

ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2021 CAMBODIA



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ACRONYMS

BEEP	Basic Education Equivalency Programme
CARD	Council for Agriculture and Rural Development
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ILO	International Labour Organization
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MoH	Ministry of Health
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NEA	National Ecosystem Assessment
PLHIV	People Living with HIV/AIDS
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TEST	Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

FOREWORD

Our conviction that “crisis is an opportunity for transformation” persevered in 2021. Our focus was steadfast in supporting the Royal Government of Cambodia to build back better, leaving no one behind in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the pandemic deepening inequality across many countries around the world, including in Cambodia, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) stepped up efforts to address human rights challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. The Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights fostered integration across the UN System and improved operational links between **human rights, development and peace**, with human rights at the core of UNCT actions in Cambodia.

How did we do this? We accelerated integrated support for human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by **protecting health services and systems; expanding social protection and basic services; accelerating a green economic recovery; and designing a forward-looking SDG financing architecture.**

Under the technical leadership of the World Health Organization (WHO), the **UNCT supported the Royal Government’s comprehensive health response to the COVID-19 pandemic**, and in the process catalyzed actions to build resilience in health systems. The UNCT and partners ensured that essential and basic health services for all, as well as prevention of gender-based violence mechanisms and child protection services, were not disrupted during the pandemic.

The UNCT worked with the government on **the right to social security, to ensure the most vulnerable were included** in the contributory and non-contributory social protection system. We helped facilitate safe working environments, the continuation of micro and small businesses, decent employment and access to jobs.

We supported **policies and investments to fast-track the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** which increased the resilience of vulnerable communities to climate change while promoting a green recovery from the pandemic. We assisted in laying the groundwork to design a forward-looking SDG financing architecture, including policy instruments such as the Cambodia Credit Guarantee Policy and the Government Securities Issuance Policy Frameworks. Through this engagement, we helped **identify the potential for unlocking US\$ 23.4 billion by 2025** from public and private financing to achieve the Cambodia SDGs.

People are at the centre of recovery. Be it skills-building for young entrepreneurs to prepare them for the future of work, onboarding smallholder farmers to agri-tech platforms for improved access to finance and increased trade, developing inclusive distance learning materials for **3.2 million children**, protecting human rights defenders, or empowering women migrant workers to undertake a safe migration journey through the **“My Journey”** mobile application. The imperative of leaving no one behind permeates our work.

2021 was another year of adapting, encouraging us to remain inclusive and responsive to emerging needs while keeping a long-term perspective. What did we learn?

- **Leadership is key.** The pandemic has shown the importance of political leadership and the imperative of adopting a whole-of-government approach in overcoming intersectional development challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. Health outcomes cannot be achieved through the health sector alone. Health and the economy are two sides of the same coin – health is a contributor to and driver of productivity and prosperity for the future.

- In times of uncertainty and rapid change, we need to **embody learning and sharpen our capacity** to sense emerging possibilities. The pandemic accelerated government efforts to digitalize systems for social service delivery at a scale, speed and scope previously thought impossible. The rapid rollout of the COVID-19 Emergency Cash Transfer Programme, while built on existing systems, taught us to be agile and provided opportunities in real time to improve systems for identifying those most at risk of being left behind by the pandemic. We also learned to prepare for future crises and adapt social protection systems to be shock-responsive.
- We need **empowered communities with strong individual agency and capacity** to successfully manage and recover from the pandemic.
- **Putting people first is key to digital transformation success and an inclusive society.** Digital solutions and technological tools, such as e-commerce and agri-tech platforms, provided accelerated solutions for pandemic response and recovery. Ensuring equity in access, building capacity, providing safeguards while expanding the use of digital technology and tools in everyday life will allow Cambodians to embrace digitalization and unleash opportunities.
- **We are stronger together.** Overcoming the pandemic required a multi-stakeholder response. In the same manner, collaboration and partnerships will be necessary to advance the Cambodia SDGs. We will continue to build on multi-stakeholder partnerships generated by COVID-19 response efforts to promote joint actions in the pandemic recovery.

I am grateful for the partnership with the government, in particular with the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), for facilitating the UN's work in Cambodia. The progress we achieved in 2021 is a result of the joint efforts of the UNCT with development partners and civil society in support of the Royal Government's priorities to build forward better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Looking ahead at 2022, we will deepen our engagement with the Royal Government, civil society and the private sector to expand socio-economic opportunities, promote sustainable living, strengthen participation and accountability and manage urbanization. Through the "**Cambodia Futures Lab**" launched in 2021 – a cross-sector collaboration platform on transformational leadership – we will continue breaking down siloes, while charting the path for joint learning on sustainable development and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are stepping up to a UN 2.0 with stronger capabilities for data, innovation, strategic foresight, behavioural science, and results. We kicked off 2022 with a foresight-focused UNCT strategic planning retreat, which focused on listening to and engaging with Cambodian youth. Inspired by young people's energy and insights, we unwaveringly committed to a UNCT leadership team that works together to make a difference in Cambodian people's lives.



Pauline Tamesis
Resident Coordinator
United Nations in Cambodia



UN COUNTRY TEAM

Resident UN Agencies

Non-resident UN Agencies



Key Government Counterparts

1. APSARA National Authority
2. Council for Agriculture and Rural Development
3. Council for the Development of Cambodia
4. Cambodian Human Rights Committee
5. Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority
6. Cambodian National Council for Women
7. Disability Action Council
8. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
9. Ministry of Economy and Finance
10. Ministry of Environment
11. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
12. Ministry of Health
13. Ministry of Interior
14. Ministry of Justice
15. Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation
16. Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
17. Ministry of Land Management Urban Planning and Construction
18. Ministry of Mines and Energy
19. Ministry of Planning
20. Ministry of Public Works and Transport
21. Ministry of Rural Development
22. Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation
23. Ministry of Women's Affairs
24. Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology
25. National AIDS Authority
26. National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development
27. National Committee for Disaster Management
28. National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STDs
29. National Council for Sustainable Development
30. National Social Protection Council

Chapter 1

Key Development Context

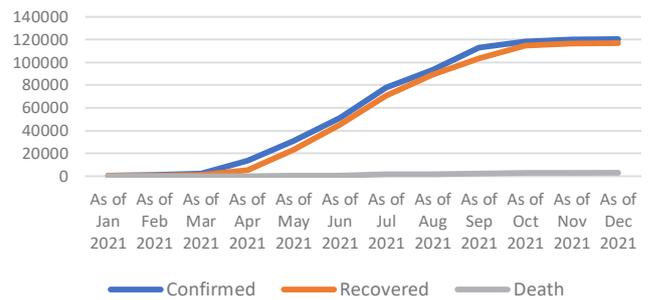


COVID-19 transmission

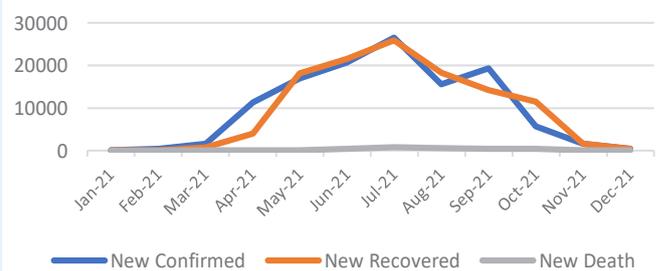
While Cambodia was largely spared from COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, by the end of 2021, COVID-19 infection cases had reached 120,507, of which imported cases totalled 19,923. Deaths were recorded at 3,012. A whole-of-government approach was mobilized to curb widespread transmission, strict containment and health measures were implemented, including large-scale lockdowns in Phnom Penh, Takhmao city and Sihanoukville, and in eight provinces along the Cambodian-Thai borders.

The government also rapidly rolled out a nationwide vaccination campaign, which was of unprecedented speed and scale, reaching nearly 90 percent of the population as of 21 February 2022. As a result, the infection rate markedly subsided to less than 10 cases per day by December 2021.

Cumulated total confirmed, recovered and deaths from COVID-19 in Cambodia in 2021



Number of new confirmed, new recovered and new deaths of COVID-19 in Cambodia in 2021



Economic update

After a sharp contraction of 3.1 percent in 2020, Cambodia's economy was projected to bounce back to positive growth in 2021. Based on the general equilibrium modelling, the **Cambodian economy in 2021 was estimated to grow around 3.0 percent.**¹ The recovery was propelled mainly by an upturn in external demand, although the country experienced some supply-side disruptions as a result of community outbreaks and strict containment measures. The growth recovery was supported by policy interventions. Cash transfers for poor and vulnerable households, wage subsidies for suspended workers in the garment and tourism sectors, and other intervention programmes played an important role in stimulating domestic consumption and supporting wholesale and retail trade, thus driving growth recovery.

Garments, footwear and travel goods remain the most important export merchandise, accounting for **63.7 percent** of total merchandise exports, excluding

gold, in the first three quarters of 2021. This was **up from 54.5 percent** in the same period last year. Garment, footwear and travel goods exports grew by **12 percent to \$ 8.1 billion** in the first nine months of 2021. Reflecting an increase in production and export, the agriculture sector played a crucial role in partially cushioning the impacts of the pandemic and absorbing some workers who had lost their jobs in other sectors. In the first nine months of 2021, **agricultural exports were \$ 790.3 million, an increase of 24.7 percent** on the same period in 2020. Given its remarkable growth, the agriculture sector became the second largest export earner in 2021, accounting for **6.2 percent** of total exports.

As the leading growth driver before the pandemic, the construction and real estate sector continued to be sluggish in 2021. In terms of investment values, the sector saw a substantial drop of **24.4 percent to \$ 3.84 billion**. The tourism sector was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the first nine months of 2021, there were 131,674 international tourist arrivals, an **89.4 percent decline** on the same period in the previous year.

¹ UNDP (2021) '2021 COVID-19 Economic and Social Impact Assessment in Cambodia', September 2021.

Foreign direct investment declined drastically in 2021. In the first three quarters of 2021, the number of foreign direct investment projects approved by the Council for the Development of Cambodia was 116, **a decrease of 23 percent** on the same period in the previous year. In terms of investment value, foreign direct investment experienced an enormous drop of nearly half of the total investment values of 2020. It dropped to only **\$ 3.09 billion**. As a result, the number of jobs expected from foreign direct investment projects **decrease by 31.4 percent**.

The accommodative monetary policy played a vital role in supporting liquidity in the financial and banking system. In the first half of 2021, the loan restructuring programme reached **\$ 5.5 billion** for 367,239 borrowers.² While monetary easing measures were helpful for mitigating the impact of the pandemic on businesses and households, they also created an accumulated risk in the banking system, potentially causing higher non-performing loans.

Headline inflation in the first three quarters of 2021 was below a manageable rate due to a deceleration of food prices. The average inflation rate from January to September 2021 was **2.7 percent** year-on-year. The nominal exchange rate of the Khmer riel against the US dollar appeared to be stable, moving around the average rate of KHR 4,100 per US dollar, thanks to NBC's constant interventions in the exchange rate markets.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) continued to implement expansionary fiscal policy in 2021, including cash transfer programmes and other intervention packages to mitigate socio-economic fallout of the pandemic. Although the national budget in 2021 was about **\$ 7.62 billion, a reduction of about 7.1 percent** on the 2020 budget, the RGC injected a sizable, additional stimulus package of \$ 1.45 billion. Total public expenditure in 2021 was estimated at around \$ 9.07 billion. As such, the fiscal deficit was projected to expand to 6.1 percent of GDP.



Impacts of the pandemic

Analytical evidence confirms what is already known, that some groups of the population were more socially and economically affected than others due to

the prolonged and uncertain nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. Households in rural areas have been far more affected by the economic fallout of COVID-19, which was corroborated by the decline in rice exports in 2021 that affected rice farmers in rural areas. A higher percentage of rural households adopted potentially detrimental livelihood coping strategies, such as selling productive assets, borrowing money, reducing food consumption and/or withdrawing children from school.

The most vulnerable population groups are people living below the national poverty line, women and girls, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, people living with HIV (PLHIV) and key populations, homeless people and people living in informal settlements, indigenous people and minorities, the LGBTIQ community, workers in informal sectors and the entertainment sector, and migrant returnees. Workers in the tourism sector also became more vulnerable because of the decline in tourism activity. These groups are at risk of multiple vulnerabilities or deprivations. Households living below the national poverty line were found to face greater difficulty affording food compared to non-poor households. Women and children faced greater risk of domestic violence, especially during lockdowns and mobility restrictions, as they were stuck at home.

The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic had tremendous negative impacts on social development and is likely set back some development gains made in recent years. In 2021, although access to health services appeared to be stable, the health system was dramatically overwhelmed due to explosive coronavirus transmission in communities across the country, from urban to rural areas. The sudden rise in demand for COVID-19 healthcare services prompted the RGC to increase public spending in health response, including establishing new health facilities and quarantine centres, purchasing medical equipment, recruiting and training new health staff and treatment and care services. Additionally, because of border restrictions, some patients who had previously travelled abroad for healthcare services were using domestic healthcare services, thus putting additional pressure on the health system.

