

Statement of the Kingdom of Cambodia
In High-Level Conference on World Food Security
Delivered by H.E Dr. Chan Sarun
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H.E Mr.
Distinguished International Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen!

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I have a great honor in being here to share with all of you the issues relating to world food security and especially in the context of Cambodia. I also would like to extend my deep thanks to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation (FAO) in arranging this important event, and H.E. BAN Ki-moon, General Secretary of the UN for inviting Cambodia to attend this very important conference.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Despite strong economic growth, the Asia-Pacific region is still home to about two-thirds of the world's poor living on less than one dollar per day and to about 520 million undernourished people. As we have known that poor households spend the bulk of their income on food. Food security is a concerned matter that the governments around the world should take consideration to ensure the food availability, access to and affordability of food by the poor.

It is acknowledged that the reasons affecting food price rising are due to several factors such as: (i) increase of energy costs, especially fuel price led to generating higher costs of production and processing etc.; (ii) climate change led to destruction of crop production; (iii) decrease of food crop cultivated areas for the purpose of increasing bio-fuel and ethanol production; (iv) increase in food demand due to population growth; (v) speculators played in rice stock to increase rice price and (vi) devaluation of US dollars.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

The Royal Government of Cambodia has a long-term vision that "To ensure enough and safety food availability for all people, reduce poverty, increase the GDP per capita and sustainably manage and conserve natural resources." With this vision, the Royal Government of Cambodia has strongly supported and highly placed its attention in improving the livelihood of all people by taking necessary measures to enhance the agricultural productivity and facilitating markets and trade operation. As a result, poverty declined from 47% in 1994 to 34% in 2004 and average economic growth was around 7.8% per annum.

To ensure the food availability in the country, the Royal Government of Cambodia has made lots of efforts to increase agricultural production through the promotion of crop intensification and diversification, family livestock raising, aquaculture etc., for responding to food security as well as nutrition at community level. As the results for these attempts, Cambodia has produced rice surpluses since 1996. In 2007, higher production of 6.72 million tons of paddy rice exceeded domestic consumption of about 2.57 million tons, thereby generating a surplus in milled rice of 1.64 million tons. Rice yield increased from 2.1 tons/ha in 2003 to 2.62 tons/ha in 2007.

The Royal Government of Cambodia is however concerned by the rising domestic price of rice that affects food security. The policies have been implemented to increase strategic rice stocks and encourage rice millers to process more paddy rice for meeting domestic demand. Rice millers have been provided government soft loans to increase paddy rice stocks and to sell more milled rice during the shortage period. Paddy rice exports were temporarily banned during 25 March-25 May 2008 to ensure self-sufficient rice stock in the country. However, the ban was removed to allow paddy rice to again be traded from 26 May 2008.

In order to increase food supply for its domestic consumption and to gain a surplus for export to international markets, Cambodia has carried out a number of measures in response to the situation of food price soaring crisis as below:

- To implement, in collaboration with Cambodia's development partners, the management of rice stock, food security and food supply safety net, including food for work;
- To collaborate for a study on rice export management policy, rice price control policy and subsidy;
- To facilitate and support farmers' accessibility to agricultural inputs and credit;
- To encourage more investment in agriculture sector, especially in food production. In this connection, investment in irrigation system, improvement of marketing system, and infrastructure is the must;
- To increase investment in agricultural research and extension, and provision of education and transfer of new agricultural technologies to farmers.

I strongly believed that Cambodia will be able to contribute more in increased food supply to meet the necessary requirement in the country as well as in the world based on its potential production capacity, together with technical and financial support from its development partners who have been closely working with Cambodia.

Based on the above realities and what we all have already known that little investment has been put in the agriculture sector, why are we, especially rich nations and international institutions, still reluctant to invest more intensively in the development of agriculture, particularly in developing countries?

Finally, I would like once again to extend my high appreciation to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation (FAO) to facilitate this international discussion on the concrete issues of world food security, and I wish that FAO will formulate global action programmes to cope with the problems encountered to improve and ensure food security of the poor and vulnerable people around the world.

Thank you for your kind attention!