KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

NATION RELIGION KING

Royal Government of Cambodia

NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY FRAMEWORK 2024 - 2035



SOCIAL PROTECTION IN CAMBODIA

Prepared by the National Social Protection Council

October 2024

KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

NATION RELIGION KING

NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICY FRAMEWORK 2024 - 2035



SOCIAL PROTECTION IN CAMBODIA

Prepared by the National Social Protection Council

October 2024

Contents

Abbreviation ..... **I**
List of Figures ..... **II**
Preamble ..... **IV**
Executive Summary ..... **VII**
1. **Overview** **1**
1.1. Introduction 1
1.2. Cambodia's Macroeconomic Development 2
1.3. Social Situation Development 3
1.3.1. Human Development Index 3
1.3.2. Demographic Situation 4
2. Approach to the Development of the Social Protection System in Cambodia **6**
2.1. Vision 6
2.2. Goals 6
2.3. Objectives 6
2.4. Definition 7
2.5. Financing Policy 8
2.6. Lifecycle Risks Approach 8
2.7. Social Assistance and Social Security System 9
2.8. Shock Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) 10
2.9. National Social Assistance Programs in Family Package 10
2.10. Mechanisms to Promote Social Security Formalization 11
3. Social Protection Interventions **12**
3.1. Maternity and Childhood Risks 13
3.1.1. General Situation 13
3.1.2. Policy Measures 14
3.2. Health Risks 16
3.2.1. General Situation 16
3.2.2. Policy Measures 17
3.3. Occupational Risk 18
3.3.1. General Situation 18
3.3.2. Policy Measures 18
3.4. Disability 19
3.4.1. General Situation 19
3.4.2. Policy Measures 20

3.5. Unemployment 21
3.5.1. General Situation 21
3.5.2. Policy Measures 21
3.6. Homelessness 23
3.6.1. General Situation 23
3.6.2. Policy Measures 23
3.7. Old age and Survivors 24
3.7.1. General Situation 24
3.7.2. Policy Measures 25
4. Cross-Cutting Work 26
4.1. Conflict Resolution and Grievance Redress Mechanism 27
4.1.1. General Situation 27
4.1.2. Policy Measures 27
4.2. Beneficiaries Identification 28
4.2.1. General Situation 28
4.2.2. Policy Measures 28
4.3. Digital Social Protection System 29
4.3.1. General Situation 29
4.3.2. Policy Measures 29
4.4. Sensitization, Communication and Broadcasting 31
4.4.1. General Situation 31
4.4.2. Policy Measures 32
4.5. Social Protection Support Policies 33
4.5.1. General Situation 33
4.5.2. Policy Measures 33
4.6. Development Partners Coordination Mechanism 34
4.6.1. General Situation 34
4.6.2. Policy Measures 34
5. Governance of the Social Protection System in Cambodia 35
5.1. Policy Level: National Social Protection Council (NSPC) 36
5.1.1. General Situation 36
5.1.2. Policy Measures 36
5.2. Regulator Level: Social Security Regulator (SSR) 37
5.2.1. General Situation 37
5.2.2. Policy Measures 37

5.3. Social Security Operator: National Social Security Fund (NSSF) 38
5.3.1. General Situation 38
5.3.2 Policy Measures 38
5.4. Social Assistance Operator: National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF) 39
5.4.1. General Situation 39
5.4.2. Policy Measures 39
5.5. Health Equity Fund Operator 40
5.5.1. General Situation 40
5.5.2. Policy Measures 40
5.6. National Payment Certification Agency (NPCA) 41
5.6.1. General Situation 41
5.6.2. Policy Measures 41
5.7. Subnational Administration 42
5.7.1. General Situation 42
5.7.2. Policy Measures 42
6. Implementation and Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanisms 44
6.1. Implementation mechanism 44
6.2. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism 44
6.2.1. M&E mechanism for the progress of the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework and its Action Plan 45
6.2.2. The Social Protection System M&E Mechanism 45
7. Conclusion 46
Appendix I : Glossary 47
Appendix II : Decision on the Establishment of the Technical Working Group on Developing the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2030 50
Appendix III : Letter of Order on the Establishment of the Working Group in the General Secretariat for the National Protection Council to Evaluate the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 54
Appendix IV : Supporting Working Group of the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council for the Preparation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 57

Abbreviation

NSPC	National Social Protection Council
CSDG	Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals
NPCA	National Payment Certification Agency
SSR	Social Security Regulator
NSSFC	National Social Security Fund for Civil Servants
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NFV	National Fund for Veterans
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NSAF	National Social Assistance Fund
PWDF	Persons With Disabilities Foundation

List of Figures

Figure 1: Gross Domestic Product Per Capita 3
Figure 2: Life Expectancy of Cambodian People 5
Figure 3: Cambodia's Population Pyramid in 2019-2030 and 2019-2050.....5
Figure 4: Lifecycle Risks Approach 9



The Royal Government has determined "strengthening the social protection system" as one of the priorities in the Pentagonal Strategy-Phase I, which focuses on continuing to develop the social protection system based on Lifecycle Risks Approach, with the spirit of "**Leave No One Behind**" and a clear vision and goals to promote economic growth in an equitable and inclusive manner.

Preamble

The main policy priority of the Royal Government of Cambodia of every legislative is the maintenance of the complete peace and political stability, which is a prerequisite for the economic growth and national development. Cambodia has been reaping the fruits of peace, political stability and macroeconomic stability, which had enabled Cambodia to maintain an average annual economic growth rate of 6.1% from 2010 to 2023 and has turned Cambodia into a lower-middle-income country since 2015. The fruits of this economic growth are distributed equitably through investments in the health and education sectors, in particular in the social protection system as the Royal Government recognizes that it is an important contribution to building a harmonious society and is the foundation for the country's development. As a result, the gross domestic product per capita has increased by more than 8 times, from approximately 312 US dollars in 2000 to approximately 2,520 US dollars in 2023.

The fruits of economic growth, prosperous peace and political stability are indispensable preconditions that enable Cambodia to roll out policies and strategies as well as to implement the major reforms to restore and develop the country achieving commendable results. Throughout this time, the Royal Government has focused on building social protection system based on the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025, which has played important roles in building and developing an integrated, consistent, efficient, sustainable and inclusive social protection system. The Royal Government of Cambodia, having the National Social Protection Council as its Secretary, has implemented social assistance programs and social security schemes with remarkable achievements, which are reflected by the stronger, more integrated, and effective as well as with larger coverage of the social protection, especially it has supported the citizens' livelihoods both on a regular basis during normal time and during the major crises, such as COVID-19, inflationary pressure and severe floods, etc.

Looking ahead, and to achieve the Royal Government's long-term vision of turning Cambodia into an upper-middle-income country by 2030 and High-income country by 2050, the Royal Government of the Seventh Legislature of the National Assembly continues to focus on "People" as a priority goal for the national development by continuing to promote human capital development and citizens well-being through continuously developing a stronger and more resilient social protection system. In this regard, the Royal Government has determined "strengthening the social protection system" as one of the priorities in the Pentagonal Strategy-Phase I, which focuses on continuing to develop the social protection system based on Life-cycle Risk Approach, with the spirit of "Leave No One Behind" and a clear vision and goals to promote economic growth in an equitable and inclusive manner.

In response to this strategic direction and based on the basis of political stability, economic growth, the evolution of Cambodia's socio-economic situation and the progress of the development of the social protection system in the past, the Royal Government decided to prepare the "National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035" which is an update of the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025, with the aim to continuously promote the development of social protection system further and with a focus on building resilience and maintaining adaptiveness to respond to climate change, emergencies and crises, as well as the evolution of economic and social factors in general.

The "National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035" will act as the long-term compass by replacing the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 in order ensure the sustainability of the development of the Social Protection for the next 11 years, with the aim to contribute to promoting social well-being and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. This new National Social Protection Policy Framework shifts from a pillar-based to life-cycle risk approach social protection by continuing to focus attention on ensuring income security and reducing citizens' economic vulnerabilities, promoting well-being, gender equality, social equality, as well as poverty alleviation.

The National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 sets out social protection policy measures that respond to the seven stages of a human's life-cycle risks, which include maternity and childhood risks, occupational risks, unemployment, health risks, disability, homelessness and old age and survivors. This policy framework also sets out policy measures for relevant cross-sectoral work to help advance the development process and to not hinder the development of the social protection system. Meanwhile, the Royal Government has also set policy measures to continue to strengthen the governance of the social protection system following the three levels of functions, namely the policy level, the regulator level and the operator level, to ensure the check and balance.

I strongly believe that the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 will help improve the livelihood and quality of life of every citizen as well as strengthen social solidarity and stability. In this regard, relevant ministries and institutions shall collaborate as a whole, under the leadership and coordination of the National Social Protection Council, to implement this new framework with a high sense of responsibility to achieve the determined vision and objectives. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to commend and highly appreciate the efforts of His Excellency **Dr. AUN PORNMONIROTH**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Finance and Chairman of the National Social Protection Council, who directly led and gave continuous guidance to the technical working group coordinated by the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council in the preparation of the draft policy framework until achieving this historical vital policy framework. At the same time, I would also like to express my appreciation to Excellencies

Vice-Chairs and members of the National Social Protection Council, Chair, Vice-Chairs and members of the Executive Committee of the National Social Protection Council, the Technical Working Group as well as relevant development partners and civil society organizations for the cooperation, support and active participation with high sense of responsibility in the process of preparing this valuable document.

Phnom Penh, October 28, 2024
Prime Minister
(Signature and Seal)

Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei HUN MANET

Executive Summary

The "National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035" has been formulated through updating and replacing the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 to ensure the sustainability of the development of a stronger, more effective and sustainable social protection system that can cover all life-cycle risks and respond to emergencies or crises. The National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 shifts from the pillar-based to life-cycle risks approach social protection, in line with Cambodia's socio-economic development and the regional and global trends. The development of social protection system must adhere to seven key principles, namely: (1) equity and inclusiveness, (2) adequacy, (3) efficiency, (4) adaptiveness, (5) sustainability, (6) good governance, and (7) gender responsiveness, including taking into account realistic financing principles.

Based on an analysis of Cambodia's current situation as well as the regional and global trends, the National Social Protection Policy Framework defines social protection policy measures according to the seven life-cycle risks, which include:



1. **Maternity and Childhood Risks:** Strengthening the implementation mechanism of the cash transfer program for pregnant women and children under 2 years old for all target groups, with additional coverage for children up to 5 years old and other target groups and strengthening the institutional capacity and implementation mechanisms of school feeding programmes, contemplating gradually expanding the scope, exploring the feasibility of raising the subsidy level of the scholarship program for poor students and gradually expand coverage.



2. **Health Risks**: Focusing on the implementation of the policy directions set out in the " Roadmap toward the Universal Health Coverage in Cambodia 2024-2035" to push for the universal health coverage to become a reality for Cambodian citizens.



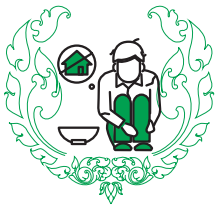
3. **Occupational Risks:** Promoting the quality strengthening of the medical and rehabilitation services of the social security schemes in terms of the occupational risks by examining the feasibility of using the services of state centers to the maximum, as well as reviewing the benefits package in line with the level of contributions paid, as well as studying the feasibility of extending the scope of the scheme to the self-employed, as in some regional countries.



4. **Disability:** Strengthening the disability identification mechanisms according to social and rights based model; Strengthening the implementation mechanism of the cash transfer programme for persons with disabilities in the family package; Strengthening the disability protection mechanisms, focusing on the rehabilitation in the social security schemes in health care, occupational risks and pension; Examining the feasibility of providing additional protection to persons with disabilities who are the members of at risk households.



5. **Unemployment:** Continuing to build human resources and institutional capacity to be ready for the rollout of the social security schemes on unemployment; Strengthening the implementation mechanism of the National Social Assistance Programme in Technical and Vocational Skills Training for youth from poor and vulnerable households; Institutionalizing the "Graduation-Based Social Protection" and the "Cash for Work Program" as well as the feasibility study of launching a loan program for higher education to poor students who wish to continue the higher education.



6. **Homelessness:** Feasibility study of implementing a cash transfer program to support housing costs for students from the poor and vulnerable households, as well as at-risk households starting from the trial phase. Additionally, study the feasibility of implementing an "affordable housing" program for low-income and vulnerable people. In parallel, explore the possibility of providing support to vulnerable groups currently residing in temples and other religious places.



7. **Old Age and Survivors:** Reforming the social security scheme on pension for public sector workers to ensure the sustainability of the overall pension system; Conducting a feasibility study of implementing the social security system on pension for self-employed, as well as exploring the feasibility of applying a multi-tiered pension system to extend coverage to other populations that have not yet been covered.

