



Royal Government of Cambodia

National Policy
On
Child Protection System
2019-2029

Cambodia National Council for Children

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Preface

The Kingdom of Cambodia is one of the developing countries that suffered the catastrophic destruction caused by Pol Pot genocidal regime that killed millions of people and shattered the nation's society, in which children were subjected to all kinds of victimization and torture, that cost Cambodia a lot of human resources. After the liberation day, January 7, 1979, the government sought to restore the country from scratch. Along with restoring and developing the country from the scratch, the rights of the people, especially the rights of the child, are protected and promoted as the nation's successors, like the slogan "**Children are the bamboo**" and "**Children are the pillar of the nation.**"

Currently, the government has made significant strides in social and economic rehabilitation, requiring the construction of human capital, skills and healthy people over the last two decades with an average economic growth of around 7%. The Royal Government has been investing more resources in health, education, social work and other areas related to human resource development, including child development, to achieve the Kingdom's Sustainable Development Goals 2016-2030, with a focus on child welfare development as well.

In line with the situation of children that has developed from the day-to-day after the Kingdom of Cambodia has ratified several international conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, the Additional Protocol on the Participation of Children in Armed Conflict and the Protocol Convention on the Trafficking of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, 2002, Convention 138 on the Minimum Age Limitation for Employment in 1999, Convention 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of Severe Patterns of Child Labor in 2005 and the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and International Adoption Cooperation in 2007.

As a country that has ratified these conventions, the Royal Government has laid out its rectangular strategy, national development strategy, national policy, regulatory standards, national action plan for children and other long-term and medium-term development plans to ensure development, appropriate employment provision, equality, efficiency and ensuring the achievement of the Kingdom's sustainable development goals 2016-2030, including various mechanisms at the national and sub-national levels to facilitate the implementation of regulatory standards as well as policies and action plans, as noted earlier.

Along with the introduction of various national regulatory standards, policies and plans concerning the promotion and protection of child rights, Cambodian children still face challenges such as child violence, child exploitation and trafficking, child drug and substance abuse, child on the move, children affected by migration, school dropout and malnutrition that require ministries, institutions, authorities, NGOs, private sectors, communities and parents, to deal altogether in a timely manner and on target.

Based on the above context, the Royal Government has established a national policy on child protection system that integrates existing mechanisms and systematically continues to provide consistent services for children and families that the Royal Government will put in place soon to ensure that the issues of children are integrated into all areas involved in promoting the rights, safety, status and skills of children. This is another new step in investing with children, as investing in children today will create future skilled and potential human resources to sustain national growth and improve people's well-being.

The national child protection policy sets out three key strategic pillars, focusing on **prevention and protection, intervention and response service delivery**, as well as defining specific activities for ministries and institutions working in the field of promoting child rights to ensure the implementation of the national child protection system policy effectively and successfully. I ask all relevant institutions to monitor, evaluate and update regularly to respond to children's real status and through the implementation of this policy, Cambodian children will receive more services and multidisciplinary attention which means doing different things to reach the common goal.

I commend the Cambodian National Council for Children, ministries, institutions, National Child Protection Committees, authorities at all levels and development partners for their contribution to the development of this important national policy, which is a historic achievement for Cambodian children. I encourage all ministries, authorities, NGOs, private sectors, communities and parents to start implementing the national child protection system from now on and I sincerely hope that Cambodia will be able to address these challenges successfully.

I ask the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and other relevant ministries to set spending plans to implement priority actions set out in this national policy and to include in their annual budget plans of the ministries and institutions, particularly, to pay attention to the establishment of social workers or agents in communes, Sangkats across the country to address the protection of children.

I urge the Cambodian National Council for Children to strengthen their role in facilitating inter-ministerial work in the field of child care, especially monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the progress of the national child protection system policy.

I hope and believe that the government ministries, institutions, development partners, NGOs, private sectors, and all stakeholders will incorporate the activities in this national policy into their sectoral implementation plans to strengthen, protect and promote the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which has been ratified by the Kingdom of Cambodia in 1992, more effectively from now on.

Phnom Penh.....
Prime Minister

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen

1. Introduction

1.1. Situation analysis

1.1.1. Overview

Cambodia is a country that has a lot of young people, with about half of the population is less than 25 years old. However, the population growth rate has steadily increased to 14.1% for the past 11 years between 2008 and 2019.¹ This young population growth, if sufficiently invested in human resources, health and child protection, will form the core of a demographic dividend that benefits socioeconomically. Declining overall fertility rates will reduce the economic dependency ratio for the next three decades, bringing higher incomes and contributing to Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Disaster, poverty, domestic violence, migration, children left behind and parental incarceration factors put children at risk, including children separated from families, trafficking, violence, threats, physical, psychological and sexual abuse and all forms of exploitation.

