

**Kingdom of Cambodia
Nation Religion King**

**Lesson Learn: Cambodia Mine Clearing Company to join UN
Peace Keeping Operation in Sudan**

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With high commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia led by Samdech Prime Minister HUN SEN, the National Coordination Committee for UN Peace Keeping Mission in Sudan was established on March 01st 2005. Historically, this is first time, Cambodia decided to send its troop oversea to join peace keeping mission of the United Nation, when Cambodia has full peace.

For more than three decades of civil war, Cambodian people learn hardship of suffering with social and infrastructure destruction, heavily land mine accident, yet highly value peace. From bare hand, government, after January 1979, Cambodia has been reconstructed with clear perspective toward building long lasting peace and stability. Land mine, which place Cambodia as a second high risk country in the world, has brought the world attention for assistance to liberate land from mine for developing the agriculture livelihood to feed the growing population. From a country receives international community assistances, Cambodia is proud to contribute her experiences and limited resources to the UN Peace Keeping Mission although this is not an easy step to prepare a Mine Clearing Company of 135 strengths.

In order to facilitate the preparation of the Mine Clearing Company, the National Coordination Committee has overcome many difficulties such as searching and learning the UN procedures/protocol, requirement and standards before the MOU negotiation took place November 7-11 2005. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the lesson learn and challenges we can summary as the followings:

1. The current Cambodian Mine Clearing Force has been trained in form of the military intervention unit to work in the battle field; whereas the UN Peace Keeping Mission is a humanitarian mission, it requires the special preparation for the 135 strengths battalion to be retrained in humanitarian service, UN regulations, and technical standard in multicultural environment;

2. The current trained Cambodia Mine Clearing Force is at different level of standard of international standard IMAS required by UN Mission; in particular requires for mission in Sudan. To meet with this requirement, the de-miner troops need to be intensively retrained with standard equipped;
3. As this is the first time Cambodia joins UN Peacekeeping Mission, beside the standard required, the complication of institutional arrangement has been experienced; this relates to the organization, inter-ministerial arrangement and coordination including the communication with the UN Body;
4. Following the standards required by the UN mission, the mine clearing troop needs to be equipped with UN standards of modern equipments that we don't have in hand – this is not only facing with the limited state budget, but searching for international supplies timely;
5. In preparing the very first Mine Clearing Company of 135 strengths, we spent 321 days from the establishment of the National Coordination Committee, who facilitates and coordinates different institutions to form and train the 135 Mine Clearing Battalion with UN requirement for troop structure and equipment;
6. In deed, the points raise above are the summary of some constraints for the preparation, the motivation and supportive modes of the Royal government are the fundamental factors for a successful preparation:
 - a. The Government's political commitment reflected the high attention and leadership of Samdech Prime Minister HUN SEN;
 - b. The full support and routine supervision of the Deputy Prime Minister TEA Banh, Minister of Defense;
 - c. The full participation and coordination of all unit the Royal Government Arm Force;
 - d. The close cooperation of all mechanism in Ministry of Defense and all related institutions including individual contribution;

Presided over at the ceremony of Mine Clearing Company No. 135 Departure, on April 12th 2006, Sadech Prime Minister HUN SEN reminded the mission troop of the experiences of UNTAC mission in Cambodia during 90's. We dearly thank to UN and International Community for their assistances to building democracy in Cambodia; what we learnt from the UNTAC mission with the absence of paying the full respect and attention to local culture, moral, authority, sexual misconduct awareness and to the integrity of our country, I remind you all not to repeat in Sudan, he said. In addition, he raised the high awareness for the troop to fully represent the Goodwill of Cambodian people. Turning to the situation in Sudan, he said that, as the peacekeeping troop, you are ordered to give full respect to the integrity of the country and people where you serve. He added, you

all are carrying out the caring, sharing, and loves of the 13.9 million of Cambodian people to the people of Sudan and thus you all are counted on this mission. Although, the situation in Darfur posed serious challenges, it requires that you work closely in cooperation with other countries troops to overcome the designated tasks as part of your responsibility to serve peace and development.

As the No. 135 Mine Clearing Company is on mission, the National Coordination Committee is working on developing a long-term functional body to serve the administration of further preparation for military humanitarian intervention services with different fields require for UN Peacekeeping Operation Mission. It lays a great challenge for the Royal Government of Cambodia's commitment in contributing to UN peacekeeping mission with sharing its limited resource and the international community assistance.

I very appreciate your attention and am looking forward to your fruitful cooperation.

Sincerely yours,
Gen. NEM Sowath