² Khmer Times (2021) 'Cambodia restructures \$ 5.5 billion worth of loans to ease people's burden', 31 July 2021, Khmer Times, accessed at: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50905311/cambodia-restructures-5-5-billion-worth-of-loans-to-ease-peoples-burden/>

Education and learning were severely disrupted in 2021 as schools nationwide were closed for more than 200 days to contain virus transmission. The extended school closures had a significant impact on the learning and development of around **3.2 million children** who were already affected by learning losses in the preceding year. Regardless of distance and digital learning programmes, the combined effects of household income loss and extended school closures led to higher student dropout, poorer academic performance and mental health issues, among others. Children from poor and vulnerable households in rural areas were most affected. This may cause long-lasting effects on children's skills, attainment and earning prospects as a person's earnings increase with more years of schooling. According to a recent study, the loss in lifetime earnings (in the most optimistic scenario) was estimated at **\$ 1.57 billion** in Cambodia.³

The pandemic worsened existing inequality and gender equality. The tourism sector, as a job-creating industry and key growth driver before the pandemic, which predominantly employed women, was more severely affected in 2021. Women generally shoulder the burden of household chores and domestic care. A recent survey indicated that women's food consumption was significantly lower than other family members. Given social norms, as the main caretaker for the family women resorted to lower food consumption to allow more food for other family members and children, to cope with reduced household income caused by the pandemic. Given the devastating impacts on various dimensions of social indicators, especially education and learning, the human development index was expected to drop significantly.

With the slow pace of economic recovery, reduced household income and job opportunities, and deteriorating progress in some indicators of social development, there is likely greater risk of social and

political volatility. Towards the end of 2021, there were increasing demands for government support, including a notable strike by workers laid off from Naga World Casino in Phnom Penh.



Political and Human Rights Context

In 2021, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia encouraged the government to guarantee the basic needs of Cambodians, including access to healthcare, food and social protection to address deprivation and the extensive impact of the pandemic on lives and livelihoods. He urged the government to ensure that its public health measures that dealt with COVID-19 complied with its obligations under international human rights law, and that restrictions such as lockdowns were balanced with the full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The Special Rapporteur also encouraged a review of laws, policies and practices, including draconian laws, which were in breach of international human rights law to comply with human rights standards.⁴

Cambodia ranked low on a number of global indices for justice, press freedom and corruption in 2021. There were also concerns around restrictions to the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and political participation as highlighted by the Secretary General, in his Report to the Human Rights Council. In early 2021, the government took steps to establish a National Human Rights Institution in line with recommendations from the Universal Periodic Review. A draft law was prepared and the Cambodian Human Rights Committee held consultations on the draft law with a range of stakeholders.

There were significant developments in the political environment, with the endorsement by the Cambodian People's Party of a prime ministerial candidate to succeed Samdech Prime Minister Hun Sen.

³ Learning and Earning Losses from COVID-19 School Closures in Developing Asia, April 2021, ADB.

⁴ Report by Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Cambodia, Situation of Human Rights in Cambodia, 3 August 2021.

⁵ See Cambodia's ranking in the World Justice Project, Reporters without Borders and Transparency International.

⁶ Secretary-General Report, Role and Achievement of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights in Assisting the Government and People of Cambodia in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 16 September 2021.

⁷ Press Release by Cambodia Human Rights Committee, Update of Human Rights Situation and Law Enforcement in Cambodia, Part 2, 7 October 2021.

Chapter 2

UN Development System Support to National Development Priorities





Outcome 1 - Expanding Social Opportunity



By 2023, women and men in Cambodia, in particular the marginalized and vulnerable, have their basic needs addressed equitably as they benefit from and utilize expanded quality social services and social protection in a more resilient, fairer and sustainable society.

❖ Key Results of the United Nations (UN) Contribution to Expanding Social Opportunity



Intermediate Outcome 1.1: Quality Services and Basic Rights of Vulnerable People

Women and men, in particular marginalized and vulnerable populations, increasingly seek quality services and the realization of their basic rights, including during emergencies

The UN supported the **development and implementation of the National Communication and Community Engagement Strategy and Plan on COVID-19 vaccination**, through establishing a social listening platform to inform the strategy and tactics. It was guided by the COVID-19 Social Economic Study, and reached the most excluded populations, such as ID Poor groups, migrants, people with disabilities, minorities and pregnant women, with accurate and tailored information on vaccinations.

The UN worked to **promote access to public health and prevention of gender-based violence (GBV)** alongside national partners and communities to ensure that essential and basic health services for all were not disrupted during the pandemic. For example, **1,175,579 children** under 5 years and **383,311 pregnant women** in the north-eastern and north-western provinces (14 provinces in total) of Cambodia benefitted from essential health services integrating COVID-19 precautionary measures supported by UNICEF. Some **10,000** parents/caregivers (5,805 female) were provided with maternal care, GBV information and psychological support. Disruption of treatment services for PLHIV remained at less than 10 percent compared to before the pandemic.

Childhood vaccination coverage nationally for non-COVID vaccines remained on track.

Social media interventions focusing on COVID-19 prevention, access to safe delivery, life-saving interventions such as emergency obstetric and neonatal care, prenatal care, GBV, mental health, and adolescent and youth health reached more than **4.55 million** people with over **396,000** post engagements.

With support from the UN, **nationwide multi-media back-to-school campaigns were designed and implemented**, as well as a communication-for-education initiative targeting vulnerable children in 1,185 villages in six provinces. The school-based positive discipline programme, including materials aimed at eliminating GBV in schools, was expanded, benefiting **429,300 school children** (214,650 girls).

Over **500,000** caregivers of young children received infant and young child feeding counselling support through facility-based services and community-based platforms supported by the UN.

The UN provided support to migrants returning to their communities from Thailand. A total of **53,808 migrants** (26,092 female) received COVID-19 information through health education sessions and community dialogue at the community level. The information delivered to migrants during this period was about COVID-19 prevention measures, risks, the importance of vaccination, tuberculosis symptoms and diagnosis and treatment processes. Some **920** migrant returnees (474 women) in greatest need received support, including the provision of personal protective equipment, food supplies after they completed quarantine, awareness about the transmission of COVID-19, access to local job and employment information, and skills development programmes.



Intermediate Outcome 1.2: Public and Private Services and Expanded Coverage

Public and private sectors provide quality services and expanded coverage for marginalized and vulnerable populations in line with international standards and norms, including during emergencies.

In April 2021, support was provided to the Ministry of Health (MoH) to update the **Cambodia Master Plan for COVID-19**. This was to further guide provinces in local preparedness and response planning and to support the development of the Strategy for Living in the New Normal within the context of COVID-19. This was led by the Inter-Ministerial Committee to Combat COVID-19, and facilitated Cambodia's shift to a sustainable, long-term response for endemic COVID-19, with safe reopening of society and the economy.

Under the technical leadership of the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, the UN supported the RGC to respond to the pandemic and vaccinate people. As of 21 February 2022, nearly **90 percent** of the population had been fully vaccinated (two doses) including 1.7 million children over the age of 12. Through COVAX and other avenues, Cambodia received approximately **46 million vaccine doses**.

The **UN supported the rapid expansion of COVID-19 treatment facilities** throughout the country, including large regional centres. It procured critical supplies such as personal protective equipment and essential medicines and equipment for oxygen support, built the capacity of frontline healthcare workers in clinical management and infection prevention and control measures, and improved clinical management and care pathways with increased intensive care unit capacity across the country. Expansion went from one laboratory with **500 samples** per day in February 2020 to 12 laboratories and nationwide testing of up to **12,000 samples** per day.

The **UN played a key role supporting the RGC on sector coordination, planning, monitoring, risk communication and community engagement, vaccine supply chain management and cold**

chain strengthening. This support was critical in establishing the RGC's capacity in ultra-cold chain and mRNA vaccine management, enabling the country to diversify its vaccine portfolio further, with a low MoH reported wastage rate of less than 1 percent.

Throughout north-eastern provinces, **health workers and village volunteers were equipped with knowledge, supplies and skills** to implement infection prevention and control measures and promote routine maternal, newborn and child health services, leading to minimized disruption of availability of essential health and nutrition services in all 126 health centres.

HIV self-testing was introduced, scaled up and accessed by **1,910 key populations**, resulting in 41.29 percent of national multi-month dispensing coverage by September 2021, a significant **increase from 33.57 percent in December 2020**.

The operational guidelines for HIV integration in commune development plans were finalized by the National AIDS Authority, to enable communes to implement RGC Directive #213.

The UN provided technical support to improve the midwifery pre-service education system. The **Core Competency Framework for Midwives and the Associate Degree in Midwifery** were developed. An **e-learning platform and tele-medicines** for sexual, reproductive and maternal health professionals and women and girls was established as part of the national health care system.

Support was provided to MoH to implement national standard operating procedures for diabetes and hypertension management in primary care. Health professional knowledge and capacity were strengthened through training on the Package of Essential NCD Interventions for Primary Health Care (PEN). A total of **252 nurses** from 84 health centres in Cambodia have been trained on PEN. The **National Action Plan for Salt Reduction 2021-2027** was adopted and launched in December 2021. The **second draft of the Strategic Plan on Mental Health and Substance Abuse 2021-2030** was reviewed in consultation with health sector, NGO, and development partners.

The UN procured approximately **760,000 copies** of the home-learning package that contained self-learning materials in both literacy and numeracy, a guidance

sheet for parents, an information leaflet on COVID-19 and a soap bar. The home-learning package was also used as supplementary material for remedial learning after schools reopened in November 2021. A **package was also developed and distributed in four minority languages to 5,000 ethnic minority** students. The UN supported the disbursement of top-up block grants to all primary and lower secondary schools across the country, which **benefitted 9,013 primary and lower secondary schools** and supported outreach and distance learning activities. This also established safe, healthy and protective learning environments that supported the nationwide reopening of schools. The UN supported the distribution of **92,000** teaching and learning materials to support home learning.

The UN continued to support multilingual education, including through the provision of **1,640 radios** to deliver distance learning opportunities during COVID-19, and the expansion of early childhood education programmes in rural communities. This supported **1,250 community pre-schools** to reach the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) quality standards.

MoEYS launched the **Youth Situation Analysis Report** in Cambodia, which provides youth situation updates for policy and planning. Evidence from this study was used to develop the Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexuality Education Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The UN, with other partners, also provided technical and financial support to MoEYS to formulate and finalize the **10-year National Action Plan on School Health 2021-2030**.

The UN constructed or rehabilitated **2,000** handwashing stations, **10** water systems, **137** kitchens/storerooms, and **151** fuel efficient stoves in schools to improve school nutrition environments. UN-supported training and seed supply to set up school gardens doubled the amount of fresh vegetables grown and available to complement school meals.

With UN support, **Cambodia's Roadmap for Food Systems for Sustainable Development 2030 was developed**. The roadmap, together with the development of the **Country Operational Roadmap on the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting**, further supported the consolidation of joint commitments for



RGC policy frameworks, strategies and plans developed and implemented with UN support:

- Cambodia's Master Plan for COVID-19, in April 2021
- National Multisectoral Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases, 2018-2027
- Tobacco Control Law, sub-decrees and Prakas in compliance with WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
- Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care Improvement Plan 2021-2025
- National Strategy for Reproductive and Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights, extended from ending in 2020 to 2023
- Update of Safe Motherhood Protocol for Health Centres
- National Action Plan on School Health 2021-2030
- National Action Plan on Youth Development 2021-2025
- Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexuality Education Strategic Plan 2021-2025

the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit, highlighting Cambodia's commitment to ending malnutrition in all forms. The Scaling-up Nutrition Business Network was established by the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD), together with the development of a three-year implementation strategy.

Capacity building on early identification and treatment of acute malnutrition, growth monitoring, supportive supervision, and community engagement was provided to 864 village health support groups in north-eastern provinces, contributing to **an increase in the severe acute malnutrition cure rate, from 59 percent (2020) to 68 percent (2021)**, and a reduction in defaulters from 40 percent to 32 percent. Only 81 percent of the annual target for SAM treatment coverage was reached. No gender disparity was observed in these efforts.

With UN support, **NAPVAW III** was launched in early 2021 and the **Operational Plan of Neary Ratanak V** was developed, in consultation with line ministries and civil society organizations. The UN also provided support to draft the **National Policy on Gender Equality**.

GBV mechanisms in four target provinces were strengthened, eight district working groups on GBV were formed to respond to victims, and **149 cases** were handled. There were **297 GBV** survivors who benefitted from health services in public health facilities supported by the UN.

To address and prevent GBV and harassment in the garment sector, the first ever **standard operating procedures** for garment sector supply chain actors, in line with the International Labour Organization (ILO's) Convention No. 190, were developed and launched.

The 16 Days Campaign of Activism against GBV was launched, reaching more than **2 million people**, with active engagement by youth representatives. Awareness raising on the rights of female migrant workers and GBV services reached **47,052** people.

An innovative and women-centred mobile application ([My Journey Mobile App](#)) was launched to provide accessible, reliable and essential information to empower women migrant workers to migrate safely.



Intermediate Outcome 1.3: Social Services and Social Protection

Public and private sectors sustainably increase and diversify domestic resources for social services and social protection, especially for marginalized and most vulnerable populations.



Scaling up social protection and social assistance to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19

The importance of social protection measures for Cambodia's vulnerable populations was demonstrated through the **UN-supported modelling of the 2021 socio-economic impacts of COVID-19**, conducted in close collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and

Finance. The UN also supported the implementation of three rounds of longitudinal surveys from December 2020 to June 2021 to track the impacts of the COVID-19 Cash Transfer Programme. Significant impacts were reported across human development and socio-economic indicators. The COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Survey (phase II) continued to capture changes in key household socio-economic variables during the course of the pandemic.

Massive investments were made in strengthening systems and service delivery for routine and COVID-19 cash transfer programmes, resulting in more than **500,000 children** aged from the pre-natal period to 18 years, and more than **684,000 households** being covered by the routine COVID-19 cash transfer programme. The UN also provided technical assistance to the RGC through the National Social Protection Council, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, and the Ministry of Planning on the one-off cash transfer programme for households affected by lockdowns in Phnom Penh, Takhmao city and Sihanoukville. Some **108,000 households** were covered through the one-off lockdown programme.