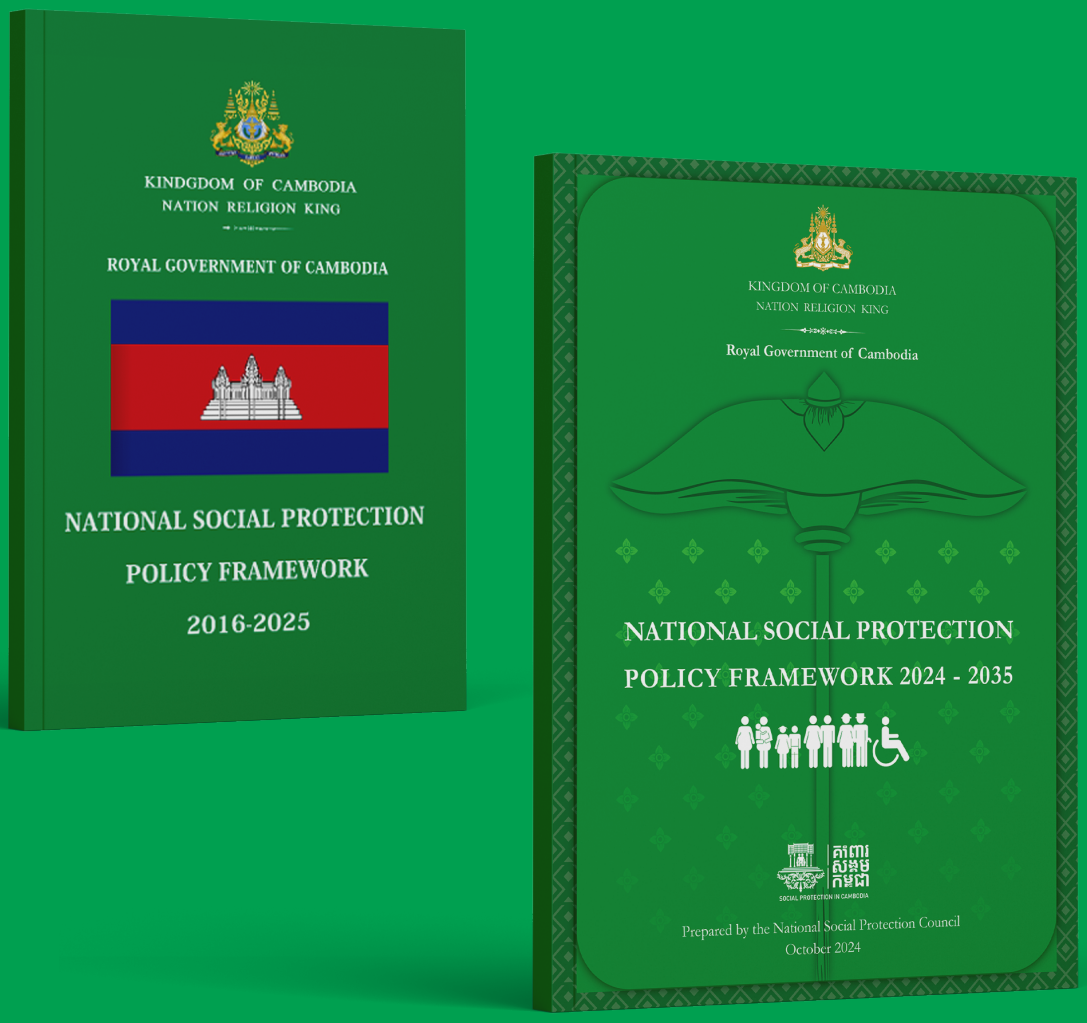
In addition, to accelerate the development process and not to hinder the development of social protection system either directly or indirectly, the Policy Framework also defines policy measures for cross-cutting work, namely: 1) dispute resolution and feedback, 2) identification mechanism, 3) digital social protection system, 4) awareness-raising, communication and dissemination, 5) policies supporting social protection system, and 6) development partners coordination mechanism for social protection system.

In addition and to ensure check and balance in the fulfilment of functions under social protection system, the governance of social protection system will be strengthened through the three levels of functions, including:

1. Policy level: The National Social Protection Council fulfill the function of policy guidance.

2. Regulator level: The regulator institutions fulfill the function of monitoring and supervising all the operations of all social security schemes and social assistance programmes, and

3. Operator level: The National Social Security Fund, National Social Assistance Fund, Health Equity Fund Operator, National Payment Certification Agency, and the subnational administrations as direct implementing bodies.



The National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 will act as the long-term compass replacing the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 in guiding and orienting the development of the Social Protection System in Cambodia to be stronger, better and sustainable for the next 11 years.

1

Overview

1.1 Introduction

Over the last 10 years, the development of the Social Protection System in Cambodia has taken a proud step, especially after the Royal Government launched the "National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025" (NSPPF), a long-term roadmap for developing the social security schemes and social assistance programs in Cambodia. In accordance with the guidelines of this policy framework, the National Social Protection Council (NSPC) has been acting as the secretariat for the Royal Government in coordinating the social protection policies in an integrated and consistent manner. The presence and effectiveness of the NSPC underscores the importance of establishing a central mechanism for dialogue and exchange of views on interconnected and interdisciplinary policies.

As the leading institution to coordinate and promote the development of the social security schemes and social assistance programs set out in the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025, the NSPC has led the development of social protection system in Cambodia with involved ministries and institutions to reach a new stage that is stronger, more concentrated and more efficient. However, the development of the Social Protection System in Cambodia continues to have the potential to move forward as the Royal Government sets out its vision to transform Cambodia into an upper-middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income country by 2050. This makes it clear that Cambodia needs a more robust social protection system to meet the challenges both globally and nationally through better redistributing resources to ensure the equity, inclusion, solidarity and social stability.

The National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 has played a vital role in orienting the development of the Social Protection System in Cambodia for some recent years, but with the rapid development of global events such as the recent COVID-19 crisis and with the results of the mid-term evaluation of the implementation of this policy framework, the Royal Government saw the significance of updating this policy framework to "National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035" to further strengthen the development of the Social Protection System, focusing on building resilience and maintaining flexibility to respond to the climate change, disasters and crises, as well as to respond to the development of economic and social factors in general.

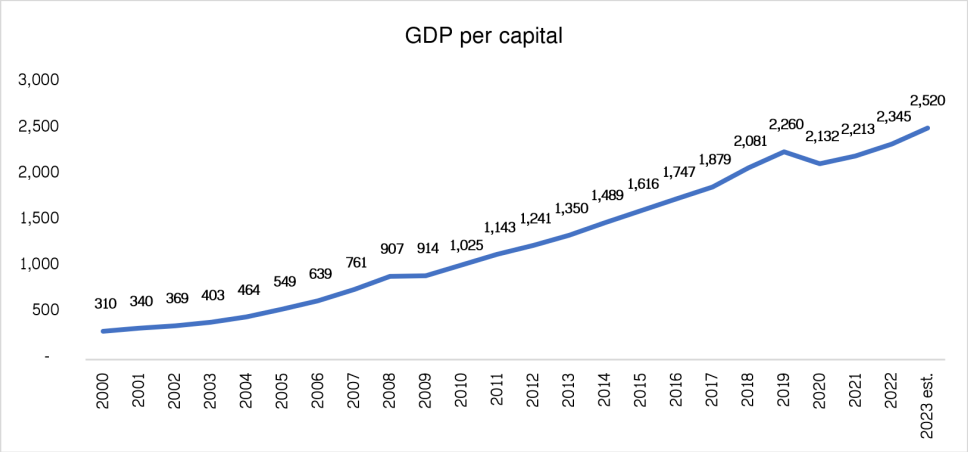
The new "National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035" will act as a long-term compass replacing the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 for the sustainable orientation of the development of the Social Protection System in Cambodia for the next 11 years. The National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 shifts from pillar-based approach to the development and provision of life-cycle risks protection with a continued focus on ensuring the income security and mitigation of the economic vulnerabilities of the citizen aimed at promoting well-being, gender equality, and poverty reduction while being ready to deal with the possible emergencies and crises.

1.2. Cambodia's Macroeconomic Development

Cambodia's economy has developed significantly after Cambodia adopted a free-market economy which was the basis for launching an in-depth and comprehensive structural reform plan for the national economy. The investment and trade liberalization has attracted a steady flow of foreign direct investment to Cambodia and boosted productions and exports to foreign markets which has created domestic jobs which subsequently contributed to improving the livelihoods and reduced poverty among Cambodian citizens. These successes derive from the peace and stability brought to the motherland through the implementation of the "**Win-Win Policy**" of **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN**, Cambodia's preeminent leader.

According to the data from the national accounts with new based year 2014 by the National Institute of Statistics, the Cambodian economy grew at an annual average rate of 9.4% from 2000 to 2008 before declining slightly to 4.1% in 2009 due to the global economic crisis, but started to recover at an annual average growth rate of 7.6% from 2010 to 2019. However, the COVID-19 outbreak has had negative impacts, especially on tourism, construction and export-oriented sectors, such as the garment sector which has caused Cambodia's economy to decline for the first time in 30 years at a rate of -3.6% in 2020. From 2021 to 2023, the economic growth continually recovered at 3.1%, 5.1% and 5.0%, respectively, and was expected to grow continually at 6.0% in 2024. This economic growth has led to a steady increase in the living standards of Cambodians. Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita has grown more than 8 times from about USD 312 in 2000 to about USD 2,520 in 2023. It should be noted that according to the World Bank assessment, Cambodia already transformed from a low-income to a low-middle-income country in 2015, and many international institutions have assessed that Cambodia is one of the fastest economic growth among other developing counties.

Figure 1. Gross Domestic Product Per Capita



Source: Data from the National Accounts with new based year 2014

Along with achieving high economic growth and a steady increase in people's income, the Royal Government has also well maintained overall macroeconomic stability. In fact, in the last five years, the inflation rate has been kept at a manageable level, averaging around 3%, while the exchange rate has been maintained at around 4,060 KHR per 1 USD. International reserves are in the range of 19,998 million USD by 2023 which can guarantee imports for about 8.2 months. From 2017 to 2023, imports increased by an average of 12.2%, while exports increased by an average of 13.3%.

1.3. Social Situation Development

1.3.1 Human Development Index

Cambodia is committed to contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda of the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDG), especially on goals related to human development. The progress of achieving CSDG related to human development includes:

1. **Goal 1:** End the poverty in all its forms everywhere

   Significant progress has been made by achieving all target indicators, as shown by reducing the poverty rate from 26.3% in 2014 to 17.8% in 2019.

2. **Goal 2:** End hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

   Progress has been moderate due to the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but there has been good progress in reducing stunting among children, down from 32% in 2014 to 22% in 2021-2022.

3. **Goal 3:** Ensure healthy people's lives and promote well-being for all at all sectors Significant progress has been made, as evidenced by the increase in the life expectancy of Cambodians from 62 years in 2008 to 76 years in 2021-2022, the decline in child mortality under 5 years from 35 to 16 per 1,000 live births between 2014 and 2022, and the decline in maternal mortality from 170 to 154 per 100,000 live births between the same years. Other advances, for instance the fight against HIV/AIDS have had positive results with 99% of HIV-positive people receiving antiretroviral treatment by 2022; Tuberculosis tackling has been better which Cambodia has been removed from the list of countries responsible for tackling severe Tuberculosis; Reducing the number of malaria cases from 1.95 to 0.24 per 1,000 population during 2019-2022 and no deaths from this disease from 2018.

4. **Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive, equitable, and qualitied education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

   Significant progress has been made with the primary school graduation rate rising from 82.7% in 2018 to 91.72% in 2022, and the gender equity index in education increasing from 1.09% in 2018 to 1.17% by 2022, the adult literacy rate increasing from 83.5% in 2018 to 87.8% by 2022, and continuing to focus on modernizing education and technical and vocational skills training.

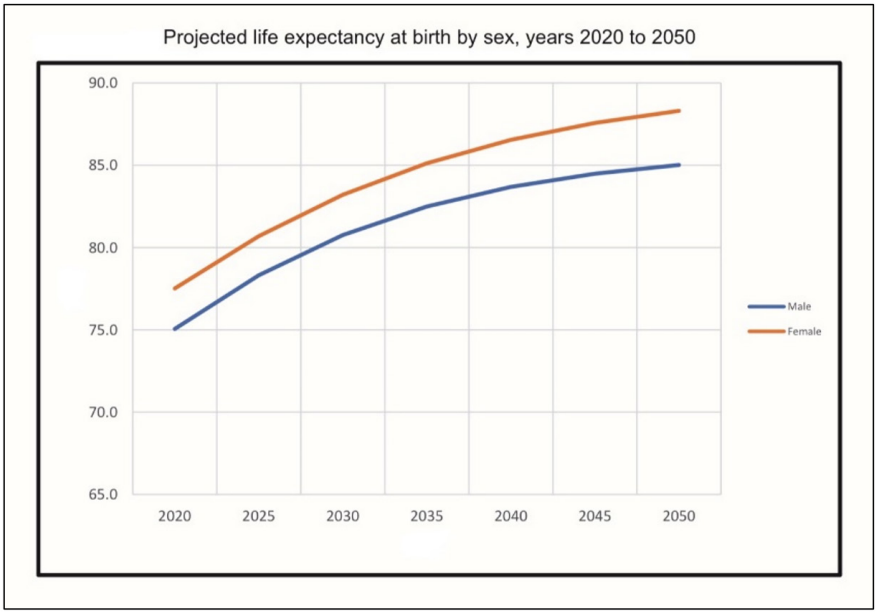
5. **Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

   Significant progress has been made through the development of legal standards to promote the implementation and monitoring of gender equality and non-discrimination on gender in excess of the target, the establishment of multi-sectoral response mechanisms on gender-based violence, and the rising in sectoral gender mainstreaming.

