

EMBASSY OF THE KHMER REPUBLIC
PRESS SECTION
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THE KHMER REPUBLIC :
AN OVERVIEW:
OUR PLAN FOR POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION
AND DEVELOPMENT(1)

The war has caused enormous damage. We wish to give our readers a general idea of what we intend to do to heal the deep wounds this war has inflicted and on what basis we propose to build our future development.

Description: A five-year plan from 1973 to 1977 with an extension to 1980.

Breakdown: 1973-1975: a period of reconstruction, of healing the wounds received during the war, of re-starting economic activities, and preparing the framework for development; to continue the structure of a framework and a socio-economic base for the different areas in need of development.

AIMS: 1975

1. At the conclusion of 1975, we hope to have returned to the 1969 pre-war level of development:

- in general terms and in the production of energy;
- in several agricultural areas: grain, processing (except rubber), food, stock-farming, fishing and perhaps a few others;
- small industries which manufacture products from and for agriculture, reconstruction and handicrafts such as factories that produce manure, sugar, canned foods, woods and plywoods, tyres, textiles, cement, bricks, small agricultural tools and others;
- tourism, which in conjunction with agriculture and industry will make an economic starting point possible in 1977, provided conditions are highly favorable. But if these conditions are only "good" we will then aim at the year 1980;
- in the agricultural area: primary, secondary and university education, with a new and stronger approach, especially in the technical and professional fields, and most especially in secondary schools;
- restoration of temples and tourist sites;
- Public Health: child care, preventive measures against malaria and venereal diseases, dispensaries in the cities as well as in the country, medical insurance, among others.

(1) This article appeared in the English edition of Khmer Republic (Special Issue), October 1973, pp. 314-317.

2. To help economic development along wherever this can be done quickly and to follow by development in the areas mentioned thereafter: fishing, woods, industry, grains and cereals, stock raising, precious stones, agriculture, handicrafts, tourism and whatever else may present itself.

3. To pursue an economic, government and social policy which is firm and realistic and which will encourage public and private participation that will lead to the edification and development of the country. Our guidelines shall be our Constitution and the embodiment of the ideas set forth in neo-Khmerism, by:

a) gradual, orderly development of our economic and cultural life, without rigidly following a set pattern. We must therefore encourage private, national and foreign investment within the guidelines set forth in our post-war plan for Reconstruction and Development. Partially private schools and especially Universities may want to be set up (as in the Philippines, Indonesia, United Kingdom). It will then be possible for the State to concentrate its efforts on national defense, and on enterprises of a social and international nature (such as defense, security, ports, airports, roads, bridges, cheap transportation, social welfare, products of a strategic nature, pre-school and extra curricular education, mass education, professional post graduate courses, and participation in international activities).

b) Gradually attain a level of income that may be considered somewhat realistic which will then also permit prices to be brought up to a realistic level.

c) Tourism should receive priority and preparations should be completed by 1975. This, in turn will then become the take-off point for the economic development of the country, first in agriculture and certain industries and eventually in production.

AIMS: 1977

At this point we reinforce the basic structure, and develop the energy potential of the country, such as hydro-electric dams and irrigation. This will aid agricultural production which will promote the export of rice, rubber and wood. We solidify our agricultural methods and make them more efficient, we employ fertilizer on a large scale, we vary and intensify our methods of irrigation, so that all irrigation structures will be efficiently constructed, maintained and used. The OFFINACO and similar organizations will be actively and fully involved in harvesting agricultural products and furnishing agriculture with what is needed.

Tourists will come in large numbers to Angkor, to Phnom Penh, to Kompong Som and eventually to Stung Treng and Kompong Sralao. The Development Bank, the Farmers Banks and all other banks will thrive. Farmers and people in need will benefit from assistance programmes.

CENTERS OF DEVELOPMENT

From 1973-1975 there will be three centers: Phnom Penh, Kompong Som, Battambang-Siemreap. From 1972-1977 there will be 4 centers: Phnom Penh, Kompong Som, Siemreap-Battambang, Stung Treng.

These centers will be in the forefront in forming regional policies and will have the support from minor centers within the different areas. This is essential for maintaining a good balance between city and country.

In the second stage of the five year plan the center named Battambang-Siemreap will then reverse to Siemreap-Battambang, because the international center of Siemreap will be eventually the very active.

