



Kingdom of Cambodia  
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# Cambodia's Roadmap for Food Systems for Sustainable Development

2030

September 2021

Council for Agricultural and Rural Development and the  
Technical Working Group for Food Security and Nutrition



# Foreword

At the invitation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, **António Guterres**, Cambodia has conducted a National Food Systems Dialogue, working through a process of engagement, in-depth exploration and consensus building. In the period between January and August 2021, Cambodia conducted 30 dialogue events, involving almost 2000 participants. These events were mostly online or blended events, during a period when face-to-face meetings were very restricted because of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The events were neither the beginning, nor the end of the discussion of food systems in Cambodia. Earlier activities to engage youth in food systems for healthy diets and discussions surrounding the drafting and release of the Second National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023 helped to introduce the concept of food systems and to arouse interest in a more holistic approach. The Seventh National Nutrition Day on 6 November 2020 celebrated the theme *Strengthening Food Systems for Healthy Diets* and set the stage for the National Dialogues. **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia recognised the importance of the food system in his remarks for the event, stating that...

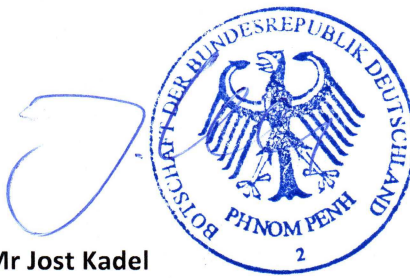
*'In the context of this pandemic, Cambodia has not only been able to avoid the food crisis that some countries in the world have experienced, but Cambodia has also seized this opportunity to strengthen our food systems by introducing various measures to strengthen agriculture and food industries as a foundation for economic recovery, to produce and supply quality and safe agricultural and food products to local and global markets.'*

In support to the Royal Government of Cambodia, representatives of all stakeholders and all relevant sectors have worked together in the National Dialogues to formulate Cambodia's *Roadmap for Food Systems for Sustainable Development 2030*. This Roadmap reflects the voices of all participants and the policy and strategic directions of the Royal Government of Cambodia. We are grateful for the efforts of the many stakeholders that have gone into the debate and the drafting of this important roadmap. We ask all concerned to continue to collaborate in our efforts to discuss, refine and implement the necessary actions for sustainable food systems in Cambodia in 2030.

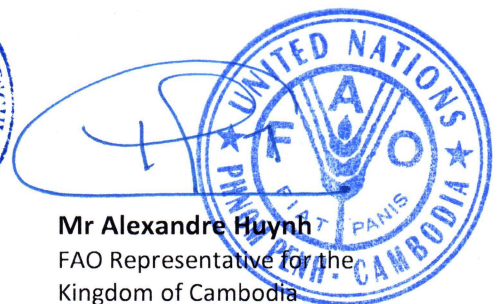
3 September 2021



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## Cambodia's Roadmap for Food Systems for Sustainable Development 2030

### A. Overview

Cambodia is home to 15.5 million people, with a youthful population (55.8% below age of 30<sup>1</sup>). The country is endowed with diverse food systems and a rich culinary history. While Cambodia has exhibited strong economic performance and made great strides towards sustained and broad-based economic development and poverty has reduced exponentially in the past two decades, inequalities persist and 22% still cannot afford a healthy diet<sup>2</sup>. Malnutrition rates remained high among children under five; 32.4% children were considered stunted, 24% underweight, and 10% wasted<sup>3</sup>. Poverty and malnutrition rates vary drastically by province, with highest figures found in hilly border regions. Cambodia is also one of the most disaster-prone countries in Southeast Asia, extremely vulnerable to the compounding impacts of climate change.

Policies and strategies currently in place in Cambodia address multiple drivers of food systems transformation and offer the framework to spur action across sectors. This food systems roadmap aligns with existing policy frameworks and emphasizes areas that require accelerated action including under the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV, the National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023, Cambodia's Sustainable Development Goals 2016-2030, the Second National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (2nd NSFSN) 2019-2023, Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025, relevant sectoral strategies, including the Agriculture Sector Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023, Industrial Development Policy 2015-2025 and others. Agriculture and healthy diets play an important role in strengthening Cambodia's food systems, in the response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and for the recovery period.

This roadmap is the product of extensive policy dialogue and analysis. In 2021, thirty dialogue events were conducted in Cambodia, with almost 2000 participants. Good progress was made possible under the leadership of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), which appointed H.E. Sok Silo, Secretary General of the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) as National Convener in November 2020. A number of initiatives contributed to Cambodia's readiness for the Food Systems Dialogues including the preparation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> NSFSN 2019-2023, coordination under the Technical Working Group for Food Security and Nutrition, support from the SUN Movement and youth events conducted over the period 2018-2020. Events were mostly online to fit the restrictions for COVID-19.

