

**Ministry of Social Affairs,
Veterans
and Youth Rehabilitation
Directorate of Social Affairs and Youth
Rehabilitation**
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**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA  
Nation Religion King**  
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**COUNTRY PAPER
Presented by Mr. KEO BORENTR, Director- General
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Development of Human Resources and Implications of Aging Societies
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**I- CAMBODIA: BASIC NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE INDICATORS AND
STATISTICS**

Land area	: 181.035 sq km
Population (1998)	: 11.437.656
Population by ages distribution	
From 0 to 04 years	: 12.8%
From 05 to 14 years	: 30%
From 15 to 64 years	: 53.7%
Over 64 years	: 3.5%
Population in rural areas (1998)	: 84.3%
Total families	: 2.188.663
Average size of family	: 5.2
Annual population growth rate (1998)	: 2.49%
Employment by sectors (2000)	
Agriculture	: 73.7%
Industry	: 8.4%
Services	: 17.9%
Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 2001	: 259 USD
GDP annual growth rate, 1990-2000	: 5.%
Share of GDP by sectors	
Agriculture	: 37.6%
Industry	: 23.5%
Services	: 35%
Fertility rate	: 4.0
Prevalence of HIV/AIDS (2002)	: 2.6%
People living with HIV/AIDS (2002)	: 157.500
AIDS orphans below 15 years of age	: 30.000
Rank in the Human Development Index, 2000	: 130 out of 174
Human Development Index, 2000	: 0.543
Primary enrolment, 1998 (population 6 to 11 years old)	: 78%
Secondary enrolment, 1998 (population 12 to 17 years old)	: 14%
Adult literacy rate, 1998 :	: 71%

Infant mortality rate, 1995-2000 (per 1000 live births)	: 95.0
Maternal mortality ratio, 1994-2000 (per 100,000 live births):	437.0
Life expectancy, 1998 (years):	: 54.0
Underweight children under five, 1998	: 40%
Access to safe drinking water, 1998	: 29%
Population under the poverty line , 1997& 1999	: 36%
Gender Development Index, 1998	: 0.537
Persons per doctor, 1998	: 6,808
Persons per health worker, 1998	: 598

II- CARE AND SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY PEOPLE IN CAMBODIA

In the history of Cambodia, especially before 1975, Cambodians considered elderly people as the main resource on all aspects of Cambodian life, including experiences, skills, abilities, and general knowledge. According to the data of demographic census in 1998, the number of the elderly people, whose age is 60 years and above made up 5.2% of the population (1.6% among males and 5.9% among females). These proportions are projected to increase to 5.8% in total, 5.6% for males and 6.9% for females, by 2016.

Article 47 of the Cambodian Constitution provides that *Parents have the obligation to care for and educate their Children so that the latter become good citizens and Children have the duties to care for their older Parents according to Cambodian tradition.*

However, older people of today are the most disadvantaged group in society. Families and communities who traditionally provided support to older people have been fragmented and destabilized by decades of war and subsequent poverty. Features of modernization and the free market encourage rural to urban drift of the active population. This leads to growing geographical mobility and major social changes, such as the fast increasing number of nuclear families, changing rural/urban social and cultural values, etc, that all too often undermine the role, dignity, recognition and well being of elderly people. As result, many older people are now living alone, in poverty and without support.

HIV/AIDS in particular is having a devastating impact on many older people in Cambodia. At a time in their lives when they need support, many older people, especially women are finding themselves having to support their own dying children, as well as orphaned grandchildren left in their care. Older people need to feed, provide medicine, house, clothe and educate their dependants, but have access to few resources.

The Royal Government has provided elderly people with support and advocacy. For civil servants, when they retire or become invalid, they will receive cash pension payment from the government for themselves as well as for their wives and children according to the retirement or invalidity criteria. For private workers, whose retirement age is also 55 years, they are entitled to receive old age and invalidity benefit according to the Social Security Law. However, because the Law has just been adopted, this scheme has not yet been implemented.

In addition to this above pensions, a number of regulations, measures and infrastructure have been successively adopted and created to raise awareness on and support the elderly people.

For instance, on 07 May 1999, the Royal Government issued the Sub-Decree No. 4 ANK on the creation of the National Committee for preparing the International Day for Elderly to help aged people in the country. The Committee has the Prime Minister as Honorary President and the Minister of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation as President. The Committee then created Sub-committees in provinces and cities throughout the country for helping the elderly. The Committee has also set a principle for conducting an Elderly Day event for elderly people every year, in an attempt to raise awareness among Cambodian citizens, so that they can understand the important achievements and experiences of the elderly people. Since then, the Elderly Day has been solemnly celebrated on the 1st of October every year under the presidency of the leaders of the

Government and with the participation of representatives of government institutions, relevant NGOs and the elderly themselves.

