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**Kingdom of Cambodia
Nation Religion King**

Royal Government of Cambodia

**National Policy
On
Cambodia Youth Development**

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Prepared by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

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1. Introduction

The Royal Government of Cambodia regards youth as a key resource and the most valuable for national economic, social, cultural and environmental development and for the upholding of peace now and in the future.

In the Cambodia's social, cultural and political context, 'youth' are males and females holding Cambodian nationality, single or married, aged between 15 and 30. The Cambodia general population census in 2008 indicates that Cambodian youth comprises 33 percent of the total population.

The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) determines that education is a strong foundation of socio-economic development and ensures sustainable growth toward poverty reduction. In the academic year 2010-2011, the net attendance ratio for primary school, junior, and senior secondary school is 96.1, 33.9, and 20.8 percent respectively. The total adult literacy rate (aged 15 – 24) is 87.5 percent (Population Census, 2008), and total tertiary school attendance including at preparatory level, diploma, bachelor, master, and doctoral is 263,000 (MoEYS's Annual Report 2009-2010).

RGC regards youth as the corner stone of the nation and special focus has been given to the provision of quality education and capacity development for their easy access to the labor market. However, some young people have not yet had an opportunity to get a decent job. Those with low education are poorly paid. Women in particular do not normally enjoy high-paid jobs. Other youth migrate to cities, urban areas, and abroad to look for income generation opportunities. In addition, many face numerous difficulties or become vulnerable including school dropout, loss of choices, drug and alcohol abuse, and working under difficult and vulnerable conditions, etc.

To promote the rights and responsibilities of youth as the nation's active force and to prevent and reduce the aforementioned negative aspects, RGC has developed National Policy on Cambodia Youth Development (NPCYD) aimed to provide youth with opportunities for enthusiasm, perseverance, and professionalism in their capacity development.

Cambodia's NYDP was developed in line with the provisions of the Cambodian constitution, the Law on Education, Labor Law, the Rectangular Strategy – Phase II, the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs), the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), and any relevant international instruments for youth development in consistency with the country's goals.

2. Vision

In order for the Kingdom of Cambodia to acquire human resources for national development, the RGC had defined a long term vision to mobilize all effort available in the country with the aim to contribute positively to youth development and to provide them with opportunities to develop their potential, to access education, employment, and health services and to participate in decision making, and to contribute to family, community, national, and global development.

3. Objective

Develop Cambodian youth in terms of physical strength, intellectual, consciousness, ethics, value, and skills so they will become a good citizen of broader society.

4. Goals

- 4.1 Provide youth with opportunity to get quality and equitable access to education and vocational training;
- 4.2 Motivate youth to develop their sense of initiative, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship;
- 4.3 Promote gender equity and equality for both young males and females, and the creation of opportunities to empower young females in particular;
- 4.4 Assist youth in their personal development in terms of physical strength, knowledge, know-how, good morals ability to live peacefully and in harmony within a society, and sense of love of country and people, self-confidence, dignity, leadership, and broader social understandings;
- 4.5 Enable youth to share their perspectives, opinions, and decisions in their community and in the broader national development context; and
- 4.6 Mobilize effort from all relevant ministries, institutions, development partners, civil society, communities, parents or guardians to develop youth.

5. Strategies

To achieve the above mentioned purpose and goals, key strategies are as follows:

5.1 Development of legal framework and mechanism

- Develop legal instruments and mechanisms to support effective implementation of the Cambodia's NYDP by defining collaboration and roles of key relevant stakeholders;

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- Improve and accelerate implementation of national policy, legal framework and existing and new mechanisms; and
- Develop a national action plan and programs on Cambodia's Youth Development by identifying specific actions, timeframe, resources, and responsible ministries and institutions.

5.2 Promotion of education, training, and capacity development

- Promote and encourage young people's access to appropriate education and vocational training, particularly those with limited opportunity, and the vulnerable, including youth with a disability;
- Promote life skill programs that respond to the specific livelihood needs of youth and labor market demands;
- Participate in the promotion of quality education in technology, sciences, and language at all levels of the country's educational system in response to the national needs while meeting regional and international standards;
- Enable access to and completion of at least basic education by all young Cambodians and enhance the survival rate at all levels of education;
- Develop youth centers and vocational training centers and motivate them to actively participate in learning and vocational training in their communities;
- Encourage academia and providers of vocational trainings, public and private enterprises, and relevant authorities to participate in motivating and creating opportunities for youth to participate in relevant activities; and
- Promote entrepreneurship training for young by linking with the opportunity for development of small, medium and large enterprises in order for youth to start and expand their businesses.