1.3.2 Demographic Situation

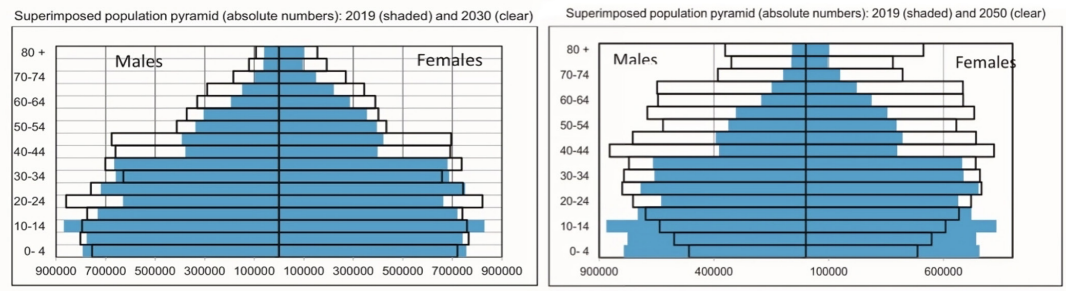
According to the General Census of the Kingdom of Cambodia in 2019, the population increased from 13.4 million in 2008 to 15.6 million in 2019 and is expected to increase to about 18.7 million in 2030, about 20.6 million in 2040, and about 21.7 million in 2050. The age structure of the Cambodian population is stepping in to the aging country with 29.4% of the population under the age of 15 increase to the age of 22 in 2008 to the age of 27 in 2019. At the same time, the number of people aged 60 and over in 2019 is about 8.9% and is expected to increase to 12.7% in 2030, 16.1% in 2040, and 23.2% in 2050.

Figure 2. Average Life Expectancy of Cambodian People



Source: Census of the Kingdom of Cambodia 2019

Figure 3. Cambodia's population pyramid in 2019-2030 and 2019-2030



Source: The General Census of the Kingdom of Cambodia 2019

2

Approach to the Development of the Social Protection System in Cambodia

2.1. Vision

The vision of the Royal Government of Cambodia is to provide the social protection to all citizens from the income insecurity in the face of risks at each stage of the life cycle, aiming to improving the health and well-being of the citizens, reducing poverty , reducing gender inequality and social inequality as well as strengthening social solidarity and stability by continuing to promote the development of a stronger, effective, and sustainable social protection system.

2.2. Goals

The National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 aims to strengthen the implementation of the existing national social assistance programs and the social security schemes and introduce new national social assistance programs or social security schemes in accordance to the actual development of socio-economic conditions, in order to provide protection to ensure income security for citizens throughout their lives based on the principle of "**Leave no one behind**" through strengthening the formalization of social security and beneficiaries identification mechanism.

2.3. Objectives

To achieve the above vision and goals, the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 set the following main objectives:

- To strengthen the governance of social protection system to ensure the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the management of the social security schemes and the national social assistance programs
- To strengthen the effectiveness of the social protection benefit delivery
- To expand the coverages over life cycle risks and the social protection responses to emergency or crises, including climate change
- To strengthen social protection registry to be more effective, inclusive and responsive
- To build the resilience of the entire social protection system in Cambodia.

2.4. Definition

The social protection system refers to the policies, social assistance programs, social security schemes, activities, legal framework and institutions that established to strengthen income security and provide protection against risks and vulnerabilities that citizens may face.

Social Protection System in Cambodia contributes to building social solidarity by promoting rights to protection in equitable, gender equality, and inclusive manners. Social protection interventions contribute to the redistribution of resources to support the rights to a dignified livelihood of all citizens.

The development of the social protection system in Cambodia must adhere to the following main guiding principles:



1. **Equity and Inclusiveness:** the determination of policy must be broadly and well-rounded thought through for all targeted citizens with the emphasis on the vulnerabilities.



2. **Adequacy:** The defining of the benefits package must take into account the level of appropriateness and acceptability to ensure the long-term minimum income security, by maintaining a balance between state support and personal contribution. Based on this principle, the benefits package of the national social assistance programs and the social security schemes should be considered to be adjusted in line with the changes of the official consumer price index and the socio-economic situation.



3. **Efficiency:** The management and administration of social assistance programs and social security schemes must be implemented thoroughly and economically to avoid excessive spending, especially on administrative costs.



4. **Adaptiveness:** The consideration of policy options must be linked to the development of external factors such as demographic, technological, social, and environmental factors to ensure that each policy option is adaptable to those changes.



5. **Sustainability:** The determination of the policy must take into account the financial situation to ensure the continuity of the implementation and does not affect the affordability of the state budget and individual contribution.



6. **Good Governance:** The institutional set-up must adhere to transparency and accountability and check-and-balance between policy maker, regulator and operator.



7. **Gender Responsiveness:** The policymaking of the social security schemes or the social assistance programs must focus on the gender aspects at all stages, processes, and tasks in contributing to achieving the goal of gender equality.

2.5. Financing Policy

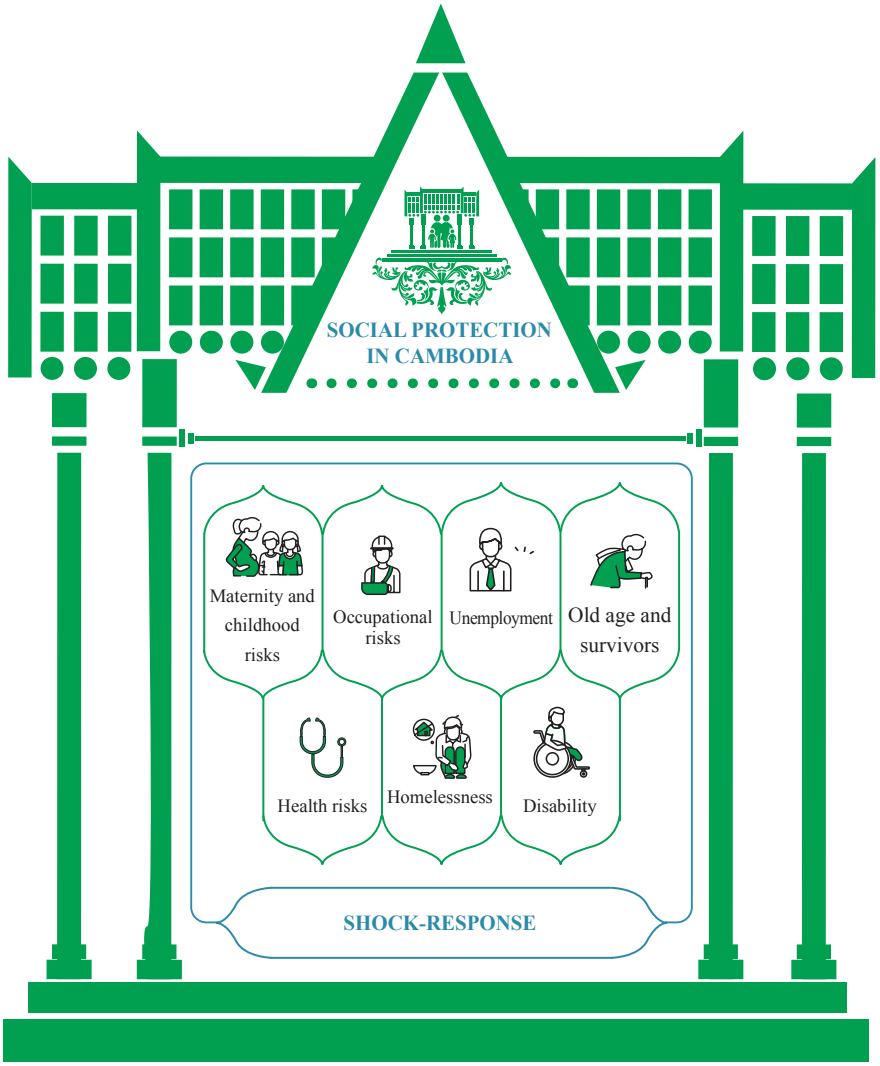
To build a strong social protection system, it requires appropriate financial resources. In this sense, based on international best practices, the Royal Government sets out the common principle for managing the national social protection system in which every citizen is obliged to pay contributions in order to receive protection as required by law and provisions in force. However, the Royal Government will provide support to the poor, vulnerable and at-risk citizens whom cannot or has limited capacity to afford to pay the contribution; the support needs to be carefully considered in terms of the affordability of the national budget and the "**exit strategy**", with the consideration on the provision of education and training, capacity building and opportunities to decent work in order to increase income and improve livelihoods which subsequently leading them to be able to pay contribution too.

The National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 takes into account all aspects in providing the protection to all citizens. However, the expansion of the social protection system must be done step by step in line with the socio-economic development, especially the affordability of the national budget and the affordability of the employers and the citizens in paying the contribution. The immense ambitions to promote the development of the social protection system will lead to financial instability that is unfavorable to the national budget and ultimately have negative implication for the development of the country as a whole. Therefore, the determination of social protection policy needs to be based on the realities of the actual fiscal space, the overall macroeconomic and political situation.

2.6. Lifecycle Risks Approach

One of the main challenges for the development of the Social Protection System in Cambodia is the limited level of coverage that does not yet guarantee the income security of all target groups when facing risks at each stage of life. Therefore, the architecture of Cambodia's "**Social Protection House**" is made up of seven sections, of which each section represents risks at specific life cycle stages, including maternity and childhood risk, health risk, occupational risk, disability, unemployment, homelessness, and old age and survivors.

Figure 4: Lifecycle Risks Approach



Source: National Social Protection Council

2.7. Social Assistance and Social Security System

Difference between the national social assistance program and the social security schemes are determined by the financing mechanism and the target population groups covered. The national social assistance programs use the national budget as financing on actual basis, while the social security schemes are supported by the contribution payments into the social security fund.

The national social assistance programs focus on providing support to the poor citizens with equity card and other vulnerable citizens whom identified by the Ministry of Planning using the identification of poor household mechanism. On the other hand, the social security schemes are the social insurance mechanism that focuses on other citizens, both in the formal and informal sectors

2.8. Shock Responsive Social Protection (SRSP)

Cambodia faces high levels of exposure to covariate shocks and is anticipated to be one of the countries most affected by climate change. In recent years, the flood and drought situations in Cambodia have revealed and served as another reminder of the country's vulnerability to natural disasters, which have negative impacts on people's livelihood, especially the poor and vulnerable. Despite Cambodia's relative success in containing the spread of the COVID-19, the pandemic has negatively impacted and created a scar in the country's economy and overall health system. Also, Cambodia is an open economy and relies mainly on external factors for development such as foreign direct investment, tourism, trade, and supply chains. That creates an additional exposure to shocks in the context of global geopolitical conflicts, trade wars, and an increase of protectionism policies.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Royal Government had launched a number of social protection interventions to support people's livelihood, especially the poor and vulnerable. The Cash Transfer Program for the Poor and Vulnerable households during COVID-19 and Post Lockdown Cash Transfer Program were effective one-off interventions. Additionally, the suspension of contributions to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) during shocks supported companies and enterprises in that challenging time.

The Royal Government had launched the Cash Transfer Program for At-Risk Household during the Inflationary Pressure as well as the Cash Transfer Program for At-Risk Household Affected by the Severe Floods at the end of 2022 and early 2023 to ease the effect on people's livelihood.

To prepare and be ready to address crisis or shocks, including climate change that may occur in the future, the Royal Government had launched the Guideline on the Shock Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) Framework with an aim of providing systematic protections that are predictability, timely, and effective for the poor and vulnerable both during and after shocks including national disasters, macroeconomic and financial and public health crisis. The guideline has defined policy tool options, including design tweaks to routine social assistance programs and social security schemes; vertical expansion of social protection programs and schemes; horizontal expansion to include those affected; and linking emergency cash transfer programs of humanitarian actors to social protection system as well as other policy tool options that respond to shocks.

2.9. National Social Assistance Programs in Family Package

Building a comprehensive, integrated, and automatic social protection system is importance for supporting people's wellbeing. The National Social Assistance Programs in Family Package, which integrated the social assistance cash transfer programs, were established and operated using a common system by National Social Assistance Fund—the single cash transfer operator with the aim to strengthen governance, improve operational effectiveness as well as to improve alignment and provide a better coverage to poor households and their vulnerable members. As a start, the National Social Assistance Programs in Family Package includes four main national social assistance programs that are newly established and integrated the functioning as follows:

- The Cash Transfer Program for Pregnant Women and Children Under 2 years old
- The Scholarship Program for Students at Primary and Secondary School
- The Cash Transfer Program for Persons with Disabilities
- The Cash Transfer Program for the Elderly (60 years and above)

In addition, the National Social Assistance Programs in Family Package also provide base cash transfer for all households with equity card as well as their members living with HIV/AIDS abided by inclusiveness and equity principles.

In principle, the Royal Government will consider integrating other national social assistance programs or establishing new national social assistance programs under the Family Package upon future circumstances.

