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CAMBODIA

Accelerating progress towards SDG2



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Accelerating progress towards SDG2

Policy Effectiveness Analysis for the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023

**Food and Nutrition Security Impact,
Resilience, Sustainability and
Transformation Programme in Cambodia
FIRST**

Kingdom of Cambodia, 2019

Contents

Foreword	i
Acknowledgments	ii
List of Abbreviations.....	iii
Executive summary	1
Rationale	1
Research questions	1
(i) Drivers and trends in food security and nutrition.....	1
(ii) Current policies and strategies	2
(iii) Emerging problems.....	2
(iv) Adequacy of current implementation mechanisms and funding	2
(v) Adequacy of current policies	3
(vi) Political economy.....	3
(vii) Credibility of existing policies	4
(viii) Priorities for resource allocation	4
Possible contributions for FIRST in Cambodia for 2019 onwards.....	6
1. Introduction	8
1.1 Rationale for the diagnostic exercise and research questions.....	8
1.2 FIRST in Cambodia.....	8
1.3 Methods, information sources and information gaps	9
2. Food security and nutrition diagnostic exercise for Cambodia.....	11
2.1 Drivers and trends in food insecurity and malnutrition.....	11
Availability	13
Access	14
Utilization	15
Stability.....	16
2.2 Current policies and strategies	18
2.3 Emerging problems.....	25
Economic growth.....	26
Migration and urbanization	27
Climate change	28
Changing tastes and preferences and the prevalence of NCDs.....	29
2.4 Adequacy of current implementation mechanisms and capacities	29

2.5 Adequacy of existing policies	32
2.6 Political economy	34
2.7 Realism and credibility of current policies	36
2.8 Priorities for resource allocation.....	38
Household food security.....	40
Care and feeding practices	44
Household environment and health services	47
Strategic priorities for food security and nutrition.....	48
Annex 1: SAFE Systems Assessment for Priority Actions under the NSFSN 2019-2023	53

Foreword

Food security and nutrition remain high on the agenda for the Royal Government of Cambodia under the *Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency Phase IV*, and the *National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2019-2023*. Under the Rectangular Strategy, the 'Human Resource Development' Rectangle has the goal of enhancing public health and nutrition to support sustainable human resource development, economic growth and social development.

The Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) chaired by **His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Yim Chhay Ly**, has the responsibility for policy formulation, strategic planning and technical co-operation for food security and nutrition in the Kingdom of Cambodia. In step with the NSDP 2019-2023, CARD has the responsibility to produce the *National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (NSFSN) 2019-2023*. As part of an extensive process of review, consultation and analysis involved in formulation of the NSFSN 2019-2023, this policy analysis has been produced by the FAO-EU First Partnership Programme between the Royal Government of Cambodia, the European Union and FAO. The process has been led by CARD through the Technical Working Group for Social Protection and Food Security and Nutrition and the Food security and Nutrition Forum.

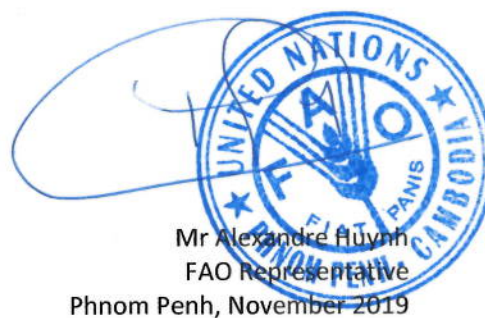
The analysis builds directly on the finding of the *Mid-Term and Strategic Review* of the NSFSN 2014-2018. The review findings were widely disseminated and have received high level political support and attention. The process of conducting the review helped to build cooperation and understanding across the sectors and agencies involved and a strong foundation for this analysis.

The major strategic directions for the NSFSN 2019-2023 are for a reduction in the number of strategic priorities addressed by the strategy, the separation of these priorities into **sector-led** and **joint** priorities for action, the integration of the *National Action Plan for the Zero Hunger Challenge* into the NSFSN and more definite actions for dealing with the double burden of malnutrition. These changes are supported by a revised conceptual basis to place greater emphasis on nutrition. There is a continuing strong focus on women and children, both in FSN and also in relation to sustainable agriculture.

The analysis which follows is presented as a foundation for the NSFSN 2019-2023 and as a basis for ongoing discussion in the key forums for discussion of food security and nutrition in the Kingdom of Cambodia. We are grateful for the support provided by the European Union and for the contributions of the many stakeholders involved.



HE SOK Silo
Secretary General of the Council for
Agricultural and Rural Development,
Office of the Council of Ministers
Phnom Penh, November 2019



Mr Alexandre Huynh
FAO Representative
Phnom Penh, November 2019

Acknowledgments

FIRST is a global programme funded by the European Union, implemented by FAO and run in country partnerships with national governments. In Cambodia, FIRST is a three-way partnership between the EU, FAO and the Royal Government of Cambodia. It is a tribute to the strength of this partnership that it thrives in a trusting relationship, comfortably aligned with the goals of promoting nutrition, food security and sustainable agriculture in Cambodia.

The direct partnership with the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) and the leadership of **HE Dr YIM CHHAY LY**, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of CARD has been a key element to success. CARD has led an extensive process of consultation, review and strategic reform that will culminate in the release and implementation of the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (NSFSN) 2019-2023. This process has included mid-term and strategic reviews of the NSFSN 2014-2018 and this diagnostic exercise in addition to ongoing consultation, formulation and dissemination events. The review process and the strategic analysis has attracted a great deal of energy and debate. We are grateful to the agencies and individuals who have supported this process, including the staff of CARD working under **HE LAO SOKHAROM**, (Deputy Chairman of CARD), **HE CHEA SAMNANG**, Chief of Cabinet and **HE Dr SOK SILO** (Secretary General of CARD). CARD has played a vital role in facilitating discussions through the Technical Working Group for Social Protection and Food Security and Nutrition, the Food Security and Nutrition Forums and in events conducted in the provinces where UN agencies, the SUN Civil Society Alliance (particularly Helen Keller International) and GIZ have been prominent in facilitating dialogue in conjunction with provincial governments.

Stakeholders involved in the dialogue included representatives from the national and subnational levels, including government ministries and line departments, UN agencies, donors and civil society organizations. Special thanks are due to the members of the FSN trainer pool, who facilitated the exchanges and to the members of the SUN CSA, who collected the records of events.

Special thanks to Ms By Sokunthea, Programme Officer, Food Security, Water and Sanitation of the EU Delegation to the Kingdom of Cambodia and Mr Alexandre Huynh, FAO Representative for Cambodia, for providing guidance on the diagnostic exercise and to Mr Joaquin Barata and Ms Julia Boyle (FAO Cambodia), for providing a solid basis for analysis. The diagnostic exercise has been supported by thorough review, with inputs from numerous technical specialists in FAO and critical insights from the EU and FAO FIRST management team. In addition, the FIRST Policy Officers in Fiji, Timor Leste, and Myanmar conducted a process of peer review and worked together to generate regional observations on policy effectiveness, and feedback from IFPRI and the technical divisions of FAO contributed to the global 'think piece' emerging from the country studies of policy effectiveness.

Our thanks to WFP in Cambodia for providing the infographics to illustrate the country profile and joint priorities for the NSFSN 2019 – 2023.

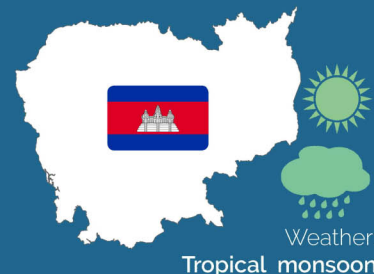
The financial support of the European Union is most gratefully acknowledged.

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASDP	Agriculture Strategic Development Plan
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASMP	Agricultural Sector Master Plan
CARD	Council for Agricultural and Rural Development
CDC	Council for the Development of Cambodia
CDHS	Cambodian Demographic and Health Survey
CSA	Civil Society Alliance
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSDGs	Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals
DP	Development Partner
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIRST	Food and nutrition security, Impact, Resilience, Sustainability and Transformation
FSN	Food Security and Nutrition
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HDI	Human Development Index
HKI	Helen Keller International
HRF	Humanitarian Response Forum
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JMI	Joint Monitoring Indicators
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoC	Ministry of Commerce
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MFAIC	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoIH	Ministry of Industry and Handicraft
MoP	Ministry of Planning

MoSAVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation
MoWA	Ministry of Women’s Affairs
MoWRAM	Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology
MRD	Ministry of Rural Development
MTSR	Mid-term and Strategic Review
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NCDD	National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development
NCDM	National Committee for Disaster Management
NIS	National Institute of Statistics
NNP	National Nutrition Programme
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
NSFSN	National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition
NSPC	National Social Protection Council
NSPPF	National Social Protection Policy Framework
PIP	Public Investment Programme
PO	Policy Officer (FIRST Programme Policy Officer)
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SAFE	Sustainability, Acceptability, Feasibility and Effectiveness
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SP & FSN	Social protection and food security and nutrition
SPSP	Sector Policy Support Programme
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition Movement
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WRA	Women of Reproductive Age
ZHC	Zero Hunger Challenge

CAMBODIA COUNTRY PROFILE



Political and administrative systems

Sub-divisions

One capital, 24 provinces, 177 districts/Khan, 1,609 communes, 13,406 villages

Capital

Phnom Penh

Head of state

King Norodom Sihamoni

Head of government

Prime Minister Hun Sen

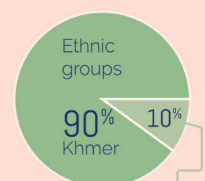
Legislative body

Parliamentary and Senate



Demography

Population ('000)	15,288 ^a
Population under 5 ('000)	1,800 ^b
Population under 18 ('000)	5,900 ^b
% Population growth rate	1.2 ^a
Land area ('000 sq.km)	181.035 ^d
Density per sq.km	75 ^d
% urbanized	19.5% ^d
Life expectancy for male	67.1 ^d
Life expectancy for female	70.1 ^d
Number of births ('000)	98 ^d



Chinese, Vietnamese and indigenous groups



Socio-economic environment

Gross National Product per capita (USD)	\$1,395 ^b
Gross Domestic Product per capita (USD)	\$1,427 ^c
Human development index	0.582 ^b
Radio sets per 1000 population	300 ^c
TV sets per 1000 population	730 ^c
% female in labor force	79.9% ^c



Nutrition

Child stunting rate	32% ^d
Child wasting rate	10% ^d
Child underweight rate	24% ^d
Early initiation of breastfeeding	63% ^d
Exclusive breastfeeding under 6 months	65% ^d
Continued breastfeeding at age of 12 months	80% ^d
Continued breastfeeding at age of 24 months	37% ^d
Minimum acceptable diet age 6-23 months	30% ^d



Health

Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live birth)	170 ^d
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	28 ^d
Under five mortality rate (per 10,000 live births)	35 ^d



WASH

Improved safe drinking water	65.2% (dry season) ^d
	83.7% (rainy season) ^d
	75.5% (total) ^d
Improved sanitation	42.4% ^d

Sources:

a: National Institute of Statistics, 2019, Population Census of Cambodia 2019.

b: UNICEF Cambodia and Division of Data, Research and Policy, UNICEF New York, 2018, A Statistical Profile of Child Protection in Cambodia.

c: National Institute of Statistics, 2018, Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2017.

d: National Institute of Statistics, Directorate General for Health, and ICF International, 2015, Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2014.

Diagnostic exercise to support the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023

Executive summary

Rationale

The diagnostic exercise in Cambodia is focused on the food security and nutrition domain; it has been integral to the preparation of the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023. The diagnostic exercise was developed on the basis that the EU and FAO are strategically positioned to assist the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) to improve food security and nutrition, working through the FIRST Programme to support the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) and the relevant line ministries. The effectiveness of the diagnostic exercise has been increased by the direct involvement of the RGC and other stakeholders in the food security and nutrition domain and reflects other contributions from national and subnational strategic planning processes. The diagnostic exercise is the foundation for ongoing funding of the FIRST Programme in Cambodia and informs its work plan for 2019-2020.

Research questions

The diagnostic exercise is organized around a set of eight key issues:

(i) Drivers and trends in food security and nutrition

What are the trends, geographical and socio-economic patterns, and prospects for eradicating food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty in the country? What are the key drivers of food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty?

Cambodia has made good progress in moving from severe nutrition and poverty, assisted by strong economic growth and structural transformation. Given the country's dramatic economic growth in recent years, attention is needed for the most vulnerable people and for specific regions. Cambodia faces ongoing challenges in terms of availability, access and utilization of food, food safety, health care services and behavioural change communication. These challenges particularly threaten vulnerable groups, especially in the light of climate change and the frequency of natural disasters. As incomes and urbanization increase, there is a need to stress the importance of healthy diets and to address the double burden of malnutrition. In concert with the trends in migration and urbanization, the rate of breast feeding is declining in urban areas.

(ii) Current policies and strategies

Is the current set of policies and strategies sufficiently focused and designed to adequately address the immediate and underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition in the most impactful way?