Through advocacy and support, PLHIV and key populations were included in the IDPoor registration programme, enabling **2,045 PLHIV** households to receive equity cards and to benefit from the COVID-19 Cash Transfer Programme.

The UN distributed school meals to **247,000 school children** in areas with poor education performance, malnutrition, high food insecurity and poverty, after schools reopened. It also supported the design of healthy and diversified school meals.

During school closures, the UN worked across ministries to reach school-aged children and their caregivers by integrating nutrition into the MoEYS home-learning package. This benefitted **763,865 primary schoolchildren**. The UN directly supported **29,000** vulnerable households with take-home rations, and constructed or rehabilitated **2,298** water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and cooking structures in schools.

The UN expanded its support through the Ministry of Interior to strengthen the capacity of all 25 capital and provincial administrations to plan and budget more on social services that benefit children, adolescents and women. As a result, the average social service

allocation for seven target capital and provincial administrations such as Phnom Penh, Kandal, Preah Sihanouk, Siem Reap, Battambang, Kratie, Rattanakiri increased from **2.4 percent in 2020 to 6 percent in 2021**. The Phnom Penh administration allocated approximately \$ 5 million (4.7 percent of the capital's total budget). Preah Sihanouk province allocated approximately \$ 130,000 (1.4 percent of the province's total budget) and Kandal province allocated approximately \$ 835,000 (11 percent of the province's total budget).



Strengthening and expansion of social protection system to increase resilience or reduce vulnerability

Significant progress was made in strengthening and expanding the scope of social protection, including its social assistance and social security pillars. The UN-supported **review of the National Social Protection Policy Framework** refocused the RGC towards a lifecycle approach to social protection, while the establishment of a shock-responsive social protection framework guided the adaptation of the overall social protection system to respond to future shocks. A review of the social protection legal architecture supported by the UN also provided greater clarity about existing legal gaps and inconsistencies. These will be addressed through the drafting and consultation of legal instruments like the Social Protection Law.

Efforts to strengthen the delivery of social assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable households resulted in the endorsement of the family package of integrated core social assistance programmes. The family package is intended to expand coverage of the routine social assistance programmes upon completion of the COVID-19 Cash Transfer Programme and will include children aged 0-18, pregnant women, people with disability and the elderly, while mainstreaming PLHIV.

With UN support, the national Disability Identification System was built and rolled out with more than **230,000 people with disability** identified for access to social assistance and other services.

The UN also supported the government at national and sub-national levels to implement the **national home-grown school feeding programme** and strengthen its governance structures and systems. It developed a policy framework for school feeding, an operational manual aligning the national school meals programme with the social protection framework, and established a digital management information system and standard infrastructure system. It also worked with the government to develop standard operating procedures for school meal implementation during COVID-19.

Leveraging the positive impact of social protection as proven during the pandemic, the UN supported the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and the Ministry of Economy and Finance to **pilot different social protection packages** through the **Graduation-based Social Protection Programme** in 2021. The pilot covers 1,587 IDPoor households receiving a monthly cash transfer package or asset transfer package in line with the experimentation methodology. The evidence generated will inform systematic government support to address poverty and achieve the country's objective of 'leaving no one behind'.

Through the pilot **Cash-Based Transfer Scheme for Flood-Affected Households**, the UN provided cash transfers as a top up to the COVID-19 Cash Transfer Programme to households affected by multiple shocks, including floods and COVID-19. This reached over **170,000** people from ID Poor 1 and 2 households in five provinces such as Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Pursat, Kampong Thom and Siem Reap.



Supporting young students as they return to school:

How new home-learning packages bridge the transition between home learning and full-time education for Grade 1 and 2 students



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Six-year-old Lina Long Lyhour's Khmer language workbook already looks well used. It is covered in fingerprint smudges and creases less than a week after he first got his hands on it. The workbook was one component of the home-learning packages recently distributed to every Grade 1 and 2 child in Cambodia. Lyhour's mother, Sam Chanta, laughs from their home in Kampong Chhnang as she points out one ripped page she had to repair with tape. "You can see how much he loves it by the fact I am having to fix it already!" As she speaks, Lyhour recites the Khmer alphabet from the book, as if to prove his mother's point.

Some 750,000 of these home-learning packages were distributed across Cambodia in October in response to the disrupted education experienced by school children during the COVID-19 pandemic. The packages include study materials developed specifically with Grade 1 and 2 children in mind, and were designed so they could be used in classrooms or at home. This makes them ideal for the current phased reopening of Cambodian schools, where many young students will be spending half of their study time at school and half at home. It also means that if any school has to close temporarily because of a COVID outbreak, children will still be able to learn at home without falling behind.

The packages were created by MoEYS and its Capacity Development Partnership Fund partners, the European Union, USAID, SIDA, the Global Partnership for Education and UNICEF. The design was informed by research proving that Grade 1 and 2 children found it particularly difficult to learn online, and that well-designed, child-friendly printed study materials were better at helping them catch up on the education they missed in classrooms.

“The packages are a big help in helping students catch up,” confirms Chhem Thorn Sitha, who teaches at a nearby primary school. “When the packages arrived we met with all parents for an orientation meeting to show them how to use the study materials, and everyone agreed that they would be valuable. With these home-learning packages, and the fact that schools are opening again, I now feel much more hopeful. We can use these books, but also, when we see our students in classrooms, we can check on how much they really are learning and what their needs are. That’s the best way to help them catch up.”

Sitha’s school, Bunnary Hun Sen Romeas Primary School in Kampong Chhnang’s Teuk Thos district, is currently operating on a 50 percent capacity basis, so that children go to half the lessons they would have pre-COVID. The home-learning packages can provide extra support when students are at home. The school director, Sok Veng, confirms that the new study materials in the packages will be an important tool in his efforts to make sure all children catch up and resume their education. “The children were interested in them as soon as they saw them. They started reading them straight away; they didn’t need to be told to. The design is much more modern and attractive than our old textbooks, and that stimulates the children. I would love to see the older children get really good content like this, too.”

Mrs. Sam is a parent at this school and agrees with the instant impact of the home-learning packages. “The truth is that it’s really hard just to teach children through television or a smartphone, especially for younger ones. These books are useful and beautiful.”

Mrs. Sam also appreciates the bar of soap and family-friendly guidance on how to take precautions against COVID-19, which were included in all the packages. “I can teach them and check they are washing their hands when they are at home with me, but the guidelines can help them to remember how to stay safe even when they leave the house and go into school.”

Her daughter, Lina Long Lisa, is looking forward to putting all the lessons into action when she gets back to the classroom. She said, quietly, that she felt unhappy during the pandemic. “I like to read, and I am trying really hard to write well. I am looking forward to learning how to write my numbers and letters better.” She has already used the home-learning package study materials with her teacher and her mother, and found them helpful in both cases.

While the home-learning packages could never replace the power of face-to-face education for eager pupils like Lisa, they have been designed to make the transition back into classrooms easier. By helping children catch up with their education and reducing the risk of further disruptive outbreaks, they will lead the way back to full-time education for all Cambodian children.

BUILDING A GLOBAL EXPERT





Outcome 2 - Expanding Economic Opportunity



By 2023, women and men in Cambodia, in particular those marginalized and vulnerable, benefit from expanded opportunities for decent work and technological innovations; and participate in a growing, more productive and competitive economy, that is also fairer and environmentally sustainable.

❖ Key Results of the UN Contribution towards Expanding Economic Opportunities



Intermediate Outcome 2.1: Decent Work

More women and men have decent work, both in waged and self-employment, are protected by labour standards, and have higher skills in a progressively formalizing labour market, and high levels of employment are maintained

To assist youth to enter the labour market, the UN has been supporting the **digital transformation of the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system** in Cambodia. As a result, a **national TVET policy to blend learning packages** was developed, and TVET institutions have the capacity to design, deliver and assess innovative blended learning packages. This allowed **3,000 youth** to acquire in-demand skills and become certified. Through digital and blended platforms, as well as digital innovation, TVET opportunities have become more accessible to young women migrant returnees, low-skilled workers and rural and vulnerable youth.

With UN support, 79 secretariat committee members (16 women) strengthened their capacity to coordinate the implementation of the National Employment Policy (2015-2025) as well as its Action Plan for 2020-2021.

To prepare the workforce for Industry 4.0, an industry readiness survey was produced and used as part of the evidence base to inform the long-term National Policy

on Science, Technology and Innovation 2020-2030, which was launched in 2021. Through the provision of technical advisory support and advanced ICT equipment, the UN supported the **establishment of the Digital Economy Faculty** at the National University of Management, which enrolled 54 students in its first intake (51 percent women).

Despite the pandemic, the Better Factories Cambodia programme completed working **conditions assessments in all export garment factories** in Cambodia (in 550 factories with a total of 580,000 workers). It advised on COVID-19 measures and improvements with respect to non-compliance in around 210 export garment, footwear and travel goods factories, virtually.

Through a start-up mentor platform focusing on skills building for young entrepreneurs, **3,234 young entrepreneurs** (40 percent women) improved their entrepreneurship skills. To further promote entrepreneurship skills building for youth, a ready-for-business training and other training materials to nurture entrepreneurial mindsets were made accessible to the public. These reached 130,417 youth.

Despite the closure of schools and learning centres, **414 youth (111 women)** enrolled in the Basic Education Equivalency Programme (BEEP) and received career counselling services. A total of **169 learners** have successfully passed the online final exam. A career counselling manual was developed and 77 BEEP facilitators (20 women) and technical team members participated in a training of trainers event.

A total of 12 garment factories participated in the Factory Literacy Programme. From this, 271 garment workers (95 percent women) successfully graduated

from the programme. Additionally, 13 factory literacy teachers (seven women) upgraded their skills in adult learning, and 15 graduate literacy learners (all women) trained as sewing operators.

At least **687,780 people** accessed job information through an online career platform, social media, and a professional conference on the emerging job market and skills. Among them, 1,755 (52 percent / 904 women) secured jobs offered through the National Career Fair and job matching support.



Intermediate Outcome 2.2: Economic Productivity, Competitiveness and Innovation

Public institutions, businesses and entrepreneurs drive improved economic productivity and competitiveness, greater innovation, adoption of new technology, and resilience to shocks

To support improved understanding of the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector, **a survey on SME competitiveness in Cambodia was conducted** with UN support, in partnership with the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation. This reached 400 businesses across Cambodia. The survey results highlighted areas where policy interventions may be most relevant for strengthening SME competitiveness and resilience. Priorities include policies to support the development of business networks, growth of innovative firms, access to finance and financial management capacities, skills development, and job matching. This will provide analytical foundations on which to build institutional and technical assistance for COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

An assessment of the impacts of COVID-19 on **agro-food and tourism enterprises** was carried out, with data collection completed in 2021. The assessment will feed into the recovery plans of these sectors.

The UN provided support to strengthen the capacity of fisheries administration on the Cambodia Quality Seal certification and the control of food quality and safety. As a result, 50 fishery post-harvest sites were pre-audited and 702 samples were collected from inspected sites.



RGC policy frameworks, strategies and plans developed and implemented with UN support:

- Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation of Industrial Development Policy
- National Action Plan for Inspection and Control of Fish and Fishery Products (2020-2024)
- Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production Strategy 2021-2030

The **Green Industrial Award Guideline** was adopted by the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation and used for the first Green Industrial Award in December 2021. This policy tool enables the promotion of green, innovative and inclusive manufacturing practices in Cambodia, and promotes compliance with international obligations on inclusive and sustainable manufacturing.

Some 1,518 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) were supported to transition to e-commerce platforms as a means to increase economic resilience during the pandemic. This resulted in **job continuity for 6,527** people (41 percent women) in the context of COVID-19 outbreaks and lockdowns.

Four agro-businesses participated in a pilot project where biogas power plants were installed to demonstrate the benefits to economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability. The pilot demonstrated that using biogas power plants could potentially produce electricity to meet **40 percent to 90 percent** of farms' electricity needs, while managing daily wastewater quantities ranging from 4.2 tons per day to 141 tons per day, along with an expected reduction of GHG emissions of between 1,283 tCO₂eq/a and 20,382.55 tCO₂eq/a.

Fifty local manufacturers in the garment, footwear and travel goods, and food and beverage sectors were provided with environmentally sound technology for lowering carbon emissions to improve their environmental, economic and social performance. This initiative **will potentially reduce 220,000 tons of**

CO2, compared to the target of 500,000 tons. It will also conserve water and materials, and reduce waste. The potential for conservation and waste reduction is higher, as 20 more factories came under the Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production assessment process in 2021.

To support the country's endeavour to diversify its financing options to increase fiscal space, the UN provided technical support to explore the possibility of **issuing sovereign Khmer Riel bonds**. A feasibility study on Khmer Riel bond issuance in Cambodia provided recommendations on the development of a primary market for the issuance of government bonds, including prospective demand, the size of bonds, maturity, coupon rates and incentive mechanisms. Following the study, a bond issuance plan will be produced in coordination with the Ministry of Economy and Finance to support the issuance of the first sovereign Khmer Riel Bond in 2022.

The second **Development Finance Assessment** analysed the national post-COVID-19 outlook, and prospects for innovative financing for the country's recovery and strategy for building forward better. The assessment was also used to inform the government's Strategic Framework and Programmes for Economic Recovery 2021-2023, which was launched in December 2021.

In close collaboration with the Disability Action Council and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, the UN provided technical assistance to enhance the implementation of the Employment Quota for Persons with Disabilities. This resulted in the identification of employment opportunities for **8,768 people with disabilities** (4,204 women).

Support to build the resilience of small holder farmers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic saw **2,139 smallholder farmers** (48 percent women) in five provinces successfully onboarded onto agri-tech platforms. This facilitated increased trade in agricultural commodities, improved access to inputs, finance, and market information, and enabled better communication and coordination along supply chains in the context of the pandemic.



