thanks to the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India, United Nations Agencies, partner organizations and donor countries who collaborate and contribute to the organizing and process of the conference and support for Delegates from Asian Countries to be able to participate in this conference with immense feeling of warmth and content. I highly evaluate the Government of the Republic of India, one of the leading countries who plays very active role in strengthening of regional cooperation in disaster management in Asia.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen !

As you already aware, natural and human-induced disasters have made people in the world, especially people in Asia lost their lives, properties and lost the opportunity for sustainable development not only developing countries, but also the developed countries who are rich with resources and high technologies. Obviously, the *hurricane Katrina* as well as the recent wildfire in California of the United States of America took thousands of lives; destroy thousand homes and enormous properties.

As for Asia, the late 2004 *Tsunamis*, which were recorded in history, made losses of thousands of lives, affected millions of household and devastated almost to the root of properties and social economics of the affected communities. Even though high-valued cultural and historical heritages that were built in a long time with huge amount of resources were also washed away in almost at a glimpse.

In Cambodia, on the other hand, natural disasters have often struck the country, primarily flood and drought. The worth of the losses and damages caused by disasters significantly disrupted the efforts of the Government of Cambodia in its works to improve the people's welfare and the social economics of the country. However, as a result of the dynamic of the Government Leadership, good collaboration between NCDM and concerned ministries, institutions, the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC), national and international partners, NGOs, Cambodia was able to successfully and effectively tackle all disaster situations. Nevertheless, more important than this, is the awareness of

the community through the preparedness, mitigation, dissemination programs along with their experiences of disaster situations.

Today, in addition to existing disaster hazards, the Avian Influenza caused by the influenza A (H5N1) virus has menace people's life and their livelihood. Currently, countries in the region and in the world are jointly combating the virus H5N1 that has increased bigger concerns of an outbreak of a new human influenza if the H5N1 be developing into a human influenza virus that can transfer from human to human and consequently cause a pandemic influenza. If this rationalization becomes true, then widespread deaths and the interruption of social-economics are inevitable. At that time, many people will die, basic public services will be disrupted, security, public order will be chaos, all sectors will be impacted, which would lead to severely damage of the social economy as whole. Continuation of outbreak among poultry in many countries around the world is the signal that indicates unavoidable pandemic influenza.

Emergency of Pandemic Influenza is not just about the health issue. It will affect all sectors and severely impact social economic in the whole country. People will die; many more will be sick; the labour force unable to work; hospitals and health centers will be overwhelmed; airports will close – tourists will likely be unable to leave; food will be in short supply and prices will rise; fuel availability will dry up and power supply will become erratic; rubbish collection and water treatment services will start to falter; and maintaining law and order will become a serious challenge as supplies become scare. This is not just too unreasonably frighten, but it is to awake us to consider ahead of situation and be self-reliant over disaster. In order to do so, it needs preparedness; therefore, all countries should develop a rapid and effective response plan with the limited resources that we can still access by now. It will be a severe social economic emergency, thus collective national efforts are now required. It must be addressed by a multi-sector approach, comprehensive with participation from all agencies and the organizing appropriate coordination mechanism in order to mobilize multidisciplinary cooperation including civil societies, development partners and private sector.

Being one of the signatory countries to the Hyogo Framework for Action (the HFA), Cambodia has put high priority to disaster reduction, preparedness and response by developing national strategy, formulating strategic plan and implementing action plan of integrated disaster management through building capacity and development of human resources; collaborate in disaster risk reduction and mobilizing resources for disaster responses. Cambodia has developed 5-year strategic plan 2006-2010 in line with the Rectangle Strategy of the Government, National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and the HFA, which was integrated into National Strategy for Social Economic Development 2006-2010. Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and response into social-economic planning has been undertaken from the national to the community levels, implemented by line technical ministries, agencies, civil societies, international organizations and development partners.

In response to the threat posed by Avian and Human Pandemic Influenza, the Royal Government of Cambodia has put collective efforts for a national comprehensive planning. This is being achieved by combining Cambodia's national animal and human health plans with an inter-ministerial cooperation Plan and a national Information, Education and Communication Plan into one integrated document with using disaster management mechanism, the National Committee for Disaster Management, to be the central body for coordination. Preparedness and response to a Pandemic Influenza is one of the priorities for the Government of Cambodia. The Royal Government of Cambodia is seeking to invest increased resources and efforts into controlling the current outbreak and thereby reducing the risk of a pandemic. In order to tackle the problem in an integrated, holistic and sustainable manner the Royal Government of Cambodia is further strengthening its central co-ordination mechanisms for better inter-ministerial, civil society and development partner cooperation.

On 4th-5th, July, 2007, a National Workshop on the Implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and Avian Influenza was successfully organized in order to integrate the two issues into one framework. Currently, Cambodia is implementing a pilot multi-sector planning process of provincial pandemic response planning using existing mechanism and structure of provincial/local disaster management, the Provincial Committee for Disaster management. Those pandemic influenza have occurred several time since 18 century, to deal with it is still a new task for our world. Yet up to now, no country dare to claim that it is well-prepared nor has specific plan to respond to this emergency.

However, Cambodia on the other hand, is moving forward gradually in its process of developing an operational response plans of multi-sectors for a pandemic influenza emergency at the provincial level; in line with the government's strategic direction and WHO's guideline for national pandemic preparedness.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I fully understand that this conference is organized to be an important platform in order to allow Asian Countries share and exchange experiences and disaster management know how to in order to improve future activities. I believe that the 2 days of the conference will be an opportunity for all delegates to listen, review and improve current activities, especially in relation to HFA, for a better result and effectiveness. I hope that from now we will become the family of disaster management that will be able to develop stronger relationship and better cooperation in disaster management at community, country and regional levels.

Once again, in the name of ***Samdech AKerk Senapadei Dekcho HUN SEN***, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, I would like to profoundly thank to the Government of the Republic of India, Governments in Asia, Donor Countries, UN Agencies, International Organizations, financial institutions and NGOs who support the organizing of this conference as well as support for capacity building on disaster management and the continued humanitarian assistances to the people of Cambodia.

The Royal Government of Cambodia would like to urge all friend countries, Donor Countries, UN Agencies, International Organizations, financial institutions and NGOs to continue collaboration, increase participation and contribute with finance, material and spirit to jointly overcome disaster risks that threatening our world. The Royal Government of Cambodia commits itself to a best effort of contribute to the success of this work in the region and the world, since this task is belong to all of us.

Finally, I wish that the conference be successful and fruitful.

Thank you for your attention !