

ADB Water Prize 2004 Acceptance Speech

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Ten Years ago I was entrusted by my government with the task of managing the water supply in the city of Phnom Penh. At that time, the Authority was in a sad state of chaos and disarray with the water supply in a severe state of deterioration. "This is not a nice job, actually", I said to myself. Nevertheless, I took it up as the duty of a government servant. After ten years of hard work, today I am being awarded the ADB Water Prize. I feel greatly honored by this award, this token of appreciation and recognition for what we have done in the water supply of the city of Phnom Penh, and what we have achieved in our goals and commitments set ten years ago.

Please allow me to thank the President of the ADB and his many specialists for this kind gesture of appreciation and recognition. Actually, all I have done is simply to perform my duty, as a modest government servant. It would be enough to do my duty to the best of my abilities in the service of my country and its people.

I feel already very happy when I am able to provide water connections to poor families. Only last Friday before I came here, we had a meeting with 300 slum families who used to live in the garbage disposal area. The government has just relocated them. We had a meeting to explain how the government wanted to provide water to them and the benefits they can get from a secure water supply. These people are now really very happy. But, myself, I also feel very happy, because of the work that I have done, which is the duty of a government servant. That is why I am pleasantly surprised when I was informed of this award.

In the meantime I feel that I do not deserve full credit for this recognition and instead I want to share this with my colleagues. I can say that I have a special group of people working for me. Some people call our groups the Musketeer team because we have the rule: one for all and all for one. We are working very hard together, we share all of the difficulties and also participate in all the opportunities that our people are given. Our workforce has made a big contribution to our achievements.

In the meantime I would also like to share this with the government of Cambodia, which has supported me all the way, especially the governor of the city of Phnom Penh and the Prime Minister. Without the support of the lawmakers and decision makers, we would not have chalked up these achievements at this stage.

But, I would also like to thank and share this award with many ADB specialists, particularly Mr. Xiaoyan Ye, a very hard worker, a very good expert who has worked very hard since the beginning of the project ten years ago. He has given me much encouragement; shared with me priceless lessons and experiences that have helped me manage the water system in Phnom Penh successfully.

Finally, I must say that ADB is much more than a bank. It is really much more than a bank. Thank you.