According to 2013 survey by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and UNICEF on child violence, one out of two children has experienced physical violence, one in four has experienced psychological violence and one in 20 children has experienced sexual violence. The study also revealed that those who abused children were most often the ones closest to the child, such as parents, guardians and caregivers. According to the findings, children in Cambodia are still not safe and fully developed. Therefore, parents, guardians and caregivers should explore child violence and its effects on children, their families, their society, their family economy as well as the nation's economy. Understanding this effect can help parents, guardians or caregivers stop the violence and neglect of children. In addition, parents, guardians or caregivers should be supported to protect children from all forms of violence, including ignoring children, both inside and outside the home.

According to 2013 labor and child labor survey of the National Institution of Statistics of the Ministry of Planning, the total number of children aged 5-17 years old in Cambodia was 3,956,751 nationwide. Economic activity accounted for 755,245 of the nearly 4 million children aged 15-17 (approximately 81% were unemployed and 19% went to work. 6% of children were in hazardous jobs, 4.9% in other forms of child labor and 8.2% worked in safe working conditions: by 2012, there were 429,380 child labor, while the worst form of child labor or children doing hazardous jobs amounted to 236,498 people and 325,865 children working safely.²

According to the Cambodian Social Economic Survey 2017, 730,000 children participated in economic activities, equal to 17% of the nearly 4.3 million children. Child labor could decrease to around 300,000 out of nearly 440,000 children who did not attend school.³

The 2013 Inter-Census Population Survey in Cambodia, based on general definitions, shows that the proportion of total child labor was around 9.9%, with 9.3% boys and 10.7% girls accounting for 356 932 child labor in the labor force.

According to a report on the location of child care facilities in 25 city-provinces of the Kingdom of Cambodia in 2017, there were 639 child care facilities with 35,374 children and youth, of which 26,187 children aged 0 to 17 years old (12,526 girls). According to the report, there were 406 child

¹ 2012 Labor and Child Labor Survey

² 2012 Labor and Child Labor Survey

³ Cambodian Social Economic Survey 2017

care centers with a total of 16,579 children, of which 22 were state centers with 1,601 children and youth (724 girls). Community child care facilities included 25 temporary shelters with 628 children (348 girls), 71 home groups with 1,952 children (820 girls); some of them were staying in 727 monastery, dormitory and religious places with 7,388 children (3,582 girls). All of these children had access to accommodation, education, nurturing to education, general education, vocational training, family reunification and reintegration into the community. No matter how good the child's welfare is, it still does not meet the living standards and needs of victimized and vulnerable children and their families in the community. We find that those children still face a number of problems, including abuse, all forms of exploitation, violence, health, nutrition, education, social, emotional, economic strengthening and daily living that require more efforts for the best interests of children.

1.1.2. Challenge

Although the government has been paying close attention to addressing the challenges through the introduction of laws, policies, action plans and regulatory standards and with the participation of stakeholders in helping children, there are still some children facing problems such as children being trafficked, abused, exploited, left behind, dropouts, malnutrition, health, sanitation, clean water, violence, child labor, child migration with parents, child with migrated parents, drug addicted child, homeless child, child with disabilities, child conflicted with law, child or guardians with chronic diseases, etc.

In principle, keeping children in foster care is the final and temporary option, but now taking a vulnerable child into a care facility as a reactive approach is a huge challenge because it increases the number of child care centers and children are increasing rapidly.

Lack of preparation and access to preventive services for children vulnerable to all forms of violence, abuse or exploitation, neglect and exploitation are provided by stakeholders at all levels, which is a major challenge to the process of systematic child protection implementation. In fact, some Commune/Sangkat Committees for Women and Children Affairs and civil society organizations have only implemented formal measures, including referrals to health centers, case reporting and mediation with offenders and child victims at only local level. At the same time, campaigns for dissemination, prevention, counselling for both legal and social support, child care and support in family and community are still limited and unresolved to meet the target.

Children are always victimized almost everywhere and at all times, especially in remote areas, which are caused by a lack of information, knowledge, education, communication and behavior change among the general population and local authorities. In carrying out its multidisciplinary role, the competent authorities, local authorities and stakeholders have been facing a number of challenges, such as the mandate of the roles and responsibilities, the lack of resources, the lack of experience and the technical capacity to address child protection issues, particularly methods for prevention, protection etc.

1.2. Concept of Child Protection System

1.2.1. The necessity of the child protection system

In the context of this policy framework, the child protection system refers to policies, programs, activities, including existing legal frameworks and mechanisms that are implemented in a systematic and interconnected manner to prevent, protect, intervene and provide services and

responses to children who are at economic risk, child victims and vulnerable children who have been subjected to all forms of trafficking, abuse, exploitation, and violence.