### B. Vision for sustainable food systems for Cambodia 2030

*By 2030, all Cambodians will have access to healthy diets and safe food, with an initial focus on women and children, to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition and address the nutrition transition. Food systems will nourish Cambodia's population, strengthen local production and distribution, generate domestic and international opportunities for trade and enterprise, offer equitable livelihoods especially for youth, be resilient to vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses, steward the environment, and help mitigate and adapt to climate change by shifting the food system towards green growth<sup>4</sup>.*

This vision will be achieved by 2030, by expanding access to health and nutrition services, providing social assistance and education, and ensuring that agriculture and food value chains are diverse and productive, sustainable, support healthy diets, contribute to economic growth and trade and

<sup>1</sup> NIS, 2019 < <https://www.nis.gov.kh/nis/Census2019/Final%20General%20Population%20Census%202019-English.pdf>>

<sup>2</sup> CARD, MAFF, WFP 2017, 'Fill the Nutrient Gap', <<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000070325/download/>>

<sup>3</sup> Cambodia DHS, 2014-15 < <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr312/fr312.pdf>>

<sup>4</sup> Green growth is defined in RGC, 2013, National Policy on Green Growth and National Strategic Plan on Green Growth 2013-2030

provide job opportunities for the poor and vulnerable. Major drivers for modernizing agriculture and food systems in Cambodia lie in innovation and investments for digitalization, modern technologies and infrastructure development.

### **C. Four specific priorities have emerged from the national dialogues:**

1. **Healthy diets for all**
2. **Empowerment of youth, women and the vulnerable**
3. **Resilient livelihoods and resilient food systems**
4. **Governance for a more inclusive food system**

To succeed, we must work together, across sectors and stakeholders at national, sub-national and community levels, to create multiplier effects for poverty reduction, ending malnutrition and hunger, and protecting our environment. Most importantly, we will engage and include the voices of youth, consumers and producers, women, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, and the most vulnerable, to shape the food system of tomorrow, for a healthier population, planet, equitable economy and prosperity. A food systems approach lends itself well to shape the next generation of sectoral policies and strategic plans and offers a framework to operationalize game changers and milestones to ensure effective implementation of this roadmap to 2030.

### **D. Priorities for Cambodia to 2030**

#### **1. Healthy diets for all**

Cambodia will work across key sectors to ensure that healthy diets and safe foods are accessible to all, especially for women and children and vulnerable groups, to address all forms of malnutrition. Achieving this objective requires multi-sectoral actions including: ensuring food and nutrition security; expansion of access to health and nutrition services; consumer awareness and education; diverse, inclusive and modern agriculture and food value chains; healthy food environments and food safety; clean drinking water, sanitation and good hygiene practices through awareness raising and enhancement of quality systems; and the provision of social assistance. Cambodia is home to diverse food systems and well-endowed with safe and nutritious food. However, poor households cannot afford this safe and nutritious food.

**a. Game changers:** (i) Healthy diets are to be made more available and accessible through enhanced agricultural productivity and diversification, agro-industry, research and development, food safety, food fortification, value addition, wider commercialization, and infrastructure improvements in local markets; (ii) food will be made more accessible through the expansion of social assistance to vulnerable individuals and households including its cash transfer, homegrown school feeding, and use of fortified foods for in-kind distribution schemes; (iii) the expansion of 1,000 days health counseling and services for mothers and children under 2 years of age, with a focus on promoting exclusive breastfeeding and improving infant and young child feeding and mother's dietary diversity; (iv) operationalize the National Roadmap for Prevention and Treatment of Child Wasting; (v) ensure access to clean drinking water, sanitation and good hygiene practices; (vi) create food environments where consumers can make healthy food choices through regulation of food marketing (including breast-milk substitutes) and promotion of national dietary guidelines and standards.

**b. Milestones 2025:** The coming 3rd NSFSN 2024-2029 and concerned sectoral policies and strategies will reflect a broader food systems framework and key game changers will be implemented to achieve the 2030 vision for sustainable food systems and the Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals. Social assistance for vulnerable families will be rolled-out and coupled with nutrition messages and National Dietary Guidelines for adults will be

formulated. The National Roadmap for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Wasting will be implemented. Model markets will be constructed to demonstrate food safety and promote diverse, healthy diets with support from private sector and community. Information systems will be used to assess the proportion of households able to access healthy diets. A national consumer protection association will be established and private sector companies will provide nutrition information on products.

