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Cambodian-Chinese Friendship Benefits Two Peoples

Phnom Penh, September 14, 2009 AKP —

The friendship and cooperation between Cambodia and China have brought continued benefits to the two peoples, said Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen.

Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen (center) accompanied by China Ambassador to Cambodia Ms. Zhang Jing Feng (1st left)

The two countries forged diplomatic ties in 1958 under their then leaderships — His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, he said in a recent written interview with Xinhua.

"Until now, the Cambodian people always consider the relations a valuable legacy of the two leaders," he said, adding that "such good relations have been constantly strengthened by their succeeding leaders and their peoples."

He said the Kingdom of Cambodia have always staunchly adhered to the one-China policy and regard Taiwan and Tibet as inalienable parts of China…

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2008 Population Census Final Results Released

Phnom Penh, September 8, 2009 AKP—

Cambodian population has increased by 1.96 million over the last ten years, from 11.4 million in 1998 to 13.4 million in 2008, according to the 2008 general population census final results.

Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen presides over the Ceremony for Releasing National Report of the Final Results of 2008 General Population Census of Cambodia.

The population density of the country increased from 64 to 75 persons per square kilometer, but the annual growth rate declined from 2.49 percent in 1998 to 1.54 percent in 2008, show the results, adding that however, Cambodian accounted for 2.3 percent of the Southeast Asian population of the world's population of 6.7 billion in 1998 and continues to do so in 2008.

While the total fertility rate has been declined to 3.1, the estimated infant mortality rate shows moderate decrease from 66 to 60 per 1,000 live births during 2005-2008. However, the maternal mortality ratio has not changed much for the past 10 years which it was estimated at 437 in 2000, 472 in 2005 and 461 per 100,000 live births in 2008…

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U.S. Extends US$34.8 Million for Health and Education in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, September 8, 2009 AKP —

The U.S. government has decided to provide US$34.8 million to support Cambodian priorities in health and education.

H.E. Hor Namhong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Flynn Fuller, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Director, signed here today amendments to two bilateral agreements related to the above-said assistance.

U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia Carol A. Rodley also attended the signing ceremony and signed as a witness.

According to a press release of the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh, the amendment to the first agreement consists of US$31.6 million in grant funds to achieve health objectives. Funds will be used to promote a variety of activities to reduce the transmission and impact of HIV/AIDS; to prevent and control major infectious diseases such as tuberculosis; to fight avian influenza and other influenza-like illnesses; to improve maternal, reproductive, and children's health; and to strengthen Cambodian public-health systems.

The United States and Cambodia singed amendments to two bilateral agreements that provide USD 34.8 million in 2009.

The amendment to the second agreement will provide US$3.2 million in grant funds to support the Cambodian government's education objectives. These funds will support the launch of a new program that will build on USAID's ongoing education program, which is improving the quality and relevance of basic education and increasing access to schooling for all children, including minorities, people with disabilities, and the very poor. Activities will also focus on reducing school dropout and repetition rates through improvements in teaching quality, school-management training, and measuring student academic achievement…

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PM Asks for Setting Up Committees Dealing with Policy and Security, Economy, Social Affairs and Culture

Phnom Penh, September 7, 2009 AKP —

In response to the requirement for the foreign relations with ASEAN, Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen asked in a ministerial meeting on Sept. 4 for setting up three communities.

In the premier's recommendations given to the meeting, among the three communities, the first one deals with policy and security with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hor Namhong served as the president, the second deals with economy with Senior Minister Cham Prasidh as the president and the last with social affairs and culture with Senior Minister Sun Chanthol as the president.

The premier also requested for taking an action to remove a concessionary land of economy for being kept uncultivated and undeveloped to a concessionary land of social affairs to be available for being distributed to retired soldiers.The premier gave some advises, asking for creating and strengthening social safety net for retired soldiers. As stated in the government's rectangular strategy for military reform, he said, they do not have to be allowed to be displaced and should be in response to their gratitude for the cause of the nation by providing lands for their livelihood and farm production.

The meeting decided to conclude the partnership with World Bank for the land ownership registration program from now on.

The ministerial meeting adopted a draft sub-degree on ethical code of dentistry, prepared by dental practitioners' board and a draft sub-degree on a day to mark the battle against malaria to be held every year on April 25 along with the World Anti-Malaria Day in Cambodia, which suggested by the Ministry of Health. —AKP

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National Assembly To Hold Seminar To Debate Over Democracy in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, September 14, 2009 AKP —

Some 200 participants, including members of the National Assembly, government officials, members of diplomatic corps in Cambodia and representatives of the civil society, will attend a seminar on Sept. 15 to debate over democracy process in the country.

The seminar is organized by the National Assembly's Secretariat with the support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The one-day long seminar will be presided over by National Assembly President Samdech Akka Moha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin and several topics related to the strengthening of democracy will be raised by concerned parties, including the domestic and international politicians and members of the diplomatic corps in Cambodia. Moreover, two distinguished guests: Philippines' Senate Member Mr. Aquilino Pimentel and Malaysian parliamentarian Mr. Fuziah Salleh will also attend the seminar.