Overarching policy guidance for national policy is provided by the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV, which broadly follows the pattern of Phase III. The National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (NSFSN), which are released every five years, provide regular updates for national and sectoral strategies. The NSDP and NSFSN for 2019-2023 are currently under development. In general, sectoral policies and social protection around food security and nutrition issues need strengthening.

Are the underlying conceptual models suitable?

The conceptual model underlying the NSFSN 2014-2018 focused on the four dimensions of food security (availability, access, utilization, and stability)¹. It is generally recognized that a more comprehensive model is needed to bring nutrition to the forefront and to better recognize the linkages between the various underlying causes of malnutrition.

(iii) Emerging problems

Are current policies and strategies realistic and sufficiently forward-looking to address emerging problems related to migration, economic growth, changing tastes and preferences, youth unemployment, climate change, population growth, urbanization, etc.?

Strong economic growth does not automatically lead to a reduction in malnutrition. There is growing recognition of the various factors that are posing new challenges for malnutrition in Cambodia, where migration, urbanization, climate change, increases in overweight and obesity – in addition to strong economic growth – all impact on diets and feeding practices. The NSFSN 2019-2023 is designed to respond to these challenges.

(iv) Adequacy of current implementation mechanisms and funding

Are the implementation mechanisms and capacities that are in place adequate to reach the people and areas most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition? What are the particular needs at the subnational level?

¹ FAO. 2006. *Food Security*, Policy Brief June 2006, Issue 2.

fao.org/fileadmin/templates/faoitally/documents/pdf/pdf_Food_Security_Cocept_Note.pdf

The main bottlenecks to food security and nutrition for CARD, and for ministerial and subnational bodies are inadequate information systems, funding, coordination, and human resource and organizational capacity. There is an urgent need to incorporate food security and nutrition issues into the functions assigned to local level governments; otherwise there is the risk that actions relevant to food security and nutrition by subnational governments will be excluded (with the exception of sector-led contributions such as for building infrastructure). We need a better understanding of food security and nutrition challenges, better sources of information and stronger efforts to ensure that food security and nutrition are integrated into sectoral policies and cross-sectoral dialogues. It is difficult to identify funding for food security and nutrition, especially for nutrition-sensitive investments where the impacts of such investments on reducing food insecurity or combatting malnutrition are not clear.

(v) Adequacy of current policies

To what extent are existing policies and strategies adequately resourced, implemented and monitored? What are the implications of policy adequacy for achieving the intended food security and nutrition impacts?

Resources for supporting priority actions for achieving food security and nutrition in Cambodia are inadequate. There is a heavy demand on the RGC to increase funding for food security and nutrition and many competing demands for public funds. There is no effective strategy or regulation to support the constructive engagement of the private sector. There are major limitations in the availability of data needed to monitor progress. Policies for transferring responsibilities from the national to subnational level resources and capacities to address the challenges associated with food insecurity and malnutrition. The lack of a law around food policy is a critical constraint to the development of safe and nutritious food systems. Difficulties in achieving inter-ministerial agreement on such a law have limited progress through the Council of Ministers.

(vi) Political economy

What are the political economy factors that may prevent the adoption and/or implementation of the measures, actions, and implementation mechanisms needed to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by 2030?

High level support and political commitment for the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV, the NSDP and the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) have been confirmed. However, the lack of indicators for CSDG 2.1 means that little attention may be paid to the achievement of this goal. There are challenges to reconciling the Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC), CSDGs and the NSFSN 2019-2023 because of the detail in the objectives, targets and indicators and there is an ongoing need for additional resources and recognition of the importance of nutrition. The attention given to this issue may be masked by the achievement of lower middle-income status and changing arrangements for development assistance.

There are challenges involved in coordinating and managing multisectoral issues because sectoral and single-ministry interests may create barriers in areas of common interest. This is especially true in efforts around food safety, where many ministries are involved in value chains and the coordinating authority for the actions of these ministries may be weak. There is the potential for a similar division to arise between food security, nutrition and social protection interests, with each governed by a different council. Nonetheless, investments by the RGC in maternal and child cash transfers and school feeding programmes represent a renewed and growing commitment.

(vii) Credibility of existing policies

What is the realism/credibility of the current set of policies and strategies?

Based on the analysis presented in this report, there are four main challenges to the realism and credibility of current policies in the FSN arena:

- The lack of linkages between stated priorities for legislative change and allocation of finance (both for domestic and donor funds);
 - The lack of linkages between priority actions and specific responsibilities or accountabilities;
 - Challenges in setting targets and monitoring progress;
 - Information and capacity gaps at the subnational level.
-

What are the information gaps that limit understanding?

There is a critical gap in Cambodia's framework for achieving the SDGs on food security and nutrition, given that there is no target for CSDG 2.1. Without this target, there are no measures of food security in the national indicator set. This situation was likely driven by the lack of data for the indicator set, which influenced the choice of targets. Timely and reliable information for evidence-based policy-making and for reporting progress are critically limited for food security and nutrition. In addition, there are gaps in understanding the core concepts and the available options at subnational levels.

(viii) Priorities for resource allocation

Which areas of the policy framework and implementation capacity gaps should be prioritized for resource allocation?

In the past, too many priority actions and indicators were identified in the NSFSN 2014-2018 without matching accountability for the actions with specific outcomes and funding. There is a challenge in bringing all sector-specific priorities under the umbrella of CARD, when resources are allocated and actions are implemented by ministries and agencies that mostly

operate independently. For this reason, it is important to separate out sector-led contributions, recognizing that these are under the control of line ministries, and for CARD to leave the direction such contributions to the ministries and agencies involved. CARD can assist ministries with advocacy for funding for food security and nutrition activities and in reporting the contributions made to the broader impacts on malnutrition and food security.

Sector-led contributions are vital to achieving food security and combatting malnutrition. CARD has a role to play in ensuring that cross-cutting issues are addressed, and advocating for a coordinated approach to sector-led contributions. In addition, there are specific actions requiring multisectoral coordination. CARD should focus its efforts on the joint actions that require coordination and integration and are within the realistic limits of its resources and influence. Based on this logic, a twin-track approach is recommended for the NSFSN 2019-2023, which separates sector-led contributions and joint priorities for multisectoral coordination (see Figure 1).

THE TWIN TRACK APPROACH

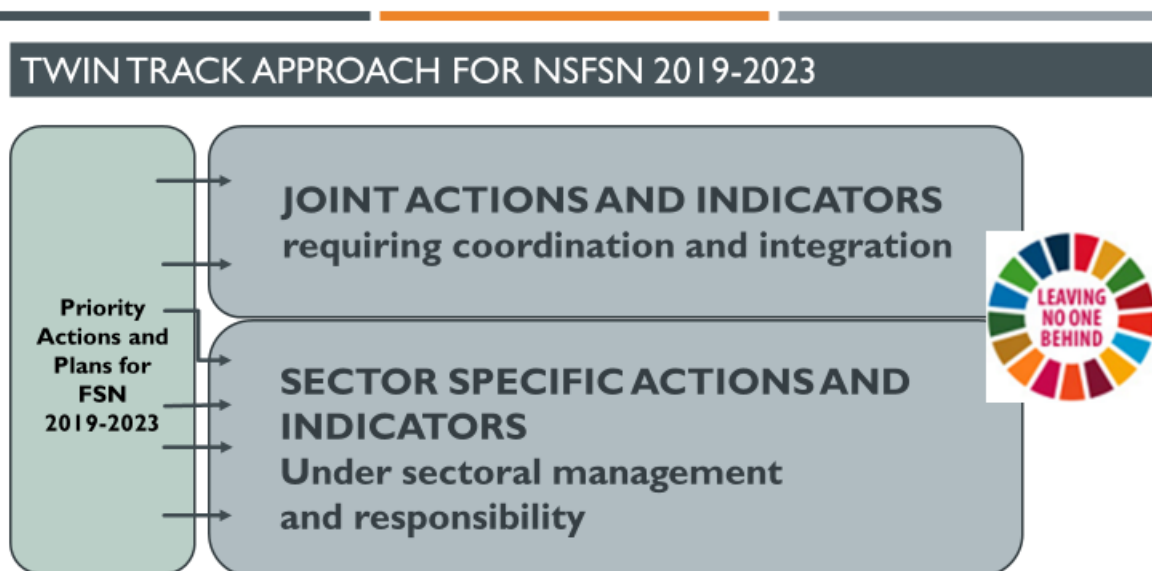


Figure 1: The Twin track approach for the NSFSN 2019-2023

CARD can focus on a limited subset of actions requiring multisectoral coordination and facilitate institutional strengthening, capacity building and partnerships for strategic action. Such actions can be further divided in terms of cross-cutting issues, sector-led actions, priorities for multisectoral coordination, and the strengthening of the institutions and partnerships needed to support these actions. These roles are outlined in Figure 2.

Comprehensive information was collected during the mid-term and strategic review (MTR) of the NSFSN 2014-2019 for prioritization and resource allocation. The MTR highlighted the importance of focusing on implementation, especially at the subnational level, where coordination and capacity building were identified as critical issues.

THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR FSN IN CAMBODIA

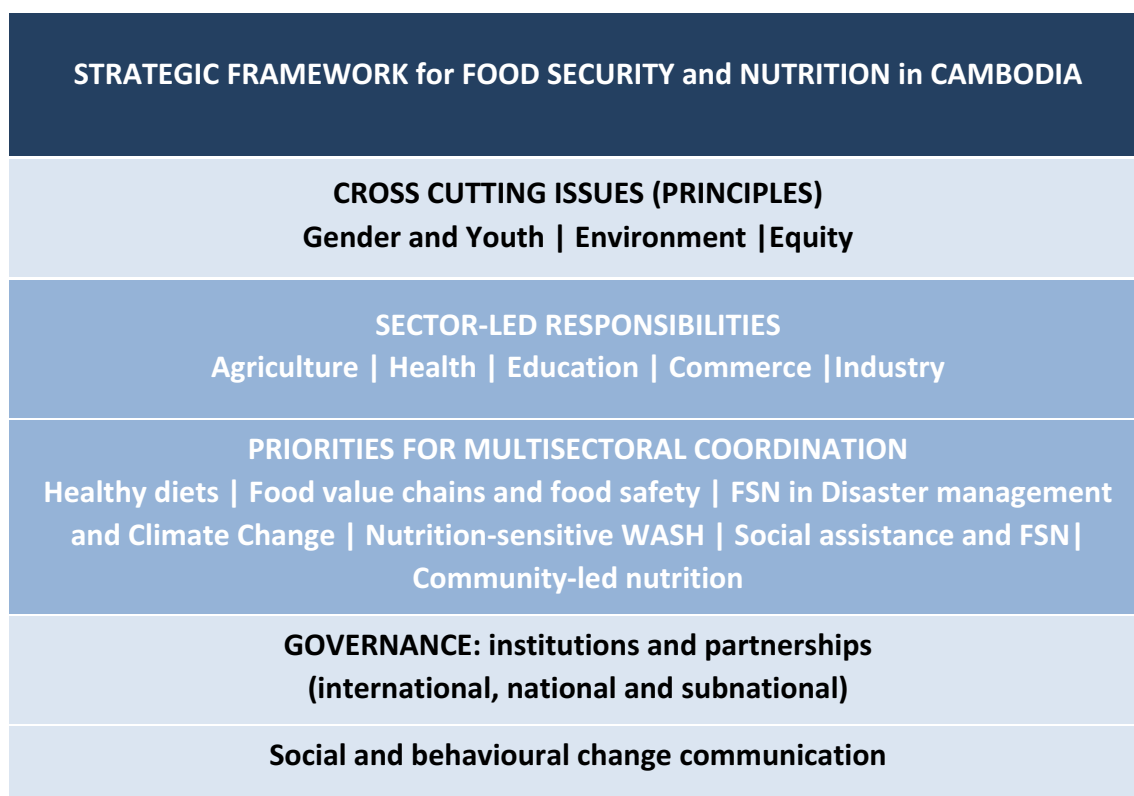


Figure 2: The Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition in Cambodia.

Possible contributions for FIRST in Cambodia for 2019 onwards

What areas of investment are required from FIRST (e.g. capacity building, promotion of dialogue, analysis, formulation of policy and strategic planning processes)?

What areas of investment are required from FIRST (e.g. capacity building, promotion of dialogue, analysis, formulation of policy and strategic planning processes)?

The immediate priority is to complete the NSFSN 2019-2023 and design follow-on actions to support dissemination and implementation. This is facilitated by the development of the strategy as an element of the overall communication plan, including a process for interpretation in the local context and a basis for developing local action plans. Another priority the creation of an effective information system for evidence-based policy and decision-making. This can be accelerated using agriculture as a primary focus. FIRST should assist CARD with coordination and reporting capabilities for the NSFSN 2019-2023, linking the SUN and NSFSN 2019-2023 to a strategic management process aimed at driving change and achieving results.