**c. Milestone 2030:** Healthy diets will be accessible and affordable for all Cambodians.

## **2. Empowerment of youth, women and the vulnerable**

Cambodia will work towards the promotion of gender equality, decent employment, enterprise development and the creation of job opportunities for youth, women and the vulnerable in the food system. Cambodia will continue to engage youth, women, and the most vulnerable, promote their understanding of food systems and the importance of healthy diets, equipping them to become agents of change. Consumers, women and youth shape the food system of today and tomorrow, and their voices are important in policy dialogue and decision-making to achieve the 2030 vision. Creation of decent employment and increased labor skills and productivity in the local food system are critically important for economic growth and exports. In recovering from COVID-19 pandemic, it is important for both individual well-being and national development that all children have the opportunity to attend school and fulfil their potential. Cambodia will continue to engage in dialogue with vulnerable groups, to understand their needs and objectives, working together to improve food systems for the benefit of all Cambodians.

**a. Game changers:** (i) engage youth, particularly young women, in leadership roles and provide opportunities for youth, women and the vulnerable to be routinely engaged in policy dialogue and decision-making; (ii) promote digitalization, research and development, innovation, and support for the vulnerable, youth and women's SMEs; and (iii) strengthen vocational training programs, formal and non-formal education, and youth and women associations to meet the demands of a developing food system and the country's development.

**b. Milestones 2025:** Capacity building and support provided to youth, women and the vulnerable to engage in food systems and healthy diets at national, sub-national and community levels. To meet future job opportunities within the food system, education and vocational training will be adapted to industry needs innovation hubs and SMEs multiplied and linked with investors. Collect sex-disaggregated data regularly and update plans to achieve Cambodia's Sustainable Development Goals.

**c. Milestone 2030:** Youth, women and the vulnerable will be routinely engaged in policy dialogue and decision-making, and vocational training, education, decent employment and enterprise opportunities in the food system will be expanded, especially for women, youth and the vulnerable.

## **3. Resilient livelihoods and resilient food systems**

Cambodia will continue to build on our experience and success to address vulnerabilities and poverty and to strengthen the resilience of food system actors, networks and infrastructure to human and climate-related shocks and stresses. Cambodia will improve the potential of food systems to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change and other shocks and stresses. The COVID-19 Pandemic has highlighted the importance of strengthening existing systems (health, economic, agricultural, environmental, information and social protection systems) to withstand future shocks and stresses, and provides a unique opportunity for real structural change.

In promoting resilient livelihoods, this roadmap supports indigenous communities, youth, women, smallholder farmers and SMEs in food production and processing to strengthen rural livelihoods for enhanced resilience. Building forward better from the COVID-19 Pandemic fits with the commitment by the Royal Government of Cambodia to building a greener economy and implementing key policies such as the updated 2020 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The Royal Government of Cambodia also advocates for green growth, to ensure protection of the environment and ecosystem services.

In addition, Cambodia will continue to build on its Cambodian Food Reserve Systems, social assistance programmes and expand the shock-responsiveness of these programmes. In building forward better, Cambodia will adopt One-Health principles across food systems.

- a. **Game changers:** (i) expand shock responsive social protection to include vulnerable families and strengthen resilience and maintain food reserves; (ii) apply One-Health principles, including traceability along the value chain; and (iii) steer food systems development in the direction of green growth by enabling the potential of the private sector in digitalization, green financing, agro-ecological transformations, climate smart agriculture, resource efficiency, reducing waste and food losses, renewable energy uses, and improving green infrastructure including irrigation and rural roads.
- b. **Milestones 2025:** The competitiveness of food value chains and smallholder livelihoods will be enhanced through improved market linkages. Health and social protection systems will be reinforced throughout the country and information systems will be integrated (for improved targeting, shock-responsiveness, awareness raising and communication). Food reserves will be maintained to prepare for future disasters, at national and regional level. Infrastructure, including irrigation and processing facilities, and trade facilitation will be strengthened across the food system. And green infrastructure will be funded, green financing expanded, and existing Nationally Determined Contributions related to food systems elaborated.
- c. **Milestone 2030:** The resilience of households and food systems to future climate and human induced shocks and stresses will be strengthened through improved livelihoods, strengthened food value chains and markets; health and social protection systems and investments in climate resilient infrastructure will be expanded; and Nationally Determined Contributions related to food systems from production to consumption will be expanded and implemented.

