**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**

**NATION RELIGION KING**

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**Report**

on

The issues covered in the Human Rights Council resolution 44/2 on the central role of the State in responding to pandemics and other health emergencies, and the socioeconomic consequences thereof in advancing sustainable development and the realization of all human rights

COVID-19 has spread worldwide and has impacted to hundred countries around the world, especially developing countries not only on the health emergencies but also socioeconomic consequences. The pandemic of Covid-19 has rapidly changed the global economic growth and affected to other factors and the lives. Cambodia is also affected by this pandemic that has impacted on country economic growth, health emergencies, social, education and other factors.

Cambodia has been affected by the community-outbreaks of Covid-19 following the event of 02 November 2020, 28 November 2020 and 20 February 2021, which caused the increase number of confirmed cases. According to the Ministry of Health (MoH) report by 15th March 2021, Cambodia has 1,325 cases of Covid-19 (Female=560) of those 730 cases (Female=286) have been cured and recovered, one case dead, and 592 cases (Female=274) are being treated. The rapidly increase of confirmed cases during the community-outbreaks has had a significant impact on the socio-economic and health of the population and other factors in the society. These also hinder the implementation of policies and programs by the public, civil society and private institutions, especially the provision of services to the poor and vulnerable in the communities. Despite the difficulties, the Royal Government of Cambodia has worked hard with partners to establish mechanisms and put in place measures, guidelines, schemes, subsidies, and other interventions response to COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) has actively involved in identifying the challenges and take necessary measures following the measures and guidelines of the Royal Government and the Ministry of Health responding to COVID-19 pandemic. Through this experience, the MoSVY has identified the challenges, take actions and measurements to address the issues and achieved as following:

1. **Human rights challenges experienced in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, including in relation to the measures taken as part of health response**

**Human Rights Challenges**

The pandemic of COVID-19 has become an obstacle for the Government, relevant ministries as well as MoSVY to implement its work plan, some of activities have been postponed or canceled to avoid eventual COVID-19 infection example: meetings, workshops, seminars, community outreach programs, community gathering, etc. This pandemic has also affected to our targeted groups and beneficiaries including: children, adult, elderly, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups as following:

* Some of people, especially the poor and vulnerable people are facing difficulties in their living, losing or reducing income due to the closure of some companies and businesses during the community outbreaks of COVID-19.
* Mitigating severe economic impacts: A large number of poor households in rural communities have suffered as factories and businesses remain closed. We need to intensify rural economic development that has been promoted.
* The poor and vulnerable people who mostly live in the rural areas may not well understand the threats of COVID-19 and its impacts. Much more measures need to be done including ensuring sufficient reach to the indigenous communities who live in remote villages.
* The influx of migrant workers along the borders pose the high risk of COVID-19 which requires measures to prevent those workers from eventually infecting COVID-19.
* Victims of human trafficking and workers returning from Thailand are not clearly identified before being sent to the community. Some of victims refuse to receive services and demand to return home or community on their own.
* Poipet parking center is currently housed for workers returning from Thailand. Due to its small size and overcrowding, there is a high risk of infection if someone is infected with COVID-19 and it can transmit the infection to the team who are working in the center. Officials who work with victims have a high risk COVID-19 infection. Victims are at risk with COVID-19 infection and its transmission from one to others as they arrive and leave the center without protective equipment such as facial masks, alcohol, gel, etc.
* Some quarantine centers do not issue health certificates to victims after leaving center to community, and the local authorities require a health certificate. In the absence of certificate, the victims are required to quarantine again.
* Neglect and lack of parental care: Children can lose parental care and attention when their caregiver is hospitalized, falls ill, or quarantines. Measures have been taken to control the spread of the virus, for instance: School closures can also make children miss out on parental care during the day (because their parents have to go to work). Due to concerns and fears about Covid-19, the support system for traditional care that replaces in the absence of parental care (family, relatives, community members).
* Mental Health and Psychosocial Stress**:** Children affected by Covid-19 and their families face a variety of stressors, social isolation, health anxiety, and infection anxiety or spread of the virus.
* Increased risk of violence, physical and emotional abuse: These problems can be caused by caregivers and other adult family members as they become more stressed. Children with disabilities, underprivileged children and other vulnerable groups are at higher risk for these effects.
* Drug victims staying in the Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers are more likely to be infected if someone is infected with COVID-19 because of the overcrowding of their accommodation and the lack of accommodation.
* Older people are more likely to be affected by health problems, especially COVID-19 infection and it’s transmission into the community.
* Reduction number of persons with disabilities come to receive the services from the Physical Rehabilitation Centers because of they are afraid the infection of COVID-19.
* 99,222 veterans, in addition to receiving the monthly pension of the Royal Government. Some veterans also have additional occupations to support their families, such as opening a small business, farming and sales. But after the outbreak of COVID-19, some businesses went down and sales were abnormally low.
* Mental health issues: These problems can be caused by other members who put stress on the family. Veterans who have lost their ability to work and are disabled can do nothing more to help support their families other than the government's monthly pension.

