

*Address of
H.E. Deputy Prime Minister Hor Namhong,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia
At the World Summit on Food Security,*

FAO-Rome, November 16-18, 2009

- Mr. Chairman,
- Excellencies,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Cambodia very much welcomes this significant and timely “World Summit on Food Security” at this critical time, particularly in galvanizing the necessary impetus and the political support from all to address this extremely serious global challenge confronting humanity.
2. We all know that according to FAO, the number of hungry people will top **more than one billion**, while the World Food Program (WFP) has added that “one in six people go to bed hungry every night” and describes hunger and malnutrition as the world's number one health risk, greater than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. With more people to feed each coming day and reaching more than of **9.2 billion people by 2050**, we would need a decisive shift towards a **worldwide response** in order to effectively address this problem of “**Human Security**”. The eloquent fact is that worldwide TVs show very often a growing number of illegal immigrants risking death and detention to seek refuge in developed countries.
3. The present global food conditions underline that food security is no longer adapted to the basic needs of the increasing world’s population. So, what we need now is an **urgent call** for a “**New World Food Security Order.**”

- Mr. Chairman, Excellencies,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. To cope with spreading hunger, the developing countries, which depend mostly on agriculture, need to have a **stronger political commitment** with a comprehensive policy on food production. It is imperative that **national food production strategy** must be reviewed and rationalized. Water management, irrigation system, the utilization of fertilizer and seed selection must be properly conceived in order to increase productivity. On the other hand, incentive should be provided to encourage investment in agriculture and agro-industry which have been somewhat disregarded up to the present time.
5. One should also recognize that, in the past, the Official Development Assistance (ODA) had not been appropriately focused on agricultural production. Cambodia hopes that, as a result of this World Summit, the international community would turn their attention to redirect and increase ODA to emphasize on food production.
6. Another major cause of food shortage is the growing **direct impact** of **Climate change**, aggravating more frequent floods and droughts everywhere worldwide effecting, particularly, the developing countries, whose economies depend mainly on agriculture. Therefore, achieving an ambitious target on reducing global emission of greenhouse gases in the forthcoming UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen, in December, is crucial not only for reversing global warming and protecting the environment, but also for **ensuring food security**.
7. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the current global economic and financial crisis has exacerbated the problem of food security as well, with the economic slowdown and the increasing

of unemployment in poor countries due to the declining of export which they essentially rely on and also falling investment etc. In this gloomy situation more people are not able to secure enough income to feed their families. There is no doubt that this crisis has reduced available national public resources for agricultural development.

- 8. On the other hand, the soaring of energy price in recent years has put tremendous pressure on Agricultural land that had been diverted for bio-energy cultivation instead of food crops. This practice in the long term, I believe, would only further affect food production. The approach to tackle this **twin problem** must be balanced. How to feed increasing population and at the sometime respond to increasing need for clean and renewable energy.*
- 9. These combined causes of food insecurity have already hindered the achievement of the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** in developing countries, and poverty remains a serious challenge. Hunger and malnutrition are also affecting health with more risk of diseases and high infant mortality rate in poor countries.*

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- 10. I bear the hope that this very opportune **“World Forum”** would come up with **concrete and realistic** measures to confront the very serious threat of food shortage. Facing such a growing food crisis, very often, the WFP calls for **emergency food assistance**. Perhaps it is timely for the International Financial Institutions together with the developed countries, to set up a **“Trust Fund”** to be managed by the FAO and WFP in order **to cope with emergency situation**, rather than letting WFP to make appeal every time there is a crisis. Moreover, may be a **“World Rice Reserve”** should be initiated in vulnerable regions to timely meet emergency need.*
- 11. At the regional level, ASEAN + 3 countries (China, Japan, Republic of Korea) have decided during their summit meeting, in Thailand in October 2009, to explore the possibility of establishing an **ASEAN+3 Emergency Rice Reserve**.*
- 12. In this dismal context, the 20 billion US\$ pledge over the next 3 years made by the G8 Summit, in L'Aquila, to support agricultural production in poor countries is **extremely important**, not only for solving food shortage, but also for contributing to the MDGs' realization and poverty reduction. The timely disbursement and efficient utilization of this funding is of utmost imperative.*
- 13. As far as Cambodia is concerned, to contribute to the effort of ensuring food security, our Prime Minister, has proposed the establishment of a **Rice Exporters Association** in Southeast Asia, comprising of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam which are major rice producers and exporters. The move aims to **regularize** the world food market and **not intend to speculate**.*

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- 14. Although the overall picture may look somewhat gloomy but, ultimately, I believe that with strong governmental commitment and appropriate measures to ensure food security, as I have just mentioned, and timely disbursement of the financial pledge at the L'Aquila Summit, we shall be able to collectively overcome world hunger and malnutrition and thus ensuring world food security.*

Thank you.