The child protection system is a concrete commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia, which has many practices and needs to be strengthened and expanded. These factors require greater attention from the Royal Government on systematic child protection practices in Cambodia, including:

1. The need to invest more in social officials or social workers at the sub-national level to promote effective, efficient, consistent and timely child protection services for children and families in the community.
2. Continuing to ensure that children have access to legal services and social equity through the provision of a minimum package of social services for children and families in need.
3. Response to children and their families affected by disasters.
4. Continuing to consolidate, strengthen and expand the existing programs for child protection aimed at enormously increasing efficiency, transparency and consistency.
5. Ensuring the consistency of existing procedures, measures and mechanisms to address children's issues to meet the needs and ensure the protection of children in a family environment, loving, child-friendly caring and ensure the best interests of children.

1.2.2. The role of the government and stakeholders in the child protection system

The above factors imply that systematic child protection activities need to be multidisciplinary in relation to national and subnational mechanisms. The Royal Government of Cambodia has the role of supporting the child protection system through (1) - Promoting and raising the implementation of the rights of the child in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and relevant international legal instruments (2) – Budgeting to support policy implementation (3) - Developing and implementing child protection legal framework (4) - Capacity building and cooperation strengthening with related stakeholders.

(1) Promoting and raising the implementation of the rights of the child

The Kingdom of Cambodia ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on October 15, 1992, and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia article 48 states that the State guarantees the protection of the rights of the child enshrined in the Convention on Children, especially the rights to life, the rights to education, the rights to protection in the face of war and protection against economic or sexual exploitation. At the same time, the Royal Government has always focused on safeguarding against any work which could damage the education and learning of the child or endanger the health or well-being of the child. Meanwhile, to ensure the best interests of the child, Cambodia has ratified international legal instruments and additional protocols related to children.

(2) Budgeting to support policy implementation

With economic growth increasing every year, the Royal Government raises funds for social, education, health, rural development, agriculture and other sectors with the aim of improving the well-being of people, especially children, and meeting many goals of the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals. Cambodians, especially children, have been reaping the benefits of peace, political stability and rapid economic growth at an annual average rate of around 7% over the past two decades. Cambodia's poverty rate has steadily declined from over 53% in 2004 to around 10% today. In addition, the fruits of economic growth were also distributed in a more equitable manner, which was reflected in the

reduction of the inequality coefficient of 0.41 in 2007 to 0.29 in 2012 with expectations that this figure will continue to decline further in the coming years.

(3) Developing and implementing child protection legal framework

With increasing attention to the rights of the child, the Kingdom of Cambodia has enacted a number of national laws and issued regulations, policies and national action plans, including mechanisms for child protection, to ensure the full implementation of the principles and regulations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. With the focus on children's rights and welfare, the Royal Government has also made the issue of children a priority in its economic and social development programs. Competent authorities, such as courts or administrative authorities, have taken steps and issued decisions regarding the rights of the child as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

(4) Capacity building and cooperation strengthening with stakeholders

The Royal Government of Cambodia is committed to strengthening cooperation among involved ministries, institutions, development partners, civil society organizations and private sector in the provision of child protection services. Child protection services in Cambodia are enhanced through civil society projects and programs. Over the past two decades, national and international agencies working on children have made remarkable achievements in advocating for children to be protected, helped build social worker's capacity at all levels and provided services directly to vulnerable children, families and communities.

1.2.3. Basic principles of the child protection system

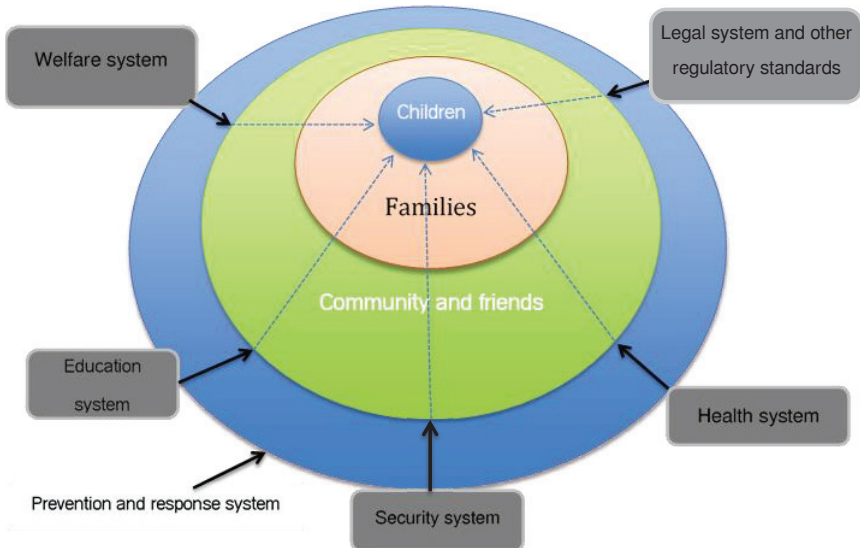
In the context of Cambodia socio-economic and interconnected politics and to ensure that the child protection system plays an effective role in the vision for long-term development, the policy should comply with the following principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

1. Child best interest principle
2. Non-discrimination principle
3. The rights to life and development principle
4. Child perspective respect principle

1.3. National policy framework on child protection system

The child protection system is a set of rules designed to promote and raise the protection of children from all forms of abuse and exploitation. These rules include (1) - Legal and policy framework, (2)- Assistance and service delivery, (3)- Human resources and finance, and (4)- Changes in social behavior in the treatment of children. These rules require the participation of all stakeholders, particularly the areas of social welfare, education, health, security and justice in support of prevention, protection and response to protect children from various risks.