2 .10. Mechanisms to Promote Social Security Formalization

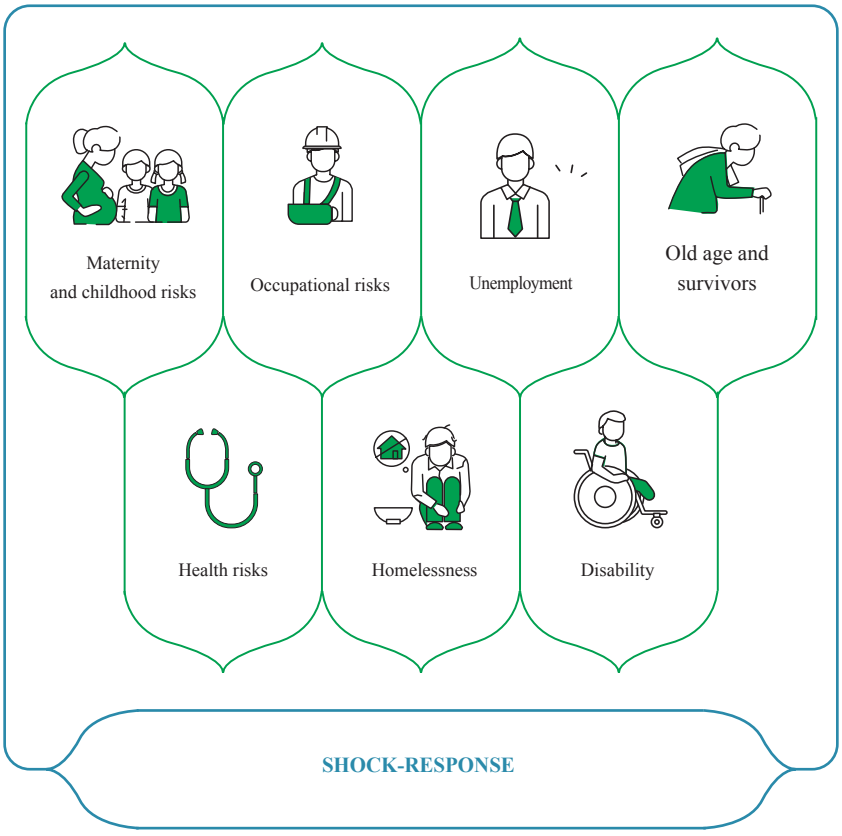
According to the Labor Force Survey 2019, about 88% of informal workers (89% male and 87.6% female) do not receive annual leave pay or sick leave benefits as well as do not receive social security benefits in Cambodia, although the provisions in force apply to those target groups. At the same time, enterprises and establishments that are registered, licensed, or have a permit from the relevant ministries and institutions, as well as many workers have not registered with the NSSF to get benefit from the social security system yet. Lack of awareness and publicity about the social security system, lack of incentive mechanisms and lack of enforcement of regulations are the main reasons the enterprises, establishments as well as workers are not registered in the social security schemes. Nevertheless, the technological advancement and the advancement of Cambodian economy has led to an increase in freelancers or casual workers who do not receive wages but are paid in the form of commissions based on their performance through the online ordering platforms. These individuals are generally not considered as employees and are not registered as members of the NSSF to benefit from the social security schemes while their works are facing high risks. An increase in this form of work will lead to an increase in the informal economy, underemployment, public health issues, and social instability.

To address the above challenges, the Royal Government has launched a series of policies to improve the living standards of those working in the informal economy through a number of key measures, especially the establishment of a “Strategic framework and programs for economic recovery and to promote Cambodia’s economic growth in living with COVID-19 in the new normal for 2021-2023”, “National strategy for informal economic development 2023-2028”, and many social protection policies. Meanwhile, in order to expand the coverage of the social security schemes with equitable and inclusive manners in the aim to improve the wellbeing of employees and ensure financial sustainability in the social security system, the National Social Protection Council has an aim to introduce a “mechanism to promote social security formalization” to encourage and motivate enterprises, establishments, employers, employees, self-employed individuals, dependents of NSSF members, and especially the freelance or casual workers to be registered in the National Social Security Fund.

3

Social Protection Interventions

The social protection system in Cambodia focuses on life cycle risks of the citizens at each stage, which recognizes that people confront distinct risks and vulnerabilities at different times in their lives and that social protection system is tailored to address threats caused by the respective risks.





3.1. Maternity and Childhood Risks

3.1.1. General Situation

Pregnancy and birth delivery put every mother at risk. The early stages of fetal life put a lot of pressure on parents, especially mothers, in two aspects: (1) pregnancy welfare and childbirth and (2) the ability to earn income to support the family's economy. It is important to improve the wellbeing of both mother and infant in order to address the malnutrition of children at the pregnancy stage and promote both physical and mental growths at the first 1,000 days of life. In addition, during pregnancy, women need more micronutrient and are at risk of micronutrient deficiency, including iron deficiency, which is a major cause of anemia. Severe anemia can put both the mother and the infant at high risk of postpartum hemorrhage and premature and low birth weight infant and high postpartum mortality rate. In this regard, the Royal Government has launched a number of social protection interventions, including:

1. The Royal Government's Cash Transfer for Pregnant NSSF Members and Children under 2 years old by providing cash transfer for taking up the prenatal check-ups, birth delivery, and postnatal check-ups and child vaccination until 2 years of age at public health facilities. The Female public workers also receive prenatal, birth delivery, and postnatal cash transfers.

2. The female NSSF members working in the private sector are entitled to a daily stipend of 70% of the average contributory wage during the 90 days of maternity leave. In addition, according to the Cambodian Labor Law, in regard to maternity leave, female workers are entitled to half the wage, including subsistent allowances provided by the employers.

3. The Cash Transfer Program for Pregnant Women and Children under 2 years old is the first national social assistance program established in 2019 which provides the cash to the pregnant women from the households with equity card under the condition of completing the prenatal check-ups, birth delivery, and postnatal check-ups and child vaccination until the kids reach 2 years old.

The Cash Transfer Program for Pregnant Women and Children under 2 years old has contributed to the promotion of nutrition intake for both mothers and young children, especially helping the children to grow physically and mentally, as well as reducing mortality rate. The results of the assessments show that this program really encourages pregnant women to seek the right technical health care services and has an overall positive impact on the health of both the mother and children.

In addition to protecting the mothers and children under 2 years old, the Royal Government also provides support to the children in school in order to continue promoting the growth of children through two programs such as (1) Home-Grown School Feeding Program, a national social assistance program launched in 2019 that provide nutritious hot meals to children in public primary schools located in malnourished and high-risk areas in order to raise the level of nutrition necessary for growth of children at early stages of education. Furthermore, the program also contributes to promoting the economy and gender equity in the community by increasing the economic empowerment of women and helping to promote gender equity through the utilization of community-based agricultural products obtained from suppliers and farmers that mostly are women, and (2) Scholarship Program for Poor Students in Primary and Secondary School by providing cash to the children from poor households in order to promote on-time enrollment and keep them in school, which lead to successfully graduation. However, the amount of cash transfer and the scope of coverage remain major challenges for both programs.

Despite the significant progress, the indicators of Cambodian children development remain a concern. Cash Transfer Program for Pregnant Women and Children under 2 years old provides support for children from birth to 2 years of age, while the school feeding program and the scholarship program provide support for children from the age of attending the primary school, generally from the age of 6 until the end of secondary school. This demonstrates the lack of the coverage of social protection program for children between the age of 2 and 5 years of age, who are growing up and in the need of protections. Meanwhile, according to the Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2021-2022, many children do not receive sufficient nutrition, of which 32% suffer from stunting, 24% are underweight, and 10% of children under 5 are thin. On the other hand, the main reason for dropping out of school is labor issues, which account for about 30% of girls and 25% of boys between the ages of 6 and 17 years old who are always on the job rather than in school. Meanwhile, about 10% of girls and 5% of boys drop out of school to help with household chores.

3.1.2. Policy Measures

The mother and children protection is essential to ensure that every child has the opportunity to develop physically, mentally and emotionally through nutritious dietary while receiving equitable education that will create more opportunities for job and decent income; preventing from falling into inter-generational poverty.

In this regard, the Royal Government will continue to strengthen the benefit delivery mechanism of the Cash Transfer Program for women who are from the households with equity card, private sector, and public sector during pregnancy until the child reaches 2 years of age to ensure the use of prenatal and postnatal care services as well as birth delivery at professional health facilities with the aim of ensuring safety and health for the mother and children. In addition, the Royal Government will also take into account the coverage of children from the age of 2 to 5 and other targeted groups with regards to the fiscal space, as well as consider incorporating the Royal Government's cash transfer for Pregnant NSSF Member and Children under 2 years old into social security scheme using contributory budget.

For Home-Grown School Feeding Program, the Royal Government is committed to gradually accepting all targeted schools which currently under the management of the World Food Programme (WFP) by 2028 and focusing on the implementation of the "School Feeding Policy 2024-2035", which the Royal Government has just adopted, to further strengthen the institutional capacity and the program implementation mechanis m as well as explore the possibility of expanding the coverage to other targeted schools, especially the pre-school and secondary school in the long term. As the Scholarship Program has been integrated into the Family Package, the Royal Government will explore the possibility of adjusting the amount of cash transfer and expanding the coverage gradually.

The design and the implementation of the National Social Assistance Programs or the Social Security Schemes in response to maternity and childhood risks shall take into account all relevant aspects in order to promote better gender status and inclusiveness.



3.2. Health Risks

3.2.1. General Situation

The Health Equity Fund (HEF) started piloting in Siem Reap and Takeo in 2000 and was gradually expanded to cover public health facilities nationwide, both nationally and sub-nationally in 2015. In 2018, the Royal Government extended the scope of this program to other target groups, including informal workers, Cyclo-riders, athletes, village chiefs, deputy-village chiefs, village assistants, commune councils, de-mining staffs and experts, and people living with HIV/AIDS. At the same time, the Royal Government has expanded the coverage of the HEF to the people employed in the entertainment and tourism sectors of the informal economy, especially women working in discos, bars, karaoke lounges, beer gardens, massage parlors and spas since 2023. In addition, in 2023, the Royal Government has also decided to expand the coverage of the HEF to at-risk households. In total, as of August 2024, the HEF covers a total of more than 4.7 million poor people and other target groups.

At the same time, the Royal Government introduced the Social Security Schemes on Health Care for employees in private sector in 2016, for persons working in public sectors in 2018, and the Voluntary Social Security Scheme on Health care for self-employed and the dependents of NSSF at the end of 2023, with the NSSF as the operator. As of December 2023, the Social Security Schemes on Heath Care covers a total of more than 2.1 million employees, public officials, and self-employed. Overall, the social health protection covers more than 7 million people or about 41% of the population.

Through major investments and innovations in the health sector over the past two decades, the development of Cambodia's health system has made strides with the increasing use of care and treatment services that improve people's health gradually. Some indicators reflect this progress including; (1) the level of coverage of essential health services in 2021 with the average of 58%, of which 75% of the health coverage index of reproductive, maternal, infant and children's health, 65% of the non-communicable diseases, 37% of the capacity and access to services, (2) a decrease for out-of-pocket health expenditure on healthcare to 60% by 2020. (3) a gradual increase in the life expectancy of Cambodia, and (4) a decline in maternal, infants, and children mortality rate.

However, out-of-pocket health expenditure in Cambodia remains high, at about 60% by 2020, higher than the country in the Asia-Pacific region. This shows that most Cambodians still face high financial risks especially those living near the poverty line who are more likely to fall back into poverty if any family member is seriously ill.

3.2.2. Policy Measures

With the above-mentioned progress, as well as an in-depth analysis of current challenges and future vision, the Royal Government recognizes the need to continue to accelerate on the path toward universal health coverage in Cambodia, which requires long-term, detailed, and comprehensive consideration. Based on this, the "Roadmaps toward the Universal Health Coverage in Cambodia 2024-2035" was prepared and approved by the Royal Government on 12 April 2024 and officially launched on 23 May, 2024, presiding over by Samdech Moha Borvor Thipadei Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia. This roadmap sets out a strategic path towards universal health coverage in Cambodia from 2024 to 2035 outlining the priority policy options for in-depth, step by step, in multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional perspective through the development on social health protection system and capacity building in the provision of health services both in public and private sector which aimed at minimizing the size of out-of-pocket health expenditure and enhancing the cost-effectiveness in health sector. This roadmap sets out three specific goals: (1) expand the population coverage under the social health protection system to 80% of the total population, (2) Expand essential service coverage index to at least 80%, and (3) Reduce out-of-pocket health expenditure to 35% of the total health expenditure.

In this regard, the Royal Government will focus on implementing the policy directions that set out in the roadmap to make universal health coverage a reality for Cambodian.



3.3. Occupational Risk

3.3.1. General Situation

The Social Security Schemes on Occupational Risk have been in place fully for the public and formal private sector and have been providing a financial protection to public workers and private employees in the time of accident occurs directly at work place, commuting accidents to and from work place, and occupational diseases. The schemes provide (1) medical treatment and care, (2) allowance for temporary disability, (3) pension for permanent disability, (4) allowance for permanent disability, (5) survivors' pension (6) funerary grant, and (7) rehabilitation services.