Intermediate Outcome 2.3: Economic Inclusion of Vulnerable People

Social norms, laws, policies and institutions promote economic inclusion, especially of women, people with disabilities, women and men living in remote areas, and the extreme poor

Under the leadership of the Cambodia Mine Action Authority, the clearance of Cambodia's mine-affected land is now linked more closely to the release of land that supports livelihood development. Some **32,570 vulnerable people** (51 percent women) engaging in agriculture in the most landmine-affected provinces gained access to mine-free land as a result of the UN-supported mine clearance programme. This enabled access to the safe use of 26.33 km² of land for community and livelihood development.



Women's Role in Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development in Cambodia



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Ms. Panharith is a supervisor of health, safety and environment at the Wan He Da Manufacturing Company Limited. She has been working in this field for seven years. Ms. Panharith participated in a Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies (TEST) project training series organized by UNIDO and the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation. It was called, Low Carbon Development for Productivity and Climate Change Mitigation Through the TEST Methodology. The project aimed to encourage factories in Cambodia to use environmentally sound technologies to enhance their production, and at the same time reduce carbon emissions.

Before joining the TEST project, Ms. Panharith observed that the factory she worked for had several issues, such as high energy and water consumption and a medium level of efficiency in terms of material and waste management.

Her factory joined the TEST Methodology in 2019. It was one of the key projects under the UNIDO Programme for Country Partnership. Ms. Panharith was assigned the factory focal point and received technical support and capacity building from the UNIDO team, as well as the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation. This covered the TEST methodology and the resource efficiency and cleaner production assessment. This was also to build the TEST team at the factory to implement measures and train on environmental management systems and accounting. As a result, Ms. Panharith has supported and improved the environmental roadmap for better performance and factory production. “After gaining knowledge from the training and assessments in the TEST project, my team and I improved our environmental performance. We met client requirements, for example by improving the HIGG Score from 37 percent in 2018 to 60 percent in 2021,” Ms. Panharith said.

Ms. Panharith has contributed to improvements in environmental performance by adopting green practices and changing users’ behaviour, including setting air conditioning at 25°C instead of 18°C or 20°C, practicing energy and water consumption, and properly managing and recycling waste. She also implemented green and efficient technologies, such as using LED instead of fluorescent lamps, properly maintaining the boiler, preventing air leakage, using an efficient driving system for the compressor, and considering investing in Solar PV at the factory.

“As a woman working in the field of environment, many tasks require paperwork, such as collecting, analysing, reporting and presenting data, and coordinating and managing work with the technical team to implement the action plans or resource efficient and cleaner production measures,” she said. “When I worked on the tasks, I sometimes experienced challenges on the technical parts, like lacking skills and knowledge or facing a dilemma in selecting the correct countermeasure to those issues.”

To deal with these challenges, Ms. Panharith and her team held discussions and technical consultations, or improved staff competence and skills via a capacity building programme. Addressing the challenges helped the factory achieve its green goal. Importantly, Ms. Panharith added, “occasionally, I can find innovative ways to implement those green measures”.

“With my dedicated involvement in this factory and project, I can see that the factory’s business is growing gradually. The customers overseas, namely the European Union and the United States, just to name a few, are satisfied with our performance due to the increase in product ordering, despite the COVID-19 outbreak. This is contributing to the creation of more jobs for local workers,” Ms. Panharith added.

Ms. Panharith believes environmental protection is the responsibility of every individual, without gender discrimination. “Based on my experience, I think environmental work is suitable for not just men but also women, and it contributes to personal, institutional and community development,” she said. “In the present and the future, green skills are important and relevant in supporting the manufacturing sectors in Cambodia.”





Outcome 3 - Promoting Sustainable Living



By 2023, women and men in Cambodia, in particular the marginalized and vulnerable, live in a safer, healthier, more secure and ecologically balanced environment with improved livelihoods, and are resilient to natural and climate change related trends and shocks.

❖ Key Results of the UN Contribution towards Promoting Sustainable Living



Intermediate Outcome 3.1: Increased Resilience and Access to Resources

Women and men, in particular the vulnerable and marginalized, are empowered to equitably access, responsibly use and benefit from resilient basic services, land and natural resources, with an increased resilience to cope with disasters/shocks and other risks

To improve policy development and decision making, the UN continued to provide technical assistance to the drafting of RGC policies and frameworks. With the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, this included the **Agricultural Development Policy**, updated Fisheries Law, and collecting annual agricultural data through the RGC's yearly survey programme.

The UN continued its support to strengthen national capacity and transboundary dialogue in **emergency preparedness for major transboundary animal diseases, including highly pathogenic avian influenza, African swine fever and foot and mouth disease**, and to reduce the incidence of antimicrobial resistance. This contributed not only to protecting the animal industry and farmers' livelihoods, but also public health.

The UN continued its efforts to **support vulnerable agricultural households** (more than 1,000 people, 40 percent women) resulting in enhanced sustainable livelihoods achieved through the practice of safe, nutrition-sensitive and climate-resilient agriculture. This enhanced rural women's empowerment through

the pilot implementation of gender transformative approaches and community engagement.

In the water and WASH sector, **8,053 households** benefitted from secure access to water through climate-resilient infrastructure, and **5,929 IDPoor households** gained access to safe water services. The capacity and systems of government and private sector stakeholders on drinking water services was strengthened in 2021, with water supply mapping; climate risk assessments; and adaptation tools developed and rolled out at national and sub-national level. This reached 289 local government officers in 22 communes. Climate-resilient bottled and piped water systems were developed, reaching **14,000 people**, and pro-poor subsidies for connection to piped water systems through government systems were delivered in three provinces. There is potential for scale-up from international finance institution funding.

Sanitation results were accelerated and scaled up, and the first open defecation free province in Cambodia was declared in 2021. This benefitted over **525,000 people**. Hand hygiene practices were strengthened, with the reinforcement of hand hygiene messages in Cambodia's national COVID '3 Dos and 3 Don'ts' campaign through social media. There were over **1 million** hand hygiene message views, and local radio and community activities in six provinces. Hand hygiene items were given to **49,025 IDPoor** family members, as well as **34,966** people in 158 quarantine/treatment sites and 'red zone' areas in 12 provinces and the capital city.

The UN continued to support the government's **disaster risk management priorities** through the Humanitarian Response Forum, an inter-agency and multisectoral coordination platform with more than

60 UN and international NGO members. In 2021, this included UN support to the national response and recovery to floods in September 2021 reaching 11,926 beneficiaries.

The UN **supported the National Committee for Disaster Management to construct and deploy six safe evacuation centres** in flood-prone provinces around the Tonle Sap Lake. The UN supported sub-national authorities to update disaster contingency plans and conduct emergency simulation exercises with local stakeholders to ensure readiness in the event of a flood.

Major investments were made to fast-track Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) implementation to increase the resilience of vulnerable communities to climate change while promoting a green recovery from COVID-19, gender mainstreaming and women's leadership in climate change action, and disaster risk reduction.

Twenty off-grid villages were electrified during 2021. The UN contributed to this result by providing four villages with clean and affordable electricity access through solar mini-grids, benefitting a total of 225 households (1,595 people, 715 women), including 85 households from the Jarai Indigenous community.

The UN provided technical support to establish a new Energy Unit under the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The unit mandate was finalized, and eight economists (one female) have received training related to the energy sector. The unit will be formally established in 2022.



Intermediate Outcome 3.2: Innovation, Information and Technology for Sustainability

Relevant public and private sector actors use innovation, information and technology to contribute to sustainable production and living, environmental protection and conservation

With support from the UN **National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA) Initiative**, Cambodia is among 11 countries developing their NEA, led by the Ministry

of Environment/GSSD and the Royal University of Phnom Penh. The NEA will provide an evidence base on the status and trends of ecosystems and the services they provide to support human wellbeing and development in Cambodia, and set out policy options to improve conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services. In 2021, the Cambodia NEA team developed an outline for the NEA, identified authors and contributors, and began data collection, including through field trips and consultations with local authorities, communities and Indigenous groups.

As part of activities under the UN Counter MEASURE II project, the Royal University of Phnom Penh completed micro- and macro-plastic assessments in Phnom Penh and along the Tonle Sap. The UN supported the Mekong River Commission Secretariat to develop protocols to monitor micro- and macro-plastic pollution and micro-plastic in fish. The pilot testing was ongoing at the end of 2021. As part of this effort, training was conducted on solid waste management for authorities managing ports and piers along the Mekong.

In the forest sector, different schemes were deployed to empower **24,261** people to embrace sustainable forest management practices. This resulted in the **restoration of about 9,000 hectares of degraded land/forest**. Some of these interventions were linked to the COVID-19 response, for example, **2,952** people benefitted from a **\$ 205,000** cash-for-work programme through tree planting and assisted natural regeneration.

In the fisheries sector, the **UN continued efforts to strengthen fisheries conservation and management**, contributing to the growth and sustainability of this vital sector by developing upgraded information management systems and improving the system for reporting on illegal and unregulated fishing.

Under the Montreal Protocol, with UN assistance, the **Cambodian national infrastructure for conducting competency-based certification of refrigeration servicing technicians was enhanced**. The content of "good servicing practices" to assist the implementation of the Montreal Protocol was integrated into the assessment criteria for refrigeration

and air-conditioning servicing technicians. The UN assisted Cambodia to train 144 servicing technician trainees (24 female) through four virtual training workshops. These were led by experts supported by the UN.

The UN **assisted 35 factories** in the form of Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production Assessment and TEST-related capacity building programmes. Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production measures were recommended to 15 factories, **with the potential to save 22,000 tCO₂eq per year**. As part of promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development, support was provided to integrate TEST into university curricula.

The UN invested in the PRISM digital platform (Breaking News on Disaster Situations and Monitoring System).

1200 officers were trained in disaster damage and loss mobile data gathering.

Platform for detecting danger (PRISM).



Intermediate Outcome 3.3: Partnership for Sustainability

Relevant public institutions consultatively develop, adopt, appropriately resource and implement, without discrimination, in partnership and coordination with the private sector and civil society, legal, policy, regulatory and planning frameworks related to sustainable production and living, compliant with relevant international standards and conventions

Better food security and nutrition was at the forefront of UN activities and support in 2021, with significant improvements in both promotion and uptake at national and provincial levels. The UN collaborated closely with CARD to effectively implement the 2nd National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023 at national and sub-national level, with a renewed focus on the concept of food systems and the promotion of the farm-to-fork approach and healthy diets. As part of the **global Food Systems Summit**, the UN supported CARD to convene 30

national in-depth dialogues and produce a national food systems roadmap to guide future efforts. It also supported CARD to develop the Roadmap on the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting and to contribute to the Nutrition for Growth global summit in Tokyo, where the RGC made a set of commitments to meet nutrition goals. The UN supported CARD to establish a **Scaling-Up Nutrition Business Network**, a platform to engage and mobilize private sector actors to act, invest and innovate to improve nutrition, with 20 founding members. To strengthen efforts at the sub-national level, the UN supported the RGC to form provincial working groups for food security and nutrition in 12 provinces in 2021.

The UN collaborated with the National Committee for Disaster Management and the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat to train 183 sub-national and local authorities in four provinces on integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into commune development programmes and commune investment plans. As a result, **16 climate-smart development and investment plans in four provinces were developed** by local authorities through a community participatory approach.

The UN supported the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and the National Committee for Disaster Management to convene more than 300 national and sub-national stakeholders in social protection and disaster risk management to discuss opportunities to use anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection in Cambodia. The UN then supported the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and the National Committee of Disaster Management to produce a policy brief on anticipatory action.

Environmental protection, climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk management were central to UN support in 2021. The UN provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Environment to strengthen the technical and institutional capacity of adaptation and mitigation in responding to climate change and natural hazards.

With UN support, Cambodia demonstrated its commitment to climate action by submitting the

Long-Term Strategy for Carbon Neutrality to UNFCCC (2nd LDC to submit a strategy with a 2050 target). It announced a cessation to the development of new coal-fired power plants (aside from those already approved), and increased public climate expenditure to 2.2 percent of GDP. The inter-ministerial high-level coordination mechanism for the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve was established to strengthen coordination for conservation and sustainable development of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve. The **National Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2035** was adopted as an enabling policy framework for the country to transit from a linear to a circular economic model. This, together with other pieces of legislation being developed and pilots being rolled out at the municipal level, is envisaged to provide new market solutions and generate employment in the waste and other sectors.

The UN supported the National Committee for Disaster Management to develop and disseminate the **Guidelines to Mainstream Gender into Inclusive Disaster Management**. A country assessment

report on the status of gender equality and climate change was produced, contributing to monitoring the progress of gender mainstreaming in climate change.

The UN supported government efforts to move towards sustainable energy, including technical assistance to the RGC to develop policies, strategies, action plans and guidelines related to resource use efficiency and cleaner production. These included the **Efficiency and Cleaner Production Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2030**, the Cambodian Green Industrial Award Guideline, guidelines for rooftop solar PV, and building energy efficiency design.

With UN technical assistance, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries developed and endorsed a new biogas policy on **Biodigester Development in Cambodia 2021-2030**. This will promote investment in commercial biogas to transform waste to energy for captive use in livestock farming and the agro-processing industry. This will lead to lower electricity costs and will contribute to lower GHG emissions in these agri-businesses.



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Sustainable Financing for Climate Change through Community Forestry in the Prey Lang Landscape



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Community forest is a legally recognized framework that aims to place local people at the centre of decision-making processes and natural resource management in Cambodia. The Cambodia Climate Change Alliance Phase 3 (CCCA3), funded by the European Union, Sweden and UNDP, has been supporting the Regional Community Forestry Training Centre for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) to pilot an innovative approach, introducing climate change actions into a community forestry credit scheme (2020-2022). The scheme is used to generate capital for community forestry activities that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, including forest restoration, patrolling and financing sustainable livelihood activities of 10 community forests in Kampong Thom and Kratie provinces.