Establishing a child protection system



1.3.1. Legal and policy framework

The Royal Government of Cambodia has put in place a number of existing laws and policies that are positive and deep in implementation. At the same time, the Royal Government of Cambodia has laid out strategies for promoting the implementation of the Convention and facilitating systematic and comprehensive child protection. Although the laws, policies and regulatory standards regarding children are numerous and well-meaning, the capacity for implementation is still limited.

1.3.2. Assistance and service delivery

In fact, the provision of assistance and services to at-risk children and families has been taken care of by the government, with the support of civil society organizations and private sector. These assistance and services include preventive, protection, emergency assistance, rehabilitation services, consulting, integration and monitoring. However, these services are often cluttered and non-targeted.

1.3.3. Human resources and finance

The effective child protection system requires the necessary human and financial resources to support such work and ensure that children receive equal and equitable protection. The Royal Government has invested heavily in capacity building and services to assist child and family victims and vulnerable children and families. There is also active participation from relevant stakeholders, including development partners, associations, national and international NGOs, private sector, and charities. But despite the investment and the help of the stakeholders, the human and financial resources have yet to meet the needs of the child and family.

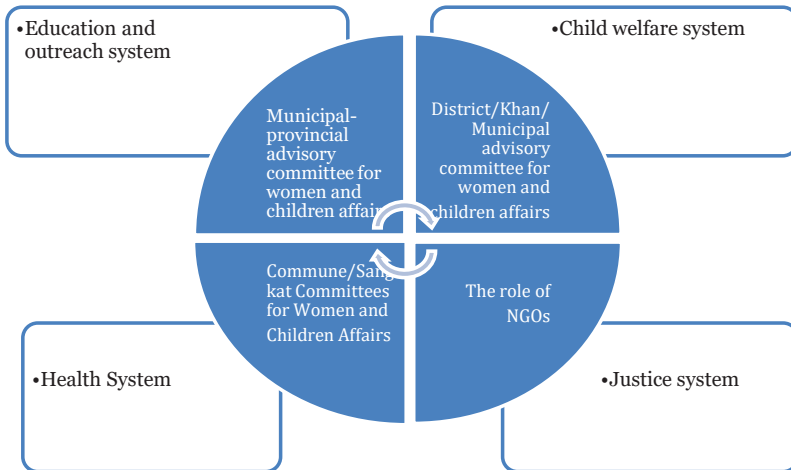
1.3.4. Changes in social behavior in the treatment of children

Customs, traditions, beliefs, religions, colors, gender, languages, politics, or views, wealth, birth, status, and other conditions of children in relation to negative approaches to education and child discipline, are rooted in Khmer society. Violence in families, in communities, in schools, and elsewhere is often the result of witnessing and coping with the unhealthy practices that adults commit against children or people of inferior status, which is particularly detrimental to the development of the child. In view of these issues, the Royal Government, through the Cambodian National Council for Children and related ministries, is committed to rolling out measures and campaigns to encourage positive behavior change and attitudes toward children who own the rights, families, communities and those who are obligated to act, including involved actors and policy makers.

The national policy framework of the child protection system is based on three pillars: (1) prevention and protection (2) intervention, (3) service delivery and response, which we need to systematically complete. Each pillar has its own aspects and challenges that lead to the development of different strategies and measures or actions in different cases. All such activities will be carried out in the national policy framework in accordance with the relevant framework and action plan for all ministries, institutions and stakeholders who need to do so in line with the policy to be set out in the upcoming action plan.

Overall, this national policy framework of the child protection system focuses on three pillars: prevention and protection, intervention, service delivery and timely multidisciplinary response to all children without discrimination and to be interconnected and consistent from preventative measures to responses for physical, psychological safety and well-being of the child victims. All children should be protected by the law. Child victims and families must receive appropriate services, adequate human resources and funding for child protection, and social behavior change in the treatment of children.

Overall, we can design the following child protection system:



2. Vision

The vision for the future of Cambodia is to ensure that all children in the Kingdom of Cambodia enjoy equal rights as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and additional protocols including the rights to life, protection, development and participation.

3. Objectives and goals

3.1. Objectives

To achieve the above vision in the next 10 years, more raising of child protection is needed by strengthening the comprehensive and interconnected child protection system implemented by all stakeholders to respond the protection of children from all forms of abuse and exploitation for the best interests of children.