There is an ongoing need and opportunity to support the technical working groups (TWG), especially through planning and evaluation and linking results to economic arguments to support investment. This is critical in light of the likely split between the social protection, and food security and nutrition elements of the TWG's agenda and the need to maintain strong

connections between these two domains. The imminent changes in local-level government under the NCDD suggest an urgent need to support food security and nutrition interests in the reform of local level government, especially in the definition of the functions of local government. The review of subnational coordination mechanisms for food security and nutrition must align with the changes that will come into effect in early 2020.

There are important opportunities for engaging young people in food security and nutrition actions to address behavioral change. Likewise, there is a need to undertake advocacy and networking activities to harness contributions from the private sector (e.g. through establishing a SUN Business Network), parliamentarians, media and academia.

The FIRST Programme should continue its efforts to add value to EU investments in fisheries to ensure gender responsiveness and nutrition-sensitive programming. Support for effective data collection, sharing information and using it in policy and decision-making can be agriculture-led and FIRST is well placed to support such efforts through the Fisheries Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and the National Institute of Statistics (NIS). There is also a useful role for FIRST to play in continuing to advocate for improving food safety through coordination, dialogue and the development of legal frameworks and implementing regulations.

1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale for the diagnostic exercise and research questions

The Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty by 2030 by strengthening national and regional institutions and promoting partnerships to reach common goals. Addressing these objectives requires multidimensional policy actions that are tailored to countries' capacities and needs.

Focusing primarily on the food security and nutrition policies and programmes that will accelerate achievement of the 2030 goals in Cambodia, this study articulates the major development problems and examines their root causes at the sectoral level. The study is expected to contribute to developing national consensus around policy, programme and resourcing decisions for food security and nutrition interventions.

The analysis builds on the inception report produced by the FIRST Policy Officer (PO) in 2016 as well as detailed review work conducted for the Mid-Term and Strategic Review (MTR)² of the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2014-2018.³ This diagnostic exercise contributes directly to the formulation of the NSFSN 2019-2023.

Broadly, the diagnostic exercise addresses the following research questions:

- What is blocking the achievement of food security and nutrition (FSN) objectives?
- Do we fund the right things at the right moment?
- Are we having an impact on the right people?
- What are feasible investments and where will we have the greatest impact?
- What is the most efficient way of making progress?

1.2 FIRST in Cambodia

The focus of the FIRST Programme in Cambodia is to improve food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture by providing policy assistance and capacity development to the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC), including the Council of Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) and related ministries and departments. These services will lead to improved capacities of individuals and organizations, and strategic coordination across sectors and a stronger enabling environment for food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture in Cambodia. This requires the incorporation of suitable objectives and considerations in sectoral and cross-sectoral policies and investment and programme frameworks. It also requires necessary actions to be adequately funded, implemented and coordinated. Gender gaps must be addressed and stakeholders empowered to participate in inclusive and evidence-based dialogues and to engage in concerted action at all stages of the policy process. Prerequisites include the creation of a common understanding of food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture problems and solutions among decision-makers; the generation and

² Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD). 2017. Mid-Term and Strategic Review of the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2014-2018, Parts I-III. CARD, Phnom Penh.

³ CARD. 2014. National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2014-2018, CARD, Phnom Penh.

use of robust information and analysis in decision-making processes; the capacity for policy analysis, planning and implementation; and the availability of effective accountability mechanisms. The FIRST Programme is designed to leverage investments made by the EU in Cambodia, capitalizing on partnerships with FAO and the RGC.

The main challenges faced in tackling food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture in Cambodia are: a demanding institutional environment; limited resources and capacities of organizations and individuals; lack of evidence for decision-making; and lack of coordination and communication of information to key decision and policy-makers, including at the subnational level. The integration of nutrition into sectoral policies is a major issue for the EU Delegation (EUD) and the strengthening of the capacity of CARD is a shared concern for the EU, FAO and other stakeholders.

FIRST aims to strengthen CARD's capacity to play a dynamic role in policy formulation and debate in the food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture domain. The policies, strategies and programmes in relevant sectors will reflect food security and nutrition concerns and responses and there will be cross-sectoral coordination and dialogue, again with significant influence of CARD on the outcomes. In addition, FIRST will ensure that food security and nutrition concerns are reflected in investments in the agriculture and fishery sectors by contributing to the formulation of strategic plans and programmes and to the policy and regulatory environment in which these programmes are implemented.

The key national policy and capacity building processes for FIRST in Cambodia are centred on:

- The formulation and implementation of the *National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2019-2023* (NSFSN 2019-2023);
- The *Agriculture Sector Master Plan 2030* (ASMP) through the integration of food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture concerns and the provision of reliable and timely information;
- Capacity building for CARD and related ministries and subnational governments to support their mandate in relation to food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture.

1.3 Methods, information sources and information gaps

The purpose of the diagnostic exercise is to guide the FIRST programme in targeting key challenges or obstacles with realistic policy measures and for leveraging other investments in food security and nutrition.

The NSFSN 2019-2023 which sits under the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV, serves as a major guideline for food security and nutrition in Cambodia. The RGC and development partners use the NSFSN to harmonize their efforts across sectors, to ensure that major constraints are addressed, and to guide reporting on progress. The diagnostic exercise has contributed to the formulation of the NSFSN 2019-2023 and the PO was well placed to help the RGC coordinate other inputs to the strategy formulation. For FIRST purposes, the diagnostic exercise has been seen as an identifiable contribution to the policy processes and products, although in application it merges with other contributions to the national process of policy formulation. Ownership of the process rests with the RGC.

The EUD, FAO and the RGC were involved in consultations around the diagnostic exercise through sharing drafts of the report, tripartite meetings for discussion of the findings and direct involvement in the formulation of the NSFSN 2019-2023. Numerous other stakeholders were included in the consultative process through sharing key findings and recommended actions in national and subnational meetings during the period 2018-2019. The diagnostic builds on available analysis and makes use of literature reviews, discussions with key informants and focus groups involving various stakeholders, validation workshops, and formal consultation processes between government and development partners. Validation workshops involving national and subnational level stakeholders facilitated consensus and the findings helped to identify areas where additional research and analysis may be needed. The methods employed have been consistent with conventions and institutional frameworks for dialogue, policy formulation and validation of the RGC.

The exercise involved extensive discussion with stakeholders at national and subnational levels to refine the strategy and secure a broad basis for consensus. Other development partners contributed by providing complementary analyses. Depending on need and resource availability, the diagnostic can be supplemented with more in-depth analyses, including an assessment of implementation capacities and econometric simulations of the cost effectiveness of different policy options in addressing problems of food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty.

2. Food security and nutrition diagnostic exercise for Cambodia

2.1 Drivers and trends in food insecurity and malnutrition

What are the trends, geographical and socio-economic patterns, and prospects for eradicating food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty in Cambodia? What are the key drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition?

Considerable progress has been achieved in food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture for Cambodia over the last decade. Cambodia is fully rice self-sufficient and is on the way to becoming an important rice exporter in the region. Food is available throughout the country and markets are well integrated. Household food access and consumption have improved considerably in recent years. Nonetheless, stable access and the effective utilisation of food are continuing challenges. Disparities among regions and social groups persist. Cambodians still face a wide range of constraints to household food security, such as low agricultural productivity and a lack of diversification, limited access and unsustainable use of forestry and fishery resources, landlessness, and insufficient employment and income opportunities, especially in rural areas. The poor are highly vulnerable to volatile food prices, because a large part of household income is spent on food. Even rural households engaged in agriculture are very vulnerable to fluctuations in food prices. The stability of food access for the poor and near-poor is easily compromised by idiosyncratic shocks, socio-economic crises or natural disasters. Increasing the coping capacities of vulnerable groups is an ongoing challenge, requiring social safety nets, improved disaster preparedness and mitigation mechanisms, and climate change adaptation.

Robust economic growth, diversification of industry and livelihood improvements have enabled sizeable improvements in food security and nutrition, as reflected in the scoring for the Global Hunger Index 2017.⁴ Although still considered to have serious problems with hunger, the Kingdom of Cambodia has experienced relatively rapid improvements and is now approaching the moderate category. In the global rankings, Cambodia achieved the highest percentage reduction for countries measured as having serious hunger or above in the scoring of the Global Hunger Index for the period 2000-2017.

Despite these important achievements, the incidence of stunting and other indicators of malnutrition among young children remain high. The 2014 Cambodia Demographic Health Survey found that 32 percent of children under age five were stunted.⁵ This represents a decrease of only 8 percent for this age group since the 2010 Cambodian Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS) (NIS and ICF International, 2011). Moreover, 9 percent of children under

⁴ IFPRI, **Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe**. 2017. *Global Hunger Index: The Inequalities of Hunger*.

⁵ National Institute of Statistics and ICF International. 2015. *Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey*.

five were severely stunted (height-for-age). The CDHS 2014 found that 10 percent of children were wasted (weight-for-height), compared to 11 percent in 2010. The percentage of underweight (weight-for-age) children improved only marginally between 2010 and 2014.

Child and maternal undernutrition differ considerably by region and social group. The diagnostic exercise highlights the need to identify the most vulnerable people and determine where they are located. This is essential for targeting decisions. It is evident, for example, that stunting and wasting in infants and small children are severe in the north-east provinces, yet the population of these provinces is relatively low. These people will most likely be more difficult to reach and influence than affected populations in other provinces, where the rates of stunting and wasting may not be so severe, but the absolute numbers of children affected are much greater.

There has not been sufficient attention to gender in the formulation of policies and strategies to address food security and nutrition, despite widespread understanding that gender issues are critical. The *Gender Assessment in the Agriculture Sector*, prepared by FAO in 2017, followed the *Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategic Framework in Agriculture 2016-202*. The Gender Assessment found that women migrating for work were vulnerable in terms of undernutrition, and recognized the additional burdens for women created by climate change in managing food, water and other resources to meet their families' needs. In addition, women farmers generally lack the financial resources, mechanization advantages, technical knowledge, and other resources needed for effective climate change adaptation. A 2017 FAO study, *The Impact of Gender Policy Processes on the Right to Food*,⁶ concluded that despite significant progress in tackling poverty, a significant part of Cambodia's population continues to live just above the poverty line, especially in rural areas, with a high degree of vulnerability. Malnutrition and food insecurity particularly affect women and children. Households headed by women (nearly 20 percent of Cambodian households) usually have smaller plots of land and are more likely to be poor. Despite the high participation of women in the workforce, the majority (70 percent) are in vulnerable employment or experience poor earnings, difficult work conditions, lack of social security and limited representation.

According to FAO data (2019),⁷ the prevalence of undernourishment in Cambodia has levelled at 18.5 percent (2017) in recent years, after dropping rapidly from 2000 (29.3 percent) until 2006, when it reached 18.8 percent (three-year averages). As far as total population affected by undernourishment, the absolute numbers have risen from 2.6 million in 2006, to 2.9 million in 2017, reflecting the rapid growth in the population and the growing problem that the country is facing in terms of the absolute numbers affected.

The double burden of malnutrition is apparent in Cambodia, with overweight and obesity problems increasing, especially in urban areas and among women of reproductive age. Overweight and obesity are not specifically linked to poverty and are evident across income groups.

⁶ **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**. 2017. *The Impact of Gender Policy Processes on the Right to Food*. FAO, Cambodia.

⁷ **FAO**. 2019. *FAOSTAT Country Indicators, Cambodia*. <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#country/115>

The FAO *Food Security Commitment and Capacity Profile for Cambodia 2014* concluded that Cambodia had met the Millennium Development Goals of halving the proportion of undernourished people, gender parity in primary and low-secondary education, providing access to safe drinking water in urban areas, and furnishing access to basic sanitation. The country is on track to meet targets for: providing access to safe drinking water in rural areas, universal primary education, and gender parity in upper-secondary schooling. Further development of national capacities is required in terms of mapping systems to support evidence-based decision-making. While multiple coordination mechanisms exist for food security and nutrition, there is a lack of human resources in this field, limiting their effectiveness. It is now well recognized that water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are critical to the improvement of nutrition and the integration of WASH and nutrition is gaining momentum in Cambodia.

The key trends supporting improvement in food security and nutrition status are increased food production (particularly of the staple rice); continuing economic growth at an average rate above 7 percent per annum; growing investments in the health and education sectors; and funding for the building of roads and other critical infrastructure. In the past several years, much progress has been made in implementing the priority actions of the NSFSN 2014-2018. Virtually all priority actions are underway, although coverage across the country has been uneven. There is now strong support for a comprehensive approach to combatting malnutrition. This support extends from the highest level of government and is reflected in policy statements and directives from the RGC, based on the understanding that the basic causes of malnutrition are cross-sectoral and that some problems require an integrated approach.

In the following subsections, progress is summarized in terms of the four dimensions of food security (availability, access, use and utilization and stability), consistent with the conceptual basis for the NSFSN 2014-2018.