**Measures Taken**

In response to the above issues, the Royal Government, relevant ministry and MoSVY have taken measures and actions as following:

* Cambodia had passed the Cambodia’s Law on National Administration in the State of Emergency which is known as the “State of Emergency” Law. This was formulated in order to prevent instability and insecurity from happening in the society during the COVID-19 pandemic.
* Recently, Cambodia has passed the Law on Preventive Measures against the Spread of COVID-19 and other Severe Dangerous Contagious Diseases. RGC also has issued the Sub-Decree on the Health Preventive Measures against the Spread of COVID-19 and other Severe Dangerous Contagious Diseases.
* RGC has developed and been implementing the “National Master Plan for COVID-19” in order to control the transmission of COVID-19 and mitigate health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic.
* RGC established the National Committee for Combating COVID-19 to lead Government’s response which is headed directly by **Samdach Prime Minister**. An inter-ministerial committee has been also established to combat COVID-19 headed by the Minister of Health. The Ministry of Economic and Finance established: 1- The Multidisciplinary Working Group to plan monetary and banking measures to manage the impact of COVID-19 and the withdrawal of “Everything but Arms (EBA)”; 2- A Task Force to control supply and prices of strategic goods during the fight against COVID-19; 3- A Task Force to plan for budget policy on financing and social assistance in controlling the fight against COVID-19. The Ministry of Health issued the Instruction on Preventive Measures against COVID-19 at barbers, beauty shops and other related services. The Ministry of Commerce issued a Notification to Fuel Stations and Depots that sell fuel for unreasonably high price. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport issued Letter on Temporary Suspending all sport activities and exercises which require gathering in public and private sport clubs.
* The Prime Minister reiterated his request to the private sector to reduce rental fees or defer repayments without seizing property or implementing fines.
* The Prime Minister has set out measures to protect the infection of COVID-19 “Three Protections and Three Do Not”, including: 3 protection: 1. Wear a mask, 2. Wash your hands, 3. Social and individual distance (from 1.5 meters up) and 3 Do Not: 1. Do not go into a closed place with no airing, 2. Do not go to places where there are many people, 3. Do not touch each other, Do not shake hands, and so on.
* Rapid assessment on poverty situation: The Government conducted rapid assessment in order to identify the poor households who have been affected by COVID-19 pandemic.
* Mobilize resources for supporting the poor and vulnerable people: The Government called relevant stakeholders to support the poor and vulnerable people who are impacted by COVID-19.
* Raise awareness of rural community on COVID-19 and its impacts: The Government, relevant ministries and MoSVY have made efforts to combat COVID-19 through awareness raising to make communities better understand its threats, impacts and preventive measures.
* Social Assistance Program: The Government launched the Social Assistance Program to provide emergency assistant to the poor and vulnerable households. The Government also has provided emergency relief to the poor and vulnerable households.
* Ensuring attention to indigenous communities: The Government follow the principle of leave no one behind. Indigenous communities are not ignored and their rights continued to be respected and protected.
* Promote livelihood diversification to strengthen resilience of rural communities: The Government promotes agricultural activities which is a potential sector for rural communities to earn more incomes.
* MoSVY issued the Instruction on the Implementation of Measures to Prevent and Control the Outbreak of Covid-19 to Associations of National and International Organizations that have been implementing Projects in Child-Care centers and in the community.
* MoSVY issued the Instruction on April 26, 2020 on the Prevention and Control of Covid-19 virus infection in children without family, relatives or guardians. The main point is that social workers, organizations, and associations must intervene immediately in cases where children are abandoned, without family or relatives, and identification, and gather clear information to find the necessary services to help them.
* MoSVY issued a Letter to introduce the municipal-provincial DOSVY on implementation the role and responsibility for preventing and responding to the outbreak of Covid-19.
* Guidelines for managing cases during outbreaks of Covid-19
* Focal points in charge of child welfare of municipals-provincials DOSVY has disseminated the guidelines of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and other relevant preventive measures to officials or NGO staff who provide child care services in the center or in the family and community, as well as distribute hygiene items such as soap, gel, hand wash, mask, thermometer, water tank, broom, posters for educating child care centers in the target areas.
* MoSVY has disseminated the educational messages and video spots on the prevention and control of Covid-19 through Cambodia PROTECT project's Strong Family Campaign to end violence against children and the separation of children from families unnecessarily. This dissemination goes through the website and social network (Facebook) Strong Family Page.
* Promote the COVID-19 vaccination: As reported by MoH, number of voluntaries came for vaccination from 10 February – 14 March 2021 is 189,086 persons (Female=65,043). Among those, 170,659 persons (Female=57,430) were vaccinated and 18,427 persons (Female=7,613) were not allowed for vaccination.
* MoSVY has instructed all units and centers under MoSVY to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by using protective equipment, including masks, alcohols, gels, etc. according to the guidelines of the Ministry of Health.
* MoSVY has recently issued Guidelines for Tightening Measures to Prevent the Outbreak of COVID-19 within its units and relevant institutions.
* MoEYS has recently issued Notification on the suspension of the business of fitness club and all kinds of sports or exercise in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Kandal and related provinces, in order to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in the community
1. **Any technical support needed to address the challenges identified, including the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and response measures**
* Donation of COVID-19 vaccines is needed assistance for Cambodia to prevent the infection of COVID-19: The first 600,000 doses of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccines had been donated by China, on 7 February 2021. Cambodia among firs countries to receive COVID-19 vaccines from COVAX Facility: On 2 march, 324,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines licensed to Serum Institute of India arrived at Phnom Penh.
* Community Awareness Raising is a necessary intervention to contribute to the prevention of COVID-19 outbreaks in communities.
* Training of community staff on measures responding to COVID-19 is essential to community outreach and participation in preventing the spread of COVID-19
* Child Welfare Department has received technical assistance from relevant partners through online training on case management of children during the epidemic of Covid-19 and continued training to focal points at municipal-provincials DOSVY to implement child protection and prevention measures in this difficult situation. We still need more technical assistance in case management of children and child integration to families and communities to ensure that they can avoid Covid-19.
1. **Any good or promising practices in these areas, including examples of international cooperation**
* Child Welfare Department has worked closely with UN agencies, national and international NGOs such as UNICEF, Save the Children, and Friends International to prevent and respond to child protection work during the epidemic of Covid-19, including: production of educational videos on prevention and control of Covid-19, preparation and training on case management of children during Covid-19, receive sanitary materials such as soap, water, hand gel, mask, thermometer, water tank, broom, wallpaper for education.
* In collaboration with the World Health Organization, Cambodia has been receiving material assistance from friend countries
* The Government has received preventive materials and financial support from local and foreign charities responding to COVID-19.
* The MoSVY cooperated with World Bank conduct a survey from 17 August-7 September 2020 on 1,055 families for the implementation of the program in the first and second months. It was found that 99% of the implementation of the Royal Government's program was good, and these budget reached to 99% of the really poor beneficiaries and 1% of the beneficiaries have not yet received cash due to the fact that they have just received a new card, have not yet received clear information, and other reasons. According to the survey, 99% of the beneficiary's money was used to buy food, and the remaining 1% was used to pay off. 15% of the 1% used to pay off debts, 20% of 1% used for the purchase of necessary materials. The results show that 99.6% of the beneficiaries were satisfied and excited about the cash transfer program for poor and vulnerable families during the fight against Covid-19, and expressed their deep gratitude to the Royal Government for launching this social intervention program, which underscores Samdech Techo Prime Minister concern for the people in all circumstances, especially during this difficult time.
* The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation is one of the institutions has been assigned to implement the programme. This Cash Transfer provided to poor families since June, 2020.