3.2. Goals

To achieve the above objectives, the main goals for implementation in the future are as follows:

3.2.1. Develop and implement laws and regulatory standards related to effective child protection.

3.2.2. Design and implement a multidisciplinary and interconnected child protection system

3.2.3. Develop human resources in law enforcement and regulatory standards and expertise in all relevant structures

3.2.4. Raise awareness and change social behavior in the positive treatment of children everywhere

3.2.5. Provide appropriate child protection according to the real situation.

4. Strategy

To achieve the vision, goals and objectives above, the key strategy of the child protection system is to shift focus towards the prevention and recognition of the primary role of each family and community to ensure child welfare. In this regard, the policy calls for changing the methods and behaviors for children, families and communities, competent authorities, local authorities and other relevant actors based on main strategies that are key to achieving each goal we have put in practice.

The national policy framework focuses on three pillars: prevention, intervention, service delivery and response, which require multidisciplinary implementation in an interconnected system, both competent authorities and relevant stakeholders implementing all measures and time for the benefit of children, which is actually more rewarding and better than individual practice and untargeted focus on protective measures.

The Kingdom of Cambodia has a number of laws and regulatory standards in which we can tailor the implementation of the new multi-sectoral strategic system as provided in the Annex.

4.1. For the purpose of developing laws and regulatory standards of the Kingdom of Cambodia with regard to child protection, we have the following key strategies:

Having a clear understanding of the legal content and regulatory standards we have collected and documented in each protection is crucial for implementation, including officials of ministries, competent institutions, private sector, journalists and NGO workers in every structure. At the national level, the Cambodian National Council for Children and relevant ministries and institutions plays a key role in understanding each article or clause stipulated the law or regulatory standards leading to work effectively with stakeholders at all levels to achieve good results as well as the education and outreach.

4.2. In order to integrate multidisciplinary and interconnected child protection systems into each type of protection across all child-related structures, we have the following key strategies:

4.2.1. Prioritization of protection by geography

Based on the analysis of the situation (point 1.1), the priority of each protection between different geographical areas must be taken into account, such as urban, downtown and rural, especially indigenous areas. And so forth, this setting enables our goals to be easily achieved through the indicators identified in the step-by-step action plan.

4.2.2. Prioritization of protection by age and gender

In analyzing the situation, the priority of protection for each child of different ages and sexes should be taken into account in relation to the victim or vulnerable category of the child. Our goals will be achieved in the first strategic pattern indicators.

4.2.3. Defining systematically the lead and relevant responsible actors

Based on the first and second strategies, there is a need for a system of lead and related responsible actors to address different types of protection based on the three pillars, prevention, intervention, service delivery and response to geographical priorities by age, gender and target group according to each protection category and geography.

Preventive measures in child protection

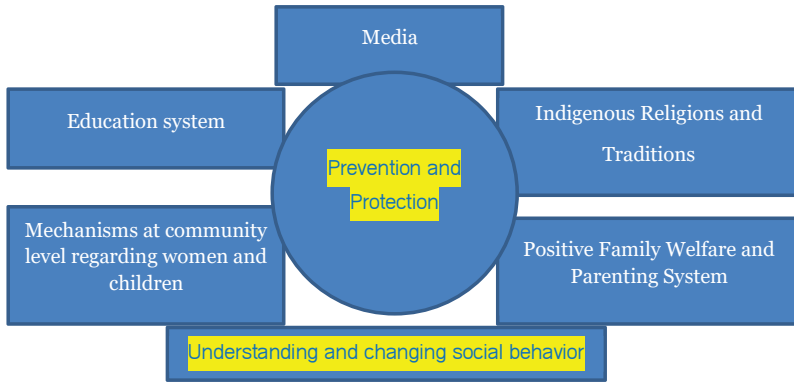
Education system: **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport**

Media: **Ministry of Information, Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, and the Cambodian Chamber of Commerce**

Indigenous Religions and Traditions: **Ministry of Cult and Religion, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts**

Mechanisms at community level regarding women and children: **Department General of Administration of the Ministry of Interior**

Positive Family Welfare and Parenting System: **Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and Ministry of Women's Affairs**

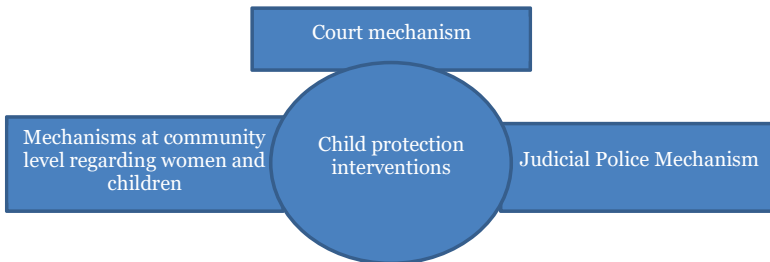


Intervention system

Court mechanism: **Ministry of Justice, Royal Academy of Judicial Professions**

Judicial Police Mechanism: **National Police Commissioner General, Police Academy of Cambodia, Royal Gendarmerie**

