



EMBASSY OF JAPAN  
IN THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Japan funds project to end violence against children amid COVID-19 in Cambodia**

Although children face less health risk from COVID-19 than adults, there have been global reports that they may be at greater risk of violence as a result of the pandemic. Movement restrictions, loss of income, isolation, overcrowding and high levels of stress and anxiety increase the likelihood that children may experience and observe physical, psychological and sexual abuse at home. In response, the Government of Japan and UNICEF Cambodia are launching a new project, “Prevention and Response to Violence Against Children in Cambodia During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Recovery”.

The Government of Japan has awarded ¥340,000,000 (approximately US\$3,090,909) to UNICEF to fund the project. The objective of the project is to ensure that girls and boys in Cambodia are protected from violence, exploitation and abuse throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and during the period of recovery, increasing human security. Some child protection services have faced disruption during the pandemic, so this project aims to ensure the restoration and continuity of services.

The project will build on existing strategies and interventions to strengthen child protection services for highly vulnerable children and their families across all of Cambodia during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery. It will support the Royal Government of Cambodia to formulate and implement institutional and legal frameworks to address ways in which COVID-19 may have increased risk factors for child protection. It will also support teachers, other school staff, parents and caregivers in learning new ways to enhance their knowledge, attitudes and practice to prevent and respond to violence against children.

Most importantly, the project will ensure vulnerable children have access to quality child protection services, including case management, mental health and psychosocial support, legal aid, and health services. Support for helplines and hotlines will be increased to provide a safe and accessible channel for children and adults to report violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse. Child online safety will be promoted through strengthened partnerships with the

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry and awareness raising and educational activities for children and caregivers. Lastly, data management and evidence generation will be strengthened by improving the reporting and quality of data related to violence against children.

The ultimate goal is to support the Royal Government of Cambodia in creating a well-coordinated and sustainable child protection system to respond to issues that have been exacerbated by COVID-19, in collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other relevant stakeholders.

“Any form of violence a child is exposed to can lead to grave and lifelong consequences, and we are deeply concerned that they could be at greater risk of violence and abuse during this difficult time of COVID-19 pandemic,” said Forough Foyouzat, UNICEF’s Representative in Cambodia. “We are grateful to the Government of Japan for stepping in with this very important and timely contribution. This project aims to strengthen child protection system and services and contributes to the realisation of Cambodian children’s rights to grow in a safe and protective environment.”

“Childhood violence can harm children in multiple ways that last throughout their lives. Violence suffered in childhood often leads to a broad range of negative behavioural, psychological and physical consequences in adolescence and adulthood, which is also a challenge for economic development.” said MIKAMI Masahiro, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Cambodia. “UNICEF has been active in Cambodia since 1952 and has outstanding experience in working to end violence against children. This is why the Government of Japan considers UNICEF to be the most trusted partner to achieve this goal. The Government of Japan and UNICEF are deeply committed to working with the Cambodian Government to end violence against children and will continue until we have helped create a world where no child is left behind. We will continue to cooperate with the Cambodian Government to help the country recover from COVID-19.”

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*Embassy of Japan in the Kingdom of Cambodia*

*Tel: 023-217-161, fax: 023-214-330*

*Email: [eco.jpn@pp.mofa.go.jp](mailto:eco.jpn@pp.mofa.go.jp)*

*Website: <http://www.kh.emb-japan.go.jp>*

*UNICEF CAMBODIA CONTACTS*

***Rudina Vojvoda***

*Chief of Communication*

*UNICEF Cambodia*

*Tel: +85523260204;ext=434*

*Email: [rvojvoda@unicef.org](mailto:rvojvoda@unicef.org)*

***Bunly Meas***

*Communication Specialist*

*UNICEF Cambodia*

*Tel: +85523260204;ext=435*

*Email: [bmeas@unicef.org](mailto:bmeas@unicef.org)*