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# CAMBODIA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT



Societal Aspects of the  
HIV/AIDS Epidemic  
in Cambodia  
Progress Report, 2001

Ministry of Planning

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# Cambodia Human Development Report

Societal Aspects of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Cambodia  
Progress Report, 2001

Prepared with the assistance of  
United Nations Development Programme 



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# Foreword

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It gives me great pleasure to introduce the *Cambodia Human Development Report 2001*, which is the fifth in a series of national Human Development Reports published in Cambodia. More than 100 countries throughout the world have published national Human Development Reports. These reports have been important tools for the promotion of the cause of human development and a people-centred approach to national policy making. Each of the four previous *Cambodia Human Development Reports* has been very well-received by government agencies, NGOs, international donors and civil society groups. They have also attracted considerable media attention. More importantly, they have provided information that is useful for planning and programming purposes to many development organisations working in the field.

This report is the first Cambodia Human Development Report to be produced within a new capacity building strategy. It was prepared by the newly formed National Research Team with technical cooperation, and ensured full ownership of each stage of production. This is an important step towards national autonomy in production and full ownership of the *Cambodia Human Development Reports*.

*Cambodia Human Development Report 2001* focuses on the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Cambodia. Such a research effort will spread over a period of two years. This year's progress report documents the reciprocal relationship between the HIV/AIDS epidemic and human development in Cambodia. The Royal Government of Cambodia responded rapidly to the emerging epidemic in Cambodia, and evidence suggests that the HIV prevalence rate may now be stabilising. Nevertheless, Cambodia has the most serious epidemic in the region and its impact is now being felt throughout the country. For this reason, it was important for the *Cambodia Human Development Report 2001* to focus on understanding the main determinants contributing to the epidemic in Cambodia.

The report details how widespread poverty in Cambodia provides fertile ground for the spread of the epidemic and how the epidemic, in turn, undermines efforts to alleviate poverty.

The report highlights the key concept of vulnerability and identifies essential features of present-day Cambodian society that feed this vulnerability. Thus, the report is an important tool for policy and programme design. I would like to add my support to the report's recommendation that a people-centred approach is essential in order to build on the achievements of the Cambodian response to the epidemic so far and to move this response to the next stage.

The *Cambodia Human Development Report 2001* is the outcome of a nationally executed project funded by UNDP and executed by the Ministry of Planning with the technical cooperation of the Cambodia Development Resource Institute. This report makes extensive use of the quantitative surveys undertaken by the National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning: particularly, the 1998 population census and the Cambodian socio-economic survey 1999, which were



undertaken by the National Institute under the auspices of the Ministry of Planning. The report also makes extensive use of the HIV sentinel surveillance surveys and behavioural surveillance survey undertaken by NCHADS, Ministry of Health with support from FHI, WHO, UNICEF, French Cooperation and the Cambodia Disease Control and Health Development Project.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of several agencies and individuals in bringing out the *Cambodia Human Development Report 2001*. First and foremost, the Ministry of Planning would like to thank UNDP for its many contributions including mobilizing technical inputs and funding for producing the report. Ms. Dominique Aï t Ouyahia-McAdams, Resident Representative of UNDP-Cambodia, has been very supportive and encouraging of this new capacity building phase of the *Cambodia Human Development Report 2001*.

Second, I would like to acknowledge the Cambodia Development Resource Institute for providing technical cooperation and an appropriate academic and research-focused environment which enabled the development of professional skills among the National Research Team. Particular thanks are due to the Director of Research for the *Cambodia Human Development Report 2001* who facilitated this process, Dr. Claude Katz, and to Ms. Eva Mysliwiec and Dr Sarthi Acharya for their technical cooperation. The members of the National Research Team are: Ms. Khiev Bory, Mr. Maun Sarath and Mr. Chea Chantum (Ministry of Planning), Dr Lim Kalay (National AIDS Authority), Dr. Ly Penh Sun (National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STDs), Mr. Prum Virak, Mr. Deup Channarith, Mr. Long Yav and Mr Rath Sethik (Centre for Population Studies, Royal University of Phnom Penh). Assistance to the team was also provided by Ms. Tep Saravy at CDRI. The report was edited by Ms. Alexandra Maclean.

