

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen,
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia,
Message

Addressed by Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen,
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia,

At the 4th National Nutrition Day (November 6, 2014-November 6, 2017)

**Under the Theme: “GROW AND CONSUME DIVERSE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD TO BE
STRONG AND HEALTHY”**

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- Venerable Patriarchs from the two Buddhist Boards and Venerable Monks!
 - Samdech, Excellency, Lok Chumteav, Ladies and Gentlemen!
 - My beloved compatriots!

On this glorious occasion of the celebration of the 4th Anniversary of **the National Nutrition Day** on November 6, 2017, I would like to express my great pleasure and strong support for the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development, line ministries and institutions, development partners, and civil society organizations for organizing this very important National Nutrition Day; and I would also like to convey this message to all venerable monks, national compatriots about the commitment and causes of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to continue to promoting food security and nutrition in Cambodia. The celebration of this National Nutrition Day intends to educate and promote wider public awareness across the country of the importance of nutrition and to encourage the national compatriots to engage in the implementation of the RGC’ policies and strategies to reduce poverty, maintain the economic growth and to improve the food security and nutrition status for all the Cambodian people.

Food security and nutrition is cross-sectoral and significantly contributes to human development and national economy, bringing about prosperity and social equity. To achieve this very important work, the RGC in cooperation with relevant actors has focused on the interventions and investments in agriculture, health, education, rural development, water resource management, gender, social protection, water supply and sanitation, and other relevant sectors. With this spirit, the National Nutrition Day selects relevant themes every year to mobilize the focus as well as the cooperation between those sectors. This year’s 4th National Nutrition Day’s theme **“GROW AND CONSUME DIVERSE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD TO BE STRONG AND HEALTHY”** is a topic that

shows the importance of the nutrition sensitive agriculture through the collaboration with health and education sectors in which agriculture plays a major role in ensuring improved food security and nutrition, increased export of agro-products, job creation, and increased income to promote the living standard and reduce poverty of the farmers. In this regards, I would like to call on development partners, civil society, and private sector to continue their cooperation with the RGC to implement the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2014-2018, the 2025 National Action Plan for the Zero Hunger in Cambodia, the Agricultural Sector Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018, and other sectoral strategic plans relating to food security and nutrition to promote the quality of life, allowing all Cambodian people to have improved physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious foods so that they live a healthy and very productive life.

My Beloved Compatriots!

Over the last decades, Cambodia has undergone a remarkable change both in the political, security, socio and economic aspects. Cambodia has become an island of peace and a well-known tourist destination in the region and in the world. Cambodia has become a lower-middle income country and been described as a new economic tiger in Asia with a firm average growth, at 7.7% per annum over the past 2 decades and the country is expecting to continue to maintain the average growth rate at 7% in the medium term, indicating that the country's progress in diversification to promote the economic growth and the livelihood of the people. On the other hand, the food security and nutrition has been improved subsequently as Cambodia has been able to produce more than 4 million metric tons of paddy rice surplus or more than 3 million metric tons of milled rice surplus each year; however, this does not directly translate into improved nutrition status for mothers and children. Improved nutrition depends on diversified diets and food quality, food supply in the household, change in dietary habit, capacity of the caregivers, water and sanitation and hygiene, as well as access to good health care services.

The issues of undernutrition and overnutrition are a double burden for the RGC, which has to think and introduce a clear strategy to address them. This is a sign of the economic change and a prediction of additional challenges that might happen in the future together with the non-communicable diseases. Undernourishment in children from the first age not only affects their health and causes mortality, but also has an impact on their mental, study, productive work abilities in the future and this impacts not only the household economy but also the entire national economy.

In this regard, I would like to call on line ministries, institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, and all private sectors who are working in the nutrition sector to enhance and expand their educational campaign by all means, to encourage the better off farmers to engage in (1) producing all types of small scale or community crops, for instance, the home garden, the school or pagoda garden in order to increase both the quantity and quality, and to ensure the diversified and safe food sources through the promotion of the construction of farm infrastructure, increased agricultural diversifications, good agriculture practices, by not keeping lands empty; (2) promoting wider and sustainable animal production to ensure the animal meat supply, food safety through the sanitary and phytosanitary control; (3) increasing the protection and conservation of fishery resources, and promoting aquaculture development to ensure the sustainable fishery resources as well as to improve the quality and safety of fishery products for local consumption and export; (4) encouraging people to consume more ecologically diversified foods full of nutrients available at their community, especially vegetables, fruits, fish, eggs and meat so that they live a nutritionally healthy life.

Before I end, I do hope that the celebration of the **4th National Nutrition Day** will uphold the commitment of line ministries, institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, private sector, and all the compatriots to pay more attention to another level of involvement with the RGC for the cause to achieve **Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals that is to End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable** agriculture in Cambodia.

Last but not least in order for us to appreciate the **November 6 National Nutrition Day**, I wish Samdech Patriarchs of the two Buddhist Boards, Venerable Monks, all national compatriots Happy Water Festival and the five blessings of Buddha: Longevity, Nobility, Happiness, Strength, and Wisdom.

Phnom Penh, Dated 1st November 2017

Signed by

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen