

NARA

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STATEMENT BY
AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR MR TONY KEVIN
ON OCCASION OF HANDOVER CEREMONY OF
AUSTRALIA'S 1995 DONATION
OF 10,000 TONNES OF RICE TO CAMBODIA
THROUGH THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM.

29 MARCH 1995

PHNOM PENH

AUSTRALIA'S DONATION OF 10,000 TONNES IS IN RESPONSE TO THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT'S GLOBAL APPEAL IN NOVEMBER 1994. I BELIEVE THAT AUSTRALIA WAS THE FIRST COUNTRY TO RESPOND TO THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT'S APPEAL. OUR DONATION IS WORTH AUS\$6.3 MILLION, INCLUDING TRANSPORT COSTS.

AS IN PAST YEARS OUR DONATION IS THROUGH THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP). WE USE WFP FOR SEVERAL REASONS. FIRST, IT HAS A RECORD OF EFFICIENT WORK IN PROVIDING FOOD AID TO THE PEOPLE IN CAMBODIA. SECOND, BECAUSE WFP HAS A VERY GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS LOCAL COUNTERPART, THE CAMBODIAN RED CROSS (CRC). THE CAMBODIAN RED CROSS HAS THE BEST MEANS OF TRANSPORTING RICE TO PEOPLE IN THE PROVINCES. THIRD, WFP USES RICE AS FOOD AID EFFECTIVELY BOTH TO GIVE EMERGENCY RELIEF AND ALSO TO SUPPORT FOOD FOR WORK ACTIVITIES THAT ASSIST IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND REBUILDING DAMAGED ROADS, IRRIGATION CHANNELS ETC. I AM HONOURED BY THE PRESENCE OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS MARIE HERE TODAY, AS PRESIDENT AND PATRON OF THE CAMBODIAN RED CROSS.

IN THE LONGER TERM, FOOD AID IS NOT A SOLUTION TO CAMBODIA'S FOOD SECURITY NEEDS. AUSTRALIA IS HELPING TO IMPROVE THE FOOD SECURITY OF THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE IN VARIOUS OTHER WAYS. FIRST, WE HAVE BEEN THE SOLE FUNDER SINCE 1987 OF

THE INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES IN CAMBODIA. THIS WORK AIMS TO INCREASE RICE PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH IMPROVED METHODS OF FARMING AND IMPROVED VARIETIES OF RICE. AROUND 14 MILLION AUSTRALIAN DOLLARS HAVE BEEN SPENT SO FAR IN THIS AREA.

SECOND, AUSTRALIA HAS FOR SEVERAL YEARS FUNDED AN AGRICULTURE EXTENSION PROJECT IMPLEMENTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN NGO, AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC RELIEF. THIS WILL SHORTLY BE FOLLOWED BY A MAJOR AUSTRALIAN AID BILATERAL AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION PROJECT.

THIRD, AUSTRALIA'S AID AGENCY, RECENTLY RE-NAMED AUSAID, WILL CONTINUE TO FUND VARIOUS AUSTRALIAN AND CAMBODIAN NGO PROGRAMS. ALL OF THESE AIM TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION AND FOOD SECURITY FOR CAMBODIA'S RURAL PEOPLE.

FOURTH, WE CONTINUE TO OFFER SUBSTANTIAL FUNDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE CAMBODIAN MINE ACTION CENTRE (CMAC). AUSTRALIA IS ONE OF THE LARGEST DONORS TO CMAC AND ONLY LAST WEEK AT ICORC, OUR AID MINISTER, GORDON BILNEY, ANNOUNCED THAT WE WILL BE PROVIDING AN ADDITIONAL AUSS\$2.5 MILLION TO CMAC THIS YEAR.

FIFTH, AUSTRALIA IS FUNDING TRAINING PROJECTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING FOREST MANAGEMENT. AS THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF CAMBODIA HAS NOTED, LAST YEARS FLOODS WERE PARTLY A CONSEQUENCE OF UNCONTROLLED LOGGING OF THE MOUNTAINS LEADING TO SOIL EROSION AND DAMAGE TO RIVER SYSTEMS.

AUSTRALIA'S AID TO CAMBODIA IS VERY DIVERSE AND SEEKS TO ADDRESS ALL AREAS OF RECONSTRUCTION OF CAMBODIA'S ECONOMY AND SOCIETY. I WANT TO SAY A WORD TODAY ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS, WHICH IS ONE OF THE MANY AREAS OF RECONSTRUCTION IN CAMBODIA THAT AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS.

IN PARIS, AT THE ICORC MEETING, AUSTRALIA'S AID MINISTER, MR BILNEY, NOTED THAT AUSTRALIA SEES A VERY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GROWTH OF PROSPERITY AND STABILITY IN CAMBODIA, AND THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE. MR BILNEY NOTED THAT CAMBODIA HAS ACCEPTED ITS OBLIGATIONS, UNDER THE PARIS AGREEMENT TO MAINTAIN A SPECIAL VIGILANCE IN THIS AREA IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES DO NOT OCCUR IN CAMBODIA.

AUSTRALIA WELCOMES THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF CAMBODIA'S COMMITMENT TO JUDICIAL AND LEGAL REFORM, AND TO THE OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. OUR GOVERNMENT, ALONG WITH OTHER DONOR GOVERNMENTS, WILL CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS IN CAMBODIA. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN CAMBODIA IS UNDER CONSIDERATION. AUSTRALIA WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE VALUABLE WORK OF THIS CENTRE, WHICH GREATLY ASSISTS THE WORK OF CAMBODIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS.

IT MAY SEEM ODD TO SPEAK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AT A CEREMONY TO HAND OVER A SUBSTANTIAL EMERGENCY FOOD AID CONTRIBUTION TO CAMBODIA. BUT I MAKE NO APOLOGY FOR THIS.

HUMAN RIGHTS ARE NOT A LUXURY.

HUMAN RIGHTS HELP TO BUILD A MORE PRODUCTIVE AND EFFICIENT SOCIETY WHERE PEOPLE WILL NOT GO HUNGRY.

HUMAN RIGHTS ARE NOT A WESTERN LUXURY THAT CAMBODIA CANNOT AFFORD.

HUMAN RIGHTS WILL HELP CAMBODIA SUCCEED IN ALL THAT IT IS TRYING TO DO.

THE HELP THAT CAMBODIA'S INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS ARE OFFERING IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AS IN OTHER AREAS, COMES WITHOUT STRINGS. THERE IS NO REASON FOR CAMBODIA TO FEAR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS, YOUR EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I AM PLEASED TO HAND OVER TO YOU TODAY THIS AUSTRALIAN GIFT OF EMERGENCY FOOD AID RICE TO THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE.

29 MARCH 1995

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY PHNOM PENH