

Speech by H.E. Mr. Masafumi KUROKI
Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of Cambodia
at the Opening Ceremony of the 60th Anniversary
of Friendship between Japan and Cambodia
22 January, 2013

- H.E. Mr. Long Visalo, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this significant occasion of the 60th Anniversary of Friendship between Japan and Cambodia, it is my great pleasure and honor to deliver a congratulatory message to Cambodian people on behalf of the Government of Japan and Japanese nationals.

The establishment of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Cambodia dates back to 1953 when His Majesty the late King Father Norodom Sihanouk won the independence. After the end of difficult era of Khmer Rouge regime and the subsequent civil war in Cambodia, Japan has actively contributed to the peace building process and the economic development of Cambodia.

In the last twenty years, Japan has not only led the international conferences for the peace of Cambodia such as the Tokyo Conference on Peace in Cambodia in 1990, in which the establishment of SNC was decided, but also has actively participated in the promotion of stability and development of Cambodia through economic cooperation in such fields as building infrastructures and human resources development, preservation of Angkor Temples and contribution to the Khmer Rouge Tribunal.

Especially, in the field of the economic cooperation, Japan has been the largest bilateral donor since 1992 and has been conducting various programs in such field as poverty reduction, construction of economic and social infrastructure, capacity building and so on with a view to working together with Cambodia to support its efforts toward the reconstruction of the nation.

The economic relations between Japan and Cambodia are getting more and more active due to the improvement of investment climate in Cambodia. I think that the Japanese assistance to Cambodia is another factor of the recent influx of Japanese investments to

Cambodia.

Recently, we witnessed a significant increase of Japanese investment, especially in manufacturing industry. Japanese investment in 2011 has doubled to 75 million dollars from 35 million dollars in 2010. Then in the year 2012 it has quadrupled to 300 million dollars from 2011. Japanese Government welcomes this increase of Japanese investment in Cambodia and is determined to continue its cooperation to Cambodia for further expansion of Japanese investment.

Japan fully commits itself to the centrality and integrity of ASEAN as well as the integrity of the Mekong region. In this sense, Cambodia is getting more and more important for Japan. Japan and Cambodia share a view that political and economic development of both ASEAN and the Mekong region is essential for the future development of Cambodia. In this regard, I strongly hope that the bilateral cooperation between Japan and Cambodia will be further strengthened in the context of ASEAN and the Mekong region.

Japan and Cambodia designated the year 2013 as the 60th Anniversary of Friendship between Japan and Cambodia. Both sides agreed to organize various cultural and exchange programs throughout the year. These programs include people to people exchange programs and a wide variety of cultural events such as music performance, traditional dance, art exhibitions, demonstration of martial arts, Japanese speech contests, Japanese movies and so on. The KIZUNA Festival which will be held in February at CJCC will be one of the highlights of these events.

I hope that as many Cambodian and Japanese people as possible will participate in these cultural and exchange programs commemorating the 60th anniversary in order to deepen our mutual understanding and further strengthen the friendship and cooperation between Japan and the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Thank you very much for your attention.