The National Committee has issued Directive Circular No 15 KCC dated 22 September 2000 on enhancing activities to help elderly people at community, and provides support to set up Association for Elderly People in community in order to encourage old age resources movement to assist each other when they meet difficult circumstance. As result, there are now a total of 140 associations of retired civil servants, associations of invalid civil servants and associations of elderly people in Cambodia. Among these, some of them have gotten financial and technical support from NGOs and from Help Age International "HAI".

The technical inter-ministerial working group of the Secretariat of National Committee to prepare International Day for Elderly has cooperated with HAI to develop national policies and program for helping elderly people.

Thanks to this effort and cooperation, a **Policy for the Elderly** was developed and put into practice in late 2003. The objective of this **Policy** is to ensure that elderly people are provided access to opportunities that contribute to and a share in the benefits of the development of their nation. The support and attention given to elderly people and their participation in social benefits should be considered beneficial to both the society and the elderly themselves.

According to the Policy, the Royal Government shall care for the well-being of the elderly population and take appropriate and timely action to respond to its problems and need according to defined priorities. The Royal Government shall also support the elderly people and the burden of the support should be shared by the civil society, communities, families and the elderly themselves. The Policy defines clearly the responsibilities of the Royal Government in providing such support in the fields of social, health as well as economic sectors. The Royal Government shall also establish a scheme whereby elderly people, with requisite skills and experiences, can work as consultants or employees on a contractual basis in the private or public sector. Finally, the Policy stresses the need to conduct research on social health and economic issues that affect the elderly.

Although Policy developed, structures for coordination and implementation created and measures successively taken, the actual needs of the elderly people, in particular those of poor families have not yet adequately been met. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation will continue to strengthen the existing elderly associations, encourage the creation of new ones and put into practice the Policy recently developed by cooperating with relevant institutions, civil society, international organizations and NGOs especially the Help Age International.

III- CARE AND SUPPORT FOR THE DISABLED PEOPLE IN CAMBODIA

A- Overview:

Through Economic and Social Affairs survey in 1999, it has shown that there are 169,058 disabled people in Cambodia, of whom 99,509 are males, and 69,552 are females. These disabled people have been classified as follows:

- 23,977 persons have lost one limb
- 6,744 persons have lost more than one limb
- 30,590 persons have one disabled limb
- 6,761 persons have more than one disabled limb
- 5,050 persons have disabled lower limbs
- 1,201 persons have four disabled limbs
- 19,453 persons are blind
- 7,353 persons are deaf
- 3,414 persons are mute
- 1,246 persons are deaf and mute

- 12,576 persons are mentally disabled
- 18,471 persons are permanently disabled
- 4,791 persons have multiple disabilities
- 27,430 persons are disabled by various diseases

Of these disabled people, 4 out of 5 are living in rural areas; 3 out of 5 are men; and 75% of them are between 10 to 59 year-old. Among them, 44% of the total number are amputees or not able to use their limbs. There is 1 person out of 5, who has been disabled since his/her birth. The above disabled people mostly require physical rehabilitation services.

The works on physical rehabilitation for the disabled people are to reintegrate them back into the community, and to provide them with the necessary needs.

B- The Royal Government policy on the disabled people:

The Royal Government of Cambodia is a signatory of the Declaration on the full participation and equal right of the disabled people in the Asia and Pacific Region in the decade of 1993 to 2002. This Declaration, signed on 20 October 1994, states that the Royal Government has agreed to adopt the principles of the United Nations on disability, especially to carry out agenda for action of the decade in 1993 to 2002, which were prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and the Pacific Region (ESCAP). These principles have been applied in solving problems of the disabled from 1993 to 2002, and they include 12 points as follows:

- 1- National coordination
- 2- Legal works
- 3- Information
- 4- Public awareness
- 5- Accessibility and communicate
- 6- Education
- 7- Training
- 8- Prevention of causes of Disabilities
- 9- Rehabilitation services
- 10- Assistive devices
- 11- Self-help organizations
- 12- Regional cooperation.

C- The MOSVY plan for community reintegration program:

In order to push on the reintegration of disabled people into the community successfully, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MOSVY) has applied some important measures as follows:

1- National coordination:

The Ministry has issued Ministerial Order to establish Disability Action Council (DAC), a permanent institution whose activities are based on the welfare of people with disabilities and is composed of representatives of relevant ministries and NGOs. DAC acts as a consultant on disability issues by coordinating with NGOs and other Ministries and aims to alter tactics for rehabilitation, providing equal opportunities and measures to prevent disability.