Some major topics including democracy and political tolerance, the democratization process in Cambodia, the role of the Human Rights Committee for the enhancement of democracy in Cambodia are expected to be discussed in the seminar. — AKP

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South Korea Plans to Construct a Phnom Penh Suburban Road

Phnom Penh, September 14, 2009 AKP —

Inter-ministerial officials led by Public Affairs and Transportation Secretary of State Lim Sidenin and Korean Expressway Cooperation Company representatives on Sept. 12 visited location around Phnom Penh city where the construction of a road is most likely with official approval.

According to H.E. Lim Sidenin, the Korean expressway constructor is interested in constructing a 60-kilometer road that runs across different areas surrounding the Capital City of Cambodia under BOT agreement. The road rehabilitation project will also entail the construction of two bridges crossing Bassac River.

The investment plan is resulted from the early 2009 visit of Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen to the Republic of Korea.

Once the plan attained official approval from the Prime Minister and the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), an estimate of eight-month assessment study will rolled out before the construction eventually starts and lasts for about three years.—AKP

U.S. Praises Cambodia for Combating Human Trafficking

Phnom Penh, September 3, 2009 AKP —

The United States of America has praised Cambodia for the development in combating human trafficking.

The statement was made known here on Sept. 2 by visiting Ambassador Luis CdeBaca, the director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the Department of State, at a news conference at the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh.

Mr. CdeBaca also appreciated the good Cambodia-U.S. partnership in combating human trafficking.

During his stay in the kingdom, Mr. Luis CdeBaca has met with government officials of the Ministries of Interior, Justice and Social Affairs. He said he has also gone to Malaysia and Thailand where the protection of victims of human trafficking, especially Cambodian victims, was raised.

In the near future, there will be discussion between Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister H.E. Hor Namhong and his American counterpart in Washington over the issue, Mr. CdeBaca said. —AKP

From page 1

Cambodian-Chinese Friendship...

Samdech Hun Sen said that over the recent years, there have been frequent exchanges of high-level visits between both countries. "And as for myself, since 2004, I, as a Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, have paid eight visits to China," he said.

"Obviously, such visits have further strengthened the friendship" between the two countries and promoted their economic, trade, culture and tourism cooperation.

He noted that China has provided huge financial assistance in the forms of grants and loans for major infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, and hydro power stations.

From 1992 to June 2009, China's financial aid to Cambodia has totaled some US$923 million, Samdech Hun Sen said.

He also extended his congratulations on the 60th anniversary of the birth of New China which falls on Oct. 1. —AKP

From page 1

2008 Population Census Final...

It is observed that the number of literate population aged 7 and more has spectacularly risen from about 5.78 million to 8.96 million during the ten years, which is increased from 62.80 percent in 1998 to 78.35 percent in 2008. Though the adult literacy rate has shown a fairly good increase during 1998-2008, Cambodia is the lowest in the Southeast Asia region after Laos. The number of children aged 6 and more attending school or educational institution have increased from 36.27 percent during 1998-2008 but the proportion of females attending school continues to be less than the corresponding proportion for males both in the urban and rural areas.

Addressing the releasing ceremony on Sept. 7 at the Chaktomuk Conference Hall, Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen said that the census plays a key role for the Cambodian government to plan the policy to achieve the millennium development goals, contribute to improve social and economic status for Cambodians and help poverty reduction in the country.

The census is also an important instrument to measure and evaluate the evolution and effectiveness of the implementation of the government's and executors' political programs in the country, he added.

The Cambodian premier further quoted the latest data of the National Institute of Statistics of the Ministry of Planning that the country's GDP per capita saw an increase from US$253 in 1998 to US$739 in 2008.

The 2008 population census was conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and supported by the Royal Government of Cambodia, UNFPA, JICA, the Government of Japan and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. —AKP

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UNESCO Helps Preserve Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, September 11, 2009 AKP —

The UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh will assist the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in the preservation of the historical documentary collection from the former S-21 prison and interrogation centre, according to an article posted on the UNESCO website on Sept. 10.

It is estimated that over 15,000 prisoners were held in this former high school by the Pol Pot regime. The collection, which has been inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, contains photographs, 'confessions' and biographical records of prisoners.

The historical photographs and documents from the site of the S-21 prison and interrogation centre of the Pol Pot regime, currently held at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh, are now listed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. Last July the Director-General of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura, announced the inscription of this collection on the Register, on the recommendation of the International Advisory Committee, which recognised its outstanding value and world significance.

The Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum Archives include various documents showing the fate of over 15,000 prisoners who were held from 1975 to 1979 in the Tuol Sleng compound. The Archives include 4,186 'confessions' (many extracted under torture); 6,226 biographies of prisoners; 6,147 photographic prints and negatives of prisoners, demolished buildings, research activities, mass graves and remains of victims, as well as photos of visitors.

These Archives constitute the most complete existing documentary picture of the Democratic Kampuchea prison system, a fundamental part of the regime under which about 2-3 million people (25-30% of the population) lost their lives in a period of 3 years, 8 months and 20 days...