Third, I would like to thank the technical advisory group established by the Ministry of Planning for the *Cambodia Human Development Report 2001*, comprising of: Ms. Mom Thany (Child Rights Foundation), Ms. Khieu Serey Vutha (Ministry of Women and Veteran's Affairs), General Meas Sakon (Ministry of Interior), Mr. Lim Kalay and Dr. Tia Phalla (National AIDS Authority), Mr. Veng Bun Lay (Ministry of Defence), HE Kim Saysamalen (Ministry of Planning), Mr. David Salter and Mr. Gunner Walzholz (ILO), Mr. Geoff Manthey (UNAIDS), Mr Sar Nak (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports), Dr. Yath Yathy (Ministry of Health), Mr. Chea Chantum (Ministry of Planning), Mr. Chea Samnang (Ministry of Rural Development), Mr. James D'Ercole (UNFPA), Ms. Aye Aye Twin (WHO), Ms. Ingrid Cyimana (UNDP), and Ms. Heang Siek Ly (Ministry of Planning). The technical advisory group provided very useful guidance to us in ensuring that the report reflects the various concerns and sectors of Cambodian society.

I am confident that this year's progress report will contribute to the national debate and dialogue about the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Cambodia, informing strategic direction and policy and programming decisions.



Chhay Than  
Minister of Planning  
Royal Government of Cambodia

Phnom Penh  
June 2002

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# Foreword

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Cambodia faces an AIDS epidemic that potentially could reverse the development gains made since peace returned to the country. It is estimated that 2.8% of the adult population is infected with HIV, among the highest in Asia; that many tens of thousands have already died as a result; and that possibly two hundred thousand people including children will develop AIDS within the next 5-10 years.

The efforts of the Royal Government of Cambodia to achieve effective response to the HIV/AIDS crisis, including its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goal on HIV/AIDS – to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015 – are tremendous. Indeed, the leadership and broad partnership stance that the RGC has adopted in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic by steering reforms as outlined in the “National Strategic Framework for a Comprehensive and Multi-Sectoral Response to HIV/AIDS, 2001-2005” is already yielding valuable results. Of great encouragement for this concerted response are the indications of a reduction in the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate. In the context of such a broad partnership on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Cambodia is working to significantly enhance its support to the national response against HIV/AIDS on the basis of the UNDAF (2001-2005). In doing so, the UNCT has developed a Common Strategy that clearly sets out the future emphasis of the Team both collectively and individually.

In line with the above, the CHDR has opted to focus on addressing key human development challenges in relation to HIV/AIDS. Such a research effort will spread over a period of two years. This year’s Progress Report on the “Societal Aspects of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Cambodia” sets a framework that outlines the fact that HIV/AIDS deepens the poverty of households and nation, while poverty favours the spread of the disease by increasing the vulnerability of individuals to infection.

In acknowledging the complex links between the HIV/AIDS epidemic, Poverty and Human Development, the initial research work provides critical analysis to the effect that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is a development issue, striking as it does at the social welfare of the population of an already fragile Cambodian society. One of the key message of the Report is the importance of building on achievements to-date and the adoption of a broad people-centred approach, by giving voice to the people living with HIV/AIDS, ensuring respect for the rights of people with HIV/AIDS through improved knowledge on the disease, and addressing social inequity in order to ensure effective participation and mobilization of all social groups.

In this regard, I wish to congratulate the National Research Team for their outstanding work in preparation of this year’s Progress Report. It is indeed important to note that the responsibility to prepare the Progress Report was entirely a national effort, with four institutions involved in the research work. These institutions are the Ministry of Planning, the Royal University of Phnom Penh, the National AIDS Authority, and the National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STDs. The overall coordination for advisory and support services was provided by a national

research institute, the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI). This new partnership arrangement is designed to achieve two key objectives. First, it aims at strengthening national ownership on the outcomes of the key findings and policy recommendations of the CHDR(s), by allowing for an in-country and demand-driven research effort. Second, it seeks to adopt an alternative capacity development strategy capable of providing a more sustainable capacity in the Ministry of Planning, other line ministries and government institutions in relation to policy analysis and research methods.

I trust that the analysis and recommendations of this Progress Report will contribute to further support a broad-based national debate on the challenges of HIV/AIDS, including setting the stage to finalize the Report on HIV/AIDS through additional research work aimed at further shaping public policy direction, resource allocation, priority setting and targeted interventions.



Dominique Ait Ouyahia-McAdams  
United Nations  
Development Programme  
Resident Representative

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