



**KEYNOTES FOR THE 1<sup>ST</sup> ORDINARY CONGRESS**  
by  
**Leader of LEAGUE FOR DEMOCRACY PARTY (LDP)**  
on  
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To start with, I, Khem Veasna, would like to extend my respect to the venerable Buddhist monks and my warm welcome to all the members of the congress and distinguished guests.

On this occasion, I have two questions for all the congress members. My first question is, “What are we doing?”, and my second question is, “Why are we doing what we are doing?”

The response to the first question makes us fully aware of our work. The answer to the second question helps us build our confidence in what we are doing. Once you are fully aware of what you do and you do it with confidence, the work moves forward with focus, and under your control.

Once you are fully certain of what you are doing, and why you are doing it, the influence from the outside will never change the course of your direction of what you are doing. After all, no matter how hard your work may be, and how big your challenges may be, you will get the work accomplished with satisfaction and appreciation. For instance, the fact that LDP is able to organize its very first congress today; because we are certain of what we do and our work is under control.

What is the response to the second question? For what purposes are we organizing this congress? Although this congress aims at electing the party leaders, adopting the party’s statute, validating the Party’s Central Committee membership so on and so forth, it only marks the stepping stones towards our goal. So what is our goal?

We have to visualize the common dream which is our goal. It is a common dream that all Cambodian citizens have visualized, “**A nation in which we live in equity as its owners.**” This is our ultimate goal. All Cambodians have to realize this dream together with our own fists. The key element ensuring the equity in a nation is the check and balance between the citizens and the government that represents their will.

Our Party's acts are guided by our goal to realize our common dream, "**A nation in which we live in equity as its owners.**"

I am fully confident that you have heard about "THEM", known "THEM", understood "THEM", and even visualized a lively and clear picture of "THEM" in your mind. So what are "THEM"? Of course, they are the eight mechanisms, the party's key political programs that reflect our vigorous will and vision. The eight mechanisms which are a result of our rationale consideration shall serve as a foundation in order to realize our common dream.

The eight mechanisms are as follows:

1. Premiership shall be limited to two terms in office *ONLY*;
2. Prime Minister shall not be allowed to establish his own bodyguard unit;
3. Prime Minister shall be required to live in a State residence;
4. Administrative court shall be established;
5. Nomination of police and military generals shall be validated by the National Assembly;
6. Civil Servants shall be banned from political party affiliation;
7. Direct voting system shall be applied to elect or remove representatives at all levels (Commune/Sangkat, District/Khan/Town and Province/Capital);
8. Uninominal system of election shall be applied to elect members of Parliament;

These eight mechanisms establish a new structure of government that all of us are obliged to endorse in order to substitute the existing government administration, and to realize our dream, "**A nation in which we live in equity as its owners**".

There is a distance between where we are now and our destination. Generally, when we move along the path to reach our destination, we inevitably encounter numerous challenges both subtle and enormous. So what are the real and perceived obstacles lying along the path towards the reachable destination that is firmly targeted by our party pioneers?

So far, we have unveiled three main challenges as follows:

- Increasing influence of widespread structure of centralized power is our first challenge;
- Propaganda of those non-portfolio political parties whose goals are merely to collect ballots, and are increasingly popular among anti-government voters and the grassroots with limited level of thoughts is our second challenge; and
- The passiveness of the nation's citizens prone to be cheated, including self-centeredness, ignorance of own obligations towards the nation, ignorance of the political program of the parties, blind faith beyond reasoning and, underutilization of their human potentials, and inability to logical reasoning on all aspects of life is our third challenge.

The three challenges lie everywhere along the path we are to travel from where we are now to our destination. It is a bumpy and dangerous path.

Thus, in order to avoid any danger to ourselves and any side effects to the destruction of the nation as a result of our mission and to successfully overcome those potential challenges, all of us must at all times adhere to the approach of “**Doing Politics**”, which we define as the art of reaching our goal and to the underlying guidance of the approach which we define as “**Political Attitude**”.