The port of Kompong Som will also see more activity, and it is therefore important not to neglect the north-east portion of the Khmer Republic, which would then be capable of economically supporting lower Laos. We take into consideration here the development programme already in progress in South Vietnam, including 15 regions in its high plateau country.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

- A) We must develop:
 - 1) Agriculture and tourism
 - 2) An industry which supports agriculture and handicrafts.
- B) The support must come from:
 - 1) Maintenance (roads, bridges, airports, electricity, various other installations).
 - 2) Forming work-groups and enlisting qualified workers to service the different areas to be developed.
 - 3) Promoting popular well-being by creating social conditions and developing a state of mind which will allow the people to participate enthusiastically in the country's development programme.

STRATEGY: HOW WE PROPOSE TO DO THIS

- a) We shall abide by the following rules:

Once the Plan is adopted it will become the official guide for our policy of social and economic development of the country during a previously determined period of time.

Within the structure of the Plan, economic and investment planning shall be encouraged. Modifications and improvisations should be avoided, as much as possible. The principal objectives of the Plan may only be modified in very rare cases, and its outlines should only be changed if absolutely necessary. Details in the planning may, however, upon occasion, be changed.

b) Education for the population at large:

The objectives of the Plan must be in line with the objectives of the country and with those of the different social groups. This is necessary because it should not just be one person's brain-child and great accomplishment, if it is to succeed, since it would then be of interest to no one. This points up the necessity for providing education in community development to the population at large.

c) Directing young people's activities towards economic development.

d) Psychological objectives. Two broad objectives run through the Plan.

-- the first one is short term, but permanent and is designed to provide a psychological impact on the people which gradually will create an interest in the Plan, and will motivate them to participate in it.

-- the second one is medium and long term and aims at the realization of global objectives in the national and popular interest. Malaysia's development succeeded nicely on this psychological premise.

HOW TO EXECUTE AND FINANCE THE PLAN

This highly important portion requires:

- a) Much publicity and good public relations;
- b) political and social stability, which must satisfy certain criteria in a developing country;
- c) an atmosphere of confidence;
- d) a more or less stable currency;
- e) an adequate financial and monetary policy;
- f) a prospering banking system;
- g) good and courteous service, private as well as public;
- h) realistic financing, as follows:

- National Budget: Workable, general goals; welfare programmes; specialized workers and equipment.
- U.N.: General assistance, social organizations.
- American economic aid (AID): Building up of the basic necessities in general, aid to refugees, assistance for the repair of war damages, general assistance, providing strategically important equipment.
- Aid for economic investment, from a number of sources.
- Private and public charitable organizations, such as the Red Cross: Economic investment, philanthropic assistance, social workers and materials.

ACCOMPANYING MEASURES

The various areas under development must maintain each other so that when one benefits all others do too, and when one is handicapped some way all others are also. For example:

-- Without framework no new techniques can be devised and no progress is possible,

-- without fertilizer and without water control agriculture cannot be developed,

-- without social organization, work cannot very well be organized, and low production, wasting of time and great production losses result,

-- without well regulated policies there can be no stable finances, and no monetary and economic stability will result. This brings with it an unruly development which may result in grave social conflicts.

GENERAL COORDINATION

The Minister of Planning who is neutral and only indirectly interested, coordinates everything as follows:

1) in cooperation with the Ministries involved in development, such as the Ministries of Finance, Planning, Public Works, Agriculture, Industry, Commerce and the Interior, through the Technical Planning Commission, in which all Ministries are involved.

2) Through the National Investment Committee.

3) Through the High Planning Council.

4) Through the provincial Offices and Commissions attached to the Planning Commission.

P R O J E C T S

Large inter-country projects connected with the Mekong project, such as the COORDOM, the Asian Highway, and other. Also the Assistance Programmes of the United Nations (UNDP) are focal points around which the majority of national, provincial and local projects revolve.

The Department of Public works is charged with setting up projects in outline and participates in that capacity in international projects in which the Khmer Republic is directly involved.

Other Departments collaborate by establishing projects concerning the domain of their interests.

The most difficult projects are those concerned with Agriculture, Public Works, Industry and National Education.

The Department of the Interior will be concerned with refugee work, and with Community Development. War damages are calculated by all interested Departments, who have formed a Commission which is presided over by the Minister of Public Works.

Those charged with Tourism, the project which is to start the economic development of the country, must become more efficient and enterprising. The building up should begin as of now.

Social and cultural projects, in Education, Culture, Youth, Labour, Health, and others are getting ready to start at the right psychological moment and are waiting for favourable social conditions. Special mention should be given to the programme of Mass Education and Welfare.

The principal projects have been set up and are ready since January 1973 to be integrated within the total Plan.

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Nota: Dates are to be corrected according to the starting time of the Plan's execution. The dates mentioned are only projected.