Availability

Agricultural production, with a focus on paddy rice and, to a lesser degree, on secondary crops, has outpaced population growth and demand, resulting in improvements in food availability. Cambodia has been self-sufficient in rice production since 1996, facilitating a growing rice export drive and increasing production from some four to almost ten million tonnes between 2000 and 2016.⁸ The dominance of rice in agricultural production means that it now accounts for some 72 percent of planted area. Undernourishment has fallen dramatically over time, from a high of 36.7 percent of the population in 1998, to some 14 percent in 2015,⁹ based on the national food balance sheet. These advances highlight the combination of improved food production, imports and exports facilitating a shift towards more people meeting their energy requirements. The emphasis on rice production and the equation of national food security with a production surplus for export has succeeded in

⁸ World Bank. 2017. Cambodia Systematic Country Diagnostic. RGC, MAFF. 2017. Annual Report 2016.

⁹ World Bank. 2017. *Data Bank*; FAO. 2017. FAOSTAT.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SN.ITK.DEFC.ZS?locations=KH>

dramatically reducing calorie deficits but at the same time has tended to obscure the need for dietary diversity.

Women comprised around 52 percent of the agricultural labour force in Cambodia in 2016,¹⁰ however, they face constraints that limit their productive potential and capacity. Women often have limited access to natural and productive resources such as land, water, livestock, agricultural inputs, rural advisory or extension and financial services, information and technologies. These gender-based constraints in accessing and controlling productive assets undermine women's economic potential and impose high costs on the agriculture sector and the broader economy.

Access

Alongside improvements in availability, there have been some improvements in access, as evidenced by declining poverty rates and sizeable improvements in Cambodia's Human Development Index (HDI). From 1990 to 2015, Cambodia's annual HDI growth rate of 1.84 percent outpaced the average in East Asia and the Pacific, currently at 1.35 percent, making it among the top seven countries in the world with the fastest HDI growth rate and ranking at 143 out of 188 countries. The percentage of Cambodians living under the national poverty line declined from 53.2 percent in 2004 to 13.5 percent in 2014, based on income poverty headcount.¹¹ Multidimensional poverty headcount is higher than the national poverty line, at 31.6 percent of the population.¹² Cambodia's growth has seen national per capita GDP rise from US\$1 215 in 2015 to US\$1 300 in 2016, while expenditure per capita has also grown. Spending on food increased by 5.5 percent between 2009 and 2015, while non-food spending increased by 11 percent during the same period. This suggests that there have been improvements in purchasing power, including among the poorest segments of society. The positive expenditure growth means that food now makes up a smaller proportion of total expenditure.¹³ It is not clear whether the positive expenditure growth and improved access translate into nutritional outcomes.

Access to employment, social protection, involvement in household decisions, and the impact of cultural norms on household decision-making (such as women eating less during periods of food insecurity) are critical factors. The increase in social assistance measures available to women and children is a very positive step forward for the social protection system in Cambodia.

When women have control over household income, they are more likely to invest in improving their family's living conditions, investing in child health, nutrition and education. Thus, the role of women in household decision-making can be a critical factor in the household situation for food security and nutrition.

¹⁰ **National Institute of Statistics.** 2017. *Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2016.*

¹¹ **MEF.** 2016. *Cambodia's Macroeconomic Progress: A Journey of 25 years.* https://www.mef.gov.kh/documents/shares/Macroeconomic_Progress_at_ADB.pdf

¹² **UNDP.** 2016. *Human Development Report 2016.* <http://report.hdr.undp.org/>

¹³ **National Institute of Statistics.** 2009, 2014. *Cambodia Socio Economic Survey.*

Cambodia has experienced robust economic growth and poverty reduction over the past two decades. Cambodia has achieved steady and remarkable success in improving health outcomes, including being one of the very few countries globally to achieve both MDG4 (Reduce child mortality) and MDG5 (Improve maternal health). However, there are remaining challenges and progress has been uneven. Efforts are needed to sustain progress and ensure that no one is left behind. For undernutrition, neonatal mortality, and teenage pregnancy, inequities across income levels and geography are high and increasing.¹⁴

Gender-discriminatory practices in intrahousehold food allocation are another obstacle to women's and girls' access to food. In some contexts, women and girls eat less nutritious food or eat less when very little food is left. This is particularly problematic because women and girls are at risk of specific forms of nutrient deficiencies due to their reproductive capacities. The nutritional status of new born babies and infants is strongly linked with the nutritional status of the mother before, during and after pregnancy. Research has linked maternal malnutrition to low birth weight, which in turn results in high infant morbidity and mortality rates. Poor female nutrition in infancy reduces a girl's learning potential, increases her reproductive and maternal health risks, and lowers her productivity.

The situation for overweight and obesity issues is complicated by socio-cultural dynamics that contribute to disparities in weight. These relate to culturally embedded attitudes to overweight children and also to dietary habits. For an older generation that knew the realities of hunger, overweight is likened to improving wealth, rather than as a cause for concern. In addition, women may be subject to dietary limitations during pregnancy and following the birth of a child and these restrictions may be at odds with prevailing wisdom concerning healthy diets. Buddhist monks may be particularly vulnerable to overweight and obesity, due to the requirement not to eat after midday and then to commonly consume sugar rich beverages to sustain their energy into the afternoon and evening. These underlying factors should also be taken into account for FSN policies and action plans.

Utilization

The percentage of households with inadequate dietary diversity has declined significantly, from 46 percent in 2008 to 12 percent in 2014.¹⁵ This, together with improvements in income and wealth, education (especially maternal education), expansion of healthcare coverage, access to water and sanitation, and health and nutrition promotion, such as exclusive breastfeeding, have led to advances in nutritional status.¹⁶ In recent years, a more enabling

¹⁴ **Rathdavy, T.** 2018. "Consultation Workshop on Cambodia's Investment Case for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health and Nutrition." December 3rd, 2018, World Bank and MoH.

¹⁵ **National Institute of Statistics.** 2009, 2014. *Cambodia Socio Economic Survey.*

¹⁶ **UNICEF.** 2016. National Nutrition Report ; **UNICEF.** 2016. Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and Nutrition.

policy environment¹⁷ has also emphasized improving food security and nutrition and the need for an integrated approach to these issues.

Food utilization, which is closely related to nutritional outcomes, has also seen some significant progress. Chronic malnutrition (stunting) rates fell from 50 percent in 2000 to 32 percent in 2014, on track with objectives laid out in the NSFSN. During the same period, wasting rates fell from 17 to 9.6 percent, while anaemia among children under five fell from 62 to 56 percent and among women of reproductive age (15-49 years), fell from 47 to 45 percent. Since 1990, the country has more than halved maternal mortality and has achieved nearly universal primary education enrolment.¹⁸

Women in Cambodia tend to be principally in charge of household food processing, preparation and storage, all of which are critical for the safety of food and the dietary diversity of the household. Much of the household food preparation is carried out by women. Women also tend to hold valuable knowledge relating to local food varieties and traditional processing and preserving techniques. It is important that their role in food production and preparation is recognized and that they are provided with nutrition education so that they can make informed decisions about the food that is grown or purchased and prepared for their households. To avoid reinforcing gender imbalances, men should also receive nutrition education in order to promote a more equal distribution of domestic tasks, alleviate women's work burden and contribute to household food security and nutrition.

Many women in Cambodia cook over open fires or on traditional stoves, using solid fuels such as wood and charcoal. These fuels exude pollutants that cause disease and it is women who are most at risk. Strategies that improve home stoves and ventilation, or provide cleaner burning-fuel sources, will decrease women's work burden and health risks as well as ensuring a healthier household environment.

Stability

The stability of food availability in Cambodia is mainly challenged by access and utilization issues. Diverse foods are generally available and there is wide diversity of foods in the markets. However, there are periodic food shortages, which affect the segment of the population that is remote from markets and depend mostly on their own production. Sporadic food insecurity may occur, but does not affect the availability of rice at the national level, which has been the focus of successful efforts to increase food production in the past. There is potential for using more diverse food sources, to reduce seasonal issues of availability and promote a more nutritious diet. The traditional reliance on forest and fisheries resources to supplement own-farm production is threatened by diminishing resources and changing patterns of employment and migration, although the fisheries reforms have made inland fisheries largely open access and therefore available to all as a food source. The provision for open access may have implications for the sustainability of the resource.

¹⁷ **Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC)**. 2014. National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2014-2018; **RGC**. 2014. Fast Track Road Map for Improving Nutrition 2014-2020.

¹⁸ **National Institute of Statistics and ICF International**. 2015. *Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2014*; **United Nations**. 2015. *MDG Country Progress Snapshot-Cambodia*; **FAO**. 2017. *FAOSTAT*.

Shocks from natural disasters are a major issue and a growing concern due to climate change. There is a growing trend for vulnerable households to take on additional debt, often at exorbitant rates, during periods of drought and flooding. This trend was confirmed by a study of the El Niño event in Cambodia in 2015-16.¹⁹ Attempting to mitigate losses during this period, households reinvested in agricultural activities, taking on additional loans averaging USD 1 282 per household. Debt is recognized as a negative coping strategy for vulnerable households and increased indebtedness is a key negative impact of natural disasters. During the El Niño period, 18 percent of households lacked dietary diversity, while 11 percent reported being hungry. To cope, 13 percent of households regularly altered their eating patterns, with 37 percent eating less-preferred food and 10 percent cutting adult portion sizes to ensure that their children had enough to eat. Complementary feeding for children under two years of age was found to be a concern, with 60 percent lacking the needed dietary diversity and 32 percent lacking the necessary number of meals.

High food prices affect poor families, who have to reduce their food intake or resort to other coping strategies. At such times, cultural norms may leave women and girls at particular risk of food and nutrition insecurity. Female-headed households, which tend to be poorer than male-headed households, are most at risk from food price volatility.

Extreme climate events are increasing in frequency and intensity, threatening the agriculture sectors and the livelihoods they support. By impacting agro-ecosystems, climate change and variability have socio-economic implications for the livelihoods and food security and nutrition of the most vulnerable households. At the same time, the agriculture sectors are also significant greenhouse gas emitters.

The effects of climate change can exacerbate the challenges that women face in achieving food security and nutrition. Work burdens may be increased by the extra work required to collect water or fuel as natural resources dry up or become depleted. Barriers to education and information may mean that women have fewer opportunities than men to learn about climate-smart agricultural practices and technologies. If women are not involved in decisions relating to the adaptation of agriculture and rural livelihood to climate change, their understanding and abilities will not be brought to bear in dealing with the challenges involved.

Both natural and man-made shocks can deplete the assets of poor households and further restrict their access to economic opportunities. Women are likely to take on additional economic roles within the household and community while still having unequal access to productive assets and resources, receiving lower salaries, and experiencing the same or even an increased work burden. In cases of complete asset depletion and extreme food shortage, women and girls are at risk of adopting negative coping mechanisms such as commercial sex, early and forced marriages, or pulling girls out of school.

¹⁹ **FAO, WFP and UNICEF.** 2016. Household Resilience in Cambodia: A Review of Livelihoods, Food Security and Health. Part 1.

2.2 Current policies and strategies

Is the current set of policies and strategies sufficiently focused and designed to adequately address the immediate and underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition in the most impactful way, both at a national scale and at the level of specific socio-economic groups, geographic areas, agro-ecological zones and/or administrative areas that face stubborn or more pervasive problems of food insecurity and malnutrition?

Cambodia's current policy framework is generally seen as comprehensive in terms of addressing food insecurity. It is somewhat less comprehensive in dealing with the root causes of malnutrition and this has been the reason for recommending that nutrition be shifted to the forefront of thinking about FSN and that the conceptual basis be revised to incorporate explicit consideration of causal factors. The policy framework clearly reflects the multisectoral nature of FSN issues and the need for multisectoral dialogue and action. However, there is not adequate attention to subnational coordination in the existing policies and plans. The RGC seeks to address this by transferring greater responsibilities through decentralisation and democratization.

The overarching guidelines for development in the Kingdom of Cambodia are laid out in the *Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency Phase IV*. This is supported by a *National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP)* and the *NSFSN 2014-2018*. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia also includes directive principles relating to the right to adequate food.²⁰ National strategies are increasingly aligned with the SDG framework, particularly since the announcement of the localized Cambodia Strategic Development Goals (CSDGs) and the identification of targets and indicators.²¹

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted a rapid integrated assessment of the NSDP 2014-2018 against the SDG targets in 2016²². The assessment showed that CSDG 2 directly complements two of the main priorities of the NSDP 2014-2018: *poverty reduction and inclusive growth* and *expanding agriculture*. Moreover, CSDG 2 addresses a number of multidimensional causes of hunger, some of which were also tackled by the NSDP 2014-2018. These include limited access to high quality public services, such as education and health; the persistence of rural poverty and the vulnerability of a great share of the population, who base their livelihoods on small-scale agricultural activities; and vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.

Food security and nutrition remain high on the agenda for the RGC. The Rectangular Strategy underscores this priority. In Phase 3 of the Rectangular Strategy, people became the top priority, followed by roads, electricity and water. Phase 4 will continue to focus on the same

²⁰ <http://www.fao.org/right-to-food-around-the-globe/countries/khm/en/>

²¹ RGC. 2019. Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework (2016-2030), PART 2: Target & Indicator Data Schedules (Unofficial translation).