3.3.2. Policy Measures

The Royal Government will continue to promote the quality of medical treatment service and rehabilitation. The NSSF is to collaborate with Persons with Disabilities Foundation (PWDF) in explore the possibility of maximizing the utilization of the rehabilitation services at state-run centers. At the same time, the Royal Government will continue to review the benefit package of the scheme to be in line with the level of contributions paid by employers, as well as to explore the possibility of extending the coverage of this scheme to self-employed, like in some countries in the region.



3.4. Disability

3.4.1. General Situation

Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2021-2022 indicates that 4.2% of Cambodia's population aged 5 and above have severe disabilities. Persons with disabilities frequently encounter obstacles that hinder their full participation in the workforce, with only 52% of women with disabilities being employed, compared to 86% of women without disabilities. A significant number of persons with disabilities are self-employed or engaged in unpaid family work. Physical impairments, coupled with limited opportunities for social participation, create barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from securing decent employment. Moreover, the presence of a person with a disability within a family can limit the labor market participation of other family members, as they may have to forego employment to provide care, leading to a loss of household income. Disability is also a significant factor that increase the family's vulnerability to other risks throughout their life cycle. Meanwhile, persons with disabilities face higher expenditure costs compared to the general population for various expenses such as health care, rehabilitation, education, and transportation. The high costs of assessing education, in particular, poses a significant barrier to schooling for children with disabilities aged 6 to 17, with only 48% attending school compared to 86% of their non-disabled peers. Overall, persons with disabilities bear a double burden due to high costs but low incomes.

The Royal Government has been providing cash transfer to approximately 17,000 persons with disabilities from the poor and vulnerable households through the community-based program for poor persons with disabilities. However, the transfer amount and the program's coverage have been limited, necessitating to make adjustments. In this regard, in 2024, the government decided to adjust this program into the "Cash Transfer Program for Persons with Disabilities" by integrating this into the National Social Assistance Program in the Family Package. This integration has resulted in a nationwide expansion of the program's coverage to cover all persons with disabilities from the poor households and an increase in the level of benefits provided. Meanwhile, the public officials, armed forces, and employees with disabilities are also receiving protection according to their specific circumstances under the Social Security Schemes on Health Care, Occupational risk, and Pension. Concurrently, the Royal Government, through the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation, has implemented a national mechanism to identify persons with disabilities based on social and rights-based models, aiming to ensure that persons with disabilities can access to the benefits of social protection systems and other social services as well as facilitates the collection and compilation of comprehensive disability data in Cambodia using a unified standard.

3.4.2. Policy Measures

The government will continue to strengthen the disability identification mechanism based on social and rights-based models, with the aim of identifying all persons with disabilities nationwide. This system will provide essential disability data to inform the development of social protection and social welfare policies tailored to specific needs and sectors.

Furthermore, the government will (1) Strengthen the implementation of the Cash Transfer Programs for Poor Persons with Disabilities, which have been integrated into the National Social Assistance Program in the Family Package, to ensure that this target group receives direct government support; (2) Continue to strengthen disability-related protections within the Social Security Schemes on Health Care, Occupational Risks, and Pension for public officials, armed forces, and employees, with a particular focus on rehabilitation; and (3) Explore the possibility of providing protection to persons with disabilities who are the members of at-risk households, based on national fiscal space.



3.5. Unemployment

3. 5 .1. General Situation

The Social Security Schemes on Unemployment is embedded in the Law on Social Security Schemes, which was promulgated in 2019, but has not yet been implemented. The Royal Government has not yet implemented this scheme due to the low unemployment rate in Cambodia, approximately 1%, according to Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2021. However, the Royal Government also sees a lack of technical skills among citizens, especially youths from poor and At-risk households which lead to the difficulty in getting jobs and decent incomes. The lack of resources and supports is also a major factor forcing some youths to drop out of school to pursue low-paid jobs to support their families. Considering this situation, the Royal Government has launched the National Social Assistance Program for Technical and Vocational Training for Youths from the Poor and At-risk Households by providing skills training not only for free but also offering monthly stipends during the training period as well as connecting the trainees with employers for the job opportunities to increase income and living standards.

Meanwhile, in the context of COVID-19 , the Royal Government has expanded the coverage of the Cash for Work program to reduce the negative impact on the household economy caused by the spread of COVID-19. The program provides short-term and temporary employment opportunities to the poor families that lose their jobs immediately and upon the return from foreign migration. In addition, this program also contributes to the restoration and development of small rural public infrastructures, especially the construction of irrigation systems which have been identified as a priority.

3.5.2. Policy Measures

The Royal Government will continue to build the capacity of the human resources and the institution to be ready for the implementation of the Social Security Scheme on Unemployment at an appropriate time in the future. At the same time, the Royal Government will continue to focus on the technical and vocational training for youths from poor and At-risk households by strengthening the delivery mechanism of the National Social Assistance Program for Technical and Vocational Training for Youths from Poor and At-risk Households by setting up additional mechanisms and training courses that are appropriate and attractive for youths, especially persons with disabilities and women.

The Royal Government will also explore the possibility of launching a “Graduation- Based Social Protection” as a national program based on the results of the pilot project implemented collaboratively with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). At the same time, the Royal Government will also promote the institutionalization of the “Cash for Work Program” to be a mechanism under the coordination of the National Social Protection Council.

In the medium term, the Royal Government will also conduct a feasibility study to establish a student loan program for higher education so students have the opportunity to continue their education and to encourage youths, who wish to continue their education but do not have sufficient resources, to study and to be able to complete their education based their abilities.



3.6. Homelessness

3.6.1. General Situation

The economic growths and the development gap between urban and rural areas, pushes Cambodian people to relocate to more developed areas to search for employment and education opportunities. It puts them, especially those from poor and vulnerable households, at risk of finding suitable accommodations; which is a major obstacle that led to school dropout. Meanwhile, the low-income population are also facing the problem of accessing to the affordable housing as housing prices have risen sharply, especially in the last decade. In the past, the Royal Government has launched the "Affordable Housing" project, but the scope of this initiative is not yet comprehensive enough and is not yet considered a part of the social protection system.

3.6.2. Policy Measures

The Royal Government has been focusing on some target groups through various interventions that includes house renting subsidies, price reduction for clean water and electricity supply; especially for factory workers who rent rooms as their accommodation. In addition, the Royal Government will explore the possibility of providing housing support through social protection system by conducting a feasibility study to establish a cash transfer program that supports house-renting fee for students from poor and vulnerable households which could begin with a pilot project in some urban areas before expanding the coverage to nationwide. At the same time, the Royal Government will conduct a feasibility study to establish "Affordable Housing" program in order to provide opportunities for low-income and vulnerable people, including social assistance beneficiaries, to get a safe and decent home with dignity. At the same time , the Royal Government will conduct a feasibility study on the provision of support to help the vulnerable groups who are staying at pagodas and other religious sites.



3.7. Old age and Survivors

3.7.1. General Situation

The General Census of the Kingdom of Cambodia 2019 shows that the number of people over the age of 60 will double from 7.6 % in 2020 to 16.4 % in 2050. The rise of the elderly population reflects the growing need to build a stronger and more sustainable social protection system to prevent people from falling into poverty at old age. A study in 2021 by the Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation found that about 73% of the elderly live under the family support. This indicates that a large number of elderly people are still living in the income insecurity situation.

For the background, the pension system in Cambodia has started in separate forms for different types of target population. Pension Schemes for Civil Servants and Veterans were managed and administered by separate institution which were the National Social Security Fund for Civil Servants (NSSF-C) and the National Fund for Veterans (NFV), which in 2022 were integrated under the management and administration of a new institution called the National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF). Currently, the Social Security Schemes on Pension for Persons in Public Sector are fully financed by the national budget which has a tendency to increase continuously and could affect the sustainability of the national budget and the macroeconomic in the long run. The Social Security Scheme on Pension for private sector employees was just launched at the end of 2022 under the management and administration of the NSSF which financed by the contribution paid by employers and employees.

On the other hand, the elderly living the households that hold equity card and in the At-risk household receive cash transfer under a number of emergency social assistance interventions such as: The Cash Transfer Program for the Poor and Vulnerable Households during COVID-19, as well as Cash Transfer Programs for At-risk Households Affected by Inflationary Pressure and Severe Floods. In addition, in 2024, the Royal Government has decided to launch the National Social Assistance Program in the Family Package which includes the Cash Transfer Program for the Elderly aged 60 and above living in a family with equity card.

3.7.2. Policy Measures

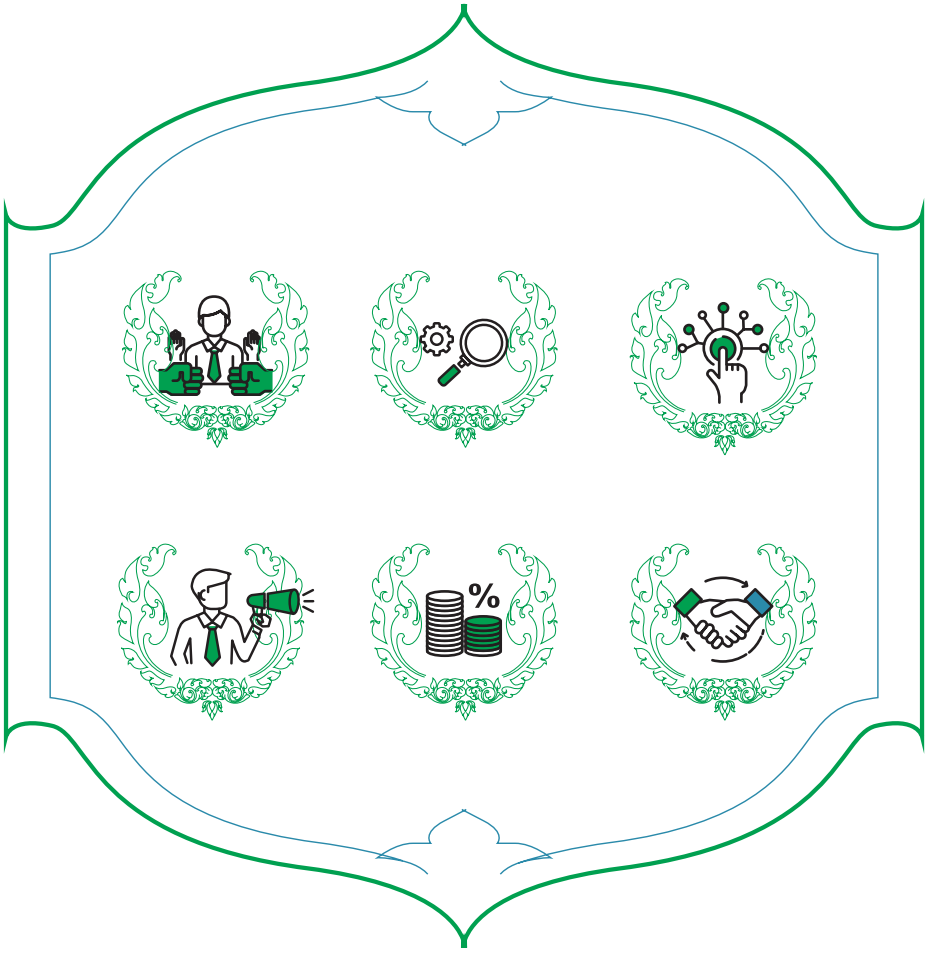
According to the General Census of the Kingdom of Cambodia 2019, the life expectancy of Cambodians is expected to reach 82 years by 2030 and 86.6 years by 2050. This requires a serious consideration for the development of the pension system in Cambodia to ensure continuity and financial sustainability of the scheme. In this regard, the Royal Government will reform the Social Security Scheme on Pensions for Persons in the Public Sector to ensure the sustainability of the pension system as a whole and the affordability of the national budget by shifting the financing mechanism from financing entirely using the national budget to a contributary system which is consistent with the Social Security Scheme on Pensions for Private Sector Employees and other groups.

Meanwhile, the Royal Government will explore the possibility of implementing the Social Security Scheme on Pensions for Self-employed according to the actual circumstance. Not only that, since the Royal Government has already launched a Cash Transfer Program for the Elderly from households with equity card as part of the National Social Assistance Program in the Family Package, the Royal Government will assess the possibility of launching a Multi-tiers Pension System to expand pension coverage to other population that have not been covered yet.

4

Cross-Cutting Work

In addition to the development of various social interventions as outlined in Section 3: Social Protection Interventions, it is critical to consider other relevant works which is the important aspect to support and promote the development of the social protection system. This will also ensure that other relevant factors will not directly or indirectly hinder the development of social protection system.





4.1. Conflict Resolution and Grievance Redress Mechanism

4.1.1. General Situation

In Cambodia's legal context, conflicts are resolved through both the judicial court system and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). ADR is the prerequisite approach used to resolve conflicts before parties decide to resolve their conflict in court. ADR consists of a wide range of simple dispute resolution forms. The most common forms of ADR include negotiation, conciliation, mediation, and arbitration.

The use of Alternative Dispute Resolution is encouraged in Cambodia's social protection system in order to reduce time and resources spent. In the social security system, conflict resolution mechanism is clearly defined at two levels: (1) conflict resolution at the operator level (1st level) and (2) Complaint at the social security regulator level (2nd level). On the other hand, in the social assistance system, a variety of dispute resolutions exist at different levels, including commune, district, provincial, operator/ ministry, and the GS-NSPC.