5.3 Enhancement of health education, health care and health service provision

- Develop and enhance health education and improve access to information on education and preventive measures in areas such as health care, reproductive health, traffic accidents, and risks at workplaces, hygiene and access to clean water, mental health, suicide, and prevention of all forms of violence;
- Develop mechanisms for youth participation in health education activities and community outreach programs that benefit youth;

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- Facilitate access by youth to quality health services including providing physical and mental health, and social services to young victims of violence, trafficking, and sexual exploitation;
- Strengthen social safety nets to ensure that the poorest youth can access health services and continue to prioritize prevention intervention, treatment, and care to the target group of the most vulnerable youth;
- Provide quality education, support, and care for teenage pregnancy before married age by appropriately trained health staffs with the participation of relevant stakeholders and communities; and
- Improve communications with parents or guardians and counseling experts on health services, on sexual attitude, and related sexual practices.

5.4 Development of spirit of entrepreneurship and labor market

- Promote cooperation between ministries and public institutions and private sectors to improve labor market environment and entrepreneurship for youth, prioritized target youth in particular, and strengthen partnership with youth for education and training to enable better access to the labor market;
- Promote specialized training and livelihood skills and facilitate job seekers to access to employment information by job seekers;
- Develop an integrated plan for monitoring and responding to labor market needs;
- Enhance youth protection against exploitation and income generation, safety at work place, and social support for their family;
- Provide suitable opportunity for self development and for access to equal treatment and freedom of expression of their concerns, organization and participation in decision making that will have an impact on their life;
- Enhance support to youth on the development of their sense of entrepreneurship to start and manage their own businesses and provide services to young entrepreneurs for improving their businesses and their understanding of market competitiveness; and
- Promote and provide opportunity for youth to engage with small, medium and large enterprises and their access to credit to start and expand their businesses.

5.5 Promotion of protection, security, safety and justice

- Enhance close cooperation among relevant institutions for youth protection and in addressing issues facing youth;
- Enhance awareness for youth of law, rights, interests, duties, structures, and their responsibilities, and provide consultation to respond to their challenges
- Develop and implement commune/Sangkat initiatives to avoid youth criminal acts;
- Participate in improvement of judicial system and rehabilitation measures for young offenders, improve prison conditions, taking care and rehabilitation of young prisoners, and seek and encourage alternative options to imprisonment; and
- Facilitate communications between parents or guardians and authorities in judicial system to prevent violence, crime, and the risk of dangers to youth.

5.6 Enhancement of youth participation

- Create an enabling environment for full participation by young people within local communities and agencies;
- Promote formal mechanisms for effective participation by youth with civil society;
- Promote youth representatives at national, sub-national, and regional committees or councils, and ensure youth integration in the decentralization and de-concentration process;
- Mobilize support and appreciation by policy makers, program developers, service providers and management level, of youth ability and rights to get involved in sharing their inputs and initiatives in community and national development;
- Organize programs for youth capacity development and to enable their engagement in collection, processing, analysis, production, and sharing of data and information appropriate to young people;
- Promote participation, expression, and decision making by young people in education sector; and
- Mobilize support for youth voices in policy and legal instruments development process that benefit youth.

5.7 Promotion of leisure, recreational and sport activities

- Develop and improve sport infrastructure and facilities, and promote youth participation in training and exercises for physical and mental health and to prepare for national and international competition;
- Enhance awareness of understanding of the value of sport, support by their parents, communities, schools, clubs, sport federations, charities, and politicians, and their engagement in physical exercises, sport activities and competition, in order to develop all forms of sport activities; and
- Promote decent and diverse entertainment activities individually, in group or in club (to promote friendship and cultural exchange).

5.8 Promotion of arts and cultural activities

- Promote the value of knowledge, and understandings of the national history, traditions, religions, and preservation of national cultural heritage;
- Promote and support new initiatives for music, arts, architectures, motion pictures, literature, and other forms of arts;
- Promote arts and culture based education, participation of youth in the community's cultural activities and arts; and
- Promote contribution, and joint responsibility among arts and cultural organizations, mobilize resources to deliver training young writers and artists, and promote new innovations.

5.9 Promotion of awareness of environment, agriculture, tourism and businesses

- Raise youth's awareness of the environment and the need for its preservation and care;
- Raise youth's awareness of the need for a balance between sustainable development and environment preservation;
- Promote dissemination of information on environment, agriculture, and tourism through school curricula and media by focusing on individual and collective actions;
- Promote collaboration between youth and specialized institutions to improve capacity of youth for environmental protection and preservation;
- Promote the protection of natural environments and cultural assets, particularly temples and coastal areas;

- Participate in the documentation of tourism in a sustainable and responsible manner; and
- Promote awareness among youth of business and other sectors.

