

Speech by Mr. HIGUCHI Yoshihiro,
Minister/Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan in Cambodia
At the Inauguration Ceremony for the Project of Installing a Water Filtration System
in Thmor Pouk District in Banteay Mean Chey Province
on February 25th, 2014

- H.E. Mr. Chou Yin Sin, Secretary of State, Ministry of Health,
- H.E. Mr. Kosum Saroeut, Governor of Banteay Mean Chey Province,
- Venerable Monks, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend today's inauguration ceremony for the project of installing a new water filtration system here at Thmor Pouk District in Banteay Mean Chey Province, with the high presence of H.E. Mr. Chou Yin Sin, Secretary of State, Ministry of Health.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the people who have contributed to the preparation of this project, and our special appreciation should go to the Reproductive and Child Health Alliance (RACHA) for taking an active initiative, in cooperation with the provincial health department.

This project, which amounts to approximately \$100,000, aims to improve the quality of life of the people in Thmor Pouk District by providing them with the access to safe drinking water. The clean water is one of the basic human needs and better access to it may have a wide range of positive impacts, in particular, in improving people's health conditions. Securing stable access to clean water is an important component of human security, concept that Japan has been actively promoting in the United Nations and other international fora, focusing on individual security of vulnerable people.

As I understand that the people in Thmor Pouk District have been suffering from a lack of water during the dry season and inadequate water supply have led to a high incidence of water related diseases among local population, especially among children under five years old. I am very much hopeful that a new water filtration system will contribute to facilitating people's better access to clean water with an affordable price, thus improving their health conditions considerably.

The Government of Japan considers the improvement of water supply systems and healthcare services as high priority areas in order to help Cambodia achieve its socio-economic development goals. To this end, the Government of Japan has so far supported various water treatment projects both in urban and rural areas.

The expansion of clean water coverage area is also identified as one of the propertities set out by the Cambodian Government, as reflected in the "Rectangular Strategy," emphasizing an increasing access to clean water through expansion of its coverage to the rural and urban areas, thus leading to the enhancement of people's health. This project of Japan aims to support such Cambodian efforts to this end.

In concluding my remarks, I sincerely hope that the water filtration system, which is given as a symbol of warm friendship from Japan and Japanese people, will be maintained properly and utilized effectively by the local people, and that through its implementation, the cordial and friendly relations existing between the Japanese and Cambodian people will be further strengthened.

Thank you very much for your attention.