

Speech by Mr. HIGUCHI Yoshihiro  
Minister/Deputy Chief of Mission  
of the Embassy of Japan in the Kingdom of Cambodia  
On the Occasion of Inauguration Ceremony of the Farm Road  
at Kork Chor Village and Andok Dobmoi Village,  
Sdao Commune, Ratanak Mundol District  
in Battambang Province  
May 22, 2012

- Venerable monks,
- H.E. Mr. Prach Chann, Governor of Battambang Province
- H.E. Mr. Heng Ratana, Director General of the CMAC
- Mr. Osamu Okada, Director of the Good Earth Japan
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Farm Road at the Kork Chor Village and the Andok Dobmoi Village of the Sdao Commune with the presence of H. E. Mr. Prach Chann, Governor of Battambang Province and H.E. Mr. Heng Ratana, Director-General of the CMAC.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the people who have worked hard for the construction of the road and also to the Good Earth Japan for taking an initiative of this project.

The Japanese Government places a high priority on the development of agriculture sector in Cambodia as it is the single largest sector in terms of national income and employment.

Thus, in these two villages which have great potential for agricultural production, Japan has conducted two projects; one is demining through the CMAC and the other is the construction of this farm road through the GEJ.

The areas around the Kork Chor Village and the Andok Dobmoi Village were once mine-ridden and could not be utilized for cultivation. Thus, in 2008, the Japanese Government assisted the CMAC in its project of clearing the areas of landmines in order to enable the villagers to reengage in agricultural activities.

However, the lack of a proper road in the area posed an obstacle to the agricultural activities and transportation, in particular during the rainy season. Against these backgrounds, the Japanese Government decided to extend assistance amounting to 86,166 US dollars through the GEJ for the construction of this farm road which gives the villagers an access to a provincial road and further.

In Cambodia where demining is an indispensable task for expanding farming areas, a coordination between the two activities is critically important. In this context, I believe that the two projects implemented here are a good example of such coordination. In addition, the transformation from mine field to farmland demonstrates the consolidation of peace and stability in

Cambodia.

The Government of Japan has been assisting the economic and social development of the Kingdom of Cambodia since the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991. The Japan's assistance covers a wide range of sectors, and some of the large-scale infrastructure projects such as national roads and bridges are widely recognized among the Cambodian people as Japanese contributions.

The Japanese Government is also actively engaging in small-scale projects in coordination with Japanese and local NGOs for the rural development in Cambodia. The GEJ is one of those NGOs and has been implementing various projects in Battambang Province since 2007.

Last but not least, I would like to conclude my remarks by hoping that this farm road will promote the economic and social development of the two villages and also the whole Sdao Commune. I am also hopeful that this cooperation will further strengthen the friendly relations between the Japanese people and the Cambodian people.

Thank you for your attention.