The O Taneung community forest, one of the community forests supported by the RECOFTC covers 248 hectares, some 65 kms outside Kratie city in Northeast Cambodia. Local people manage the forest and harvest natural foods and medicines. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries recognized this community forest in 2012, and a 15-year agreement for a forest management plan was signed on 2015. Today, the community forest group has 245 members in Kbal Damrey commune of Sambo district in Kratie province.

RECOFTC has supported the community forest since the beginning. In 2018, O Taneung made use of a community credit scheme, where members can borrow for a livelihood purpose and pay back with interest. This will later be used for community forest management.

Ray Seakla and others hope the growing capital pool from the credit scheme and the money made on interest can fund more activities in the management plan, including the maintenance of tree planting and refreshments for patrolling teams at monthly meetings.

We are optimistic about the future of our community,” Seakla said. “We have money, we can plan for more activities to manage our forest.”

With CCCA support, the borrowing scheme has been extended and climate change-related activities have been introduced in the management plan. In July 2021, the interest generated \$ 69 in income, of which \$ 21 was used to implement forestry, including patrolling and tree planting maintenance. Currently, Seakla explained, the loans have mostly been used to fund agricultural projects outside the forest, such as small investments in seed, fertilizer, and other materials used by the villagers.

Tuy Sophon, the chief of the credit scheme in O Taneung community forest, said the fund had already expanded from \$ 1,000 in 2018 to more than \$ 5,000, and now serves 58 out of 250 families in the forest community.

Beyond this support to increasing community forest credit capital, the project successfully helped the O Taneung community to restore 10.8 hectares of degraded forest area during the COVID-19 outbreak, contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation for the local community. This replanting activity provided much-needed cash-for-work support to reduce the impacts of COVID-19 for community members who participated in tree planting.

“We lost our jobs during COVID-19,” Mok Sithon, a member of the community said. “Joining the project to plant trees can reduce the difficulty for us in some ways.”

Outcome 4 - Strengthening Participation and Accountability



By 2023, women and men, including those underrepresented, marginalized and vulnerable, benefit from more transparent and accountable legislative and governance frameworks that ensure meaningful and informed participation in economic and social development and political processes.

❖ Key Results of the UN Contribution towards Strengthening Participation and Accountability



Intermediate Outcome 4.1: Human Rights for All

Women and men, including those underrepresented, marginalized and vulnerable, enjoy their human right to participate, directly and through representative organizations, in public and civic affairs through collaborative democratic decision-making processes, and to monitor public programmes, seek accountability from democratic institutions, and access functional grievance mechanisms

The government drafted a law establishing the National Human Rights Institution and launched a consultative process. The UN provided comments to ensure the institution's compliance with international standards and facilitated exchanges with regional human rights institutions.

A final draft of the **National Policy on Gender Equality** was developed through wide consultations with all relevant stakeholders, whose inputs were incorporated in the final draft. It is expected to be submitted to the Council of Ministers by early 2022.

To ensure their voices are being heard, the UN supported and facilitated the involvement of disabled peoples' organizations in processes to amend the **National Disability Law** and other policies, such as the **National Guideline on Vocational Training and Employment Support for Persons with Disability**.

Through UN support, **215,358 people with disabilities** (104,570 female) registered for disability identification cards, allowing them to fully access the disability allowance and **8,768 people with disabilities** (4,204 female) were able to access employment in both the public and private sectors.

The UN supported the development and dissemination of a Code of Conduct, checklist and leaflet to promote GBV risk mitigation and ensure the protection of people in quarantine facilities. Some **2,173** provincial COVID-19 Committee and Quarantine Centre officials were trained on protecting people in quarantine.

The knowledge, skills and attitudes of parents, teachers, religious leaders, communities and adolescents were enhanced to protect children from violence, both online and offline, through the behaviour change campaign, Cambodia PROTECT. Key topics were integrated across these programmes, such as child marriage, child online protection, mental health and psychosocial support, and GBV risk mitigation, increasing effectiveness and impact, and reaching 8 million people.

In partnership with the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, the UN initiated the development of the **National Media, Information and Digital Literacy Strategy**. This will ensure that Cambodians can fully benefit from the development of ICT, access information, self-expression, and enjoy greater participation and civic engagement. The UN also strengthened collaboration with the Ministry of Information on the design of a legislative framework reform agenda to increase freedom of expression online and offline. The **UN advocated to ensure that new legislation, such as the draft Law on Access to Information, is developed, enacted and implemented in line with international standards.**

Civil society engagement in policy development increased through the creation of the Cultural and Creative Industries of Cambodia Association for Development and Advocacy to coordinate and ensure that the creative and cultural industries are at the heart of political, economic and social decision-making.

A final draft of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Concluding Observations action plan** to monitor implementation is pending endorsement by the Cambodia National Council for Women. The Council formulated the follow-up report to CEDAW, which will be submitted in early 2022.

Fourteen national recommendations were agreed to promote and protect migrant workers during the pandemic during the 14th ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour national tripartite preparatory meeting. This was co-organized by the UN and the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training.

Support was provided to irregular migrants returning without legal status. Assistance included food rations, personal protective equipment and hygiene products, crucial information on preventing COVID-19 and migrant workers' rights, and information on protection from human trafficking and scams.

The UN supported the government in reporting and following up on the recommendations from the human rights mechanisms, including the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



Intermediate Outcome 4.2: Public Institution Functioning

Public institutions at national and sub-national levels, including an independent judiciary, effectively function in a more transparent, accessible, responsive and gender-sensitive manner

Action plans to improve participation at the Provincial Partnership Dialogue were developed in

four provinces. To develop a collaborative mindset and human-centred approach in local governance, a curriculum for 'innovation for local administration' was launched and tested in partnership with the National School of Local Administration.

In partnership with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Royal School of Administration, **a gender session was integrated into the school's curriculum** to institutionalize the capacity development of civil servants to better understand gender and provide gender-sensitive public services.

The draft **National Programme for Public Administrative Reform 2019-2030** identifies priorities to strengthen innovation capacity and digital skills of public servants to improve the quality of public services. An innovation curriculum was developed and tested with the Royal School of Administration to foster the creativity of public servants for better and more inclusive public service delivery. Complementing the innovation curriculum design, six local schools and hospitals were supported to deliver innovative projects to address public service delivery issues in their localities.

The launch of the **Child Protection Information Management System dashboard** reinforced the capacity of the sector to track progress. The ongoing development of the Child Protection Law and standard operating procedures for child protection services and referral provided a sound macro level framework for policy and service reforms. Social service workers with clear job descriptions were appointed in all 204 districts. Child protection plans developed in 10 provinces helped consolidate disparate child protection activities under a single plan in those provinces.

Primero, a digital case management system, is being rolled out nationwide at provincial and district level. Gender and disability dimensions were considered in all legal and policy work supported during the year.

The UN initiated engagement with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice to sensitize and build institutional capacity in the implementation of the **UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and on impunity** to advance joint efforts in protecting

media workers in the exercise of their jobs. A set of guidelines for prosecutors to better investigate crimes committed against journalists was produced in Khmer language, contributing to a safe environment for the media. Dialogue with authorities aimed to develop a national protection mechanism for journalists.



Intermediate Outcome 4.3: Implementation and Monitoring of Laws and Standards

Laws and policies meet international norms and standards, and are effectively implemented and monitored, addressing the rights of the most vulnerable and providing opportunities and secure democratic space for women and men to exercise political rights, freedom of expression, association and assembly

The UN submitted technical notes to the government on the Law on Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 and other Serious, Dangerous and Contagious Diseases, the sub-decree establishing the National Internet Gateway, the draft Law on the Organization and Functioning of the National Human Rights Commission of Cambodia, the draft Law on Social Protection, and the draft Law on Child Protection, assessing their compliance with international human rights norms and standards.

To support the implementation of the Law on Juvenile Justice, the UN supported the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation to finalize the Guidelines on Diversion of Children in Conflict with the Law and on child-friendly justice procedures. The guidelines were circulated to sub-national authorities for immediate implementation.

The UN continued advocating for the protection of the rights of people deprived of liberty and provided assistance during COVID-19 outbreaks in prisons. It continued monitoring trials in emblematic cases and documented practices of concern regarding fair trial rights.

Strengthened institutional and legislative frameworks, quality child protection services, including through COVID-19 child protection response, alongside a

supportive community environment, reached and benefitted at least **396,668** vulnerable boys and girls (total of 928,559 since 2019). The Strategic Plan to train the **Social Service Workforce 2021-2025** was adopted and the national training curriculum and modules were developed. Child protection services were expanded to respond to the needs of children infected and affected by COVID-19, particularly through family emergency support, hotline/helpline services and mental health and psychosocial support.

With UN support, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation published a **report on the implementation of the five-year action plan for improving childcare**, showing 43 per cent fewer residential care institutions and 59 per cent fewer children living in residential care since 2016. Complex issues, such as de-institutionalization, can be addressed with the right combination of multi-layered policy reforms and access to services. The UN also supported the development and launch of the **National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Online Child Sexual Exploitation 2021-2025**.

The UN supported the dissemination of the **Policy on Labour Migration for Cambodia 2019-2023** and the **Guideline for Dispute Resolution of Migrant Workers**, which aim to build awareness among key national and sub-national stakeholders and service providers. This enabled the effective policy implementation and operation of the complaints mechanism.

The **Guideline for Mainstreaming Gender in Inclusive Disaster Management** was endorsed by the National Committee for Disaster Management, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The guideline provides practical guidance for gender mainstreaming to assist relevant stakeholders, particularly first responders.

The UN initiated an assessment of the internet in Cambodia based on the principles of a human-rights based, open, accessible internet governed by multi stakeholder participation. This assessment will provide evidence-based recommendations on the development of the cyber-security law, cyber-crime law and privacy law, as well as the implementation of the Access to Information Law and amendments to the National Internet Gateway Sub-Decree.

The UN supported the **mid-term review of the National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023**, which enabled the government to reflect on its commitments and progress on key strategic priorities set forth in the government's mandate. It took into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on progress and it identified gaps.

With UN support, the Council for the Development of Cambodia introduced in the Cambodia Official Development Assistance Database disaggregated information, facilitating users to track development funding and financing gaps in the areas of COVID-19 response, the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs), the health and education sector, social protection, community development and gender inclusion.



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Kong Ravin's story

Despite fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic, it is my duty to continue providing services for survivors of gender-based violence.



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My name is Kong Ravin, and I proudly say that I am a female police officer. To be more specific, I am a Deputy Chief of Unit of the Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Office, Provincial Police Commissariat of Kandal Province in Cambodia. I have served my community as a judicial police officer for six years. I love working in the field, fighting against crimes and supporting survivors, especially women and girls who have experienced abuse or rape. I and all other female police officers play a critical role in not only the arrest of the perpetrators but also bringing justice to survivors, which they deserve. There should be more female police officers.

If there was no pandemic situation as we have right now, my daily routine would depend on the case we received. It could be supporting survivors of trafficking in persons, could be transferring survivors to shelters, or filing a case of domestic violence. However, I guess like all of us, a new task has been added to my routine which is patrolling at the quarantine centres. I take turns with my colleagues on the new duty, and make sure people are following the rules of the centre. Lots of women migrant workers stayed in the quarantine centres, those who used to work and live in other countries. So they have certain commonalities among themselves, which could make them want to be close. However, rules are rules, and they have to keep their distance from each other. Sometimes it is hard to keep them from chitchatting, mostly about how they are worried about their families and kids, but it is my job to make sure social distancing is in place even at the quarantine centre.

Now I am a bit used to this whole mess, however, I was very scared and had no clue what I should do when COVID-19 first started. I was concerned about my family. I even asked my mother not to go to the hospital to get her regular prescription. I did not want to go out of my house and wanted to stay at home with my family. However, it is my duty to protect everyone, not just from the virus but also from violent situations that could still occur during the pandemic. The police made the decision to have all officers on call 24 hours per day, while COVID-19 was at its peak, which I didn't mind at all. As long as there is someone who needs my support, I will be on the way to lend a hand, no matter what, no matter what virus we have in the world. I recall, there was a case of a Cambodian woman who migrated to China for work, however, once she arrived at the airport she was 'sold' as a bride which she did not agree to and was not informed about. Her passport was taken away from her. Worst of all, she was trapped in the house and exposed to the abusive behaviour of her 'husband'. It was lucky for her that her family could contact help and we could jump into the situation. Unfortunately, she is not the only one who has gone through a similar situation.

It is good to migrate. It is their choice and their right to make the decision. It takes courage to be a woman migrant worker and I respect that. One thing I would like to say for women who are thinking about migrating to another country to work, please double-check, triple-check if the path you would like to choose is safe, and check if you are fully aware of the regulations and situations. Best to remember the emergency contact or at least carry the number always with you. And for all the community members, we should not judge or discriminate against women migrant workers. I know there is a weird stereotype about women who work abroad and come back home. They migrate to work for their family so they should be called heroes of their family. Last, for police officers just like me, let's remind ourselves that it is our duty to protect them and to equip ourselves with the most up-to-date knowledge on things like, how to get support from embassies, contact information to refer cases involving women migrant workers, or keep our eyes on recruiting companies. We all have our roles in ending violence against women migrant workers.

Ravin is one of the participants of Skills for Providing Quality Services for Front Line Service Providers Training of Trainers, which is organized by the UN Joint Programme, Safe and Fair. Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region is part of the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, a global, multi-year initiative between the European Union and the United Nations (UN). Safe and Fair is implemented through a partnership between ILO and UN Women (in collaboration with UNODC) with the overriding objective of ensuring that labour migration is safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region.