#### 4. **Governance for a more inclusive food system**

Based on the successful conduct of the national food systems dialogues, Cambodia will continue to open the door for multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral dialogue, coordination, and collaboration to make planning and implementation processes more just, inclusive and participatory. These processes will be promoted at national, sub-national and community levels, and include collaboration between the Royal Government of Cambodia, development partners, the private sector, academia and civil society. The dialogues have opened important avenues for communication and highlighted several approaches to build forward better from the COVID-19 Pandemic and natural disasters: adopting community-driven approaches, public-private-producer partnerships, consumer focus, and bridging humanitarian work with development and recovery. Adherence to a strong legal framework for consistency between national and sub-national levels is needed, as well as policies, strategies and governance frameworks need to be adequately resourced and implemented with clear division of responsibilities.

- a. **Game changers:** (i) incorporate food systems discussions across Technical Working Groups (TWGs) (ii) establish and strengthen Provincial/Municipal Working Groups to coordinate

Food Security and Nutrition (P/MWG-FSN); (iii) support community-led nutrition programming; (iv) establish and strengthen youth for nutrition champions and women's associations; (v) ensure close coordination and collaboration between government, civil society, development partners, the private sector and farmers' organizations; (vi) finalize the Food Safety Law and Plant Protection and Phyto-Sanitary Law, strengthen international accredited laboratories and enforce existing food safety, quality and labeling regulations and standards; (vii) establish and engage private sector networks for improving nutrition; (viii) support academic research programs for advanced technologies in food systems, as well as for evidence-based decision making; and (ix) encourage sustainable financing for food systems improvements through allocation of domestic funding and mobilizing external resources.

- b. **Milestone 2025:** (i) Relevant TWGs will be strengthened; (ii) progress of the implementation of this roadmap for 2030 will be tracked including, the engagement of youth and women and the vulnerable; (iii) data systems and M&E tools will be improved, including the tracking of nutrition investments; (iv) relevant laws and regulations will be enforced (for example, to limit unhealthy snacks in school environments, restrict marketing of unhealthy foods, and avoid marketing infringements on breastmilk substitutes, etc); (v) capacities of actors at all levels will be improved and strengthened to encourage nutrition planning and investments by commune/sangkat councils; (vi) national and sub-national coordination will be supported to be more food systems oriented; and (vii) international, regional, national networks will be connected including the SUN Movement, Nutrition for Growth (N4G) and other initiatives.
- c. **Milestone 2030:** An enabling environment will be created and the implementation of this roadmap and related plans will be inclusive, just and responsive to the needs of consumers, vulnerable population groups and will encourage sustainable private sector investments in the food system.

## **E. Changes in the coming two to three years to accelerate progress**

A number of outstanding topics require further exploration post-summit. Furthermore, as the national dialogues were convened online due to COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions, a number of critical voices could not be sufficiently included. Dialogues will continue Post-summit, from the national to the community level, particularly with farmers, fisher-folk, forest-dependent communities, ethnic minorities, women and youth, to help shape food systems to meet the needs of consumers and the most vulnerable.

The roadmap was developed during the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic, which helped to highlight critical areas that require accelerated action. The list of priorities should be reviewed during the recovery phase to adjust to future developments and limited fiscal space. Addressing compounding vulnerabilities during the recovery phase will require bridging humanitarian and development responses to build forward better.

Private sector investment is a key to driving food systems transformation. The game changing actions for Cambodia lie in innovation and value adding for agricultural production; agro-ecological transformations, food safety and quality improvement. The next few years offer an opportunity for the adoption of digital and remote applications to support food systems development, such as remote training and extension tools, early warning systems, communication platforms, remote inspection and audits and digital traceability systems. Public sector investments in social protection, including actions to assist with graduation from poverty, shock responsive social protection; school feeding and nutrition; and in implementing the National Roadmap for the Prevention and Treatment

of Child Wasting are designed for immediate impacts. Improved data and evidence generation for policy and decision-making are critical over the next several years.

The next three years offer a window of opportunity for structural improvements, to further operationalize the priority actions, and to mobilize resources. A number of sector-specific strategies come to an end in 2023, offering an opportunity to align these frameworks in their next iteration with a broader food systems approach. Cambodia has already joined the Coalition for School Feeding, a first step in joining a global movement for food systems improvement.

## **F. Concluding statement**

Cambodia is well positioned to achieve this vision for food systems for sustainable development by 2030, anchored in a robust policy environment. In order to do so, we must work in an inclusive and participatory manner, across stakeholders, sectors, and at national, sub-national and community levels. The development partners, private sector and civil society stand ready to support government in the implementation of this roadmap. As Cambodia moves to Upper-Middle Income Country status by 2030, its agriculture sector and food systems will serve as a critical foundation for the elimination of hunger, poverty reduction and sustainable development ensuring that no one is left behind.