4.1.2. Policy Measures

For the social security system, the operator and regulator have to prepare and fully launch an Alternative Dispute Resolution both at level 1 and 2 of the conflict resolution mechanism to provide beneficiaries' the access and convenience in filing complaints or if the case is unresolved.

In the social assistance system, the above-mentioned mechanism can also be considered.

Grievance redress mechanism will be considered with simplicity, convenience, and confidentially, providing options via both in-person or digital system. This will work toward harmonization of grievance redress mechanisms managed by all relevant line ministries and institutions as well as interoperability at all level of social protection system.



4.2. Beneficiaries Identification

4.2.1. General Situation

The Identification of Poor Households (IDPoor) mechanism has been utilized as a main source of data for various national social assistance programs. Currently, this mechanism has been adapted from a regular round-based mechanism to an On-demand identification mechanism which is more flexible and responsive to changes in population's living conditions. As of the end of 2024, approximately 700,000 households have been identified as poor households (including both Poor 1 and Poor 2).

In the past, the Priority Card mechanism (Post-ID), which served as a supplementary system to allow poor households to receive healthcare services in case they missed receiving equity cards, was implemented at public health centres. However, this mechanism was discontinued once the On-Demand mechanism of the identification of poor households was fully implemented.

In addition to the identification of poor households, in 2022 the government decided to implement an identification campaign of a new target group known as "At-risk households", that are generally considered as households living near the poverty line. The purpose of identifying this new target group is to assess the possibility of providing support to these citizens, who have been observed to receive minimal protection from the social protection system. They are highly vulnerable to falling back into poverty in the event of serious illness, crises, or emergencies.

4.2.2. Policy Measures

The government will continue to strengthen the effectiveness, flexibility, and responsiveness of the beneficiaries' identification, ensuring that it adapts to changes in the living conditions and circumstances of household members in a timely manner. This will guarantee that targeted citizens are properly identified and receive their equity cards under the established criteria. The government has a vision to develop the identification system for poor and at-risk households to become the backbone of the Social Protection Registry, which will serve as a core database enabling relevant ministries and institutions to operate data exchange collaboratively.



4.3. Digital Social Protection System

4.3.1. General Situation

As Cambodia's social protection system continues to develop, the digitalization and digital transformation of this system—particularly through the harmonization of social protection registration systems and data management—emerges as a critical agenda. This process serves as a foundation for the effective implementation of National Social Protection Policy Framework, ensuring accountability, transparency, environmental sustainability, and good governance. Key to achieving these objectives is the reduction of duplicate registrations and overlapping benefits, along with the strategic investment in and development of information systems that share common functionalities. Additionally, decentralized data management must be minimized to avoid fragmentation as the social protection system evolves. By streamlining processes and enabling quick and efficient digital automation, the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection benefits can be significantly enhanced.

The implementation of Cambodia's current social protection system has encountered numerous challenges, particularly in relation to data management. Social Assistance programs and Social Security schemes have been designed with a decentralized data management and registration approach, resulting in significant fragmentation of the overall system. Registration processes remain disorganized, operating through separate procedures and systems, which has led to individual beneficiaries and target citizens receiving multiple identification cards. These identification cards, issued by different data management systems, are not yet connected or capable of exchanging information. In response to these challenges, and within the broader framework of digitalization and digital transformation of the social protection system, the Royal Government has established a technical working group tasked with harmonizing the social protection registration system and data management. This group is responsible for leading efforts to address these issues and guide the development of an integrated system in line with the core principles of the National Social Protection Policy Framework and the "Digital Transformation Strategic Plan in Social Protection 2024–2028."

4.3.2. Policy Measures

Reforming the mechanisms and procedures of decentralized registration, as currently practiced, is crucial for improving the registration and delivery of social protection benefits. This reform will be achieved by utilizing the Single Portal via Digital Social Protection Platform. Harmonizing registration systems and data management between operator systems and the Social Protection Registry through enhanced interoperability, regular updates, and data synchronization will significantly reduce system fragmentation. Such improvements will also ease the burdens on local officials responsible for implementation. Simultaneously, the launch and implementation of the "Digital Transformation Strategic Plan in Social Protection 2024–2028" marks a significant step in promoting digital capacity building among stakeholders. This plan will strengthen policy development, enhance relevant regulatory frameworks, improve operators' data management systems, and foster coordination between relevant ministries, institutions, and development partners. Together, these efforts will help address challenges in implementing National Social Protection Policy Framework and advance the Digital Social Protection.



4.4. Sensitization, Communication and Broadcasting

4.4.1. General Situation

Public awareness of social protection system in Cambodia remains limited. This factor can pose significant barriers to participation and hinder individuals from accessing the full range of available benefits from social protection system. The evidences from previous studies have shown that some poor households with health equity cards still encounter financial hardships when family members fall ill, despite receiving comprehensive financial protection from the health equity fund. Furthermore, a substantial number of employees under the provision of the Labor Law have yet to become members of the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) due to negligence or avoidance of registration by some enterprises. These factors are largely due to a lack of understanding regarding the social protection system in general and a lack of awareness of the social protection system to be specific.

Overtime, relevant institutions, especially the operators, have implemented dissemination mechanisms within their own jurisdiction on an ongoing basis; however, these activities were often fragmented and focused on their respective mandates, leading the National Social Protection Council to develop the Communication Strategy for Social Protection in Cambodia in 2022 to harmonize the dissemination of social protection-related messages. One intervention in this communication and dissemination strategy is the creation of a National Social Protection Broadcasting Mechanism (NSPBM) to strengthen communication and enhance understanding, dissemination, and information exchange with all stakeholders, beneficiaries, and the general public.

To further bolster cooperation among stakeholders, the National Social Protection Council has established the "Cambodia Social Protection Week" which serves as an annual national forum with two objectives: (1) to provide an opportunity for relevant institutions, including government ministries and institutions, employers, employees, development partners, and civil society organizations, to discuss the development of various social protection policies and to exchange views on the implementation of social security schemes or national social assistance programs; and (2) to encourage students, self-employed, and the general public to participate in social dialogues on the development of the social protection system and to gain a better understanding of its benefits.

4.4.2. Policy Measures

The National Social Protection Council will continue to strengthen and expand the scope of the National Social Protection Broadcasting Mechanism to allow all relevant ministries and institutions to use a common mechanism for dissemination and public engagement. Dissemination and information sharing mechanisms for social protection will focus specifically on the target group especially women and persons with disabilities. In addition, the government will explore the possibility of expanding the scope of the dissemination of information on the social protection system to reach a wider audience through the influencers. Furthermore, the Cambodia Social Protection Week will be expanded to be regional and international level.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Cults and Religions, and other relevant ministries and institutions shall foster the cooperation with the National Social Protection Council to explore the possibility of integrating knowledge related to the social protection system into the national curriculum, both at the general education and higher education.



4.5. Social Protection Support Policies

4.5.1. General Situation

A comprehensive consideration of tax policies and other preferential policies to support the social protection system is a key factor in promoting and encouraging greater participation from citizens. Such considerations include (1) the tax regime on social protection benefits, (2) the tax regime on contributions to the social security system, including both compulsory and voluntary schemes, (3) the tax regime on the returns of social security fund investments, (4) government subsidies, and (5) other tax regimes and exemptions.

4.5.2. Policy Measures

The government will consider adopting tax policies and other preferential policies, including government subsidies, to support the social protection system in accordance with laws and regulations in force.



4.6. Development Partners Coordination Mechanism

4.6.1. General Situation

Development partners and civil society organizations have made significant contributions to the development of Cambodia's social protection system through providing technical assistance in areas such as policy development, strategic planning, capacity building, and implementation of social security schemes or national social assistance programs. In this sense, to further enhance collaboration and ensure a more collective, consistent, efficient, systematic, and inclusive manner, the National Social Protection Council has established a coordination mechanism between the Cambodian government and development partners in the social protection system.

Through this mechanism, the National Social Protection Council serves as a coordinating body representing the government. The coordination mechanism between the Cambodian government and development partners in the social protection system focuses on cooperation in: (1) Social Assistance, (2) Employment-Based Social Security, and (3) Social Health Protection. In addition, the mechanism also has a working group responsible for coordinating policy inputs with development partners, which has the role of overseeing strategic cooperation.

Regular meetings of the working group responsible for each component of the social protection system are held to share information on progress and social protection initiatives, to promote synergy, reduce duplication, identify key opportunities, and fill potential gaps, and to assist in monitoring and evaluating progress.

4.6.2. Policy Measures

The Royal Government will continue to strengthen the implementation of this mechanism to enhance the partnerships with development partners and civil society organizations in order to provide institutional frameworks for collectively gather the development cooperations, strengthen mutual accountability and strengthen policy dialogue mechanisms. With co-dynamism coordination and stakeholder engagement, this mechanism will improve the effectiveness of technical assistance for the development of the entire social protection system, as well as continue to ensure the Royal Government's ownership of the development of equal partnership and mutual respect in dialogue and cooperation.

5

Governance of the Social Protection System in Cambodia

The governance structure of Social Protection in Cambodia is divided into three levels, including: (1) Policy level, (2) Regulator level, and (3) Operator level. This structure is designed to ensure check-and-balance in the functions of policymakers, regulators, and operators.

5.1. Policy Level: National Social Protection Council (NSPC)

5.1.1 General Situation

The Royal Government of Cambodia has established the National Social Protection Council (NSPC) as a secretariat to coordinate and strategically guide the overall development of the entire social protection system. Since its establishment and implementation in 2017, the NSPC has played a crucial role in directing policies and strategies for the formulation and execution of various social security schemes and national social assistance programs, in alignment with the vision outlined in the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025. Significant progress has continuously emerged, including the expansion of coverage, the establishment and implementation of new social assistance programs and social security schemes, as well as the reform of various institutions. The NSPC operates through an Executive Committee, Sub-committees, Technical Working Groups, and a General Secretariat which serves as the technical support body.

5.1.2. Policy Measures

The Royal Government recognizes the importance of the NSPC's role and will continue to strengthen the functions of this council to make it more robust, to further promoting the development of the social protection system as a whole; also, to continue to reform the institutional framework to enhance effectiveness, transparency, and accountability, to firmly adhere to the principles of good governance.

In addition to its roles and responsibilities related to policy and strategy formulation as well as coordination of implementation, NSPC also has the duty to monitor and evaluate the implementation of this National social protection policy framework.

5.2. Regulator Level: Social Security Regulator (SSR)

5.2.1. General Situation

The Royal Government has established and put into operation the Social Security Regulator (SSR), under the Non-Bank Financial Services Authority, which is responsible for monitoring and supervise all operations of the social security schemes to ensure that the management and administration of the social security schemes are carried out with effectiveness, transparency, and accountability, as well as maintaining financial soundness. The Law on Social Security Schemes and the Law on the Organization and Operation of the Non-Bank Financial Services Authority define the roles and responsibilities of the SSR. The Sub-decree on the Supervision of Social Security System and the Sub-decree on the Guidelines on Investment of Social Security Fund established the main conditions for regulatory and supervision on the social security system. In the initial phase, at the early stage of the operation, the SSR utilizes the structure of the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council to fulfill its roles and responsibilities.

5.2.2. Policy Measures

The SSR must continue to establish and implement prudent regulation to ensure that the contributions and benefits of the members of the social security scheme in each category are fully protected and guaranteed. Additionally, the SSR should continue to develop a framework for creating mechanisms to protect beneficiaries and implement effective alternative dispute resolution mechanisms within the social security system, aiming to safeguard the rights and benefits of disputing parties with effectiveness, transparency, integrity, and fairness.

In the medium term, the RGC will arrange to reform the organization and operation of the SSR to separate it from the structure of the GS-NSPC in order to ensure its independence in carrying out its duties. The SSR should have complete independence in both its functions and budget. At the same time, the Royal Government will also explore the possibility of establishing a separate regulatory function for the social assistance system.

5.3. Social Security Operator: National Social Security Fund (NSSF)

5.3.1. General Situation

The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) was established at the end of 2007 and underwent a new structural reform in 2019 through the law on the social security system. This new organizational structure primarily aims to respond to the Royal Government's policy on the establishment and launch a single operator for social security system, in accordance with the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025, ensuring effectiveness in managing and administering various social security schemes.

The development of the social security system under the management and administration of the NSSF has made significant progress, starting with the implementation of the Social Security Scheme on Occupational Risk for employees in private sector in 2008, the implementation of the Social Security Scheme on Health Care for the employees in Private Sector in 2016 and for the Public Officials in 2018, the implementation of the Social Security Scheme on Occupational Risk for the Public Officials in 2021, the implementation of the Social Security Scheme on Pension for employees in Private Sector in 2022, and the implementation of the Voluntary-based Social Security Scheme on Health Care for Self-employed and dependents of NSSF members at the end of 2023.

5.3.2. Policy Measures

The Royal Government aims to further strengthen the management and administration of the social security scheme to ensure full transparency and accountability through the adherence to good governance principles, in order to build public trust, especially among employees and employers, who are obligated to contribute to the NSSF. Continuing to promote the development of institutional capacity and human resources is a key factor in achieving this objective, especially through the digital transformation of the management system, aimed at increasing efficiency in service delivery and ease of access to services for NSSF members.

