

**Speech by Mr. HIGUCHI Yoshihiro,
Minister/Deputy Chief of Mission,
Embassy of Japan in the Kingdom of Cambodia
At the Grant Contract Signing Ceremony for
Japan's Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects
20 March, 2013**

- Mr. CHAB Koy, Director of Preah Vihear Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology
- Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend this ceremony today for the signing of the contract of the Grant Assistance for the rehabilitation of the Prasat Neakbours Irrigation System in Preah Vihear Province, together with the representatives of the Preah Vihear Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology. I am particularly glad that the signing is conducted in the special context of this year 2013 which marks the 60th anniversary of Japan- Cambodia Friendship.

This project aims to increase the agricultural production in the Chomkhsan District by expanding irrigated areas through the rehabilitation of the embankment of 900m and the secondly canal of 800m. In the project, an additional outlet, a check structure and a spillway which are necessary for the irrigation system are constructed as well. The grant to be provided for this project amounts to USD 100,100. The project is expected to benefit about 300 households who will become able to constantly utilize irrigation water, thus, significantly increase crop yields.

Agriculture development, in particular, the increase of rice production is one of the highest priority targets for the development of Cambodia and the Royal Government has been actively expanding and rehabilitating the irrigation systems across the country. The increase of rice production will raise farmers' income and thus reduce poverty in rural areas.

The Government of Japan, understanding the importance of the agriculture sector for economic and social development in Cambodia, has been assisting the efforts of the Cambodian Government through the rehabilitation of irrigation systems and transfer of cultivation technology. This project is in line with the Japan's assistance strategy towards Cambodia and fits in the philosophy of the assistance scheme designed to promote the human security of the vulnerable population as well.

I hope that the project for which we proceed to sign the grant contract today will be implemented smoothly and effectively by our partner, Preah Vihear Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology, and maintained properly so that as many local people as possible can benefit from the project.

Last but not least, I hope that the project will further strengthen the friendly relations existing between the Japanese and Cambodian peoples.

Thank you for your attention.