²² UNDP. 2016. https://www.undp.org/content/dam/unct/cambodia/docs/RIA_Template%20-%20Country%20SDG%20Profile_07Oct2016.pdf

four priority areas, with people retaining the top spot. The first of the four strategic rectangles, 'Human Resource Development', has the goal of enhancing public health and nutrition to support sustainable human resource development, economic growth and social development, including the strengthening of gender equality and social protection.

There are many challenges for the RGC to provide the funding to support these priorities and to implement new schemes and there are substantial food security and nutrition-related improvements in the social protection sphere underway. The contributions made by the development partners remain critical for the support of many programmes. The RGC has committed to support school feeding programmes and a cash transfer scheme for pregnant women and children under two years in poor families; nutrition-specific-interventions under the National Nutrition Programme; and use of World Bank loan funds for a community nutrition programme directed at WASH and health services. Out-of-pocket expenses on healthcare, especially for poor and vulnerable people have been reduced due to the expansion of social protection. The Health Equity Fund for the poor and Social Security for Healthcare now cover more than three million people. However, the lack of resources for implementing the food security and nutrition programmes has resulted in an implementation gap.

There are additional strategic documents relevant to the food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture domain (see Figure 3), including the *Fast Track Road Map for Improving Nutrition 2014-2020*²³, *Zero Hunger Challenge in Cambodia 2016-2025*²⁴ and the *National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025*.²⁵ The MAFF have an *Agriculture Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018 (ASDP)*,²⁶ with a new ASDP 2019-2023 under preparation and are currently working on the *Agriculture Sector Master Plan 2030*. In addition, MAFF have prepared a *Climate Change Priority Action Plan for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Sector 2016-2020* and a *Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategic Framework 2016-2020*. There are additional key policies for *The Promotion of Paddy Production and Rice Export*, an *Agriculture Extension Policy*, *Law on Animal Health and Production*, and *Childhood Development Protection in the Agriculture Sector 2016-2020*. In the fisheries sector, there is a strong *Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries Sector 2010-2019*; this document has been recently updated. Nonetheless, in general, food security and nutrition issues are not considered in detail in existing sectoral policy papers and strategic plans. During 2019, many of the policy guidelines and strategies will be revised and updated to align with the mandate of the Sixth Legislature of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Rectangular Strategy Phase IV.

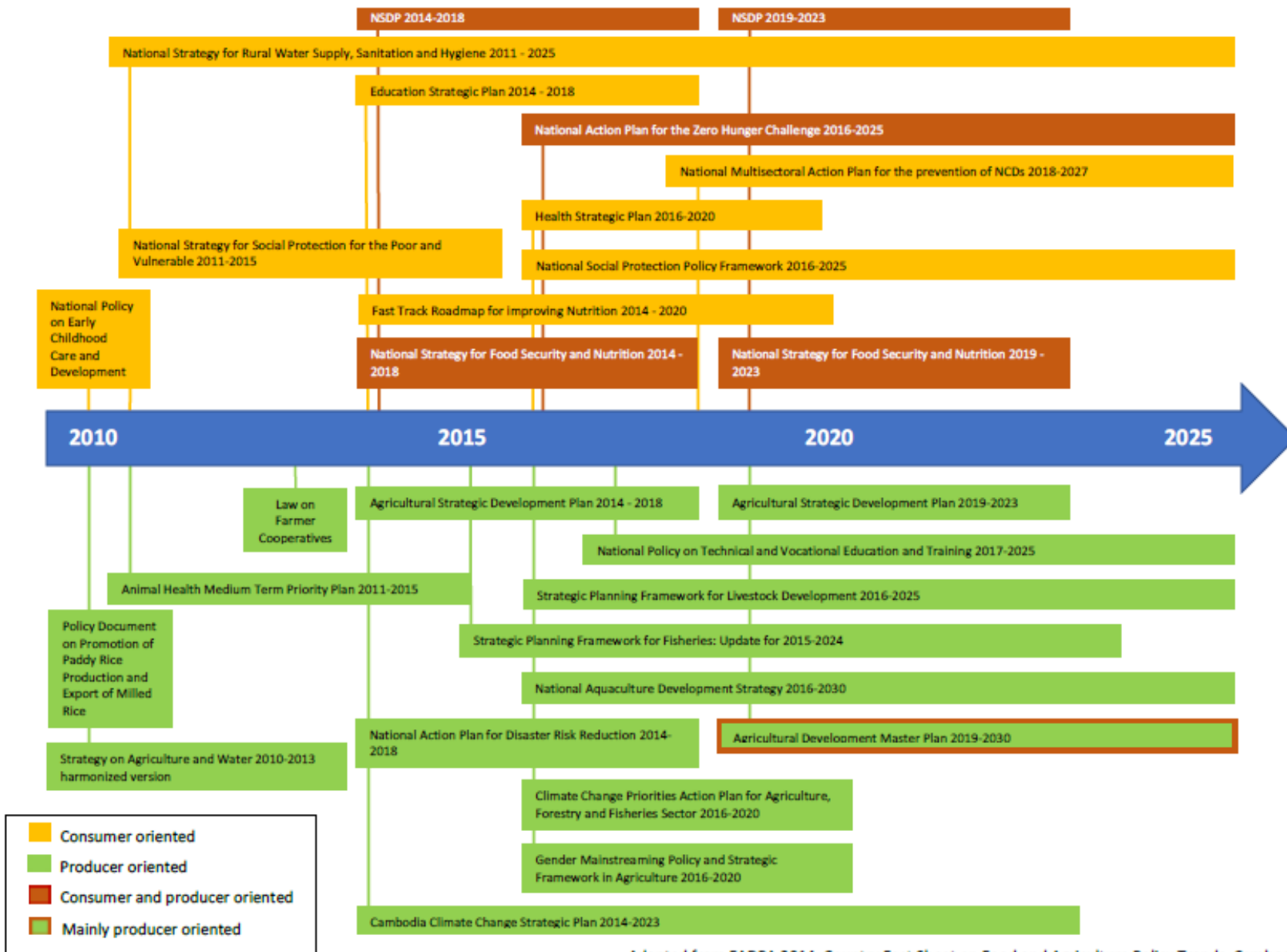
Based on the national gender mainstreaming approach, which mandates gender plans to sector ministries, the *Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategic Framework 2016-2020*, developed by the Gender and Children Working Group of the MAFF, is a key policy document

²³ RGC. 2014. *Fast Track Road Map for Improving Nutrition 2014-2020*.

²⁴ RGC. 2016. *National Action Plan on the Zero Hunger Challenge in Cambodia 2016-2020*.

²⁵ RGC. 2017. *National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025*.

²⁶ MAFF. 2015. *Agriculture Sector Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018*.



Adapted from FADPA 2014. Country Fact Sheet on Food and Agriculture Policy Trends, Cambodia

Figure 3: Key policy and planning documents for Cambodia and relevant planning periods.

for gender and food security. The policy recognizes the problems faced by rural women, confronted with the rapid modernization of agriculture that risks leaving them behind, and acknowledges the significance of migration from rural households, which often leaves women alone to take care of farms. The framework highlights the main obstacles faced by rural women, including low education and literacy rates, underrepresentation in community-based organizations and rural services, and lack of access to resources needed for economic empowerment.

Within the general framework of policies and planning in Cambodia, there is a need for strategic alignment of planning, data collection and reporting and budget cycles at all levels of government. With increasing confidence, stability and capability in government, the RGC has been able to align major planning processes with the period of the legislature, and the planning cycles at subnational levels have also become more robust. The policy and planning processes for FSN still require alignment and harmonization in order to reduce the burden of reporting and overlapping or competing interests. Since the pace of reform in public administration and financing and economic growth has been rapid, there are challenges involved in bringing capacities to the level required for the devolution of responsibilities to the local level.

There are challenges to the timely implementation of legislative reforms to support policy change and regulations to implement legislative changes. The Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) increasingly requires results-based planning as the basis for budget allocations and the Ministry of Planning (MoP) must provide the data to support planning. Streamlining, reducing duplication of effort and improving accuracy and timeliness in data collection between administrative and statistical systems is urgently required. For policy setting and prioritization of food security and nutrition issues, the inability to set targets for CSDG 2.1 reflects the difficulties of providing information to measure progress towards the target, rather than a rejection of the target *per se*.

The reform process is also gathering momentum at the subnational level and major changes are scheduled to occur in 2020. These changes will see many responsibilities devolved to the district and commune level and resources will accompany these responsibilities. The public service is to be restructured at the district level to accommodate the changes. This will be a major test for the policy framework. For example, there is a danger that food security and nutrition issues will only be addressed under a limited sub-set of approved functions (such as for the construction of local roads or other infrastructure). Complex issues, especially multisectoral coordination, might require specific legislative action to avoid systematic exclusion of these issues. In the sector-led prioritization of functions to be performed by the districts, it is likely that food security and nutrition will not be prioritized as a cross-cutting issue, and that district-level governments will not have the mandate or indeed the capacity to address these issues. The National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD) plays a key role in tying together the policy and planning frameworks at the subnational level.

In 2014, the RGC launched the NSFSN 2014-2018 with the goal that “by 2018, poor and food-insecure Cambodians have substantially improved physical, social and economic access to

sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences and optimize the utilization of this food to keep a healthy and productive life.”

Progress is being tracked through review of the NSFSN indicators, the Joint Monitoring Indicators (JMIs) and the CSDGs. FIRST assisted CARD in the adaptation of the SDGs for Cambodia, including in the formulation of indicators and a monitoring plan relevant to SDG2 (the eradication of hunger). This work will improve overall coherence of policy work and strategic planning by aligning new plans to agreed goals and rationalizing the monitoring and evaluation efforts required for cross-sectoral purposes. The MTSR of the NSFSN 2014-2018 launched in April 2017 summarized past achievements, analysed the current food security and nutrition context in Cambodia, and prepared the forthcoming strategy.

The *National Plan of Action for the ZHC* addresses major strategic needs for food security and nutrition. It is fully endorsed by the government and is included in the FAO Regional Priorities. The plan of action provides the entry point for the promotion of the right to food. Resource mobilisation for the plan will assist the RGC to overcome implementation bottlenecks and fits neatly with efforts to implement the NSFSN. The added value of the ZHC came from the impetus it generated at the time of launching in 2016, although the ZHC can now be incorporated into the NSFSN 2019-2023, so as to reduce institutional complexity. Some of the goals of the ZHC for Cambodia do not resonate with the current planning framework because these are overly ambitious in terms of timing and/or targets. This is accepted in Cambodia as a distinction between political will and technically-determined targeting.

Cambodia joined the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement²⁷ in July 2014, with efforts underway to build a clear strategy and to achieve the targets. Moving forward requires formally-appointed focal points to lead or engage in the process at national and subnational levels. Policy-makers and administrators beyond CARD need to be engaged and empowered, including parliamentarians, governors, and commune councils. More effective engagement with the private sector is required to raise awareness and scope out potential resources (technical, material, financial, capacities) and partnerships, for example, to enhance awareness of the importance of healthy diets for workers in the garment industry or scope out the means to strengthen implementation of food fortification legislation and policies. Such activities should be undertaken in parallel with efforts to reach out to the media to encourage informed reporting, and academia to support research efforts. Commitment to the initiation of the SUN Business Network for Cambodia is in place for 2019, supported by CARD, WFP and the FIRST Programme.

A disaster management law was passed in 2015 to serve as a framework for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response. In addition, the RGC has signed on to the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), with commitments to tackle climate-related vulnerabilities. Prospects for stability in food availability, access and utilization have been further strengthened by the creation of the National Social Protection Policy Framework 2016-2025 and

²⁷ Scaling up Nutrition <https://scalingupnutrition.org/>

the establishment of the Council for Social Protection. The announcement by the RGC of a national scheme for maternal and young child cash transfer payments for the poor has been seen as a major commitment to supporting social protection through domestic funding sources. Implementation will present many challenges, especially in the first year (2019), in light of the planned transfer of responsibility from the Ministry of Health (MoH) to the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSAVY) in 2020. While there remains much to be done to ensure that social protection is shock-responsive, this has been considered in the planning processes underway with support from UN agencies.

A strong planning framework for food security and nutrition and mechanisms for coordinating development efforts at the national level are in place and the RGC has called upon all responsible line ministries, development partners, civil society and the private sector to continue their cooperation in implementing the NSFSN and other sectoral plans relating to food security and nutrition. The frameworks and mechanisms for coordination are much less robust at subnational levels, with a few exceptions.

