

**Speech by Mr. FUJIMOTO Toshiki,
Second Secretary, Economic & ODA Section,
Embassy of Japan in the Kingdom of Cambodia
On the occasion of the Inauguration Ceremony of the Project for
Constructing Thnaot Agricultural Cooperative Center in Svay Rieng Province,
February 10, 2016**

- Venerable Monks,
- H.E. Mrs. Hor Malin, Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries,
- H.E. Mr. Kong Chan, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries,
- H.E. Mr. So Khan Rithykun, Delegate of Royal Government of Cambodia in Charge as Director General for Department of Agriculture,
- H.E. Mr. Cheang Am, Governor of Svay Rieng Province,
- Ms. Miki Ueda, CAE,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend today's inauguration ceremony for "The Project for Constructing a Thnaot Agricultural Cooperative Center in Svay Rieng Province", in the presence of H.E. Mrs. Hor Malin, Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Svay Rieng is located at one of the important areas along the national road No. 1, which is a part of the South Economic Corridor. Since 1992, the Government of Japan has been continuously providing its assistance to Cambodia in various fields and helping to build infrastructure along the South Economic Corridor has been one of the priority areas Japan has focused on. For example, 'Tsubasa Bridge' was funded by the government of Japan and was opened in Neak Loeng last April.

Agriculture is also one of the most important sectors in Cambodia as it contributes about 30% of GDP and more than half the population is engaged in the sector. Understanding the importance of the agricultural sector for economic and social development in Cambodia, the Government of Japan has been assisting the efforts of the Cambodian Government through measures such as developing infrastructure and providing technical assistance.

Before the completion of this project, farmers in Thnaot commune had difficulties in selling rice at a fair price not only due to lack of production materials but also lack of storage and process equipment. I am pleased to see that the newly constructed cooperative center with a stock room, a rice mill and an organic fertilizer facility provides an efficient rice distribution system. Such assistance from Japan aligned with the Cambodian government policy, including the Industrial Development Policy, which aims at strengthening agricultural cooperatives and adding value to agricultural production through promoting food processing. With the improved function of the cooperative center, I hope that more farmers will be able to increase their income and improve the quality of life.

Japan has also recently implemented, two other grassroots projects in Svay Rieng Province. Prey Mnos Primary School in Kampong Ro district was inaugurated this morning and a science laboratory at Provincial Teacher Training College was inaugurated last month. I hope these projects contribute to the development of Svay Rieng province.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all the people who have contributed to the smooth implementation of the project. I strongly hope that this cooperation will further strengthen the friendly relations between the Cambodian and Japanese people. I also hope the cooperative center will be maintained properly as a symbol of the friendship between the Kingdom of Cambodia and Japan for many years to come.

Thank you very much.