Table below is the outcome in first phase of round 4 for January from 25th January to 24th February 2021 :

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of families** | **Number Member** | **Children** **0-5 years** | **Elderly 60 years and over** | **People with disabilities** | **Families with HIV** | **Total** |
| **Poor1** | **Poor2** |
| Urban inside capital Phnom Penh | **1,884** | **2,529** | **19,390** | **873** | **3,184** | **2,381** | **6** | **1,582,380,000** |
| Urban outside capital Phnom Penh | **16,314**  | **13,882**  | **135,277**  | **9,107**  | **15,338**  | **7,750**  | **4**  | **9,390,380,000**  |
| Rural areas | **247,114**  | **406,816**  | **2,576,494**  | **175,800**  | **321,887**  | **49,519**  | **1,959**  | **111,183,448,000**  |
| **Grand Total** | **265,312**  | **423,227**  | **2,731,161**  |  |  |  |  | **122,156,208,000**  |
| **Total number of families received support** | **688,539 Families** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The total cost of implementing the program from 25 June 2020 to 24 February 2021 amounted to 922,315,844,000 (Nine hundred and Twenty-two billion, three hundred and fifteen million Eight hundred forty-four thousand Riels only) equivalents 230.58 Million Dollar.

As well, for the first phase of round 4, which have implemented from 25 February to 24 March 2021, with cover the following beneficiaries:

* Total poor families received benefit 713,948 families
* Total Members of poor families 2,857,406 members
* Total budget expense 129,573,889,600 Riels, equivalents 32.40 million US dollars.

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