- Politics is an art of reaching a goal that benefits all citizens of the nation. We are the underlying cause to the accomplishment of our goal. Even if we do not win the election or we win the election but are banned from taking the power to run the country, we will never give up our goal.
- Every aspect of our political attitudes is governed by our integrity. Not only does integrity help national reconciliation and solidarity among all Cambodians but it also establishes an indispensable force for country development. We challenge to ensure heartfelt consensus. We challenge to ensure sincere solidarity. We challenge to establish different political parties to ensure national progress. **“Pure consensus must derive from challenges. However, no consensus appears without a start of challenge and debate. Challenges can turn fruitful results only if challenges are guided by the principle of integrity.”**
- Political campaign must not be aimed at collecting ballots. Instead, it honestly aims at seeking support for an ideology. The practice of this principle reminds us at all times that any political activities carried out by our party members are of three thresholds: first, EXPLANATION, second, EXPLANATION and third, EXPLANATION. It means there is no other means besides explanation when it comes to carrying out our political activities to get support for our ideology. When every party member has this principle in mind all the times, their political activities will never depart from the integrity.
- Boastfulness, exaggeration, incitement, and demagoguery — the common practices of contemporary Cambodian politicians - are a cause of spiritual hostility among citizens. Consequently, winner-loser differentiation was created leading to an apocalypse for the nation. Bear in mind that, **“A party is for a nation, a nation is not for a party”**. Therefore, in order to overcome those negative impacts, a unique political attitude needs to be inculcated, **“As much as possible, be humble, be gentle, and be committed”**. Only your real action reflects your genuine will. **Work needs to be done before words.**

We have fully grasped the concept of politics and its fundamentals. So what do we need to know next? That is the starting point.

A starting point is an essential component of success. No success is realized without a starting point. Starting with the inappropriate starting point will consequently be catastrophic. Therefore, we are of the opinion that success is crucial, and so is a starting point.

We have to thoroughly examine and verify our starting point to ensure it is an appropriate one, and a point from which we can start off, and that leads to concrete success. Avoid growing a mango tree on a plate made of steel with no point from which it could start; or growing a beetle nut tree but expecting palm fruits. For example, people have been told that in order to eliminate corruption within the judicial system, it shall start with citizens refraining from bribery. This point of view is as completely impractical as growing a plant on a plate made of steel.

I have another example to share. Citizens have been told that when they vote in favor of a particular political party, that party will establish a democratic society for the citizens in return. How can a democratic state be established by a small clique of politicians without the seed of **“Participation”** from its people?

To be certain of whether or not it is an appropriate starting point, we need to review our common dream: **A nation in which we live in equity as its owners.**

Certainly, a democratic society is owned by its citizens. If this dream belongs to all citizens of the nation, they are obliged to participate; and the “Participation” is the seed of the democratic society. To get the “Participation”, we need to start with explaining each of us about the concept of “Democracy”, the rights and duties of citizens as the owners of the nation. If you want to enjoy mango fruits, absolutely you have to grow mango seed. If you want a democratic society, **“A nation in which we live in equity as its owners”**, absolutely you need to grow its seed of “participation”. Is growing the right type of seed alone sufficient for the nourishment of the tree? The response is seed alone is insufficient. We also need to water it.

What is meant by “water” here? Democracy is not just for democracy; it is for a society in which its people can live together in harmony. Now we cultivate a seed of “Participation” among citizens. But will the results be good, if the “Participation” is made by citizens whose knowledge is fairly low? The answer is it is impossible. As long as the knowledge is concerned, Dharma, the valuable teaching of the Buddha, can be used as a critical thinking base by people. Explanation based on the Buddha teaching for our critical thinking ability which is the **second segment of our starting point** is “Water.” Now, the seed is planted and watered, are we certain of its fruits with good taste? The answer is it is impossible. We need fertilizer. What is fertilizer then? What happens if there is a “Participation”, the “Participation” is by people with strong knowledge and ability but these people are prejudiced due to their own benefits? This participation requires morality of the participants. In this regard, even the participation is from the highly educated people but they are of poor morality; it harvests no benefits and sometimes even causes hostility. Morale education of participants on how they participate in our movement is the **third starting point**.