5.4. Social Assistance Operator: National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF)

5.4.1. General Situation

The National Social Assistance Fund (NSAF) was established in accordance with the directives of the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025, with the aim of integrating the management and administration of social assistance programs under a single operator. After officially commencing operations at the beginning of 2022, the NSAF received a complete transfer of functions from the former National Fund for Veterans (NFV) and the National Social Security Fund for Civil Servants (NSSF-C), as well as the management responsibilities of social assistance programs from the Persons with Disabilities Foundation (PWDF) and the Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation.

5.4.2. Policy Measures

The Royal Government aims to continue promoting the integration of the management and administration of social assistance programs to be under the jurisdiction of the NSAF, starting with the scholarship program for poor students in primary and secondary school. The management process of the NSAF must be strengthened by adhering to the principles of good governance to ensure that all state budget transfers are managed in a transparent and accountable manner through the preparation of financial reports in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAP) and through external audits based on regulation in force.



5.5. Health Equity Fund Operator

5.5.1. General Situation

The Health Equity Fund has been operating with progress, starting from its pilot implementation in 2000 and expanding its coverage nationwide in 2015. However, to date, the Health Equity Fund still operates in the form of a project under the framework of the Health Equity and Quality Improvement Project (H-EQIP). The current management mechanism remains fragmented and lacks clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of the involved institutions.

5.5.2. Policy Measures

In addition to the goal of strengthening governance of the overall social protection system, the Royal Government will institutionalize the Health Equity Fund as a permanent governance mechanism that is consistent with the management of the social security scheme and other national social assistance programs. This will involve adhering to the principle of separating service delivery institutions from payment institutions (payer-provider split) to ensure institutional check and balance.

5.6. National Payment Certification Agency (NPCA)

5.6.1. General Situation

Payment Certification Agency (PCA) was established in 2017 as a public administrative entity under the technical supervision of the Ministry of Health to fulfill the role of a certifying the accuracy of all payment requests for healthcare service payments under the Health Equity Fund. However, the payment certification of the Health Care and Occupational Risk schemes of the NSSF is carried out directly by the NSSF.

In accordance with the strong commitment of the Royal Government to move towards the Universal Health Coverage in Cambodia, the reconsideration of the payment mechanism has become priority. In this context, the Royal Government decided to reform the Payment Certification Agency (PCA) to be the National Payment Certification Agency (NPCA) in 2023 by transforming this institution into an entity under the direct management of the NSPC with the goal to strengthen the independence of its operations while also expanding its scope by taking responsibility for certifying payments on Social Security Schemes on Health Care and Social Security Schemes on Occupational Risk.

5.6.2. Policy Measures

The Royal Government will enhance the payment certification mechanism to be more effective and efficient using digital systems through continuing to strengthen and expand the Patient Management and Registration System (PMRS) to become an automated certification management system, which will operate along with the implementation of the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system at both public and private health facilities.

Furthermore, in the medium to long term, the Royal Government envisions enhancing the role of the NPCA in the development of the social health protection system in Cambodia, beyond its payment certification function; and the establishment and implementation of a Health Technology Assessment (HTA) system and its role in strategic purchasing, among others.



5.7. Subnational Administration

5.7.1. General Situation

To ensure the promotion of quality and efficiency in the provision of public services and the local development responding to the demands and challenges faced by the citizens in a timely and on target, the Royal Government has delegated the powers, functions, financial resources, human resources, and full responsibilities to subnational administrations, which enable them to manage, arrange, prevent, and mitigate various issues effectively, achieving better results on time, particularly in the health and education sectors. More than that, the subnational administrations play a crucial role in managing and implementing social protection interventions, especially social assistance programs include actively participating in identifying target population groups within the social protection system, such as poor and vulnerable households, at-risk households, and the people employed in the entertainment and tourism sectors of the informal economy; engage in cash disbursement, public awareness campaigns, and knowledge dissemination activities, etc.

Additionally, the relevant stakeholders must collaborate with the NSPC to encourage local administrations to continue effectively managing, organizing, and implementing work within the social protection system with higher efficiency and quality, in accordance with established national policies, principles, and national standards. Meanwhile, relevant ministries and specialized institutions should provide technical support, capacity development, and regular monitoring, supervision, and evaluation to ensure that local administrations have adequate capabilities and clear responsibilities in executing these functions effectively and efficiently.

5.7.2. Policy Measures

The Royal Government will continue to strengthen the capacity of subnational in line with the National Program on Sub-National Democratic Development for 2021-2030, which focuses on resource transfer to local levels for building both institutional capacity and human resources. The NSPC shall continue to collaborate with the Ministry of Interior and the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development to promote this work, focusing on three major factors: (1) capacity building, (2) enhancing communication between commune, district, city, and municipal and provincial administrations, and (3) digitalization.

Additionally, the relevant stakeholders must collaborate with the NSPC to encourage local administrations to continue effectively managing, organizing, and

implementing work within the social protection system with higher efficiency and quality, in accordance with established national policies, principles, and national standards.

Meanwhile, relevant ministries and specialized institutions should provide technical support, capacity development, and regular monitoring, supervision, and evaluation to ensure that local administrations have adequate capabilities and clear responsibilities in executing these functions effectively and efficiently.

Furthermore, to consider providing additional functions and resources to local administrations to implement various activities that serve the national social protection policy, the Ministry of Interior, which directly supports and encourage the local administrations with cooperation from the National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development, must collaborate with the NSPC.

6

Implementation and Monitoring & Evaluation Mechanisms

In response to the importance of a new phase of social protection policy directions, the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 serves as the long-term compass to continuously guide the development of a stronger and better social protection system in Cambodia further for the next 11 years. In this regard, the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 defines the implementation mechanism as well as the following interrelated and specific monitoring and evaluation mechanism as following:

6.1. Implementation Mechanism

The National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 is a national strategic document that sets out the policy directions to continuously promote the development of a strong, effective and sustainable Cambodia's social protection system to provide protection to all Cambodians at all lifecycle stages and to respond to climate change, crises and shocks. To ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of this new National Social Protection Policy Framework, a specific action plan with a specific timeframe will be developed in the near future based on extensive evidence and consultations with all stakeholders. This action plan will determine detailed short-term, medium-term and long-term priority activities with specific indicators as well as the implementation responsibilities of all relevant ministries and institutions, which will be divided into two stages: action plan for the year 2024-2030 and for the year 2030-2035.

6.2. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

The implementation and achievements in social protection system so far are monitored and evaluated in separate approaches with collaboration among relevant ministries and institutions as well as development partners, which illustrates the progress of the implementation of the past National Social Protection Policy Framework and the results of the implementation of each social assistance program and social security scheme. To monitor and evaluate the entire social protection system, a common social protection system monitor and evaluation (M&E) mechanism has been developed and implemented since 2020 with the aim to promote and enhance the implementation of national social protection policies as well as data and evidence collection that is an indispensable input for policy formulation.

In this regard, the M&E mechanism for the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 continues to adhere to the same approach, which is divided into two as follows:

6.2.1. M&E mechanism for the progress of the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework and its Action Plan

The M&E of the progress of the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 and its action plan will be prepared upon putting forth for implementation. This M&E has two main objectives: (1) to review the progress of the action plan and find out the relevancy, and (2) to find lesson learnt and good experiences from the implementation of the action plan as well as to find out the consequences, impacts and outcome of the implementation of this national social protection policy framework. Institutions at the policy level, regulator level and operator level in the social protection system are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the national social protection policy framework and its action plan, with the support of the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council and relevant ministries and institutions at both national and sub-national level. The evaluation of the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework, including the mid-term review, will be led by the National Social Protection Council and supported by relevant ministries and institutions in order to strengthen and improve the implementation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework and its Action Plan.

6.2.2. The Social Protection System M&E Mechanism

The continued implementation of existing common Social Protection System M&E mechanism is important to continuously monitor the progress and assess the impacts of social protection system in promoting health and well-being of Cambodians, poverty reduction, gender and social inequality reduction, as well as strengthen solidarity and social stability during the period of National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of the implementation of this common Social Protection System M&E mechanism, the establishment and implementation of M&E mechanism at program level under all operator ministries and institutions with inclusion of gender-relevant data are necessary to ensure the accuracy and consistency of data, transparency and reflecting the results of collaborative efforts to develop social protection system from all relevant ministries and institutions. Moreover, in order to increase the efficiency and maintain the momentum, the automation of data entry through an Application Programming Interface (API) between the operators' management information system (MIS) with the current common Social Protection System M&E data system is essential.

The social security schemes, the national social assistance programs, indicators, and the ministries and institutions defined in the current common social protection system M&E mechanism need to be updated regularly and in a timely manner by incorporating gender-relevant indicators, in line with the progress of Cambodia's social protection system and socio-economic development. In addition, a systemic impact evaluation of national social assistance programs and social security schemes should be conducted to measure and ensure that the goals and objectives of the national social assistance programs and the social security schemes are met and achieved as well as to provide a clearer picture of the contribution of social protection system to Cambodia's socio-economic development.

7

Conclusion

The RGC remains steadfast in prioritizing "people" as a key focus for national development, especially under the 7th legislative mandate of the National Assembly. There is a commitment to enhance human capital and the wellbeing of citizens through an effective and sustainable social protection system that supports individuals throughout their life cycle. In this context and based on the concrete developments in Cambodia's socio-economic conditions, it is imperative for the Royal Government to prepare the "National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035." This framework serves as an update and replacement for the previous National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 to ensure the sustainability of social protection framework to continuously guiding the development of social protection system in Cambodia, contributing to the enhancement of social welfare and sustainable economic growth. The new National Social Protection Policy Framework represents a significant shift in the development of the social protection system, transitioning from a pillar-based approach to the risks-based approach that addresses the life cycle risks faced by citizens. This shift is essential for the continued advancement of the social protection system in Cambodia.

This new policy framework serves as a key document for guiding the organization of social protection interventions through the establishment of policy measures that respond to the risks associated with the seven stages of the life cycle, including maternal and childhood risk, occupational risk, unemployment, health risks, disability, homelessness, old age and survivors. Additionally, this policy framework also establishes policy measures for relevant cross-cutting work to help promote the development process and hinder development of social protection system, both directly and indirectly. Similarly, the Royal Government has also established policy measures to further strengthen the governance of the social protection system across three levels: policy level, regulator level, and operator level, to ensure check-and-balance of each function.

In summary, the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035 reflects the long-term vision of the RGC to continue developing the social protection system, which can provide support to citizens in response to the life cycle risks, in line with the development of economic and social conditions in Cambodia and aims to achieve the Royal Government's vision of transforming Cambodia into an upper-middle-income country by 2030 and a high-income country by 2050.

Appendix I

Glossary

1	Universal Health Coverage (UHC)	UHC is about ensuring that all people can access quality healthcare services when and where needed without financial hardship, which include a comprehensive range of service provisions from health promotion, to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and to palliative care.
2	Strategic Purchasing	Health financing strategy which links budgeting and financial incentives to provider performance (both quality and quantity), pre-determined by detailed information on healthcare service delivery and healthcare needs of the target groups of the population.
3	At-Risk Households	Households who are at the risk of falling into poverty, and have at least 1 of the following vulnerability items, namely disability, children under 2 years, family member aged over 60 years, single female headed households, and households with members younger than 18 years and without members aged between 19-59.
4	Out of Pocket Expenditure	All direct household expenses including user fee, informal expenses, purchase of medicines, and other expenses to access healthcare. Out-of-pocket health expenditure also incorporates transport fee, and other travel-related costs, but excludes taxation and health insurance contribution.
5	Digitalization	The integration of information technologies to change business or operation model of ministries, institutions and entities, providing new revenue and value-producing opportunities in delivering healthcare services, with the aim of improving both quality and efficiency of the system.
6	Benefit	Refers to the benefits of the social protection system to be provided to the target population through the national social assistance program and the social security scheme.
7	Digital Social Protection	Refers to the integrated digital nursery of the Royal Government, operating in conjunction with the registration database of ministries - institutions, and stakeholders to establish a common ecological interoperability system for the Cambodian social protection system.
8	Permanent Disability Pension	Refers to the allowance that is provided to the NSSF who encounter work injury leading to permanent disability from 20% or more.
9	Survivors' Pension	Refers to allowance that is provided to the beneficiary as the survivor of the NSSF member sustains work injury leading to death.

