

CONCEPT NOTE FOR CAMBODIA'S 5TH NATIONAL NUTRITION DAY CELEBRATION

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH 2018

“ផ្តល់អាហារូបត្ថម្ភល្អដល់កូនអ្នកគឺជាការវិនិយោគដ៏ប្រសើររបស់អ្នក”

“PROVIDING GOOD NUTRITION TO YOUR CHILD IS THE BEST INVESTMENT”

BACKGROUND

Young child malnutrition is a known contributor to morbidity and mortality. In Cambodia nearly one-third of overall mortality of children under five – an estimated 4,454 deaths annually – is linked to undernutrition of women and children.¹ In the past two decades Cambodia has made significant progress in improving the status of infant and young child health and nutrition, with the under-five mortality rate decreasing from 83 per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 35 in 2014². While young child nutrition has improved and remains among priority health outcomes, progress is lagging. The health of mothers and children, specifically in the areas of wasting, stunting, diet and health service consults, all must be improved in order to improve the nutrition condition of children in Cambodia.

Stunting and wasting has improved of recent years, however nearly one quarter (24%) of children under-five in Cambodia are still underweight and 10% experience wasting, especially those living in rural areas. Similarly, child stunting declined from 59% in 1996 to 32% in 2014, but prevalence remains “high” as one of the most common forms of malnutrition in Cambodia². In 2013, the Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD), UNICEF and World Food Program (WFP) estimated that malnutrition represents a burden to the Cambodian national economy of more than \$266 million annually (1.7% of GDP) with stunting being the largest contributor¹. While stunting is not treatable, it can be prevented through continued breastfeeding practices and appropriate complementary feeding for children 6-24 months. Currently these preventative measures are not practiced in line with global or national recommendations, resulting in the continual prevalence of the issue in Cambodia.

Over 60% of Cambodian children aged 12-24 months, and 80% of 6-8 month olds, especially in rural areas, are not receiving the minimum acceptable diet. This is largely

¹ Moench-Pfanner, R. S. (2016). The Economic Burden of Malnutrition in Pregnant Women and Children under 5 Year of Age in Cambodia. *Nutrients*, 8 (5).

² National Institute of Statistics, Directorate General for Health, and ICF International. (2015). *Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2014*. Maryland, USA: Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Rockville, National Institute of Statistics, Directorate General for Health, and ICF International.

attributable to a lack of dietary diversity and food availability³. The lack of acceptable diet is attributable to both poor quality of food being fed to children, as well as inadequate food quantity. In addition, children are often fed non-nutritious packaged snacks as they are conveniently accessible and perceived as healthy^{4 5}.

Mothers play a key role in the nutrition of children, both with their own nutrition and their childcare behaviours. The health and nutritional status of children is closely linked to that of their mothers, and as such it is important to address the health of mothers where child nutrition is concerned. The first 1,000 days window between conception and a child's second birthday can have a profound impact on the child's overall health, growth, and development, but despite this many Cambodian women of reproductive age are malnourished, thereby increasing the risk of longer-term impairments to their child's cognitive and motor development. Similarly, the prevalence of mothers and caregivers seeking health and nutrition care for their children is low, with mothers predominately bringing children to health facilities for vaccinations and sick child care, and not attending for monthly growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) visits^{4 6}.

Improving the nutritional status of young children is necessary for Cambodia to meet its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, address issues of inequality, health and poverty, and achieve education outcomes for the current and future generations. There is global consensus that the first 1,000 days of a child's life offer a critical window of opportunity for improving cognitive and physical development, which has the potential to make lasting impacts on a country's health and prosperity⁷. Cambodia's 5th National Nutrition Day (NND) this Wednesday November 7th 2018, will aim to bring the importance of child nutrition and the best practices to the forefront of public awareness, as providing good nutrition to our children is the best investment in their future.

THEME

Each year a theme is chosen that places a spotlight on one particular area of nutrition to raise public awareness about. In previous years, the themes have focused on different areas of nutrition, from breastfeeding to improved hygiene. Previous themes are as below;

2014 Better Nutrition for a Better Life

2015 Breastfeeding is the Best Investment for Your Child's Life

2016 Improved Hygiene and Nutrition Make Children Grow

2017 Grow and Consume Diverse and Nutritious Food to be Strong and Healthy

This year, the Royal Government of Cambodia, along with key partners and stakeholders working in nutrition, has chosen to direct attention to child nutrition in order to further the current work being done to reduce infant and young child health and nutrition in Cambodia. The 2018 National Nutrition Day theme is as follows;

³ Som SV, P. S. (2017). Diets and feeding practices during the first 1,000 days windows in the Phnom Penh and North Eastern districts of Cambodia. *Nutrients*.

⁴ Save the Children. (2015). *NOURISH Project Social and Behavior Change Communication Strategy*. Phnom Penh: NOURISH Project.

⁵ iDE. (The 1000-Day Feeding Journey of Infants and Young Children in Cambodia). 2016. Phnom Penh: Melon Rouge Agency and iDE.

⁶ Save the Children. (2016). *NOURISH Project Baseline Survey Report*. Phnom Penh: NOURISH Project.

⁷ de Onis M., B. F. (2016). Childhood stunting: a global perspective. *Maternal and Child Nutrition*, 12 (1), pp. 12-26.

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“Providing Good Nutrition to Your Child is the Best Investment”

KEY MESSAGES/SLOGANS

To supplement the overarching annual theme, there are several other key messages presented in the form of slogans. These slogans are short yet impactful statements that capture the key messages of importance regarding child nutrition and aim to educate, encourage and ignite action among the audience. The proposed key messages for this year are as follows:

1. អបអរសាទរទិវាជាតិអាហារូបត្ថម្ភលើកទី៥ (២០១៤-២០១៨)

Congratulation to the 5th National Nutrition Day (2014-2018)

2. វិនិយោគលើអាហារូបត្ថម្ភ ដើម្បីសុខភាពល្អ និងកំណើនសេដ្ឋកិច្ច!

Invest in Nutrition for Healthy Lives and Economic Growth!

3. ផ្តល់អាហារូបត្ថម្ភដល់កូនអ្នកគឺជាការវិនិយោគដ៏ប្រសើរមុនគេ

Providing Good Nutrition to Your Child is the Best Investment

OBJECTIVES

The 5th National Nutrition Day will aim to bring together all relevant stakeholders, including government ministries, civil society organizations, development partners, private sector partners, media outlets and community members, to share in the awareness and importance of this year’s theme. This focused attention is a great way to build public awareness and stimulate discussion on the importance of nutrition for infants and young children and how nutrition in the early years impacts upon later life.

EVENT DETAILS

Date, Time and Venue

Date Wednesday November 7th 2018

Time 8.00 am – 12.00 pm

Venue **Room C**, Office of the Council of Ministers, Phnom Penh

Key Participants

Nearly 1000 people are expected to attend the event for National Nutrition Day 2018. This includes officials and staff from different line ministries, members from SUN CSA Cambodia, UN agencies, donor agencies, private sector partners, media outlets, university students, volunteer students, agriculture workers, and residents from the surrounding communities.