The seed of **“Participation”** can well nourish and produce fruits that bear good taste, **“A nation in which we live in equity as its owners,”** only when the participation is made by citizens with strong knowledge and high morality.

The summary concepts of the starting points are as follow:

- Explaining the citizens about democracy to have the seed of the “**Participation**”;
- Equipping the citizens with critical thinking base using Buddha teaching principle, namely to benefit the Dharma practices for the sake of faster and healthier “**Participation**”;
- When people get involved in the political movement with morality, the seed of “**Participation**” will soon foster and produce yields with good taste for all of us “**A nation in which we live in equity as its owners.**”

It can be put in another way that our starting point is to explain the people on the three key elements such as **Democracy, Dharma Teaching, and Social Morality** is our starting point.

Equally important to the previously stated starting points, another key element to be taken into consideration along the way to reach our dream is human resources. What kind of human resources will be the representatives of our will?

The core movement must be lead by a group of committed pioneers in order to realize our common dream.

Each and every member of the group of committed pioneers who will be the representative of our will are at least bound with some qualities as follows:

- He must be well aware of LDP. “**Aware**” is the key term in sentence;
- He must treat the tasks of LDP as priority in his own life;
- He needs to be certain that any political position entrusted to him by LDP is NOT AT ALL a business but responsibility – challenging and daunting;
- He must clearly ask himself if he is willing to address the problems faced by his people; Such tasks must be his sustained zeal and routines which are viewed by other people as an act of sacrifice but for him is a normal conduct. He will never feel bored or exhausted. He is assured that he will never give up the task as it is viewed and acted as part of his life. Anyone who wishes to help and address the national problems must ask themselves to ensure that they have these qualities. Do they know themselves with high level of certainty? It is worth of notice that knowing oneself is not easy at all. This point cannot be underestimated as knowing who you are is a rare but great case;
- He must be of integrity, cleanness, hate evil acts, refrain himself from wrong doings and vigorously act against the evil acts committed by other people. This characteristic refers to a model. A clean society stems from the cleanness model of each society member; and
- He must be a person with a vision to address the issues and carry concrete activities to realize his vision.

To sum up, the representatives of our will are at least of at quality heart, namely those who love their motherland, who place the national interests above their personal gains and happiness; who are honest, clean, refrain themselves from wrong-doings even such the conduct is not known to anyone, are willing to be vigorously against evil conduct and are led by clear-sighted vision.

Where can these people be chosen? They are chosen from among all devotees in our movement based on the above qualities of their traits without any coercion or persuasion. The responsibility of a task known as **“Duty”** is reflected in their very performance without appointment or pre-arrangement by anyone. **“Duty comes to a doer, a doer does not come to duty.”**

The last criterion of which we are certain in our participation is that: What kind of contribution shall be made by the participants and to what degree shall the participation be made to realize our dream, **“A nation in which we live in equity as its owners”**? Contributions shall include but not limited to:

1. Physical contributions
2. Intellectual contributions
3. Financial contributions

Such contributions are based on ability, capacity and real situations of each of us as in line with a repeated saying **“Contribute at your affordable level and situation”** and our party motto **“Think together, Act together, and Be jointly responsible.”**

Now, let us move to the full picture for the question, **“What must you know to grasp LDP?”**

LDP is uniquely shaped by its characteristics as follows:

1. **Goal:** Our common dream, **“A nation in which we live in equity as its owners,”** which will be realized by the eight mechanisms;
2. **Starting point:** Everything will start from the participation of citizens;
3. **Political attitudes:** Integrity in terms of both attitudes and ideals which are the vital part of LDP; and
4. **Human resource:** Quality of heart and head are desperately needed for our core movement