Structures for policy dialogue in Cambodia are formalized in a process that is articulated in the *Development Cooperation and Partnerships Strategy 2019-2023*, which identifies the Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board and Council for the Development of Cambodia (CRDB/CDC) as the national focal point for all matters related to development cooperation. The MoP prepares five-year plans in cooperation with the CDC, line ministries and agencies. The MEF identifies broad financing requirements for implementing annual public investment programmes and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFAIC) is the diplomatic window for development cooperation. The RGC has mandated CARD to facilitate effective coordination, policy guidance, monitoring and information management for agriculture and rural development, social protection, food security and nutrition. There are 20 joint Technical Working Groups (TWGs) that serve as technical fora for key policy issues and the related JMIs. This structure supports dialogue and decision-making between RGC and its development partners. In addition, there are bilateral meetings between the government and individual partners, with varying degrees of transparency in these arrangements.

The key TWGs for engagement with FIRST are Social Protection and Food Security and Nutrition (SP & FSN), Agriculture and Water, and Fisheries. These TWG meet several times each year to foster development collaboration between the RGG and development partners and they represent a possible mechanism for improving private sector and civil society representation. The TWG SP & FSN is chaired by CARD and co-facilitated by FAO and the German Embassy. The role of this TWG is to identify priorities, harmonize activities, address technical issues, mobilize resources and monitor progress. There is a regular Food Security and Nutrition Forum chaired by CARD, which allows stakeholders to openly discuss and exchange experiences, lessons learned and best practices related to food security and nutrition. One important issue arising from the creation of the National Council for Social Protection is the possible separation of the TWG SP & FSN into two groups. This could expedite coordination of social protection, but may result in a separation of social protection and food security and nutrition interests, unless efforts are made to maintain linkages.

In the 2017 MTSR, stakeholders determined that the existing conceptual basis for the NSFSN, which focused on food security, was not adequate for the new NSFSN 2019-2023. The complex problems around food security and nutrition suggest the need for a more holistic, multisectoral approach to reflect the complexity of malnutrition issues and solutions. There has been too much focus on availability (especially in rice production) in the past and this has diverted decision-makers and planners from the real causes of malnutrition. Much more attention needs to be paid to access, utilization and stability and there is a clear need to bring nutrition to the forefront of thinking. The UNICEF conceptual framework of malnutrition (see Figure 4) serves as a very effective and widely understood conceptual model, which can be further developed into a more comprehensive theory of change, by linking to the SDGs or incorporating more detail.

This is not a major departure: the model was included in the previous strategy. Rather it is a change in emphasis, to ensure that the dimensions of food security (and especially the availability of staple commodities) are no longer used as the basis for strategic planning and that nutrition becomes more prominent. The change in emphasis is important for dealing holistically with the challenges of both undernutrition and overnutrition. This has been identified as a key to the reorientation of thinking about food security and nutrition, especially where availability and access are lumped together and the understanding of the difference between these two concepts is poor, especially at the subnational level. The primary purpose in recommending a change in the conceptual framework is to elevate nutrition in the dialogue and planning processes. This was a major recommendation of the MTSR of the NSFSN 2014-2018.

UNICEF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

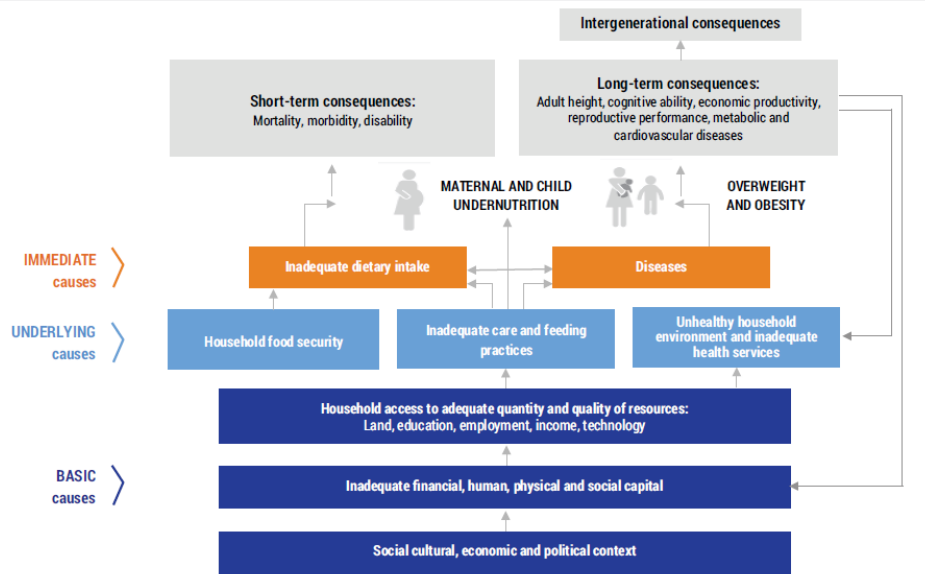


Figure 1 Figure 4: UNICEF conceptual framework of malnutrition. Source: UNICEF (2013)²⁸.

²⁸ UNICEF. 2013. Improving child nutrition: The achievable imperative for global progress. UNICEF, New York.

2.3 Emerging problems

Are current policies and strategies sufficiently forward-looking to address the food security and nutrition impacts of emerging problems related to migration, youth unemployment, climate change, population growth and urbanization?

The main challenges facing food security and nutrition in Cambodia, as identified in the MTSR of the NSFSN 2014-2018 and in subsequent debates, include:

- A rapidly changing landscape for development on many fronts, including socio-economic trends, migration, urbanization, institutions, infrastructure, climate change and the condition of natural resources;
- Ensuring food safety, improving water quality, curbing open defecation and improving sanitation around farm homesteads;
- Access to safe and nutritious food and diverse diets, especially for pregnant women and children under five;
- The adoption of good feeding practices for children under two is a continuing challenge due to social and cultural influences, including irresponsible marketing of breast milk substitutes, increasing urbanization and changing patterns of employment. Enforcement of the regulations for breastmilk substitutes and food fortification is a continuing battle.
- Maintaining sectoral commitments to food security and nutrition and meeting cross sectoral challenges requires increased public funding and creative means for securing private sector investments. The constructive engagement of the private sector is a growing challenge as the marketing of processed foods rapidly expands.
- Overweight and obesity are a growing concern, especially for women of reproductive age.
- There is an ongoing need to promote more diversified agricultural production systems and nutrition-sensitive food systems. The protection of the natural resource base (especially water and soil) is a critical challenge for agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

These challenges have arisen from rapidly changing socio-economic conditions, reflecting the continuing strength on the economy overall. It will be critical to anticipate future problems and to ensure that they are taken into account in planning, and policy dialogue.

The biggest challenge to keeping abreast of emerging trends and issues is that information and analysis are limited by poor and irregular data collecting and dissemination. The availability of data is affected by restrictions to access, language issues and concerns about the reliability and compatibility of data from different sources. The MoP coordinates the selection of indicators for the Cambodia SDGs, making decisions – with input from relevant ministries – about sources of data to support the SDG framework. This is quite difficult for Cambodia as data collection only occurs every several years. There is increasing responsibility for the RGC to fund national survey and census work as donor contributions for such work have declined markedly in recent years.

The food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture landscape is rapidly changing on many fronts, encompassing socio-economic trends, institutional reforms, infrastructure adjustments, climate change and the condition of natural resources. Cambodia's food security and nutrition programme needs to be tuned to these changes and provided with the capacity to evolve. The effectiveness and reach of the strategy will be increased through better cross-sectoral linkages and subnational efforts, as well as an efficient FSN governance system at all levels.

Economic growth

A number of new food security and nutrition issues and opportunities are emerging from the socioeconomic and climatic changes in the country. The drivers of economic growth thus far have centred on the export of goods and services, particularly garments and tourism. Export growth has been facilitated by low-skilled inexpensive labour and migration, allowing rapid change from a low base. While there is an opportunity to build on this growth, the drivers may not be as effective without greater investment in human capital, including a particular emphasis on nutrition and healthy diets, to maintain productivity and competitiveness.²⁹ The rise of wage labour has also broken the traditionally strong link between households and own food production. Linked to that, inequities that limit access to food, as well as challenges in food utilization, will need to be tackled to address underlying poverty and vulnerability.

Externally-financed projects have largely supported softer investments in capacity building, technical assistance and behavioural change in recent years in fields such as water and sanitation hygiene (WASH), nutrition and the environment, while locally-financed expenditure has been allocated to infrastructure projects. Cambodia's ongoing economic development may be accompanied by a shift from external grants to loans as part of the continuing evolution of development assistance to the country. Creative financing options from domestic and non-traditional external sources are needed to bolster key public expenditures for ongoing development in social and human capital and equity. Cambodia will take a major step forward during 2019, with the introduction of maternal and child welfare payments to the poor. Cambodia will take a major step forward during 2019, with the introduction of maternal and child welfare payments to the poor. The scheme is based on experience with activities supported by USAID and UNICEF.

²⁹ **World Bank**. 2017. Cambodia Systematic Country Diagnostic; **WFP**. 2017. Challenges and Opportunities for Nutrition and Food Security - Analytical study in support of the MTSR; **WFP**. 2017. Migration Analytical study in support of the MTSR. Unpublished.

Due to limited domestic resources ... and declining external financing, Cambodia must focus on smart, scaled, and sustainable financing of a subset of 'priorities of priorities' by: reducing reliance on vertical financing; leveraging sector-wide reforms and investments in public service delivery, quality, and health financing; and expanding public service availability, accessibility, and engagement.³⁰

Migration and urbanization

Rural to urban migration accounts for 56 percent of total migration, predominantly to Phnom Penh, and has primarily been driven by economic factors that have helped facilitate growth and poverty reduction.³¹ However, the increasing pace of urbanization has also seen the growth of poorer outer city areas, polarizing urban life as the poorest and richest people live side by side. For the urban poor, access to water, sanitation and health facilities are sometimes constrained, although they are somewhat better than in rural areas. As the pace of urbanization continues, this is expected to place increasing strain on already stretched services.³² A more sophisticated measure of well-being and/or poverty – such as a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) – may prove useful to policy-makers in the future now that income poverty has reached historically low levels but vulnerability remains a risk. There are concerns about falling rates of exclusive breastfeeding among mothers in urban settings as well as for the nutritional status of factory workers and children 'left behind' with family members remaining in rural settings by those who migrate to other countries or to urban areas for work. Social and behavioural change communication (SBCC) and other support programmes are needed to meet new challenges in both rural and urban areas.

Migration has had a profound influence on the socio-economic situation in Cambodia and is a driving force behind the economic growth of the nation. Gender affects the reasons for migrating, who will migrate, the job opportunities people have access to, and whether they leave or stay behind for reasons including lack of education, personal safety, family responsibilities and labour requirements. On the positive side, migration can lead to a greater degree of economic or social autonomy for women as well as for men, and the opportunity to challenge traditional or restrictive gender roles. Through migration, both men and women may develop skills, have better job opportunities and earn higher wages. Nonetheless, migration can also increase women's dependency and limit their decision-making power, both in areas or countries of destination and

³⁰ **Tung Rathdavy**. 2018. "Consultation Workshop on Cambodia's Investment Case for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health and Nutrition" December 3rd, 2018, World Bank and MoH.

³¹ **UNDP**. 2017. In and Out of Poverty: An Analysis of Cambodian Poverty and Vulnerability Dynamics Between 2004 and 2014; **WFP**. 2017. Migration Analytical study in support of the MTSR. Unpublished.

³² **WFP**. 2017. Migration Analytical study in support of the MTSR; **UNFPA**. 2014. Linkage to socio-economic and environmental issues.

origin. Male migration, together with the commercialization of agriculture, have affected the division of labour in rural areas, resulting in the feminization of agriculture.

The changing composition of the rural workforce and the post-migration population in rural areas has significant implications for agricultural and rural development and food security and nutrition. While local authorities often see migration as a loss to their community, many families rely on remittances from migrant workers; migration to seek employment has always been a traditional coping strategy for rural people during periods of hardship or even seasonal variations in food supplies. The growing role of women in agriculture can be empowering only if structural inequalities are addressed and they are provided with equal opportunities to access and control assets, resources and opportunities. Policies and institutions need to be transformative and respond to women's needs if agricultural performance and food security and nutrition is to be improved.

Urbanization has consequences for both gender equality and food security and nutrition. Rapid urban growth is underway in Cambodia, where cities often offer higher wages and better employment options, including for women, as well as a greater availability of services, such as health care and education. In the structural transformation of the Cambodian economy, there has been a massive movement of workers from agriculture into the garment, footwear, construction and service sectors away. Poor urban dwellers usually spend a large part of their income on food. When food prices escalate, it is the urban poor who are hit the hardest, particularly women and female-headed households.

Climate change

The impact of climate change is expected to have negative impacts on food security and nutrition. Cambodia has been identified as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change impacts in Southeast Asia. It is expected that, at current rates, the pace of climate change in the next 40 years is likely to be faster than the adaptation of local agricultural methodologies.³³ Cambodia faces high risk from the impact of natural disasters, ranking ninth on the World Risk Index and standing at 41 of 171 countries in terms of vulnerability,³⁴ with the most vulnerable populations residing around the Tonle Sap Basin. This risk is exacerbated by the continuing degradation of natural resources. Official estimates suggest that forest cover declined from nearly 60 percent in 2006 to 49.48 percent in 2014.³⁵

³³ IFPRI. 2013. *Cambodian Agriculture Adaptation to Climate Change Impact*.