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Over US$200 Million Invest in Cambodia Mobile Phones in First Half

Phnom Penh, September 3, 2009 AKP —

Cambodia claimed Tuesday that investment in the country's mobile phones sector has increased to US$234 million for the first six months of this year.

According to the Ministry of Telecommunication and Posts, total investment in the sector amounting to US$234 million as of June this year, whereas last year, within the same period of time, the total investment was only US$35 million.

Officials at the ministry were quoted as saying by Chinese News Agency Xinhua that the number of mobile phone users is remarkably increased with about five millions of the country's total estimate of 14 million populations.

The ministry officials contributed the increase in the sector to the huge demands from Cambodians who enjoy their communication through mobile phone because it consumes less time than traveling to meetings with other people while their businesses are in larger demands.

Other contributing causes to the increase in mobile phone usage are the country's economic growth and the better living standard of the people.

In recent years, telephone and internet are the latest growing modern technology in Cambodia.

Nine mobile phone companies are running businesses in Cambodia, according to the ministry. —AKP

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U.S. Extends US$34.8 Million for Health and Education in Cambodia...

"This assistance shows the good relations between Cambodia and the U.S., which have been strengthened day by day," said DPM Hor Namhong, adding that the new funding brings to over US$250 million that the United States has provided in support of health and education in Cambodia since 1999.

H.E. Hor Namhong further said he will leave here on Sept. 22 to New York and he is planning to meet his American counterpart to discuss about the ties of friendship and cooperation between both countries.

In addition to health and education activities, the press release added, USAID supports a broad range of programs designed to benefit all Cambodians in areas such as human rights, rule of law, local governance and decentralization, anti-corruption, natural-resource management, economic growth, and combating trafficking in persons. USAID expects to commit US$61.8 million in assistance to Cambodia in 2009. —AKP

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UNESCO Helps Preserve Tuol Sleng...

Copies of these historical documents have already been made. However, much more needs to be done in order to preserve the collection. UNESCO's Office in Phnom Penh will assist the Museum in the preservation of the originals in danger of destruction, mainly because of the tropical climate.

The Museum has started the digitalisation of the most significant parts of the Archives. The Tuol Sleng Museum personnel lack capacity and management skills, which is the case of many Cambodian institutions. In order to address this issue, UNESCO's Phnom Penh Office, in collaboration with the Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO and the National Museum, is organising a workshop for Cambodian Memory of the World focal points. During this training, to be held from 14 to 17 September 2009, about 30 participants will learn how to advocate, preserve and identify the national documentary heritage. They will, subsequently, become members of a future National Memory of the World Committee. —AKP

Cambodia Declares Its Candidacy for a Member of World Heritage Committee

Phnom Penh, September 9, 2009 AKP —

The Kingdom of Cambodia has declared its candidacy for the World Heritage Committee during a ceremony here on Sept. 7.

The declaration ceremony was held under the chairmanship of H.E. Sok An, Minister in charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers and President of Cambodian National Commission for UNESCO.

H.E. Sok An said that once Cambodia is elected as a member of the World Heritage Committee, which is slated in the upcoming October, Cambodia will need for a four-year mandate only. —AKP

Culture and Tourism:

Ethnic minority music and dance

The ethnic Cham community of Cambodia no longer has an active tradition of performing arts. In contrast, several Chinese community associations in Cambodia have Lion Dance teams which perform during Lunar New Year and other Chinese festivals.

Each of the hill tribes residing within Cambodian borders has its own unique music and dance traditions, which function together with the production of art objects to propitiate the spirits and celebrate the many social milestones in the lives of members of the community.

Musical instruments are crafted with great ingenuity from natural materials such as stone, wood, gourd, bamboo, animal horn and reed to accompany a wide range of solo and group songs and dances. In common with their cousins in southern Laos and the central highlands of Việt Nam, many groups utilise bronze drums as an integral part of their ritual ceremonies. The Jarai and Rhade (or Ede) in particular are renowned for their indigenous musical instruments, from stringed bronze gongs to the unique k'longput, made of bamboo tubes into which the players force air by clapping their hands.

Many of Cambodia's ethnic minority groups still maintain the services of shamans to intercede on their behalf with the world of the spirits. These perform special ceremonies and trance-dances to the accompaniment of ritual music.

Most of Cambodia's hill tribes have their own dances, which originated largely as a celebration of everyday events and pastimes. Many of these have been adapted for theatre presentation over the past 50 years.

The best-known ethnic minority dances are the skorl (bamboo) dance of the Stieng, the warrior dance of the Kui, the buffalo sacrifice and hot (bamboo pipe) dances of the Jarai, plus a range of dances by Pearic peoples which include the wild ox dance, the cardamom picking dance, the sen ploy spirit possession dance and the Pursat peacock dance of the Pear, the ritual and drum dances of the Suoy and the port chor rung dance of the Samre. The National Theatre Company of Cambodia Folkloric Dance Troupe includes a wide range of these highly-choreographed ethnic minority dances in its repertoire; however, those wishing to see the dances in their original form must travel to the villages.

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