There is an issue with which we must be certain. In our political movement, what is the success of individual and that of all of us and how are the twos linked? The success of individuals in this movement is revealed only when each individual is asked due to each individual responsibility and so is the success of all of us. No one is hold responsible for our success or failure of this movement. **Each of us can be asked the question: not what can you do to realize our dream, but instead how can you contribute to the realization of our dream?** The responsibility of each of us is limited to our involvement only, our success; therefore, it is linked to the segment of our responsibility. This is a broad interpretation of success defined by LDP and it is totally different from those expected by other political parties. Even though some of us with fever numbers than 50% plus one might enjoy their success, the rest experience failures due to the failed work done by each of us. The key question which links the success of individuals with that of all of us is: Have you succeeded in doing your work? For instance, there are many people, including me, who never experience failures. Failure is like the bankruptcy business. I have committed capital, physical and mental ability and financial resources to provide people with critical thinking base. It is my responsibility. It is my day-to-day routine and increasing people benefit from my work. In this regard, I succeed in my work. It is not my failure when our

common dream “**A nation in which we live in equity as its owners**” is not realized, but is the failure of all of us. In this context, I am very certain that my work in this movement is successful. You? Has your work in this movement been successful? If all of us with numbers of 50% plus one and more succeed in our individual work, then our overall success is realized. It can be interpreted here that if we cannot realize our success but we are doing the right things, there would be no failure in our work. The failure, in this case, would be that of those who only expect their own benefits. It is like the advice of Buddha, “**Do your best with what you must do and look forward to the fruits of your work.**”

### **This is League for Democracy Party**

Up to this point, I, however, wish to post a rather unexpected question to the congress: How would you feel if I would say “Thanks to you for your confidence in me with your votes”? You would feel both ironic and suspect at such an expression.

How can a person express his thanks for the daunting for-other challenge he faces? It is totally ironic. From my heart, I cannot express “Thank-you” as it is not imbedded in my heart. It is, however, a consciousness reminds me that the more I am trusted, the more work I will do and the more responsibility I will face. It is the ultimate hope of many people on me. If their desperate hopes are dashed, they would feel the serious punishment, or in other word, they are dead while still alive. I will not afford you any pledges. I can just say that those who devalue the trusts of other people are the worse evils. Those who dash the desperate hopes of other people are the most serious criminals. **We all never tolerate such crimes.** My heart is not embedded with “Thank-you” for all daunting tasks and activities you all have shared in our political movement as they are the obligations which are shared by all of you for the sake of our own interests and those of our nation. Instead of “thank-you” expression, we wholeheartedly appreciate, admire and respect one another for what we are doing. Although we are in such a plight, we work for our nation as its owners while dominant people commit no responsibilities for such a case.

In this regard, my “Thank-you” is replaced by heartfelt appreciations and respects. No one refuses that the all supporting cells of up-to-now growth and development of our political movement are not concreted to your involvement? Your involvement is absolutely vital to our movement to realize our common dream: “**A Nation in which we live in equity as its owners.**”

Before closing this speech, I wish remind you all that a movement can overcome its obstacles and reach its destination only when it is **firm, vigorous, committed and active** and readily faces any challenges, namely the movement is sustained by only one source: **confidence!** To reflect your confidence, you must feel three values:

1. You feel confident that you need no personal-attached benefit at all from this movement. This no personal-attached benefit will not be changed although you deeply challenge your heart ten thousand, one hundred thousand or one million times;
2. You are very clear with what you are involved in. You make yourself clear with your involvement in LDP, with your protection of its vision and construction of its picture; and

3. You are very clear with the characteristics of your challengers. You grasp the hearts of your challengers and explicitly compare your hearts with those of the challengers. You are confident of the concepts, abilities to form the concepts and conceptual gaps of your challengers.

Finally, I have a piece of concept in the form of both question and suggestion and share with all compatriots throughout the country: **Can we allow our hearts to treat our people as members of your great family?**

**Thank you!**