Outcome 5 Managing Urbanization



By 2023, all women and men living in urban areas, including those marginalized and vulnerable, enjoy a safer, more secure and healthier life, utilizing quality public and private services, and benefit from improved urban governance informed by their voice and participation.

❖ Key Results of the UN Contribution towards Managing Urbanization



Intermediate Outcome 5.1: Protection of Vulnerable Groups in Urban Environments

Marginalized and vulnerable groups in urban environments are empowered and protected in seeking and utilizing quality services

In their efforts to support a vulnerable population in urban environments, the UN has supported the RGC and Cambodians on the entire migration process.

One of the key achievements of 2021 was the endorsement of the National Migrant Health Policy and the drafting of the National Strategic Plan, in close cooperation with MoH, for health practitioners to promote the inclusion of migrants and mobile populations in the health system at national and sub-national level.

The UN closely supported the RGC to respond to returning migrants, especially from Thailand, during the pandemic. Support was provided to authorities at the port of entry, and at COVID-19 quarantine and treatment centres in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Oddar Meanchey and Siem Reap province. At the port of entry, a total of **49,396** migrants (23,485 female) received information on COVID-19 prevention measures, risks, the importance of vaccination, tuberculosis symptoms, and diagnosis and treatment processes, among others.

The UN provided basic health service support, including counselling, to migrants at the quarantine centre.

Some 12,487 migrants received hygiene kits, including **5,991 dignity kits** for women. The UN also provided counselling support services to the migrants: **47,321 returnees** (17,513 women) at quarantine facilities in the above four provinces accessed counselling on a range of topics, including quarantine facilities, basic and labour rights protection, vaccinations and COVID-19 risks.

To uphold the principle of 'leave no one behind', the UN supported the government to ensure the inclusion of PLHIV in IDPool registration. As of December 2021, **2,045** PLHIV households are covered by the ID Pool programme and are benefitting from the Cash Transfer Programme for the COVID-19 response.

Some **40,255** people, including female entertainment workers, men who have sex with men, transgender women, and people who inject drugs received prevention services from January to October 2021 in Phnom Penh, Battambang and Siem Reap provinces. As a result, almost 100 percent of 651 confirmed HIV positive people were enrolled in HIV treatment.



Intermediate Outcome 5.2: Management and Coordination of Urban Services

Urban authorities plan, manage and coordinate regulated quality services to the public in a more participatory manner, responsive to the needs of urban populations, and informed by data, evidence and best practices.

The UN applied the **United Nations' Human Security Approach** to initiate **13 sustainable, inclusive, smart initiatives** for Preah Sihanoukville province.

The development of these initiatives resulted from a comprehensive assessment engaging with all key relevant stakeholders, in particular urban vulnerable groups, ensuring that the urban development would leave no one behind. The UN also provided support to the RGC as part of Smart Green ASEAN Cities,⁸ which will support SMART urban planning and investment to create urban solutions for climate change.

With UN support, different initiatives are allowing urban authorities to offer quality services to the public, such as rehabilitation of urban water systems, and waste management and energy in Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Kep, Sihanoukville and Battambang provinces. For example, the UN supported the Secretariat of the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development on the rehabilitation of water systems, benefitting **20,000** people in Battambang province.

The UN also supported the transformation of waste to energy in Poipet, Banteay Meanchey and Siem Reap provinces. The **\$ 20 million** project preparation documents, including a feasibility study, technical design study and financial model were developed. The project information memorandum to enable public private partnership procurement under the new Public Private Partnership Law is currently being updated.

In 2021, the UN began supporting the RGC (the APSARA National Authority and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts) to **strengthen disaster risk preparedness in Angkor** to protect the World Heritage site. This was done by developing a disaster

risk management plan for Angkor, including concrete measures and recommendations to identify and address major risks threatening Angkor, and to foster resilience and the socio-economic livelihoods of local communities living in and around the site.



Intermediate Outcome 5.3: Legal and Policy Frameworks for Urbanization

Relevant institutions develop appropriate and costed legal/policy frameworks to guide urbanization, compliant with international norms and standards, and informed by data, evidence and best practices

The UN is assisting the RGC to develop a **National Smart Cities Roadmap and Strategy**, in line with three principles of the human-rights based approach, leave no one behind, gender equality and women's empowerment, and identifying technology as an enabler of economic growth and social welfare. There was a series of inception meetings in Battambang and Phnom Penh with officials from national and local level administration to conduct a capacity assessment, review existing urban policy and prepare a smart city strategic plan.

The UN provided technical support to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training to **draft the Law on Labour Migration** by ensuring that the draft law is gender-responsive and voices of migrants are taken into account.

⁸ Smart City - ASEAN



Story:

A prosperous migrant worker received compensation through a complaints mechanism

In 2019, Ouk Chanak⁹ wanted to make more money. Living in her village in Kampong Cham province, the 20-year-old had heard of people in her community migrating to Thailand, where they found work through recruitment agencies that were located in the nearby towns. But she had also heard about some unethical recruitment agencies.

With technical and financial assistance, the Migrant Worker Resource Centre joined a commune council meeting to talk about the risks associated with migration, and the support services they could provide. As a result, Chanak was able to prepare herself for her future migration. She learned how to contact the Cambodian Embassy in her destination country if she needed help, and to keep documents and information, like her passport and important contact numbers, with her at all times. She also learned how the Migrant Worker Resource Centre could assist her if she encountered any problems she could not solve by herself.

Following this meeting, Chanak found a recruitment agency that would help her find work in Thailand. For a fee of \$ 600, they told her she could leave as soon as November 2019 and she was excited about these new opportunities.

However, the recruitment agency delayed her departure date by a few weeks and then a few months in 2020, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the restrictions on international travel. This annoyed Chanak, and she began to feel suspicious about the agency. She demanded a refund, as the recruitment agency had not upheld their agreement. But they refused to repay Chanak.

With a small group of others who had been affected by the delays, Chanak met with her local Migrant Worker Resource Centre to learn about the validity of this overseas deployment agreement and if they could help them be remunerated. The staff at the Migrant Worker Resource Centre were able to help mediate negotiations for the recruitment agency to refund unfulfilled labour migration agreements, and with the help of a licensed social worker, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training was alerted to the problem.

After the problems she experienced seeking work abroad with a recruitment agency, Chanak has decided to stay in Cambodia to look for work. She is now employed in the food and hospitality industry in Phnom Penh in a newly built four-star hotel.

⁹ For privacy and confidentiality, the name was changed.



Support to Partnerships and Financing the 2030 Agenda

Transformative Partnership:

Delivering differently in the new context

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasized a greater role of synergies among stakeholders from different sectors and new ways of collaborating with non-traditional partners, especially in the areas of financing, innovation, capacity building, trade and addressing systemic issues. The UN's convening role evolved to reach and engage multi-stakeholder groups in efforts to promote joint action, collaboration and alignment to support the RGC in economic recovery and resilience plans. The COVID-19 pandemic was seen as an opportunity for transformation, which required UN's bolder and cross-sectoral approach to address systemic issues and the concerns of growing vulnerabilities in the society. The UN in Cambodia implemented 11 joint programmes with a total budget of over \$13 million in 2021.



The UN's collective policy response focused on the leave no one behind principles

The UN's joint response to the COVID-19 pandemic was through **integrated approaches to social protection**, supporting the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework in close collaboration with the newly established National Social Protection Council and development partners. The joint programme, 'Social Protection Floors in Cambodia' was funded by the Joint SDG Fund and implemented by UNICEF, ILO and WHO, together with the European Union, SIDA and the RGC. Within this collective effort, about 700,000 households comprising nearly 2.8 million people benefited from the cash transfer programme. In collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), the UN's economic modelling demonstrated that social protection programmes helped reduce poverty by about 3.4 percentage points and save GDP growth by nearly 1 percentage point.

The UN advocated for stronger integration of **leaving no one behind and human security principles** in the context of rapid urbanization in Sihanoukville province. The UN conducted a comprehensive assessment of human security to provide policy recommendations, which have been integrated into the national roadmap for smart cities development in Cambodia. The assessment included the voices of multi-stakeholders and marginalized groups and ensured coherence in advocating for leave no one behind and human security principles. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN-Habitat were able to bring their collective voices, experience and expertise to address the emerging situation in Sihanoukville, which resulted in nationwide recognition of human security approaches to the emerging needs of urbanization at the national level, thanks to the support by the UN Human Security Trust Fund.

During the pandemic, the challenges of **returning migrants** from neighboring countries to Cambodia were exacerbated by border closures, limited access to vaccinations and limited social security coverage on returning to local provinces. To address these challenges, with funding from the Government of Japan, the UN mobilized a collective action to limit the spread of COVID-19 variants of concern at border points and meet the immediate needs of vulnerable returning migrants. The second phase of the joint programme is currently implemented by the International Organization for Migration, the World Food Programme, UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator.

The UN joint programme on Access to Justice and the inception phase of the Accelerating Disability Rights in Cambodia programme, funded by the UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

allowed more than 5,000 **people with disabilities**, including 2,418 women and girls, to receive COVID-19 vaccinations, ID Poor cards, disability identification cards, cash transfers, personal protective equipment, emergency support packages, and other social services from local authorities. UNDP, UNESCO, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and ILO came together to conduct a situational analysis on the impact of COVID-19 on the well-being and services for people with disabilities. They targeted 15 organizations for people with disabilities, 11 forums for women with disabilities, two organizations for deaf people, 10 international and local NGOs, six relevant government ministries and institutions, five provincial disability action councils, 23 commune councils, and UN agencies. As a result, some 11 key policy recommendations were developed to strengthen the National Disability Law provisions.

The UN supported the RGC to establish the Cambodia Credit Guarantee Corporation, and a dedicated fiscal space to support **women entrepreneurs of SMEs** who had limited security to sustain their recovery efforts. This was done through blended finance mechanisms (guarantees/first loss). The joint programme, 'Unlocking Cambodian Women's Potential through Fiscal Space Creation' enabled the creation of a fiscal space of over \$ 9 million, with 30 percent from the total letters of guarantee to support **vulnerable women business owners**. This was funded by the UN COVID-19 Emergency Fund. The UN Capital Development Fund, UNDP and the International Organization for Migration joined to provide policy support, operationalize the guarantee structures, and research to advocate for the inclusion of vulnerable women in proposed financial schemes by the corporation. This effort resulted in greater partnership opportunities and south-south collaboration with the Thailand Credit Guarantee Corporation, the Central Bank of Bangladesh, Moody's Analytics and the South African Government.



The UN's role is expanding to bring alternative financing mechanisms

In addition to official development assistance type support through joint programmes, the UN embarked on providing policy support on public and

private financing through the Integrated National Financing Framework, implemented by the UN Capital Development Fund and UNDP. The UN made progress in establishing a partnership with the Frankfurt School of Management and MEF to develop the SDG Financing Strategy through multi-stakeholder consultations, including the European Union and the World Economic Forum. To address the challenges of adequate financing on climate change, the UN developed a joint proposal, **CLEAN – Cambodia innovative cLimatE Adaptation & mitigationN financing mechanism** to unlock public and private finance and improve access to water, sanitation and waste services through innovative financing mechanisms. Efforts to unlock alternative financing and investments are currently underway in all thematic areas, where the UN can help convene, facilitate and deliver together with non-traditional partners, and support national efforts to advance sustainable development.



The UN is shifting to multi-stakeholder engagement for systems leadership

The integrated nature of sustainable development requires 'systems thinking' and 'systems leadership' to unlock the potential of each partner and value-add to the puzzle. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that we are unable to equip ourselves alone and continue working in siloed thematic areas. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the new normal demanded us to be agile and creative and to promote inclusive, people-centred and cross-sectoral partnerships to respond to the pandemic and protect the rights of the most marginalized.

Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation launched the '**Cambodia Futures Lab**' – a **cross-sector collaboration platform to bring government, the private sector and civil society** together to address how cross-sectoral issues of social protection, climate change and digital transformation could be taken into consideration in policy solutions that affect the farthest behind and most marginalized groups. The cross-sectoral platform demonstrated how the UN in Cambodia

plans to activate the acceleration of the SDGs in line with the vision of 'Our Common Agenda', focusing on enabling an environment for anticipatory futures and transformational leadership. The platform collaborators are: the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Khmer Enterprise, the Ministry of Civil Service, the Ministry of Commerce and the National Social Protection Council, in partnership with the MIT/Presencing Institute and the United in Diversity Foundation of Indonesia. The platform is based on mutual trust-building, mutual interests for advancing outcome-based partnerships and jointly shifting the narrative (beyond projects) for strategic policy and thought leadership engagement between the UN and national stakeholders.

As the UN is shifting to facilitate and convene multi-stakeholder partnerships at a strategic level, the internal coordination structures are being established to align with the DS Reform. The UN Country Team established the **'Strategic Partnerships Working Group'**, led by UNESCO, UNOPS, UNDP and the Resident Coordinator's Office to accelerate the outcome area on climate change and sustainable living and respond to the government's need to better engage in innovative partnerships, including with the private sector. The UNCT partnership working

group embarked on unpacking the action plan to work closely with the private sector on the UNSDCF outcome area for climate change and identify levers for advocacy, strategic partnership based on mutual interests and innovative financing modalities.

The UN provided a platform to support the National Council for Sustainable Development to manage multi-stakeholder engagement and develop a long-term strategy for carbon neutrality. The UN supported the coordination of this exercise through the Cambodia Climate Change Alliance programme (funded by Sweden and the European Union), with the UK supporting the initial scoping, Agence Française de Développement providing support for an energy sector analysis, the World Bank for agriculture and industry, the UN and the Global Green Growth Institute for waste management, and the UN for forestry and land use.

