



4th CYCLE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF CAMBODIA 2024 THEMATIC FACTSHEET 2 OF 4

BASIC HEALTH & WELFARE

TOPIC #2



3RD CYCLE RECOMMENDATIONS

- I) During the previous UPR cycle, Cambodia received and accepted 12 recommendations to, inter alia, improve access to quality, equitable and inclusive health services for all.
- II) During the previous UPR cycle, Cambodia received and accepted a recommendation from Portugal (110.189) to take all adequate measures to protect children from sexual exploitation, in particular in the context of “orphanage tourism.”
- III) During the previous UPR cycle, Cambodia received and accepted a recommendation from Fiji (110.68) which included effectively addressing children’s special vulnerabilities, views and needs when implementing national strategic plans on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change.

CHALLENGES

Health Rights



IMPACT

Since 2019, health care services have been expanded into rural areas, and efforts to ensure equitable access to health services have been undertaken, including expansion of the Health Equity Fund (HEF), established to enable households identified as IDPoor to access healthcare services free of charge. Significant progress in health outcomes for children has also been reported: for instance, the infant and under-5 mortality rates have declined significantly over the past decade.

However, access to affordable and quality health care remains far from being universally accessible, especially for the near-poor and groups in vulnerable situations living on the margin of poverty who are unable to access the HEF. Health expenditure can push many households back into poverty, and forces families to take on unmanageable debt burdens. The loss of income and livelihoods due to COVID-19 has further amplified the risk and vulnerability of the current healthcare system.

Welfare, Family Environment, Alternative Care



Despite positive developments to strengthen child protection and alternative care systems, challenges remain. For instance, cases of sexual exploitation and suspected trafficking of children in RCFs have continued to be reported. While prosecutions for sexual offenses within RCFs have secured convictions in some cases, a 2021 study found that there have been no known cases where child trafficking charges have been pursued against offenders, despite numerous offenses occurring in clandestine RCFs where removal of children from their families may have been prima facie unlawful.

While progress towards deinstitutionalization and reintegration of children is commendable, urgent work is needed to boost the number of qualified social workers and to monitor the wellbeing of reintegrated children on an ongoing basis.

Climate Change & Child Participation



In recent years, Cambodia has made significant efforts to improve and decentralize its coordination and surge capacity in relation to disasters.

However, vulnerabilities, needs and perspectives of children with different identities and backgrounds have not yet been adequately considered in policies related to climate change. Children’s capacity to contribute to the development and implementation of climate change policies has been neglected so far.

According to UNICEF’s [Children’s Climate Risk Index](#) (2021) children in Cambodia remain at a high risk of exposure and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. They are highly exposed to water scarcity, riverine flooding, and vector-borne disease.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Prioritize measures to improve access to quality health services, in particular in rural areas and for children with disabilities, children belonging to minority groups and migrant children, including by expanding access to the Health Equity Fund.
- 2 Identify and effectively address the causes and effects of child malnutrition, including underweightness, stunting and anemia, and raise public awareness of these issues.
- 3 Strengthen measures to reduce infant and under-5 mortality rates, in particular in rural areas, including by broadening access to IDPoor and other schemes.
- 4 In conjunction with ongoing efforts to monitor RCFs for sexual violence against children, review and update the Guidelines on Forms and Procedures for the Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking for Appropriate Service Provision, to include indicators of emerging forms of human trafficking, including orphanage trafficking.
- 5 Phase out institutionalization, support and prioritize family-based care for children wherever possible, including for children with disabilities, and strengthen the foster care system for children who cannot stay with their families including by implementing national Action Plan on Improving Alternative Care for Children 2023-2027.
- 6 Ensure that children who have been reintegrated from RCFs are monitored by and have access to appropriate, effective and child-sensitive support services. In particular, invest in locally based, qualified social workers, and strengthen case management systems and tracking tools to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all reintegrated children, especially those with disabilities and those in remote communities.
- 7 Expand social protection coverage, deliver safety nets and provide other support to families with children in vulnerable situations, and in particular support foster parents and kinship caregivers at risk of poverty and exploitation by linking them with social protection support services.
- 8 Specifically recognize in law children's right to a safe, healthy and sustainable environment in line with the CRC Committee's General Comment No. 26 on Children's Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change. Take steps to address gaps, especially in the procedural elements of this right, including access to information, the right to participate in decision-making, and access to justice and effective remedies, including the secure exercise of these rights free from reprisals and retaliation.
- 9 Building on the CESCR's 2023 concluding observations (para. 13(a)), ensure that all future action plans, policies and initiatives related to DRR, climate change and a safe, healthy and sustainable environment explicitly recognize children as a diverse, intersectional group of rights holders and as agents of change.
- 10 As per the CRC's 2022 concluding observations (para. 18(b) and 39(a)), facilitate the meaningful participation of children with diverse backgrounds and vulnerabilities in the review, development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of any forthcoming climate change policy.

SUBMITTED BY: CHILD RIGHTS COALITION CAMBODIA (60 NGO MEMBERS) & 3 CYL NETWORKS

AEA, BSDA, CFS, CCDO, CAD, KNGO, COLT, CCPCR, CHC, CIAI, CKIMHRDA, CLA, COCD, CPCDO, CRF, CTOD, CVCD, CWDA, ERIKS, GNC, Hagar, Happy Tree, Homeland, ICS-SP, KHEMARA, KKKHRDA, KNK, KrT, KYA, CIFA, LAC, Mith Samlanh, OEC, PE & D, UWS, Plan, PSOD, RAO, SC, SCI, SCADP, SFODA, KPY, SSO, SOS, SVC, TdH-G, TdH-NL, TLC, VCAO, WVI, WP, WOMEN, NTFP, ICC, WMC, BTS, MRO, PPS, CADDP, and **3 Child and Youth-Led Networks: CAN, AYRG & CCYMCR.**

