Cambodia: A Road to Economic Reform
- Lessons from Korea’s Experience -

박 정 동*

Cambodia is a country that has suffered from war and poverty for a long time. And now it is ending its long conflict and beginning to restore political stability. Therefore, it has the most difficult challenge in building a modern democratic society. However, the country’s democratic institutions that were only established in the previous decade, and governing institutions are still in their infancy.

Key Words: Cambodia, Economic Reform, Korea’s Experience

1. Introduction

With the end of a long conflict and the ensuing peace, restoration of political stability has been the most difficult challenge in the building of a modern democratic society in Cambodia. However, the country’s democratic institutions that were only established in the previous decade, and governing institutions are still in their infancy.
and unstable. Addressing this issue is the foundation of the construction of Cambodia’s future and will, most likely, dominate all other aspects of Cambodia’s development issues. Despite many constraints, the agricultural sector has considerable potential to raise domestic production sufficiently to mitigate shortages as well as increase exports. Moreover, beyond agricultural and natural resources, Cambodia also has promising prospects for future private sector growth in the service and manufacturing sectors, as shown by the proliferation of micro-enterprises, small and medium enterprises (SME), and multinational corporations.

Cambodia’s ability to utilize its sources for growth in a sustainable manner and reduce poverty is contingent not only on investment in physical and human capital, but also on the government’s ability to pursue challenging macroeconomic, structural, and government reforms. ¹ For these reasons, guiding Cambodia in the right direction is especially crucial. In this context, it will be very useful to introduce the relevant lessons from Korea’s economic development experience to Cambodia as an appropriate paragon for the nation’s future economic development. Therefore, in this paper, we will overview the political, social and economic situation of Cambodia, and apply Korea’s economic development experiences to Cambodia in various aspects of its society. As such, this study will ideally be small in scale but significant in its efforts to apply the relevant development experiences, resolve some economic issues and increase the welfare of Cambodia’s citizens.

II. Political Regime

The 1993 Constitution has sought the creation of a democratic society in the form of a constitutional monarchy headed by King

¹) “Cambodia – Country Assistance Strategy (World Bank February 2000:1-3)”