³⁴ United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security and Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft. 2016. *World Risk Report*; WFP. 2017. *Challenges and Opportunities for Nutrition and Food Security - Analytical study in support of the MTSR*. Unpublished.

³⁵ RGC Forestry Administration. 2016. *Cambodia Forest Cover 2014*.

How climate variation manifests in cumulative inter-annual impacts remains unknown. As it stands, migration appears survivalist at best and may, given climate projections, prove itself to be maladaptive response to climate change.

Much greater concerted attention is needed to address the nexus between poverty and climate adaptation, including longitudinal understanding about the interactions between climate, debt, and food security.³⁶

Changing tastes and preferences and the prevalence of NCDs

Cambodia has also seen dietary practices change toward more convenience foods, an increasing trend to obesity especially among women, and heightened risks of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). This trend is partly, but not solely, an urban trend. The NSFSN 2014-2018 target for overnutrition among women of reproductive age was 12 percent for 2018, although this stood at 18 percent in 2014 and there is every indication that rates are increasing.³⁷ Urbanization also has had some negative implications for the nutritional well-being of children, with rates of exclusive breastfeeding at their lowest in Phnom Penh (77 percent). Certain urban settings, such as garment factories, currently lacking enabling legal frameworks or facilities, can also serve as opportunities for enhancing health and nutrition awareness and changing practices for an extensive audience, mainly comprised of young women.

Overweight and obesity rates, although among the lowest in the ASEAN countries, are a growing concern, especially for women of reproductive age (WRA): 18 percent of WRA in Cambodia are now overweight or obese compared to 14 percent underweight (2015 CDHS). The effort required to combat this growing problem and the associated NCDs will continue to strain the available public-sector budget and harm the national economy if preventive measures are not applied, even as progress is made in driving down the problems associated with undernutrition. While the food processing industry in Cambodia is small, the lack of effective regulation of imported and domestic products indicates that a coordinated and simplified regulatory system is required.

2.4 Adequacy of current implementation mechanisms and capacities

Are the implementation mechanisms and capacities that are in place adequate to reach the people and areas most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition?

³⁶ **Jacobson, C, Crevello, S, Chea Chanthan and Jarihani, B.** 2018, When is migration a maladaptive response to climate change? *Regional Environmental Change*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-018-1387-6>

³⁷ **NIS and ORC Macro.** 2001. Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2000; **NIS and ICF International.** 2015. Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2014; **UNICEF.** 2016. National Nutrition Report 2016.

The main bottlenecks in the enabling policy and institutional environments for CARD, line ministries and at the subnational level are associated with funding, coordination, human resources and organizational capacity. Better understanding of the challenges is required as are better sources of information and stronger efforts to ensure that food security and nutrition are integrated into sectoral policies and promoted in cross-sectoral dialogue. These are critical constraints at the subnational level.

Strategic planning for sectors and the management of development have a strong framework, but coordination and integration are generally weak. Focal points assigned by concerned ministries need to have continuity in the role and both decision-making powers and technical contributions are required from focal points. Despite abundant policies, strategies and programmes, progress in implementing result-oriented actions has been limited. The overall direction and responsibility for sector-led actions on food security and nutrition should remain with ministries and coordination mechanisms, with CARD taking a lead role and responsibility for the integration and coordination of joint action.

Human and organizational capacities relating to food security and nutrition are limited in Cambodia. Topics relating to food security and nutrition are generally not covered in school and higher education programmes. In recent years, there have been investments in these areas and younger generations are beginning to experience the benefits.

CARD is mandated to facilitate effective coordination, policy guidance, monitoring and information management for agriculture and rural development, social protection, food security and nutrition, but has limited capacity to do so. CARD is restricted in terms of financial and human resources and the effectiveness of its reach to subnational levels. Monitoring and evaluation of the food security and nutrition situation is particularly challenging for CARD under these conditions. CARD has no effective mechanism for reaching to subnational level, beyond offering training in food security and nutrition to staff when funding is available (generally from external sources).

The issue of creating and maintaining a food security and nutrition information system is vexing. Past investments have not seen a sustainable result as CARD lacks the human resources and the maintenance budget to sustain the effort. A comprehensive review of information needs and uses is much needed. Follow-up funding for supporting such a system should be addressed by the RGC, at least in part, as donors are not keen to invest further in this area.

Government programmes for staff training have suffered from limited funding and reach and the efforts of development partners and NGOs have been somewhat piecemeal owing to the practical limitations of different organizations and projects taking responsibilities for different areas. Greater attention is required to focus efforts along common guidelines under government direction and to coordinate these efforts at the national level through to the delivery of services in the field.

In general, the institutional arrangements and level of human resources dedicated to food security and nutrition by the government are limited, with no clear investment plan for the sector,

and no staffing structure at the sub-national level. There is a national food security and nutrition training pool under CARD with experienced instructors and this has received considerable external support from GIZ, FAO and ADB in the past. Some of the instructors have moved on and there is a need for refresher training and new recruitment to the pool.

A comprehensive study of capacity building needs in the food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture domain is required and this should consider prior investments in capacity building and the effectiveness of such investments. It is critical that capacity building is driven by the organization concerned and that the organization has responsibility for maintaining accountability for the results of past investment in capacity building. One major step will be to motivate staff to work to existing full capacity and to plan for building additional capacity and sustaining the result.

The analysis of organizational capacity must consider eliminating duplication, replacing of redundant technology and systems, and harnessing diverse efforts to achieve common purposes and methods. In dealing with cross-cutting issues, it is necessary for organizations to break down organizational silos and promote coordination and integration. Complex issues are best addressed by flexible and responsive organizations with access to open and up-to-date information resources. This is a major challenge and requires changes in organizational cultures that are particularly challenging for Cambodia, especially at subnational levels. The recommendations for human resource and organizational capacity building should be pitched at a very pragmatic level, although investment in transformative thinking could pay long-term dividends.

Key capacity constraints relate to limited education and past training opportunities, cultural and political imperatives for maintaining the *status quo*, and the lack of incentive for applying existing capacity for the public good. Capacity building needs highlight the lack of current information resources, the need to better understand monitoring and evaluation and the skills associated with critical analysis and reporting. There is an urgent need for both individual and organizational capacity building at subnational levels, including in commune councils and other local bodies. The urgency of these actions is highlighted by forthcoming changes in local government roles and responsibilities that will commence in 2020.

The MTSR raised specific concerns around implementation bottlenecks at the subnational level. These bottlenecks relate to the lack of funding for implementation (due to previously centralized systems requiring that funding flowed through multiple levels of bureaucracy); lack of capacity (due to centralization of capacities for socio-economic advantages); and the priorities of government. Significant changes will occur from 2020 onwards as decentralisation comes into effect and marked increases in funding will flow to the sub-national level to meet locally determined needs and priorities.

In the subnational consultation round for the MTSR, conducted in 2017, it was apparent that provincial actors lacked adequate understanding of the fundamentals of food security and nutrition and the interrelatedness of the basic causes of malnutrition. Below the provincial level, the understanding is even weaker and often commune officials are poorly equipped for dealing with complex challenges relating to food security and nutrition. Strong campaigns do reach this

level and have yielded good progress, often largely funded by outside resources, but always requiring government cooperation to operate effectively.

2.5 Adequacy of existing policies

To what extent are existing policies and strategies adequately resourced (from national resources and other sources), implemented, monitored and, in case of inadequate or incomplete implementation, what are the implications for the achievement of the intended food security and nutrition impacts?

In general, priority actions for achieving food security and nutrition in Cambodia are inadequately resourced. There is a heavy demand on the RGC to increase the funding allocated to food security and nutrition and many competing demands for public funds. The major commitments made by the RGC need ongoing supplementation from the development partners, including loans such as have been allocated by the World Bank for improving nutrition in seven target provinces.

A 2015 World Bank study made policy recommendations for achieving continued agricultural growth and further structural transformation in the agriculture sector.³⁸ Four sets of policies were suggested over the next five years (short-to medium term). The first was to maintain a private sector-friendly agricultural policy environment, with added attention to lowering the regulatory burden in farm input sectors. The second was to strengthen the environmental sustainability of agricultural production. The third was to improve the quality of public agricultural programmes and increase allocations to more effective programmes. And the fourth recommendation was to help develop the agribusiness and agro-processing industries. These recommendations have shaped the investments made in agriculture and are of continued relevance in current policy dialogue.

The implementation of food security and nutrition programmes at the national scale remains a major challenge. There are serious concerns that the achievement of the SDGs will be compromised by inadequate implementation and that information deficiencies will be an ongoing limitation for the assessment of progress.

The private sector has not been adequately engaged in efforts around food security and nutrition, nor has there been effective regulation of the private sector to discourage breast milk substitution, address food safety issues and encourage fortification. The RGC has established a clear position on the responsible marketing of breast milk substitutes but the enforcement of regulations is problematic due to lax compliance and the inability to police the private sector. There are similar challenges to the enforcement of fortification standards for iodized salt.

³⁸ World Bank. 2015. Cambodian Agriculture in Transition: Opportunities and Risks. World Bank, Washington, DC.

Cambodia is in a poor position to effectively regulate food safety, labelling and other standards relating to food processing, with the division of responsibilities between ministries creating complex jurisdictions and many obstacles to the regulation of industry. For example, the MAFF has a Department of Agro-Industry with responsibilities for certifying the safety of agricultural produce extending to the point of first processing. The Ministry of Industry and Handicraft (MoIH) regulates processing, and the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) regulates marketing. Responsibilities for labelling, certification, inspection and testing issues have not been resolved between these ministries. An existing proposal for a food safety law is bogged down in the legislative process. The lack of a comprehensive food safety law is a major legislative impediment.

While there has been strong support for an integrated approach to tackling food security and nutrition, the national and subnational consultations conducted in 2017 for the MTSR suggested the need to further strengthen institutional arrangements to implement the NSFSN.³⁹ These consultations recommended a multisectoral approach, including: i) consolidating, prioritizing and sequencing actions and indicators; ii) strengthening subnational linkages to ensure ground-level implementation; iii) securing increasingly domestic funding to ensure that priorities are resourced sustainably; and, iv) shifting the focus of achievement towards results, with less emphasis on reporting on inputs and activities. The complexity of the issues and the fast pace of reform in local government make it clear that this is a priority in terms of programme implementation and coordination. The establishment of food security and nutrition as more than a single sector consideration may require the passage of a sub-decree to allow district and commune level governments to legitimise any food security and nutrition-related activities and expenditure outside the recognized list of functions produced by line ministries.⁴⁰

Despite impressive strides towards improved national level growth and progress on food security and nutrition, a number of challenges remain. These include uneven progress across the country, demographic and socio-economic groups, while Cambodia continues to lag behind on a number of human development indicators. Moreover, the sustainability of progress could be jeopardized by economic and disaster shocks, and therefore increasing emphasis will need to be placed on risk reduction and resilience building.⁴¹ These issues will need to be tackled in the context of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. While an emphasis will be on SDG 2 (zero hunger), there will need to be clear links with other critical SDGs, particularly: SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing), SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action), and SDG 17 (partnerships).

³⁹ WFP. 2017. NSFSN MTSR National Consultation Workshop Report; WFP. 2017. NSFSN MTSR Regional Consultation Workshops Report.

⁴⁰ HE Ngan Chamroeun, Secretary of State for the Ministry of Interior. pers comm, 17 Mar 2019.

⁴¹ CARD. 2017. 2016 Food Security and Nutrition Report; RGC. 2017. Mid-Term Review of the National Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018.

Information is available on the cost of nutrition-specific actions led by the MoH under the fast track roadmap for nutrition as well as the funding required for WASH, which is led by the Ministry for Rural Development (MRD). The costs associated with some of the major contributions from social protection are also better understood, as the RGC moves towards ownership and funding some key interventions.

There has not been a comprehensive analysis of the funding situation or plans for the agriculture sector, although this gap will be addressed in the formulation of the Agricultural Sector Master Plan 2030 and costed component strategies such as the Strategic Plan for Cambodian Agro-Industrial sector 2019-2030. Further analysis is required for the purposes of the NSFSN 2019-2023. Basic costings and mapping of investments for food security and nutrition are required for planning purposes.

2.6 Political economy

What are the political economy factors that may prevent the adoption and/or implementation of the right set of measures, actions, and implementation mechanisms to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by 2030?

High level support and political will

There is high-level political will to achieve the SDGs and this is reflected at all levels of government. This political will is founded on Cambodia's pride in achieving economic growth and rising out of poverty to lower-middle income status and can be seen in the commitment to key programmes, including for maternal and child cash transfer payments for the poor.

The Government's commitment to the CSDGs is strong. Through our CSDG Framework we aim to hardwire delivery of the goals within policymaking, planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring.

