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ROYAL MESSAGE
TO THE DELEGATES FOR
THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM
ON DEMINING

Most calamities which hit the innocent often the poorest people are caused by nature. Doctors and scientists labor strenuously to combat them. The people of Cambodia are miserably victimized by floods and famine. Above that our people suffer and die from a number of debilitating illnesses such as tuberculosis, malaria and most recently AIDS.

But some calamities are man-made. They can and must be stopped. The most vicious and cruel are the accident caused by exploding land mines which continue to kill and maim our people. They retard our development because the vast areas of land they occupy is not productive for farming, industrial production nor for living. These destructive weapons planted by man have become a threat to our existence.

I therefore wish to thank you from the bottom of my heart and to welcome all the delegates who have come here from all over the world to participate in the International Forum on Demining and Victim Assistance. I find the conference theme "Toward Zero Victims Based on Ownership and Partnership" particularly fitting.

I pray through this conference and by your continued joint efforts toward eradicating the existence supporting the removal and opposing the laying of new mines, you will be instrumental in contributing to the total elimination of land mines everywhere. I know these efforts will help create a better Cambodia and a world where we can freely live, work and travel everywhere.

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