



PRESS RELEASE

Cambodia, China and UNICEF Partner to Strengthen Education, Health and Hygiene for Cambodia's Most Vulnerable Children

PHNOM PENH, 5 March 2025 – The Royal Government of Cambodia, the Government of China and UNICEF are partnering to improve quality inclusive education, health, nutrition and hygiene for Cambodia's most vulnerable children.

The support aims to fill critical gaps in the quality and accessibility of essential services for children, women and families—including newborns, infants, children with disabilities, children at risk of malnutrition, ethnic minorities and vulnerable families—in some of the country's most remote and underserved areas.

"We hope that children in the most vulnerable communities in Cambodia can feel the warmth and care from the Chinese people through this project." said by H.E. Wang Wenbin, Ambassador to the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Kingdom of Cambodia. "Children are the future of the country and the nation. We should care for the healthy growth of children together. They are the inheritors of the traditional friendship between China and Cambodia and the successors of global development. "

"China is willing to work with Cambodia and relevant international organizations to continue to strengthen support for the education and health of children in the most vulnerable communities in Cambodia under the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund, further promote practical cooperation between China and Cambodia in the field of people's livelihood, and make unremitting efforts to achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and jointly build a human community with a shared future."

Many children in Cambodia, particularly those living in hard-to-reach areas, continue to face challenges in accessing quality education, healthcare and clean water. *National learning assessments for Grade 6* in 2021 revealed that 45 per cent of pupils are below basic



proficiency in Khmer, and three in four students (74 per cent) are below basic proficiency in mathematics. One in ten children under five still suffer from wasting (acute malnutrition), which has remained unchanged in the past decade. And despite improvements in access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, one third of healthcare facilities do not have access to basic handwashing services, and 78 per cent do not have access to basic sanitation facilities. WASH access is further jeopardised by Cambodia's vulnerability to climate-related hazards.

"It is a critical time for Cambodia's children," said Dr Will Parks, UNICEF Cambodia Representative. "While we have made great strides in their lives and well-being, intensifying global challenges are threatening their futures, and it is the most vulnerable children who risk being left behind—at school, at home and in their communities.

"We are grateful to the Government of China for their commitment to working together with UNICEF and the Royal Government of Cambodia to protect the children who most need our support. Together, we can ensure that every child, regardless of their background or circumstance, fulfills their right to learn, grow and develop to their full potential."

This partnership aims to enhance foundational literacy and numeracy skills for the country's youngest learners. It will provide supplies, materials and knowledge to 10,000 teachers and 80,000 students in pre-primary and primary schools, including 600 children with disabilities, to improve early-grade and inclusive learning. To promote infant and young child feeding, growth monitoring and detection of child wasting, the support from China Aid will also strengthen the capacity of 600 health personnel across 200 health facilities and 800 Village Health Support Group members to provide lifesaving quality health and nutrition services. Healthcare workers and teachers will also be supported to adopt healthy and nurturing care behaviours and monitor children's growth, critical to decreasing the risk of childhood malnutrition, reaching 65,000 children under five and 30,000 school children.

Additionally, to address urgent gaps in access to WASH services, critical hand hygiene supplies will be provided to vulnerable households living in flood-prone areas, where the risk of contamination and spread of disease is high. Hand hygiene supplies will also be provided together with other learning and teaching materials to all 3,000 community pre-schools in the country, benefiting around 60,000 children.

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UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.

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