

**OPENING SPEECH
DELIVERED BY H.E. CHHAY THAN, SENIOR MINISTER,
MINISTER OF PLANNING IN THE OPENING CEREMONY OF
SEMINAR FOR
PROMOTING THE USE OF PROVISIONAL POPULATION TOTALS OF 2008
GENERAL POPULATION CENSUS OF CAMBODIA**

**Organized by the National Institute of Statistics and the project on
Improving Official Statistics in Cambodia, JICA**

**Cambodia-Japan Cooperation Center
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- Chairpersons;
- Mr. Hikoyuki UKAI, Deputy Representative, JICA Cambodia Office;
- Ms. Alice Levisay, Representative, UNFPA
- Your Excellency Secretaries of State, Under Secretary of State of Royal Government of Cambodia;
- Excellencies, National and International Guests, Ladies, Gentlemen and Dear Participants,

1. Today, I have great honor and pleasure to chair and welcome Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, who anticipate in the important seminar for Promoting the Use of Provisional Population Totals of 2008 General Population Census of Cambodia.

2. The successful preliminary results, after 6 months of field operation of 2008 General Population Census of Cambodia, was officially released and announced recently by H.E. Mr. Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Chairman of National Census Committee on 03 September 2008 at Inter-Continental Hotel.

3. The preliminary results of the census are the outcomes based on careful scrutiny and tabulation of summary figures completed by enumerators. Basic data such as the total population of Cambodia by sex; provinces and municipalities; rural and urban area; household size (average number of member per household); geographic distribution of its population; population density; sex ratio; annual growth rate and as well as social, cultural and economics characteristics are presented in this report. Taking this opportunity, I would like also to inform you that final detail statistics of the census will be released at the 3rd quarter next year after finishing of editing and processing of approximate 2.8 millions of interviewed household questionnaires.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

4. We today have an opportunity to anticipate here, the main aims are to promote and widen the use of provisional population totals of the last census after 1998 one for the most effective development of the country toward poverty reduction of people. Data analyzed from the census are the foundations for formulating planning process and policies for development of all factors. It should be noted that if we just have data but it is not used at national level and decentralized level to evidence achievements, it will bring the uselessness of data from population census and waste of big amount of budget and time as well. For these rationales, the initiation of today seminar is a great opportunity for us who work in the fields of population, demography and formulators of national development programs, to express ideas, experiences and knowledge on the use of how to turn data into development.

5. As my experiences, what I have seen and observed, I realized that the results of 1998 Population Census were widely and effectively used. As a proof, we already acknowledged that the last 10 years after 1998 population census, our country had notable improvement of all sectors such as socio-economics, admiring from international community as well. These improvements proved by the high economics growth rate to 2 digits within the last few years. What I want to stress here is that parts of results of economics growth evidenced from the Master Plans, National Strategic Development Plan, Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan and other development plans at national and sub-national level, mainly based on data from population census and surveys. Therefore, there are linkages between data producing and data utilizing it means data producers need supports from data users and data users also need data producers.

6. The characteristics of official statistics bearing the principles of accuracy, objectivity, reliability, and timeliness are very essential characteristics of scientific statistics – all of these are for promoting and fastening decision making, poverty reduction policies and other development programs of the Royal Government and other development agencies as well and for evaluating economics growth of the country. Standing on this view point, we are now having newly-reliably-scientifically results of advanced statistics on population and demographic characteristics, is Provisional Population Totals of 2008 General Population Census of Cambodia.

7. Having these preliminary results, I would like to take this great opportunity, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to appeal and encourage to all levels of involved users in the position of statistics data utilizes such as planners, formulators of development policies, governance at national down to community levels within government, non government development partners, private sectors and relevant others, to effectively and objectively use the results of provisional population totals of 2008 population census to evidence achievements of development in Cambodia.

8. I hope and strongly believe that the in-hand preliminary results of our census will be used and extracted all essences, possibilities and potentialities by all contexts of respective users' task, data produced from the difficult affords have the universal utilization.

9. If our existing data now are properly and objectively used, developments and achievements will be evidenced in the future.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

10. Finally, on behalf of the Royal Government and myself, I would like to express my profound and sincere gratitude to the development partners: UNFPA, JICA, the Government of Japan and the Government of Federal Republic of Germany who have assisted both technical and financial supports to the successful of 2008 General Population Census of Cambodia. Especially thanks today to the project on Improving Official Statistics in Cambodia by JICA and the Government of Japan in collaboration with the National Institute of statistics for their best efforts to hold this important seminar. I hope that JICA will continue to support to improve the official statistics in Cambodia. Moreover, I would like the seminar to hopefully provide recommendations and I wish the seminar a great success.

Now, may I declare of the seminar officially start.

Thank you !