Mechanisms at community level regarding women and children: **Secretariat General of the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development, Ministry of Interior**



Response and service delivery system

Child and Family Welfare System: **Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation**

Education system: **Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport**

Health System: **Ministry of Health**

Social Supporting System: **Agriculture and Rural Development and Restoration Council, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Cambodia Chamber of Commerce**

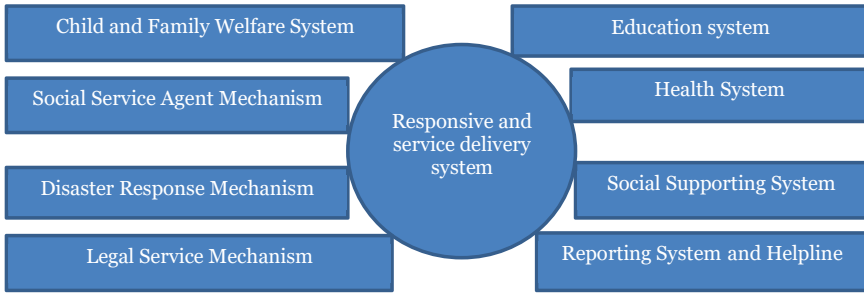
Reporting System: **Ministry of Interior and National Police Commissioner General**

Helpline: **Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation**

Social Service Agent Mechanism: **Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation**

Legal Service Mechanism: **Ministry of Justice and Cambodia Bar Association**

Disaster Response Mechanism: **National Committee for Disaster Management, Cambodia Red Cross**



4.3. With the aim of building human capital in terms of capacity of law enforcement and regulatory standards and all relevant structures for child protection, especially in Sangkats, communes, and villages, we have the following key strategies:

4.3.1. Human resource building

As stated in the first and second goals, our strategy is still in principle and procedure. The achievement of the strategy in goals 1 and 2 is our existing human resources. The scope of child protection ranges from nationwide to rural and urban, which are further divided into Sangkats, communes, villages and eventually, homes or daycare centers. Even if we have the structure at the national and sub-national level and the mechanism set out in the law and regulatory standards, without sufficient human resources and capacity, we do not expect to achieve our goals. In terms of capacity, we must make every effort to simplify the implementation of the legal framework, where the legal content is much higher than our human capacity.

Our current problem is the lack of human resources at Sangkat, commune and village level. The person in charge of Sangkat/Commune women and children affairs has a mandate every five years by election and has no support staff. In the village, the situation is the same. This strategy is key in our policy, which must be well-scrutinized. We are able to find human resources in line with existing national policies and regulatory standards.

4.3.2. Outreach and training

Outreach and training are strategies to fulfill our human resource capabilities. Therefore, the outcome of the protection depends on the above strategies and their capabilities. The systematic nature of human resources for the national policy must include government officials in charge of child labor in the structure and ministries, institutions at national and sub-national levels, relevant sectoral authorities, local authorities and villages because they must receive comprehensive education and training on regulatory standards, legal matters, multidisciplinary implementation procedures as well as case-by-case experience to ensure smooth and effective implementation of each type of protection, especially family protection that parents or guardians received from this outreach.

4.3.3. Mobilizing financial resources

Mobilizing financial resources from all sources, both government and private sector, development partners, charities is a key strategy for each strategy and activity to work.

The National Action Plan and the existing strategies related to child protection describe their respective financial resources as a solid source for implementing strategies in this national policy. The mobilization of resources from various sources necessitates systematic financial planning to act collectively on our children's work.

4.4. With the aim of raising awareness and changing social attitudes in the positive treatment of children everywhere, we have the following key strategies:

4.4.1. Raising awareness of positive treatment of children

We systematically implement the level of protection by raising awareness to the following levels:

- **Level 1:** raise awareness among the general population regarding the prevention of vulnerability of children, including parents or guardians, elders, monks, religious leaders, village volunteers, neighbors and children themselves.
- **Level 2:** raise awareness among target groups, actors related to vulnerable children, including civil servants (national and sub-national), directors or owners of enterprises, establishments and crafts, civil society and development partners, homeless children, domestic workers and children working in hazardous places.
- **Level 3:** Raise awareness among child victims and their families. In order to achieve this level of awareness, the ministries, institutions, NGO partners and stakeholders must incorporate all priorities related to its strategic plans and action plans at all levels.

4.4.2. Changes in social behavior in the positive treatment of children

Changes in social behavior are required to address the root causes of child protection issues (customs, traditions, beliefs, colors, gender, languages, politics or views, wealth, birth, status and other conditions) in order to change the likelihood of child abuse and exploitation. In order for this strategy to succeed, ministries, institutions, NGO partners, private sector and stakeholders must work together on existing strategies and mechanisms to mitigate the risks posed to children.

