

## CAMBODIA

### Nutrition situation in CAMBODIA

#### AT A GLANCE

The population of Cambodia is currently around 17 million people<sup>1</sup>, with three-quarters residing in rural areas. Stunting rates have improved significantly in the last decade, with a reduction in prevalence from 32.4% in 2014 to 21.9% in 2021, and Cambodia is now on track to meet stunting targets. The prevalence of low birthweight has also reduced, although rates of other forms of malnutrition in Cambodia are still concerning: There has been no improvement in wasting prevalence, with one in every 10 children under 5 years affected, whilst rates of overweight in the same group are increasing. Rates of exclusive breastfeeding of

infants up to six months of age have declined from 65.2% in 2014 to 47.1% in 2021. Almost half of women of reproductive age are still affected by anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies are widespread in this group as well as in children. Cambodia is also suffering from a double burden of under- and over-nutrition: close to one in five adults is overweight or obese. Gender inequality continues to be a challenge to development, as gender-based discrimination and violence are common. Cambodia has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.486 and is ranked at 122 out of 166 countries in the 2022 index.

#### DATA ON ALL FORMS OF MALNUTRITION



The data reported in the 2023 EU Nutrition Country Profiles is drawn from the UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates and the Global Nutrition Report (GNR).

#### NUTRITION GOVERNANCE

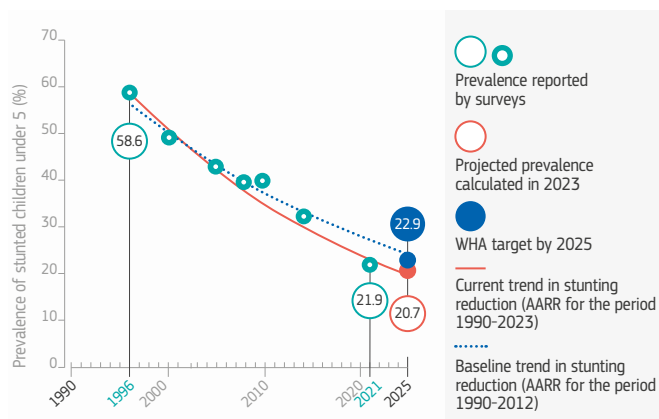
- Cambodia joined the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement in 2014. Germany and USAID are the joint SUN donor convenors.
- Food security and nutrition remain high on the agenda for the Royal Government of Cambodia. Aligned with the national strategic development plan, the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (NSFSN) 2019-2023 has provided the framework for Cambodia to make progress on nutrition.
- The Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) is the body responsible for facilitating effective coordination, policy guidance, monitoring and information management for agriculture and rural development, food security and nutrition.
- Priorities include: drafting and costing the next national NSFSN 2024-28; increasing and effectively tracking domestic resource allocation; empowerment of women and youth; engaging with the private sector; development of a food fortification policy and the establishment of a National Nutrition Institute.

#### Example of EU support

The EU-funded Advancing Social Protection in Cambodia project is steered by the National Social Protection Council of Cambodia and is implemented by the International Labour Organisation, UNICEF and Oxfam. The project has three main intended outcomes: to improve the delivery and coordination of social security and social assistance through modernised systems; extend social security coverage to more workers and improve the quality and depth of social assistance services for people living in poverty and vulnerability, while also enhancing the capability of social protection programmes to strengthen livelihoods and labour market participation. The project has received almost EUR 5.6 million of funding and will run until 2024.

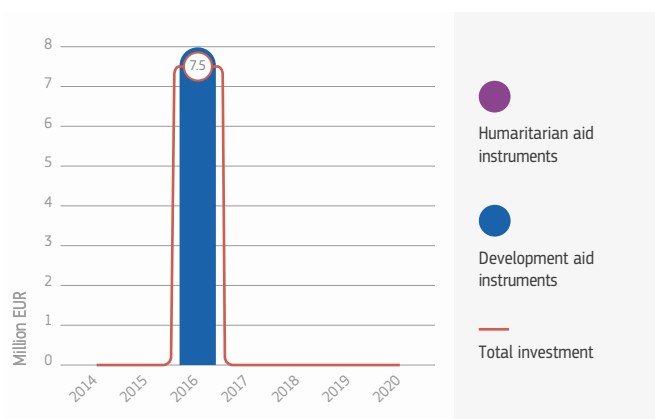
The project fosters synergies between social protection and nutrition, through a nutrition-sensitive approach to activities related to the implementation of the Family Package for Social Assistance Services, Shock Responsive Social Protection, and in the roll out of the Cash Transfer schemes, for instance the Cash Transfer Programme for Women and Young Children, and related trainings.