The UNCT will build on promoting joint knowledge exchange, innovation-focused/outcomes-based partnership approaches and unlocking alternative financing instruments together with the private sector to address climate change and sustainable living challenges as the thematic area for the joint UNCT Partnership Strategy.



Results of the UN Working More, and Better, Together

Collective efforts towards protecting health services and systems during the crisis

Under the technical leadership of WHO, the UN system in Cambodia provided extensive support to the government, in particular MoH, in the health response to COVID-19 through the update and implementation of the COVID-19 Master Plan. This entailed supporting COVID-19 pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical interventions, including preparedness of local health systems, capacity strengthening of frontline social workers, procurement of personal protective equipment, surveillance, risk communication and various public health measures.

The RGC is taking the opportunity to work for the future by investing in the health security system to ensure both a stronger response and a more prepared, resilient system. The UN commends RGC commitments to promote public health and has supported it throughout the pandemic with policy advice, technical cooperation in line with WHO technical guidelines, coordination of partners and agencies, training and procurement. Examples include:

- The UN, under the technical leadership of WHO and UNICEF, supported the RGC to respond to the pandemic and vaccinate the population. As of 21 February 2022, nearly **90 percent** of the population have been fully vaccinated (two doses), including **1.7 million** children over the age of 12. Through COVAX and other avenues, Cambodia has received approximately **46 million vaccine doses**.
- The UN, with development partners, supported MoH to strengthen local capacity to detect transmission in the field, assess risk, and respond to outbreaks.
- The **UN supported the rapid expansion of treatment facilities throughout the country,**

including large regional centres, procuring critical supplies such as personal protective equipment and essential medicines and equipment for oxygen support, building the capacity of frontline healthcare workers in clinical management and infection prevention and control measures, and improving clinical management and care pathways with increased intensive care unit capacity across the country. Expansion resulted in going from one laboratory with 500 samples per day in February 2020 to 12 laboratories and nationwide testing of up to 12,000 samples per day.

The UN worked to promote access to public health and prevention of GBV alongside national partners and communities to ensure that essential and basic health services for all were not disrupted during the pandemic. For example, **120,448** children under 5 years and **361,000** pregnant women benefitted from essential services integrating COVID-19 precautionary measures in the north-eastern provinces. Some **8,543** parents/caregivers (5,055 female) were provided with maternal care, GBV information and psychological support. Disruption of treatment services for PLHIV remained at less than 10 percent compared to the pre-pandemic period. Childhood vaccination coverage nationally for non-COVID vaccines remained on track.



Collective efforts towards social protection and basic services

To guide interventions, the UN conducted assessments, surveys and analyses that reviewed the overall impact of the pandemic and the situation of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. At the macro level, the UN supports the IDPoor programme through the existing pro-poor social protection

system, including shock responsive social assistance, by rapidly scaling up and rolling out emergency response. For all children and adolescents, the UN provided prevention supplies and raised awareness to protect them from COVID-19. It facilitated sustained learning through adapted modalities such as digital platforms and created access to nutritious food through re-purposing the school meals programme into take-home food. For example:

- The cash transfer programme for poor and vulnerable households using the IDPoor system is benefiting more than **684,000** households, equivalent to around 2.8 million people, of whom some **59,000** have disabilities. This cash transfer programme has been implemented by the RGC since May 2020, with technical assistance from the UN and development partners. The UN supported the National Social Protection Council to ensure the most vulnerable workers and their families were included in both a contributory and non-contributory social protection system. A new national disability identification mechanism resulted in the identification of **215,358** people with disabilities eligible for social care and other services.
- The UN collaborated with authorities on inclusive distance learning materials for 3.2 million children. Nationwide, the UN distributed **\$ 4.2 million** to primary and lower secondary schools to meet additional costs in the context of COVID-19. Through re-purposing school feeding resources, the UN, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, provided assistance four times to over **90,000** households across 10 provinces, helping households meet food needs and encouraging poor families to keep children learning.



Collective efforts towards response and recovery from the pandemic

Under the overarching goal of building back better, the UN is **promoting and supporting innovative solutions**

and green recovery of the economy and society after COVID-19. During this challenging time, the UN has been facilitating and ensuring a safe working environment and the continuation of micro and small businesses, as well as safeguarding food security and providing livelihood support for smallholder farmers and vulnerable families who have lost their income due to COVID-19.

To protect garment sector workers and safeguard public health, the UN initiated a risk assessment in the garment sector to prepare factories to restart operations after the lockdown in May 2021. This aimed to put risk mitigation measures in place before reopening through a multi-sectoral approach and greater community participation, including engaging the business sector for safer and more productive solutions for operating under a 'new normal'. The UN is working jointly with the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training to raise awareness of COVID-19 mitigation measures in factories in the Phnom Penh area and in surrounding provinces. UN guidelines on COVID-19 prevention measures in workplaces, factories and enterprises were shared with the government, while a UN action checklist on prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 at work and a guideline on discrimination and stigma related to COVID-19 were translated and distributed to factories. Recommendations were also provided to the government on handling positive COVID-19 cases in factories. The UN widely disseminated communications directly to garment factories and workers, which encourage them to adopt precautions to reduce exposure to and transmission of COVID-19.

For interventions on macroeconomic response and multilateral collaboration, the UN system provided strategic support to the RGC to put in place vital policy instruments, namely the **Cambodia Credit Guarantee Policy Framework** and the ongoing **Government Securities Issuance Policy Framework**. The UN supported the **operationalization of the Credit Guarantee Corporation of Cambodia**, playing a crucial role in supporting the lifelines of general businesses and SMEs during the pandemic and preparing them for recovery. For example, the UN delivered on important systematic assessments and

knowledge necessary to design a forward-looking SDG financing architecture, as well as identifying the potential for **unlocking \$ 23.4 billion by 2025 of public and private financing to achieve the CSDGs.**



Humanitarian response

The UN continued to support the RGC's disaster risk management priorities through the Humanitarian Response Forum, an inter-agency and multisectoral coordination platform with more than 60 UN and international NGO members. In 2021, this included UN support to the national response and recovery efforts to the floods in September 2021, reaching **1,926** beneficiaries.



Collective efforts towards leaving no one behind

The development of a common UN Country Team Human Rights Strategy served to operationalize the Secretary-General's Call to Action at country level. It led to a more integrated way of working across the UN system that fosters greater operational links between the three pillars of the UN: human rights, development, and peace, to ensure that human rights are at the core of all UN system actions in Cambodia.



Lessons Learned and Challenges

Crisis creates opportunity

COVID-19 challenged and tested the limits of Cambodia's health system. The challenges included increasingly transmissible variants; transmission among young, healthy, mobile adults that make the virus difficult to detect and contain; achieving full compliance with effective public health and social measures; pandemic fatigue; and vaccine optimism. COVID-19 also provided an opportunity to invest in the health system, for example improving health system readiness through investments in intensive care unit capacities and oxygen supplies.

The pandemic highlighted the imperative of adopting a whole-of-government, multisectoral approach to championing health. Health is a contributor to and driver of productivity and prosperity for the future.

COVID-19 also pushed the RGC to quickly develop more agile delivery systems for social services. For example, the rapid expansion of the COVID-19 Cash Transfer Programme built on the existing system of routine cash transfers. Together with the implementation of the COVID-19 cash transfer programme and lockdown cash transfers, key lessons emerged to link routine social assistance programmes with the emerging shock-responsive social protection national framework.

The need for contingency plans for social protection programmes, such as school feeding and others, became evident. 2021 saw increased recognition of the need to expand the scope of data collection and identification on poverty and vulnerability (including through the national ID Poor identification programme) to better support the expansion of coverage and scope of social protection, and target the poor and vulnerable.

COVID-19 also accelerated opportunities to establish and use decentralized multi-sectoral coordination

mechanisms for nutrition, which led to reaching more caregivers with critical information. This will support better nutrition practices across the life cycle. However, the pandemic also continued to hinder access to and utilization of key nutrition services.

COVID-19 provided an opportunity for marginalized and vulnerable women to increase their access to and use of technology as a means to seek information and demand essential services.



Leveraging for digital transformation

Despite extensive investment by MoEYS in online learning, many students and teachers have not been able to benefit due to inadequate internet connectivity, accessibility and affordability, as well as lack of appropriate digital skills. The UN will support MoEYS to conduct a landscape analysis of digital education in 2022, to inform the government's comprehensive digital education policy and strategy development.

Despite lower contributions to social security due to COVID-19, the government continued to provide social security benefits and sought to extend membership to other groups such as informal workers. This increased the strain on the financial sustainability of the social security system. The adoption of digital technology can potentially address many of the challenges faced in 2021.

The digital transformation of the social security institution is still at an early stage and many of the services, including enrolment and benefit payout, are not fully digitized. Intensifying investment into digitization will help ensure that the RGC is better prepared to manage challenges in future and to remain operationally resilient and effective.

Digital solutions and technological tools, such as e-commerce and agri-tech platforms, have been found to accelerate solutions for COVID-19 socio-economic recovery and longer-term development. The use of digital technology and tools will continue to play a critical role in supporting the country to leapfrog to digitization and transform people's lives.



Community engagement and participatory approach

Community engagement, local preparedness and participatory approaches help reduce the negative impacts of COVID-19. It is impossible to successfully manage and recover from the pandemic without community empowerment and individual behaviour change, which relies on building individual agency and capacity.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to closures of schools, workplaces and other establishments, and caused significant disruptions to learning. Children, particularly those of early primary and pre-school age, need constant support and guidance, more accessible content, and teaching and learning styles that provide social interaction. These are difficult to replicate online or through distance learning alone. To fulfil these needs, often parents and caregivers play a significant role in actively helping students learn at home.



Enhancing institutional capacity, ownership and coordination to deliver better

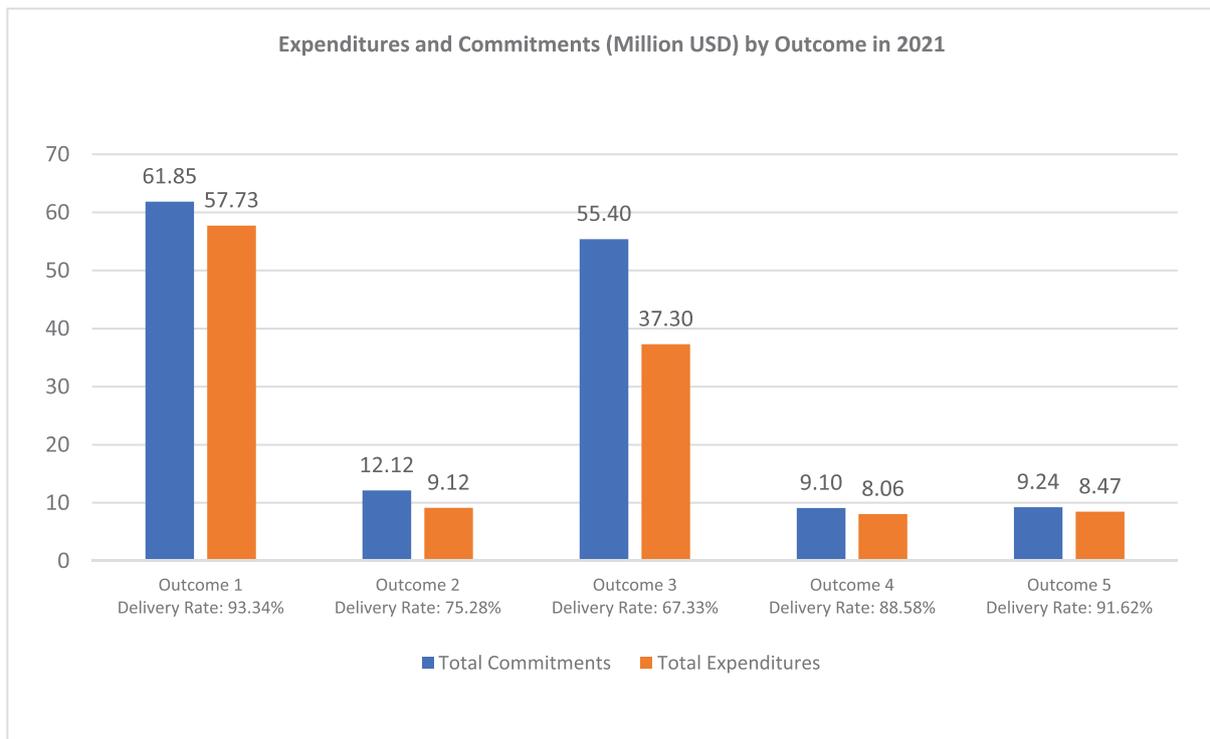
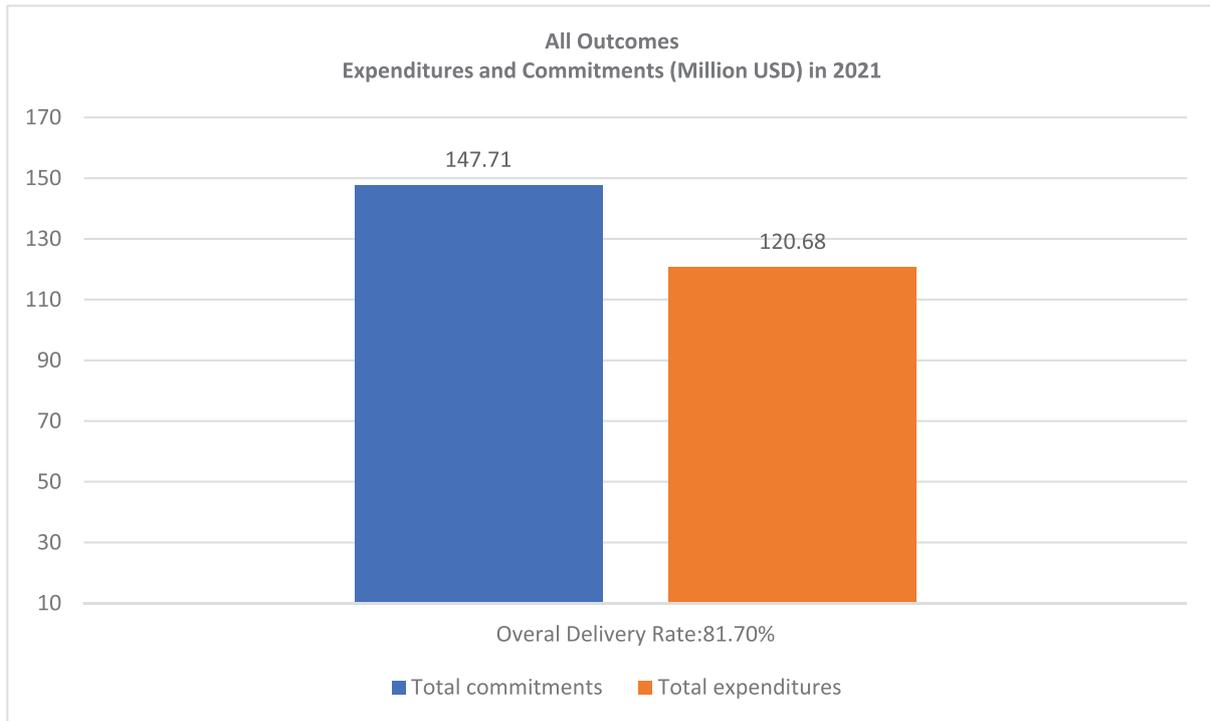
Increased collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation significantly advanced work on enhancing the child protection system, including at the sub-national level. Securing high-level leadership was a key driving force in the development of provincial child protection plans, the formal appointment and capacity building of social service workers, and the establishment of clearer mechanisms for service delivery and referrals at the community level.