4.5. For child protection to be appropriate and practical, whether it is one or more cases of protection needed, continuous process, or at the same time that we have set to achieve our goals, we can set out the following key strategies:

4.5.1. Reduction of the children's priority challenges

In Cambodia's current socioeconomic society, many Cambodian children are still vulnerable to some of the challenges such as extreme labor, migration, drug addiction, homelessness, disability, violence, trafficking, conflict of law, etc. Properly identifying and prioritizing challenges in the child protection system to a relevant area or a specific geographical area may lead us to achieve better result in line with the indicators we have put forth, rather than the general practice that has no prioritization or systematic practices.

Cambodian children generally live in families with their parents or guardians. Domestic violence is common, and mothers often suffer from the effects of husband violence, and has a real impact on children such as horror, abuse and failure to attend school. The Domestic Violence Prevention and Victim Protection Act is crucial for protecting women and their children.

4.5.2. Integrated protection practice

In all three pillars, prevention, intervention, service delivery and responses to child protection are not unique in every case. Therefore, child protection must be systematically considered for law implementation or relevant regulatory standards and ministries, institutions and actors concerned, such as in the case of preventive measures prepared to intervene. This work must be associated with service delivery and response and the prevention is associated with service delivery and respond as well. This solution has been very helpful and it has ended a case of better protection.

5. Action plan

In order to achieve each of the four strategies mentioned above, we need to take into account the following actions:

5.1. Establishment of mechanism

In the national policies and plans of the Kingdom of Cambodia we have, various working structures and mechanisms have been established at the national or sub-national level, such as the Cambodian National Council for Women, the Cambodian National Council for Children, and so on. In this policy, establishing a mechanism for coordinating child protection is essential to make the implementation of all strategies and action plans achieve in line with our goals.

5.2. Establishment of a legal framework

The Cambodian National Council for Children, as the Staff General for the Royal Government, has the following key responsibilities:

- Examine the contents of our existing laws and regulatory standards through practice to identify any deficiencies affecting child protection practices that lead to procedural improvements, if necessary.
- Currently, child abuse and exploitation are covered and protected by applicable laws such as the Penal Code, the Law on the Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation. In the future, we need to study to come up with a child protection law that has direct authority to protect more for the best interests of children.
- The establishment of regulatory standards and action taken to prevent all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation of children is a must in the promotion of national child protection policy.
- In developing a legal framework for the better implementation of the child protection system, our first task is to ensure that all child care centers are properly registered and must have a Memorandum of Understanding with the ministry and competent institutions of the government. There should not be a shortage of such things, even if those care centers have been contributing in child protection.

5.3. Financial support

From each strategy, we have laid out a number of actions to reach the goals set out in this national policy. The Cambodian National Council for Children and ministries, institutions can use the state budget within their annual budget, and mobilize funding from financing cooperation with national and international partners and other sources to ensure the implementation of each activity mentioned.

5.4. Human Resource Training

Human resource training is defined as one of the strategies in our national policy, because with sufficient and competent human resources, the implementation of policies at all levels of our responsibility can be achieved with good results. The action plan for the training of human resources is organized as needed to enhance the knowledge and competence, especially for the practitioners in the commune and village, to ensure the implementation of child protection as set out in our laws and regulatory standards.

5.5. Project implementation

Each action plan, which serves the strategy, is organized into different types of work, by defining a specific timeline, leading or implementing ministries and institutions, and incorporating measurable indicators and estimating the budget we can work on monitoring and evaluation in the future. The 10 year National policy on Child Protection System from 2019 to 2029 can be planned for 3 years, 5 years and can be finalized in each type of child protection by consulting with relevant stakeholders who implement individual plan to ensure the implementation effectiveness.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

In this national policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation are two tasks that demonstrate the continuous progress made in each strategy and action plan implementation. Each plan of action must be monitored from the start of the first year and evaluated at the end of three, five, or ten years respectively in order to see the good results we have achieved and challenges to be improved or addressed in comparison to the available indicators. In the course of this national policy implementation, a mid-term assessment in 2022 will be required to establish the new necessary measures for the next five years, enabling us to achieve better results. The Cambodian National Council for Children, through the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, is responsible for coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating and reporting on each action plan in a systematic and timely manner to aggregate performance and compliance in this national policy.

7. Conclusion

The National Policy on Child Protection has a long-term vision, which can be considered as a historical document for Cambodian children following January 7, 1979, when the rights of Cambodian people were restored to the post-genocide, especially the rights of the child that we have taken care of as the successors of the nation like the slogan "**Children are the bamboo**" and "**the pillars of the nation**".

