

Speech by Mr. FUJIMOTO Toshiki
Second Secretary of the Embassy of Japan in the Kingdom of Cambodia
On the occasion of the Inauguration Ceremony of The Project for Constructing
Agricultural Cooperative Centers in Preah Vihear Province,
25th October 2016

- H.E. Mr. Ly Sarareth, Provincial Vice-Governor of Preah Vihear
- Mr. Poeung Tryda, Director of Preah Vihear Provincial Department of Agriculture
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to attend today's inauguration ceremony at Samaky Rohas Meanchey AC in Roveang District in Preah Vihear Province, in the presence of His Excellency Mr. Ly Sarareth, Provincial Vice-Governor of Preah Vihear, to celebrate the completion of the construction of the agricultural cooperative centers.

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors in Cambodia as it contributes about 30% of GDP and more than half of the population is engaged in this 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 including developing infrastructure and providing technical assistance.

Such assistance from Japan is aligned with the Cambodian government policy, including the Industrial Development Policy, which aims at promoting rice export, strengthening agricultural cooperatives and adding value to agricultural production through proper post-harvest management and promoting food processing.

By the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, more than 600 agricultural cooperatives have been established throughout Cambodia, and they are trying to improve farmers' livelihood through business activities. But I have recognized that there are still lots of difficulties. I heard that farmers in Preah Vihear have difficulties in selling rice and soybean at a fair price not only due to lack of agricultural machines but also lack of storage and process equipment.

Now, I am pleased to see the newly constructed agricultural cooperative centers funded by the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects. Three centers were built and agricultural machines like tractors, rice threshing machines, a soybean threshing machine, and a rice bed dryer were also provided for three respective agricultural cooperatives, which are Samaky Rohas Meanchey agricultural cooperative at Roveang District, Okleang Por agricultural cooperative at Preah Vihear city and Krobao Prumtep agricultural cooperative at Kulean District.

In the rest of my speech, I would like to state the following three points. First, for the last several years, Cambodian rice export has been increasing and its quality is highly regarded in the world. I am confident that today's assistance will increase the high quality rice production.

Second, I expect that more farmers will be able to increase their income and improve their quality of life with the improved function of the agricultural cooperative centers. It is also expected that more consumers will be able to enjoy good quality Cambodian rice.

Finally, I would also like to request that the agricultural cooperative centers and machines will be maintained properly as a symbol of the friendship between the Kingdom of Cambodia and Japan for many years to come.

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.

Thank you for your attention.