## Progress on the two EU pledges for nutrition



### TREND, PROJECTION AND TARGETS IN THE PREVALENCE AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN (U5) STUNTED

The national strategy 2019-2023 commits to reducing child stunting by seven percentage points to 25% by 2023. Cambodia has experienced a strong decline in the prevalence of stunting since 1994, accompanied by an impressive decline in the number of children stunted. As the graph shows, Cambodia has already exceeded the government's own target for stunting reduction as well as the World Health Assembly (WHA) target for 2025 (and, by extension, that of the principal indicator for SDG2). If the current trend continues, 320 000 children under five will be stunted by 2025.



### EU FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO NUTRITION BETWEEN 2014 AND 2020 – TOTAL OF EUR 7.5 MILLION

Cambodia embarked on joint programming with European partners in 2013; the joint European Development Cooperation Strategy for Cambodia was launched in 2014. The total amount committed for nutrition by the EU since 2019 (EUR 7.5 million) was provided through the 'Cambodia Programme for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in the Fisheries Sector' (CaPFish programme, total value of EUR 112 million). CaPFish's overall objective was to support Government efforts to develop the fisheries sector to increase food security, improve nutrition and foster economic development. It had two components, CaPFish Aquaculture and the Capture component, which aimed to ensure more sustainable, climate-resilient and inclusive development of Cambodia's freshwater and marine fisheries<sup>2</sup>.

## Planning for nutrition 2021-2027

Government commitment to improving nutrition is confirmed by the bold targets of the NSFSN, the achievement of the stunting reduction target and extensive commitments at the UN Food Systems Summit and the Tokyo Nutrition For Growth (N4G) Summit in 2021, including: increasing crop diversity; improving social protection for women with children under 2 years; increasing dietary diversity of women of reproductive age and access to healthy diets and safe food for all by 2030.

The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training has launched a campaign on healthy eating in the workplace, aimed at breastfeeding women, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, has made significant pledges to improve the conditions of maternity leave to support exclusive breastfeeding.

To effectively address drivers of all forms of malnutrition in Cambodia, it is essential to recognise the inextricable links between healthy people and a healthy planet and ensure a gender transformative approach. Cambodia faces acute climate and environmental challenges, which threaten to undermine efforts to improve food security and nutrition, especially in rural areas.

Nutrition forms part of the 360-degree approach of the EU's Global Gateway. The EU Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) includes support for sustainable food systems to increase access to nutritious and safe food and encourage responsible consumer behaviour and business models which contribute to transformation of food systems and improved nutrition. Private sector partnerships and job creation initiatives can enhance livelihood opportunities for women and young people and can be adapted to improve nutrition outcomes. EU support to education and skills development in Cambodia has contributed to a significant reduction in the number of schools without access to water and sanitation facilities and over a quarter of million scholarships financed under the Government budget, contributing to improved nutrition outcomes in the long-term.

Innovative financing mechanisms are key, as illustrated through the Bakheng Water Supply Project in 2020, whereby an EU investment grant (EUR 13.25 million) leveraged an additional EUR 197.6 million (European Investment Bank, French Development Agency and Government of Cambodia); and the rural piped water supply scheme under Rural Infrastructure Development for Cambodia (RID4CAM), where the EU investment grant of EUR 9.3 million leveraged an additional EU 96.1 million (AFD, KfW, BMZ and Government of Cambodia). A reduction in water-borne diseases will in turn improve nutrition outcomes.

Social protection is an essential strategy to enhance resilience, as well as supporting returning migrants and the unemployed to rebuild their livelihoods while accelerating efforts to diversify agricultural production for improved diets.

1 - UNDESA [World Population Prospects 2022](#) population estimate as per 1 January 2024.

2 - Data in this section excludes some regional, global and policy/research/information commitments that could not be disaggregated by beneficiary country. The European Commission applied the methodology of the SUN Donor Network for nutrition resource tracking 2014-2020 and the OECD DAC's nutrition policy marker from 2021 onwards. Data for 2022 are preliminary.