The child protection system is a strategy demonstrating the commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia that has been implemented and needs to be strengthened and expanded. In keeping with this cause, this national policy was first drafted for the period of 10 years, 2019-2029, which enables us to mobilize our investments in children, with spirit and resources, in order to be more inclusive, so that all of them have equal opportunities to become a human resource that can contribute to the development of our nation.

Many of our existing laws and regulatory standards relating to children have their own roles and responsibilities in an interconnected system of stakeholders, including ministries, institutions at

national and sub-national, development partners, civil society, communities, families and individuals who can achieve the most effective protection of the three pillars, i.e. prevention, intervention and service delivery and response. Therefore, we have a lot of work to do for the next 10 years, which requires mid-term evaluation of the policy according to the key strategies and action plans set out to achieve our expected goals.

Based on this national policy, the Royal Government sincerely hopes that all ministries, institutions, and stakeholders in child protection will contribute individually and successfully to the future for the best interests of our children.

8. Glossary

Child Protection System refers to a set of rules designed to promote and raise the protection of children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence.

Prevention refers to a range of activities and services that are implemented to prevent children from taking risks, such as raising awareness, the general capacity of stakeholders and children in order to enable them to become the rightful owners.

Intervention refers to a set of actions taken to protect children from taking any risks.

Response refers to the intervention when a risk occurs for a child or after a risk, depending on the type of risk, to restore the child's well-being.

Child Welfare refers to a set of services in which the child receives physical, mental, or material benefits to enable them to live with comfort, security and development.

A social agent refers to an officer of the Ministry, Department of Social Affairs in the municipality, province, krong, district, khan or any other person who is trained in child and child protection and shall be appointed or recognized by the Minister in charge of Social Affairs.

Child investment refers to a long-term smart investment to develop children out of poverty, abuse of rights, as well as physical abuse, illiteracy, and unhealthy lifestyles aimed at ensuring a healthy future for children.

A reactive approach refers to a set of rules, ways or procedures designed to direct a task to quickly respond or address to a situation that has already occurred.

A negative approach refers to a resisted way to respond to something that is forced upon us, contrary to our will. Usually, the objection is not responded immediately, but rather in silence. In a nutshell, this method is the same as negative reaction.

Annex to National Policy on Child Protection System

Goals	Strategy	Duration	Responsible institutions for the implementation	Budget sources and participations
3.2.1. Develop and implement laws and regulatory standards related to effective child protection	4.1. For the purpose of implementation of laws and regulatory standards of the Kingdom of Cambodia with regard to child protection	Year 1-10	Ministries, institutions as the member of Cambodian National Council for Children	The Royal Government, NGO partners and the private sectors.
3.2.2. Design and implement a multidisciplinary and interconnected child protection system	4.2. In order to integrate multidisciplinary and interconnected child protection systems into each type of protection across all child-related structures			
	4.2.1. Prioritization of protection by geography	Year 2-5	Cambodian National Council for Children	The Royal Government, NGO partners and the private sectors.
	4.2.2. Prioritization of protection by age and gender	Year 2-5	National Child Protection Commission, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and Ministry of Planning	The Royal Government, NGO partners and the private sectors.
	4.2.3. Defining systematically the lead and relevant responsible actors	Year 2-5	National Child Protection Commission	The Royal Government, NGO partners and the private sectors.
3.2.3. Develop human resources in law enforcement and regulatory standards and expertise in all relevant structures	4.3. With the aim of building human capital in terms of capacity of law enforcement and regulatory standards and all relevant structures for child protection, especially in Sangkats, communes, and villages			
	4.3.1. Human resource building	Year 1	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation	The Royal Government, NGO partners and the private sectors.

	4-3.2. Outreach and training	Year 1	Cambodian National Council for Children and Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation	The Royal Government, NGO partners and the private sectors.
	4-3.3. Mobilizing financial resources	Year 1	Cambodian National Council for Children, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.	The Royal Government, NGO partners and the private sectors.
3-2.4. Raise awareness and change social behavior in the positive treatment of children everywhere	4.4. The aim of raising awareness and changing social attitudes in the positive treatment of children everywhere	Year 1	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Cambodian Human Rights Committee and relevant NGOs	The Royal Government, NGO partners and the private sectors.
	4-4.1. Raising awareness of positive treatment of children	Year 1	Ministry of Cult and Religion, local authority and Cambodian Human Rights Committee	The Royal Government, NGO partners and the private sectors.
	4-4.2. Changes in social behavior in the positive treatment of children	Year 1	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and Ministry of Planning	The Royal Government, NGO partners and the private sectors.
	4-4.3. Promoting child protection research	Year 1		
3-2.5. Provide appropriate child protection according to the real situation.	4-5. For child protection to be appropriate and practical, whether it is one or more cases of protection, continuous process, or at the same time that we have set to achieve our goals			
	4-5.1. Reduction of the children's priority challenges			
	4-5.2. Integrated protection practice			