10	Inclusiveness	Refers to the improvement of the status of individuals and groups to participate and benefit from the activities of society without discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, skin color, religion, ethnicity, status and family life.
11	Digitalization	Refers to the integration of digital technology into all aspects of business, economy and society, aims to transform traditional or less innovative work into automation systems to not only increase productivity but also provide new opportunities to facilitate innovation of doing business and living the new generation of humanity.
12	Self-employed	Refers to a person who works or earns his / her own income regardless of the wages or salaries provided by the employer or the state under the employment contract and does not use the worker in his / her work or occupation.
13	Arbitration	Refers to the settlement of disputes using the arbitral tribunal and may be within or outside the jurisdiction of the permanent conciliation body.
14	Social Protection Registry	Refers to the integrated registration database of the Royal Government which contains social protection identity data and socio-economic status data by generating a unique 10 (ten) digit social protection ID.
15	Health Equity Fund	Refers to the social health protection financing mechanism to enable certain target groups to access or use free healthcare services at public health facilities for which the Royal Government is responsible for reimbursement.
16	Gender	Awareness will provide consideration of socio-cultural norms and discrimination to recognize the differences in the rights, functions and responsibilities of women and men in the community and their relationships.
17	Exit Strategy	Refers to strategic thinking to lift people out of poverty by providing training, capacity building and decent employment opportunities to increase income and livelihoods.
18	Funerary grant	Refers to allowance for holding the funeral of the NSSF member passed away.
18	Data synchronization	Refers to the relationship between exchanging and updating data between two or more information systems.
20	Equity	Refers to the basic requirements of social justice that involve fairness or portion of fairness and are different from equitability or equality.

21	Essential Health Services	Refers to the necessary health services that include the services related to sexual and reproductive health; maternal and newborn health; child health; immunization; nutrition; communicable diseases (such as tuberculosis, HIV, malaria, etc.); neglected tropical disease; communicable disease like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, etc.) emergency; and mental health.
22	Rehabilitation Service	Refers to medical rehabilitation, vocational rehabilitation and social rehabilitation services that shall be provided in a bid to help persons with disabilities maintain and rehabilitate their lost competency and function for meeting the need of daily life due to sickness, injury or disability.
23	Harmonization	Refers to the correction of differences and / or inconsistencies related to the measurement of methods, procedures, schedules, specifications, or systems to make a consensus appropriate for all.
24	Interoperability	Refers to the ability of information technology systems to integrate (with each other) in an effective transition that will improve the quality, efficiency and ease of access to social protection services by allowing Communicate and exchange data with information technology systems easily and automatically under precise conditions.
25	Lifecycle Risks Approach	Refers to the consideration of the challenges that may occur at each stage of the life cycle, such as childhood, working age and old age, those risks include maternity and childhood risk, occupational risk, unemployment, old age and survivors, health risks, homelessness, and disability.

Appendix II

Decision on the Establishment of the Technical Working Group on Developing the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2030

Unofficial Translation

Decision

on

The Establishment of the Technical Working Group on Developing the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2030

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy and Finance
and the Chair of the National Social Protection Council

- Having seen the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia;
- Having seen the Royal Decree No. NS/RKT/0918/925, dated 6 September 2018, on the Appointment of the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia
- Having seen the Royal Decree No. NS/RKT/0320/421 Dated 30 March 2020, on the Appointment and Adjustment of the Composition of the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia;
- Having seen the Royal Decree No. NS/RKM/0618/012 dated 28 June 2018, on promulgating the Law on the Organization and the Functioning of the Council of Ministers;
- Having seen the Royal Decree No. NS/RKM/0196/10 dated 24 January 1996, on promulgating the Law on the Establishment of the Ministry of Economy and Finance
- Having seen the Royal Decree No. NS/RKT/0617/488 dated 15 June 2017, on the Establishment of the National Social Protection Council
- Having seen the Sub-Decree No. 43 ONK.BK, dated 28 February 2022, on the Organization and Functioning of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.
- Having seen the Sub-Decree No. 03, ONK.BK, dated 8 January 2018, on the Establishment of the Executive Committee and the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council;
- Having Seen the Sub-Decree No. 143 ONK.BK dated 19 August 2021, on the Amendment of Sub-Decree No. 03 dated 8 January 2018, on the establishment of the Executive Committee and the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council;
- Having seen the Decision No. 003 SHV dated 30 January 2018, on the organization and functioning of the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council
- As requested by the National Social Protection Council;

Hereby decide

Article 1. -

Establish the Technical Working Group on Developing the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2030, which comprises:

1	**H.E. Ros Silva**	Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy and Finance and Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the National Council for Social Protection	Chair
2	**H.E. Pen Sopakphea**	Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy and Finance	Vice-Chair
3	**H.E. Dr. Lo Veasnakiri**	Secretary of State, Ministry of Health	Vice-Chair
4	**H.E. Sum Sophorn**	Secretary of State, Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training	Vice-Chair
5	**H.E. Dr. Chan Narith**	Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy and Finance and Secretary General of the National Social Protection Council	Permanant Vice-Chair
6	**H.E. Chhour Sopanha**	Delegate of the Royal Government in charge as Director General of the National Social Assistance Fund, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation	Vice-Chair
7	**H.E. Pan Bunthoeun**	Secretary of State, Ministry of Planning	Member
8	**H.E. Dr. San Vathana**	Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Member
9	**H.E. Tin Sokkhuon**	Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Civil Service	Member
10	**H.E. Khieu Sophany**	Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Justice	Member
11	**Lieutenant General Sam Chanthuan**	Deputy Director General of the General Department of Military Services, in charge of Policy Affairs, Ministry of National Defense	Member
12	**H.E. Lao Sithiro**	Deputy Secretary General of Council of Agricultural and Rural Development	Member
13	**H.E Soth Kimkolmoni**	Advisor to the National Committee Disaster Management and Director of the Planning and Research Department, National Disaster Management Committee	Member
1 4	**Mrs. Sengphal Davin**	Deputy Director General of the General Department of Gender Equality and Economic Development, Ministry of Women's Affairs	Member
15	**Mr. Pheakdey Sambo**	Deputy Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the National Social Protection Council	Member

16	**Mr. Lee Yasak**	Director of the Department of Municipality, District, Commune and Sangkat Administrative Affairs, the General Department of Administration, the Ministry of Interior	Member
17	**Mr. Ros Ratana**	The Deputy Director of the Department Organizing Plenary Meetings of the Council of Ministers and other meetings, General Department of Coordination General Affairs, the Council of Ministers	Member
18	**Mr. Seng Cheasith**	Director of Fiscal Policy Legislation and International Tax Cooperation, the General Department of Taxation, Ministry of Economy and Finance	Member
19	**Mr. Srey Vuth**	Deputy Director General of the General Department of Budget, the Ministry of Economy and Finance	Member
20	**Mrs. Kruy Narin**	Deputy Director General of the General Department of Policy, the Ministry of Economy and Finance	Member
21	**Mr. Holger Thies**	Senior Advisor to the General Secretariat of the National Social Protection Council	Member

Article 2. -

The Technical Working Group on Developing the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2030 has the following duties:

- Review the report on the evaluation of the National Social Protection Policy Frame work 2016-2025 to gather input for the development of the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2030
- Prepare the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2030 to submit to the Royal Government for review and approval.
- Consult with experts, development partners and relevant stakeholders to prepare the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2030 in line with international standards and
- Regularly report to the Executive Committee of the National Social Protection Council and the National Social Protection Council about the progress of developing the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2030.

Article 3. -

Members of the Technical Working Group as defined in **Article 1** of this decision shall attend meetings as required by the Chair. In the event of absence, the Vice-Chair may convene and chair the meeting, as assigned by the Chair.

The Technical Working Group has the right to invite representatives of ministries/ institutions, to attend meetings if necessary, and to seek coordination and cooperation from all relevant ministries/institutions of the Royal Government, development partners , and other private sectors .

Article 4. -

The Permanent Vice-Chair shall assign relevant technical officers to serve as the Secretariat of the Technical Working Group as necessary.

Article 5. -

The Vice-Chairs and members of the National Social Protection Council , the Chair, Vice-Chairs and members of the Executive Committee of the National Social Protection Council , the Chief of the Cabinet, the General Secretary of the National Social Protection Council, the heads of all relevant institutions and entities, and the individuals as defined in Article 1 above are entrusted with implementation this decision letter according to respective responsibilities upon the signing of the decision letter.

Phnom Penh, Friday, January 23, 2023

Deputy Prime Minister Minister of Economy and Finance
Chair of the National Social Protection Council

(Signature and Seal)

Akka Pundit Sapheacha AUN PORNMONIROTH

Place of Receipt:

- Council of Ministers
- Ministry of Economy and Finance
- Cabinet of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister
- Cabinet of Samdech, Their Excellencies Deputy Prime Minister
- In accordance with Article 5 “for implementation”
- Royal Gazette
- Archive

Appendix III

Letter of order on the Establishment of the Working Group in the General Secretariat for the National Protection Council to Evaluate the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025

Unofficial Translation

Letter of Order
on
The Establishment of th Working Group to Evaluate the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 in the General Secretariat of the National Social Protection Council

Secretary-General of the National Social Protection Council

- Having seen the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia;
- Having seen the Royal Decree No. NS/RKM/0196/10 dated 24 January 1996, on promulgating the Law on the Establishment of the Ministry of Economy and Finance
- Having seen the Royal Decree No. NS/RKT/0617/488 dated 15 June 2017, on the Establishment of the National Social Protection Council
- Having seen the Sub-Decree No. 75 ONK.BK, dated 25 May 2018, on the Amendment of the Sub-Decree No. 486 ONK.BK dated 16 October 2013 on the Organization and Functioning of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.
- Having seen the Sub-Decree No. 03, ONK.BK, dated 8 January 2018, on the Establishment of the Executive Committee and the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council;
- Having Seen the Sub-Decree No. 143 ONK.BK dated 19 August 2021, on the Amendment of Sub-Decree No. 03 dated 8 January 2018, on the establishment of the Executive Committee and the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council;
- Having seen the Decision No. 003 SHV dated 30 January 2018, on the organization and functioning of the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council
- As required by the National Social Protection Council;

Hereby decide

Article 1. -

Established a Working Group to Evaluate the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 in the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council with the purpose to evaluate the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 and develop a draft of the second generation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework (Version 2.0) to be submitted to the management of the General Secretariat of the National Social Protection Council .

Article 2. -

The Working Group to Evaluate the National Social Protection Policy Framework in the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council comprise of :

1 .	**Mr. Pheakdey Sambo**	Deputy Secretary General	Chair
2.	**Mr. Holger Thies**	Advisor	Member
3.	**Mr. Leng Soklong**	Advisor	Member
4.	**Mr. Lay Sophanith**	Analyst	Member
5.	**Mrs. Hoy Bonasy**	Analyst	Member

Article 3. -

The Working Group to Evaluate the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 in the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council has the following duties:

- Prepare a concept note and action plan on the evaluation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025
- Prepare a concept note, action plan, and a draft National Social Protection Policy Framework the second generation (Version 2.0) to be submitted to the management of the General Secretariat for review and decide.
- Coordinate with national and international experts and relevant institutions on the evaluation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework.
- Coordinate and consult with the management of the General Secretariat and officers on work related to evaluation as necessary.
- Prepare reports on work results and make recommendations related to the evaluation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework to the management.
- Disseminate the results and recommendations of the evaluation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework to increase public understanding.
- Perform other related tasks as necessary and as directed by management.

Article 4. -

The Working Group to Evaluate the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 in the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council shall meet at least once a month. All members of the working group must attend the meeting upon invitation by the Chair. In the event of the absence, the Chair may designate a member to facilitate the meeting.

Article 5. -

Deputy Secretary General and the Directors within the General Secretariat of the National Social Protection Council, as well as the individuals as mentioned in Article 2 are entrusted with implementation this decision letter according to respective responsibilities upon the signing of the Letter of order.

Phnom Penh, Wednesday, January 19, 2022

National Social Protection Council
Secretary General

(Signature and Seal)

CHAN NARITH

Place of Receipt:

- Deputy Secretary Generals
- All Department
- In accordance with Article 2 “for implementation”
- Archive

Appendix IV

Supporting Working Group of the General Secretariat for the National Social Protection Council for the Preparation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2024-2035

1.	**Mr. Khean Tourk**	Deputy Secretary General
2.	**Mr. Sreng Sophornreaksmey**	Director of Department of Policy
3.	**Mr. Leng Soklong**	Director of Department of Supervision
4.	**Mr. Choeurng Theany**	Acting Director of Department of Operational Support
5.	**Mr. E Bunthen**	Deputy Director of Department of Policy
6.	**Mr. Lart Souy**	Official
7.	**Mr. Tith Annchan Krisna**	Official
8.	**Miss Heang Kanhary**	Official
9.	**Mr. Heng Bondol**	Official
10.	**Mrs. Hoy Bonasy**	Official
11.	**Mr. Lay Sophanith**	Senior Analyst
12.	**Mr. Tith Chamroeunreach**	Senior Analyst
13.	**Mr. Taing Kimeang**	Senior Analyst
14.	**Mrs. Meatra Vorleak**	Analyst
15.	**Miss. Sy Sovannary**	Analyst
16.	**Mr. Hun Pich**	Analyst
17.	**Miss. Lao Kimrasmey**	Analyst
18.	**Miss. Hang Ousa**	Analyst
19.	**Miss. Chhea Muoyleng**	Analyst
20.	**Miss. Chhum Monyroum**	Analyst
21.	**Mrs. Kao Sopheap**	Analyst
22.	**Mr. Men Chanmonypanha**	Analyst
23.	**Mr. Sreng Thymanysela**	Analyst


គណៈកម្មាធិការជាតិការពារសង្គម
SOCIAL PROTECTION IN CAMBODIA
NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION COUNCIL