

**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 Stung Treng Province,**  
**25<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

- H.E. Mr. Mom Sareoun, Provincial Governor of Stung Treng
- Mr. Leang Seng, Director of Stung Treng Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
- Mr. Thorng Srann, District Governor of Thalabarivat
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to attend today's inauguration ceremony at Preah Rumkel Commune, Thalabarivat District, Stung Treng Province, in the presence of His Excellency Mr. Mom Sareoun, Provincial Governor of Stung Treng, 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 products through proper post-harvest management and promoting food processing.

By the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, more than 850 agricultural cooperatives have been established throughout Cambodia, and they are trying to improve farmers' livelihood through business activities. However, there are still lots of difficulties. I heard that farmers in Stung Treng have difficulties in selling agricultural products at fair prices, not only due to lack of agricultural

machines but also lack of storage and process equipment.

Today, 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, threshing machines, cassava chippers and a rice bed dryer were also provided for three agricultural cooperatives, namely, Preah Rumkel agricultural cooperative and Stung Treng Rom Sar agricultural cooperative at Thalabarivat District, and Oum Khoung Rong Roeung agricultural cooperative at Siem Bouk District.

Now, I would like to highlight a few aspects of positive impact of our assistance and also would like to make one request. First, for the last several years, Cambodian rice export has been increasing and its quality is well recognized in the world. Besides rice, Cambodia has a potential for producing vegetables. I am confident that today's assistance will increase high quality agricultural production.

Second, I expect that more farmers will be able to increase their income and improve their quality of life by selling their products at higher prices and reducing production costs, while more consumers will be able to enjoy good quality Cambodian products.

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.

Before closing my speech, 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.**