

DECLARATION ON THE DISASTER SITUATION IN YEAR 2002

Disasters caused by varying natural hazards have been occurring consistently in the territories of the Kingdom of Cambodia during the past years. In the year 2000, the worst flooding experienced by Cambodia in over 70 years occurred causing damage to infrastructure and property estimated at US\$ 150 Million. The disaster resulted to the deaths of 347 people, seventy percent (70%) of who were children. In addition, the national economy and the implementation of social programs were adversely affected. In the year 2001, another flood occurred at the same time that some parts of the country were affected by drought. The disaster situation of 2001 resulted to an estimated damage of US\$ 36 Million, the deaths of some 61 people, eighty percent (80%) of who were children.

In response to these catastrophes, the various United Nations Agencies, Foreign Governments, International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Cambodian Red Cross and charitable individuals in and outside the country joined forces with the Royal Government of Cambodia and provided emergency assistance to the affected population. With the joint efforts of all these peoples and organizations, significant and proud achievements were realized in the country's rehabilitation and recovery.

The disaster situation in the current year 2002 is caused by the lack of rainfall, especially in the key food producing districts and provinces of Cambodia. Until late this August, rainfall has not been sufficient to produce the expected rice crop production. Cultivation of rice has only been undertaken in an estimated 800,167 hectares which is only equal to 36.77% of the planned 2,167,000 hectare land for rice crop production.

This is much lower than rice production achieved during the same period last year 2001. In Kampong Speu, Takeo and other provinces, the drought severely affected 51 districts amongst 185 districts or 551 communes amongst 1,621 communes throughout the country. Simultaneously, the provinces located along Mekong and Prassac Rivers are now being affected by flood due to heavy rainfalls in the northeastern parts of the country and the consequent effect of storms and rainfalls in other countries of the region (Thailand and Laos). These phenomena will continue to seriously affect the social economies and daily livelihood of the people.

Standing in front of these drought and flood situations, the Royal Government of Cambodia has endowed rice, fuel, sandbags, mobile houses and other supplies to respond and provide emergency assistances to those people who have been affected by varying hazardous calamities. Line ministries of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Cambodia Royal Armed Forces are monitoring closely and working very hard toward assisting those affected people with public education on health, hygiene and sanitation, safe water and provision of treatment as well. Cambodian Red Cross, International Organizations, Non Governmental Organizations are also cooperating and assisting

people in a timely manner in the areas where people are most vulnerable, severely affected and in need of assistance.

Although responses have been carried out, the scope of damage resulting from this severe drought and flood are increasingly intensifying causing deep concern. In the name of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I hereby would like to appeal to Samdech, His Excellency, Lok Chumteav, Ladies and Gentlemen, Government Officials, public service servants, national and international charitable individuals, the United Nations Agencies, International Organizations, Cambodian Red Cross Society, and Non governmental Organizations for your kind assistance and participation in contributing resources for emergency relief and recovery. Priority are food, rice seed and medicines and other materials in the spirit of humanitarianism as NCDM, line ministries Cambodian Red Cross and local authorities are waiting to accept donation and forward to the most affected and remote areas.

All levels of authorities ought to seek for available water sources to produce collective seedlings in order to distribute to people in the areas where transplanting is still possible but lack the seedlings and encourage people to grow supplementary food-related crops using all means. In conjunction with this, we will have to restore or renovate micro-irrigation schemes and repair infrastructure through the participation of community through food for work activities. The Cambodia Royal Arm Forces must be prepared and ready to take part in emergency response activities and evacuate people to the safe areas in an effective and efficient manner when disaster events occur.

The Royal Government of Cambodia strongly hopes, optimistically believes and extends its gratitude in advance to the positive responses to the above appeal.

Prime Minister
and President of the National Committee
for Disaster Management

Hun Sen