5.10 Promotion of volunteerism

- Raise youth awareness of the importance and benefit of volunteerism and develop networks of volunteers at national and sub-national levels;
- Promote the spirit and momentum of volunteerism and integrate in the National Strategic Development Plan and humanitarian activities;
- Promote formal recognition, respectful value, and provide awards and prizes for youth volunteers;
- Support all initiatives by local volunteers, volunteerism organizations, and projects initiated by youth volunteers; and
- Develop facilitation mechanisms and enhance effective cooperation between governmental institutions, national and international organizations, and private sector to help youth volunteers.

5.11 Promotion of gender equality

- Promote implementation and enforcement of law, policy and legal frameworks that support gender equality in all aspects of life;
- Encourage public and private sectors and civil society to focus their actions on addressing gender inequality effectively;
- Promote female youth to take leadership roles and exercise their rights in decision making in their family, community, and society;
- Promote gender mainstreaming and detailed analysis of gender inequality issue in all action plans under the CNYDP and increase youth's understandings of this issue, particularly female youth through school curriculum and various training programs; and
- Promote understanding of gender among youth to create a concrete foundation of respect for human rights in Cambodia and an effective and equal partnership between female and male in the process of national development in equality and equity of benefit sharing.

5.12 Prevention from drug abuse and youth rehabilitation

- Develop mechanisms to implement protective and preventive measures deterring youth from involvement in planting, producing, trading, transporting, storing, distributing, and abusing of any type of drugs;
- Develop peer education to promote awareness of the risk and impacts of drug abuse;
- Promote collaboration between ministries, public institutions and private sector by developing and expanding an education program to protect, prevent, and avert youth from engaging in any form of drug abuse; and
- Enhance and develop youth rehabilitation centers to provide treatment, rehabilitation, provision of vocational training to young victims and their reintegration in society.

6. Action Plan

To achieve the above mentioned strategies, there will be focus on the following:

6.1 Development of implementation mechanism

- Establish the National Youth Development Council (NYDC) as a coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanism and to assist government with the youth development process. The Council shall have a general secretariat and a number of sub technical committees to implement and support its actions;
- Establish Ministerial Youth Development Councils (MYDCs) as a mechanism for M&E of youth development and to report to the NYDC;
- Establish Municipal and Provincial Youth Development Councils (M/PYDCs) as a network of NYDC and as a sub-national level coordination mechanism and to assist municipal and provincial governments with youth development actions at municipal and provincial level;
- Establish *Krong*, district, or *Khan* Youth Development Councils (C/D/KYDCs) as youth development mechanism for coordination at Krong, district, or Khan level;
- Establish Commune/*Sangkat* Youth Development Councils as local youth development coordination mechanism at commune or Sangkat level; and
- Strengthen existing mechanisms to support youth development.

6.2 Development of legal framework

- The NYDC shall be lead by f the Prime Minister. The NYDC's members shall be appointed by Royal Decree;
- The organization and functioning of the NYDC shall be determined by Sub-decree;
- The MYDCs, the sub technical committees and M/PYDCs shall be determined by decision of NYDC;
- The K/D/KYDCs shall be established by decision of M/PYDC; and
- The C/SYDCs shall be established by decision of C/D/KYDC.

6.3 Financial support

The NYDC utilizes budget for its operation from an addendum provided as part of the budget for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and from other sources.

6.4 Human resource development

To ensure effective implementation of the Cambodia's NYDP, more attention shall be paid on leadership training, planning, technical data analysis relevant to youth.

6.5 Project implementation process

To ensure effective implementation of the policy, a medium term National Youth Development Plan shall be developed through comprehensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders. The Plan shall reflect the vision of the RGC on youth development in the future and shall respond to the National Strategic Development Plan. The Plan shall also be implemented within the framework of government's policy platform.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the policy is implemented in compliance with Cambodian context, a monitoring and evaluation system, review, and revision of the implementation shall be focused:

- Targets and strategies of the Cambodia's NYDP;
- Indicators for the National Youth Development Plan;
- Achievements against targets.
- Youth participation in national development; and
- Benefits gained by youth as a result of the policy implementation.

8. Conclusion

Cambodia's National Youth Development Policy recognizes youth's aspiration and needs, and their circumstances as indicated in the vision, purpose, goal and selected strategies to bring together youth from all spheres and mobilize resources to develop youth to become healthy people with knowledge, know-how, initiative, innovative, and entrepreneurship as a driving force for wider national economic development.

RGC believes that relevant ministries, institutions, development partners, civil society organizations, communities, family, individuals will contribute to promoting, disseminating, implementing, and supporting successful implementation of the NPCYD.