2- Rehabilitation:

The Ministry has closely cooperated with NGOs to create rehabilitation centers in provinces and cities. At the present time, the Ministry has:

- 13 physical rehabilitation centers to produce artificial limbs and wheel chairs.
- Medical rehabilitation centers at 4 places, which are: the center to treat leper, the center to treat face and mouth diseases, physical therapy center, and the center to treat disabled caused by bone marrow injury.

- One factory to produce components for artificial limbs for distribution to all physical rehabilitation centers;
- One school to train technician of prosthesis.

3- Vocational Training for Disabled People:

The Ministry has cooperated closely with the NGOs to create 08 vocational training centers. Besides these centers, the Ministry has cooperated with the NGOs to train the disabled people in the community at many other places.

4- Job placement:

The Ministry helped people to get jobs by using 3 methods:

- Requesting the government institutions to accept disabled people to work at their places;
- Asking the factories and other private companies, and NGOs to provide employment opportunities to disabled people;
- Facilitating the disabled people to set up handicraft so that they can earn some income, and helping them to set up small business in the community where they are living.

5- Working with the disabled people in the community:

The Ministry has improved its role and task of physical rehabilitation at the local branches in order to:

- Help to look after the livelihood and health care of the disabled people
- Assist with the integration of children of the disabled into schools
- Help disabled people with job placement and skills training in accordance with their ability
- Help the disabled people to receive rehabilitation and medical care

D- The development program for disabled rehabilitation:

In order to carry out the dispositions mentioned in the Declaration of ESCAP on the full participation and the equality of disabled people, in the Asia and the Pacific Region for the Disabled People Decade (1993-2002), which the Royal Government of Cambodia signed on 20 October 1994, the Ministry has set objectives for the rehabilitation which includes some points as follows:

1-The implementation of the law on the rights of disabled people

Cambodia, at present time, doesn't have the law on the rights of the disabled people yet, plus the participation from the community in the area of disabilities is still limited. In order to ensure that the disabled people will have the right to full and equal participation in various activities, the Ministry is paying attention to reviewing the draft law on the rights of the disabled people, and pushing for the promulgation of that law as soon as possible, so that the disabled people will receive their basic rights.

2- Survey data about the disabled people:

The Ministry has instructed the provincial and city Departments of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation to provide data about the disabled people to the Ministry. The Ministry doesn't have enough information for use for the development of various work plans. The purpose to obtain the data about the needs of the disabled people is very necessary in order to let every disabled person to receive services at each place.

At the same time, each Provincial and city Department of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation has to classify a priority target, and then submit a funding proposal to assist them.

In order to best serve the benefits of the disabled, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and the Ministry of Health issued last year a joint Directive Circular on the use of Standard definitions, categories and characteristics of disability.

3-Widening the Rehabilitation Program in the community and creating Rehabilitation

Centers in provinces and cities:

Community based rehabilitation is a good program. It can ensure every disabled person, especially the disabled people living in the community, a chance to actively participate with all services of the program, and they will receive benefits from various development programs such as economic, social, culture development, and rehabilitation.

The Ministry is now thinking about creating Rehabilitation Centers in provinces and cities as well as at regional level in order to improve its services and facilitate the disabled people in receiving services from the centers based on their ability and qualification.

4- Managing and creating sustainability for the Rehabilitation Centers

The Ministry still needs the supports from the NGOs at present time and in the future. At the same time, the Ministry is thinking about how to take over the management tasks from those NGOs when they leave or end their programs in Cambodia.

In order to ensure a proper management and sustainability for the Rehabilitation Centers, the Ministry has prepared the following strategies:

- Making the unofficial staffs to become the contracted ones of the Ministry
- Participating step by step in providing fund for services at the Centers
- Knowing the gross expenses of each Center so that the Ministry can have enough information for the development of funding proposals to support it.

5- Expanding works on mental rehabilitation of the disabled people through arts and sports activities:

The Ministry has a goal to expand works on mental rehabilitation for the disabled people through arts and sports with an attempt to help them build hope for themselves and show to the community the abilities of the disabled persons rather than just look at their disabilities. They will also be helped to promote and expand friendship, and to raise public awareness within the community in order to eliminate discrimination toward disabled people.

In order to reach this goal, the Ministry has cooperated with some NGOs to:

- Organize the Disabled Sports Day every year;
- Organize the Disabled International Day every year;
- Organize disabled people into artistic groups to play music and perform concerts etc.

Phnom Penh, 08 August 2004