Ownership by the Cambodian National Council for Women and the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been a significant driving force in mobilizing and coordinating the implementation of the CEDAW Concluding Observations and the NAPVAW.

Expanding partnerships and engaging with a more diverse number of stakeholders was critical to advancing freedom of expression, both online and offline, and guaranteeing people's right to access information, including people with disabilities.



Financial Overview and Resource Mobilization





Chapter 3

UN Country Team Strategic Focus for 2022



Outcome 1



Expanding Social Opportunities



Health

Work collaboratively to save lives, suppress virus transmission and minimize social disruption due to COVID-19, and learn lessons from the impact of the pandemic. Support strengthening of the health system and addressing the following thematic priorities: health security, including antimicrobial resistance; non-communicable diseases and ageing; climate change, the environment and health; and reaching the unreached – people and communities still afflicted by infectious disease and high rates of maternal and infant mortality; and health system strengthening with universal health care as the foundation.

Strengthen migrant health policy framework and support hosting communities, migrants and mobile populations to access information and quality services.

Support scaling up of access to a combination of HIV prevention services for key populations and optimize new HIV case detection.

Support MoH to ensure the continuity of essential reproductive maternal, newborn and child health service delivery and information; emergency obstetric and newborn care, family planning, adolescent and youth friendly services; midwifery capacity development; expand service coverage of health sector response to violence against women and girls.



Education

Provide support to MoEYS to address learning loss and support the development and implementation of appropriate interventions, including remedial learning and materials (also in minority languages) to support getting back on track

Support MoEYS to ensure that teachers are well prepared to teach, including special education and multilingual education teachers, with efforts put in to upskilling teacher educators.

Support the monitoring and evaluation of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and Human Resource Management Information System pilot. The initial findings will be presented at the Education Congress 2022. The balanced approach for school- and cluster-based CPD will be expanded into the CPD implementation guidelines, including a plan for a wider rollout of the CPD system and a school-level CPD funding mechanism, improvement of the Human Resource Management Information System functionalities, and the development of its software national rollout and sustainability plan.

Support the rollout of the early grade school-based mentoring model in target locations to provide direct support to teachers in classrooms and implement a blended INSET for teacher educators, focusing on online learning skills and learning-driven pedagogies practical for both face-to-face and distance education.

Develop comprehensive sexuality education instruments/textbooks for school-based young people, the comprehensive sexuality education nationwide rollout, and the development and implementation of the Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexuality Education Strategic Plan.

Support the Toul Sleng Genocide Museum and collaborate with the Kdei Karuna Organization to implement the project, 'Working Across Topics in Dealing with Khmer Rouge History – Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Torture and Ethnic Violence for Non-recurrence', from 2021-2022 via the United Nations Office for Project Services.



Nutrition and GBV

Continue to leverage positive entry points established from multi-sector coordination and community engagement to help 'catch-up' and accelerate the coverage of essential services, and leverage these platforms to include a broader focus across the first 8,000 days, including links to nutrition-sensitive social protection and private sector engagement.

Broaden collaboration and coordination across development partners to support the government to accelerate the implementation of the 2nd National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition, the Cambodia Roadmap for Food Systems for Sustainable Development 2030, the Roadmap on the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting, the operationalization of the SUN Business Network and the Cambodia Nutrition Project to address both prevention and treatment of childhood malnutrition and to mitigate the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19.

Continue to support the Ministry of Women's Affairs to implement the 3rd NAPVAW, including building the capacity of service providers and improving helplines. Strengthen the GBV response mechanism.



Social protection and assistance

Continue expansion and system building for the delivery of the cash transfer and other social protection schemes (such as school feeding, social care), including through piloting and testing innovative approaches.

Continue policy advocacy and design, including through strengthening system digitization, data collection and analytical work on poverty and vulnerability, and strengthening of the national M&E and data collection mechanisms.

Prioritize the creation of links between social assistance and employment-based social security and continue advocacy for social protection as the critical tool for socio-economic development and post-COVID-19 economic recovery.

Strengthen efforts to develop financing frameworks for social protection through public finance management and improve the fiscal space for social protection.



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Outcome 2



Expanding Economic Opportunities



Promote decent work

To address the interruption of TVET activities, and to support Cambodia to leapfrog to the 4th Industrial Revolution, as well as contribute to de-carbonization, the UN will continue to support the digital transformation and greening of TVET. This includes the digitization/ greening/ blending of TVET training packages and the Recognition of Prior Learning assessment packages, as well as training of trainers and assessors.

To increase decent employment, the UN will continue to accelerate digital transformation and promote innovations for MSMEs to improve competitiveness and to promote innovations for young entrepreneurs and start-ups. It will increase private sector engagement with TVET to increase market demand-driven skills.

Strengthening of the non-formal education sub-sector and digital education through expanding the BEEP and factory literacy programmes, establishing partnerships for upskilling and reskilling learners, and expanding economic opportunities.

Continue implementing Better Factories Cambodia by introducing digital wages in the garment sector.

to upgrade business operations for post-harvest fisheries.

Expand technical assistance to financial institutions through knowledge enhancement on commercial biogas technology, to better serve agri-business in terms of access to finance.

Expand technical assistance, capacity building, resource efficient and cleaner production assessments to an additional 20 factories to reach the target of 50 factories, and to increase the carbon emission reduction target by an additional 500,000 tons of CO₂.

Continue to support MSMEs, including in the agro-food and tourism sectors to enhance their business performance and to transition to e-commerce platforms as a way to continue operating during the pandemic. Leapfrog to digitization, targeting 170 MSMEs (40 percent women-owned MSMEs).

Promote non-income measurements of poverty and development (such as the Multi-dimensional Vulnerability Index, and SDG tagging of the national budget).

Development financing: Explore and promote innovative financing mechanisms (green bonds, SDG investor mapping, impact investment, etc.).



Economic productivity, competitiveness and innovation

Development of standards and/or technical regulations for official control of fish and fishery products under the Cambodia Quality Seal, in alignment with European Union requirements.

Operationalization of the Value Chain Investment Support's Fast-Track Scheme and the Investment Support Facility, and support to selected enterprises



Economic inclusion of vulnerable people

Continue supporting migrant worker returnees and their dependent communities in Siem Reap and Battambang provinces with alternative employment.

Continue supporting the Cambodia Mine Action Authority on the mine clearance programme for community and livelihood development.

Outcome 3



Promoting Sustainable Living



Food security and nutrition

Support CARD and line ministries to implement commitments in global summits on food systems and nutrition for growth, including the national food systems roadmap.

Continue to promote inclusive and sustainable agri-food systems, food control and food safety, agroecology, green value chain development and market access to accelerate food system transformation for sustainable development.



Energy – lower costs and increase growth

Support the implementation of the Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production Strategy and Action Plans 2021-2030; New Biogas Policy; promote the Green Industrial Award; and promote Clean Technology Investment.

Support increased access to electricity and promote sustainable energy solutions through building the Energy Code and Rooftop Solar Policy.



Environmental protection and climate change adaptation

Address climate change mitigation and adaptation through strengthening protected area management.

Strengthen coordination among key stakeholders at both national and sub-national levels to promote environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Enhance systems and capacities to build resilience to climate-related hazards in the areas of WASH, education and social protection, through technical support for climate risk-informed programming in these sectors.

Develop innovative financing solutions and private sector engagement for enhanced climate resilience in the areas of WASH and solid waste management, including through collaboration with the UN and the Joint SDG Fund.

Support the National Council for Sustainable Development to update the Cambodian Climate Change Strategic Plan 2014-2023. Support the operationalization and implementation of the Long-term Strategy for Carbon Neutrality.

Promote nature-based solutions to enhance natural resource management and reduce deforestation; provide support to advance Cambodia's transition to a circular economy.

Support the National Social Protection Council and line ministries to operationalize the shock-responsive social protection framework and adopt an anticipatory action approach to disaster risk management.

Outcome 4



Strengthening Participation and Accountability



Human rights for all

Advocating and awareness-raising campaigns to promote the rights of women migrant workers, innovative programmes and community women-led networks.

Strengthening mechanisms to respond to GBV, setting up safe spaces for GBV survivors and supporting capacity development for service providers to strengthen GBV services, including women migrant workers.

Promoting more integrated and collaborative approaches to address violence against children and violence against women, based on the Violence Against Children Action Plan evaluation and the regional study on violence against children and women intersections.

Strengthening child protection systems including the legal, institutional and organizational frameworks; advocating for and supporting an increased national budget and formal assignment of the social workforce; and supporting social workers for child protection at the district and provincial level.

Advocating for greater domestic resource investment and youth participation in policymaking and public dialogue, as identified in the National Action Plan for Youth Development and the Cambodia Youth Development Index.



Public institution functioning

Providing targeted support to criminal justice actors including the National Committee Against Torture, the General Department of Prisons and the Ministry of Justice.

Supporting local authorities and judicial actors in developing and strengthening national mechanisms to better protect journalists.

Supporting line ministries to increase budget allocation for activities towards gender equality and women's empowerment through gender-responsive budgeting.

Supporting the National Committee for Disaster Management and relevant partners to systematically mainstream gender into climate actions and disaster risk reduction.

Supporting the Ministry of Women's Affairs to finalize and advocate for the National Gender Policy.



Implementation and monitoring of laws and standards

Continue providing technical support to bring the legal framework into compliance with international human rights norms and standards.

Supporting the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, the Garment Manufacturers' Association in Cambodia and garment sector unions on their plan for a more competitive garment industry, including skills development, readiness for Industry 4.0 and digital wages, as well as prevention of GBV and harassment.

Provide support to the National Institute of Statistics on the Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey and Data Exchange through CAMSTAT.



Managing Urbanization

Support the National Smart Cities Committee to develop the **National Roadmap for the Development of Smart Cities Strategy and Framework and Cambodia's chairmanship of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network**. This will be in compliance with the three principles of the human-rights based approach, leaving no one behind and gender equality and women's empowerment.

Strengthen disaster risk preparedness in Angkor, including tourism planning and waste management issues, to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the UNESCO World Heritage site through an integrated approach to manage risk in terms of the risk to physical monuments and the integrity of the site, the risk to cultural and economic activity in and around the site, and the risk to the wellbeing of local people and communities in and around the Angkor World Heritage site due to natural hazards and human-induced disasters.

Assist the RGC and Cambodians in the process of migration on different aspects of their journey to facilitate their integration into urban areas and access to services such as health, labour rights, and economic incentives. With support to the development and implementation of policies such as Migration Health and the National Strategic Plan on Health for Migrants (2021-2030) as well as the Labour Migration Policy, which are gender-inclusive and human rights-based, migrants will see improvements in their new destination as well as for their families left behind.

Support the development and implementation of the Fast Track Cities strategic plan for Fast Track City provinces: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang and Banteay Meanchey; support strengthening and scaling up of combination HIV prevention and innovative and differentiated HIV testing, in particular PrEP, and HIV self-testing focusing on urban provinces where key populations are concentrated.

Assist the RGC to develop integrated urban and territorial policies at the national, sub-national and local levels to safeguard and promote urban heritage and cultural infrastructure, as well as traditional knowledge and the arts to leverage tangible and intangible cultural heritage in cities across Cambodia. Promote and sensitize the government to advocate for creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development, with the objective of enlisting Cambodian cities in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

Provide support on the formulation and adoption of the Social Service Implementation Manual in Urban Settings. This is a national guideline that guides communes and sangkats in urban settings to analyse and prioritize issues affecting children and adolescents; plan and budget for social services that benefit them.

Coordinate a National Urban Forum which contains some key topics, such as smart cities, affordable housing and green cities.



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