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, 21 December 2018⁴²

However, this commitment is tempered by pragmatism, as is demonstrated by the adjustment of the CSDGs such that SDG Target 2.1 is not included. Target 2.1 states that: *by 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.* This fact that this target is

⁴² RGC. 2019. Cambodian Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) Framework (2016-2030), PART 2: Target & Indicator Data Schedules. Unofficial translation.

missing does not restrict interventions to reduce food security nor does it limit reporting on the food security situation.

Food security and nutrition governance has been strengthened by the appointment of the Ministers of Commerce, Health, and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as deputy chairs of CARD. This was done to build a stronger political commitment to CARD.

[Linkages between social protection and food security and nutrition](#)

The creation of a National Council for Social Protection and the release of the National Social Protection Policy Framework suggests a possible de-linkage of food security and nutrition and social protection. At present, there is strong interest from social protection stakeholders to separate the existing TWG on SP & FSN into two different bodies. If this occurs, it will be necessary to continue to work in areas of common interest to preserve effective functional linkages and for government to recognize that social protection constitutes a core issue for food security and nutrition. There is a strong political desire to increase social protection in Cambodia and this should be achievable without reducing interest in food security and nutrition or delinking the two areas. There is a clear need to encourage the use of the maternal and child cash transfers to address nutrition problems among this target group. There are additional challenges in the transition from management of the cash transfers by the MoH for 2019 to the MoSAVY from 2020 onwards. This will require commitment, support and coordination on the part of all agencies involved.

[Economic growth and potential loss of imperative for action](#)

Although health and nutrition are recognized in the human development framework of the Rectangular Strategy Phase 4, there is an evident need for government financing for nutrition. Cambodia's move to lower middle-income status and the changing arrangements for development assistance risk that food security and nutrition will be seen as issues that have been solved by economic growth. It will be important to portray nutrition funding as an investment in human capital development with real economic returns. At the same time as the battle against undernutrition is progressing, the emphasis over the medium to long term needs to shift to overweight and obesity issues.

[Reconciliation of the ZHC, CSDGs, SUN Network and NSFSN workload](#)

To avoid unnecessary duplication of workloads, there must be a sensible reduction and harmonization of planning frameworks and reporting requirements. For this reason, the ZHC should be incorporated into the NSFSN 2019-2023 and subsequent strategies. Although there are some differences in the goals and targets for the ZHC and the NSFSN, these differences can be resolved on the basis that the ZHC reflects a political commitment to general goals, whereas the NSFSN has objectives that are realistic and achievable and will be reported strictly in accordance with agreed indicators. The annual reporting requirements for the SUN Network should be built into the monitoring and evaluation processes for the NSFSN 2019-2023. Likewise, the joint monitoring indicators used for reporting by the TWG will be formulated in accordance with the goals and objectives of the NSFSN from 2019 onwards.

Challenges for the transfer of responsibilities to subnational level

Under the NCDD, major reform processes will come into effect from January 2020 onwards. At that time, there will be a transfer of funding from the national budget to the subnational level and significant changes in the resources, roles and responsibilities divested to districts and communes. This will bring fresh challenges for food security and nutrition. There is a danger of systematic lapses in food security and nutrition actions at subnational levels once functional separation occurs and local priority setting takes place. Given that capacity building and funding for local government have been very limited, there has been a tendency for them to invest mostly in the improvement of infrastructure so the evidence for responsible use of funds would be tangible. It may take some time for this mindset to change.

Ministerial agreement to passage of Food Safety Law

There are challenges to gaining inter-ministerial agreement on moving forward with the Food Safety Law. This law is currently under review by the Council of Ministers, with CamControl (Ministry of Commerce) having responsibility for the law. The different ministries involved have not been able to reach an agreement that would allow the law to pass through the Council of Ministers to the legislative body.

2.7 Realism and credibility of current policies

Considering the above analysis what is the realism/credibility of the current set of policies and strategies? What information gaps exist?

In light of the analysis presented above, there are four main challenges to the realism and credibility of current policies in the food security and nutrition arena. These are:

- Lack of linkages between stated priorities and allocation of finances (both for domestic and donor funds);
- Lack of linkages between priority actions and specific responsibilities or accountabilities;
- Challenges in setting targets and monitoring progress, given the many data limitations;
- Resourcing and capacity gaps at the subnational level.

Nonetheless, the NSFSN 2014-2018 provided effective guidance for activities in food security and nutrition and has helped reverse the lack of progress that occurred from 2005-2010. The strategy was comprehensive (perhaps too much so) and emphasized a multisectoral approach. At the end of the strategic period for the NSFSN 2014-2018, it was clear that the messaging about multisectoral action was well understood both at high political levels and at the subnational level. This added greatly to the credibility of the planning process.

In terms of the broader question as to whether the policies and strategies are sufficiently realistic and forward looking, the overall structure is sound and attention has been paid to the development of realistic policies and forward planning. This is evident in the various structures supporting the government, such as the CDC and the TWGs, which facilitate dialogue, planning

and policy-making. While the various structures and processes have well-defined roles and general support, there is a general perception that there are plenty of policies and strategies but not enough implementation in the food security and nutrition arena. This is obviously a simplification, yet it constantly arises in discussions and is unhelpful for effective policy dialogue.

There is growing strength in the strategic planning processes under the umbrella of the political direction laid down in the Rectangular Strategy for each of five successive government mandates. Increasingly, the MEF is looking at costing in the accompanying plans to determine budget allocations. For the preparation of the NSDP 2019-2023 all ministries and councils were called on to provide inputs for consideration in formulating the strategy. Input from this diagnostic exercise has contributed to the CARD submission to the NSDP 2019-2023 for consideration by the MoP.

The arrangement of strategic processes around a stable government and successive five-year mandates provides a good basis for forward-looking policies. The process could be improved by synchronizing the major surveys and census with the timing of key information requirements for the strategic planning processes. Major limitations related to the availability of resources, especially the allocation of public funds for nutrition. There has been a strong reliance on donor funds for this purpose, although there is growing domestic funding available, especially for education and the health sector. It is always difficult to track nutrition investments made by the ministries because these investments are typically not identified as having been made for the purposes of improved nutrition, as we shall see below.

While the NSFSN 2014-2018 was the main policy related document for food security and nutrition, there have been other sectoral policy and planning documents relating to food security and nutrition although these generally lacked specific direction, with some exceptions. In addition, there have been some instances where legislation or regulations or the will to implement the law have been lacking. This applies particularly to the area of food safety, as we have seen. The NSFSN 2014-2018 was not explicit in terms of assigning responsibilities for priority actions nor for the financing required to support the strategy.

The financing aspect has been particularly challenging. There are difficulties in tracking food security and nutrition-related budgets in the financial statements of the ministries and of the development partners involved. In many cases, food security and nutrition are treated as a cross-cutting issue and contributions are not costed separately. The health and the WASH sectors have endeavoured to rectify the lack of information through the costing of plans and the *National Action Plan for Zero Hunger Challenge in Cambodia 2016-2025* sought to cost the plan. The challenge to credibility is that these costings are not specifically linked to financing. CARD is challenged by coordinating responsibilities for the food security and nutrition arena (and social protection in the past) without having the budget oversight or allocations that are associated with implementation. For these reasons, there has not been a realistic linkage between strategies and financing in the past.

To address this challenge for the NSFSN 2019-2023, there has been a deliberate decision to separate sector-led programmes and plans from priorities for joint action in a 'twin-track' approach. The aim is to limit joint priorities to only those elements that require coordination in

terms of integration and multisectoral action. This can assist CARD to adjust the strategic planning to the scope of their direct influence and greatest opportunity for their value addition. The sector-led programmes (health, agriculture, rural development, water supply and sanitation, industry and commerce) are of critical importance to combatting malnutrition, with each sector under the leadership of the relevant ministries, supported by the private sector and development partners. In order for planning to be realistic, it is important to acknowledge that each sector responsible for implementing priority actions does so under its own resources and direction. The sector-led contributions can be acknowledged and promoted and assistance provided to ensure that cross-cutting issues for gender, environment and education are woven into sectoral plans, policies and budgets.

Under the twin-track approach described above, there is a requirement for continuing advocacy for more specific reference to nutrition and food security objectives and for reporting on sector-led contributions. In addition, there is a need for a strong focus from CARD on the priorities for joint action, which falls directly within its mandate for coordination, policy setting, reporting, knowledge management and training.

2.8 Priorities for resource allocation

Considering the above analysis and given a scenario of continued resource and capacity constraints, what areas of the policy framework and what implementation capacity gaps should be prioritized for resource allocation?

The priorities for resource allocation identified are assessed using the SAFE framework, in which the critical considerations for systematic improvement are assessed in terms of sustainability, acceptability (legal, political and institutional), feasibility (technical and financial) and effectiveness.⁴³ Given the limited information available, the assessment is generally qualitative and cost estimates are based on existing commitments. The assessment framework reflects the general approach to the NSFSN 2019-2023, the priority actions identified in the consultative processes and MTSR of the NSFSN 2014-2018, and the *Compendium of Actions for Nutrition* developed by the SUN UN Network.⁴⁴ The framework helps to structure the analysis of the priorities for resource allocation and to focus attention on key areas where the FIRST Programme can contribute to the effectiveness of the policy and programming entailed in the formulation and implementation of the NSFSN 2019-2023.

⁴³ Fizzanty, T., Russell, I. & Collins, R. 2013. Learning from failed supply chains: the application of complex adaptive systems and a modified SAFE framework in evaluating proposed system improvements, in *International Journal of Agile Systems and Management*, Vol. 6, No.3. viewed at <https://www.inderscience.com/jhome.php?jcode=ijasm>

⁴⁴ WFP. 2016. *The Compendium of Actions for Nutrition*. UN Network for SUN/REACH Secretariat.

Generally speaking, food security and nutrition actions are not government priorities for resource allocation and, as a cross-cutting issue, allocations to food security and nutrition are not readily identified in sectoral budgets. For its part, the RGC has made a substantial new commitment in the social protection arena for maternal and child cash transfer payments for the poor, to begin in 2019. At the subnational level, there is little incentive for food security and nutrition to feature in priority setting, except for the sector-led functions delivered by local governments and incorporated into local development and investment plans. As many local government functions are pruned to meet financing realities, there is a risk that cross-sectoral issues like food security and nutrition will disappear at the local level. The joint priorities for the NSFSN 2019-2023 are at risk of this occurring without a major investment in awareness raising and advocacy.

Priority setting for resource prioritization by the RGC will be reflected in the NSDP 2019-2023 and the relevant sectoral strategies and plans supporting the NSDP. For food security and nutrition, agreement on priorities has involved an inclusive process led by CARD and validated by the TWG SP & FSN. The identified priorities are based on an analysis of information gathered through desk review, stakeholder interviews and multiple consultations at subnational and national levels as part of the MTSR NSFSN 2014-2018 and the formulation of the NSFSN 2019-2023.⁴⁵ This information has been updated with information collected specifically for the diagnostic exercise as part of the stakeholder consultations on the NSFSN 2019-2023.

Actions to further improve food security and nutrition are required on multiple fronts. These will have to be prioritized and sequenced, responsibilities agreed and emphasis given to accelerators of change. There is a need to increase the focus on improving food access through more equitable and inclusive growth as well as enhanced social protection measures, and to strengthen utilization through enhanced nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive measures.⁴⁶ These will act as enablers for improved food security and nutrition. To facilitate that shift in focus, efforts around food availability will have to move towards improving food diversity and quality and a more nutrition-sensitive agriculture. While the context for the current NSFSN will continue to be shaped by the food security framework, it is suggested that the framework be modified to reflect the new paradigms. To ensure a more focused national strategy, priority could be given to cross-cutting themes that add value by bringing key stakeholders together, while sector-led strategies could focus on taking forward specific areas of work that fall within the sector. Strengthening institutional arrangements and capacity building to improve food security and nutrition will need to underpin these sector-led contributions but the overall responsibilities remain within the sector and will be led by the relevant ministries and their line agencies. Under this arrangement,

⁴⁵ **WFP**. 2017. NSFSN MTSR National Consultation Workshop Report; **WFP**. 2017. NSFSN MTSR Regional Consultation Workshops Report.

⁴⁶ “Nutrition-specific interventions address the immediate causes of undernutrition, like inadequate dietary intake and some of the underlying causes like feeding practices and access to food. Nutrition-sensitive interventions can address some of the underlying and basic causes of malnutrition by incorporating nutrition goals and actions from a wide range of sectors. They can also serve as delivery platforms for nutrition-specific interventions.” **UNICEF**. 2015. *Multisectoral Approaches to Nutrition: Nutrition-specific and Nutrition-sensitive Interventions to Accelerate Progress*.

line ministries will need to argue their own case for the funding of sectoral priorities, including for food security and nutrition, with the assistance of CARD especially for the identification of joint priorities and presentation of the case for funding from domestic and international sources.

The priorities reflect a wider understanding of linkages between the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition. This requires a move onwards from the food security conceptual model, to a model like the well-known UNICEF model (2013), which draws on the underlying causes of malnutrition. It is necessary to place much greater emphasis on inadequate care and feeding practices and unhealthy household environments and inadequate health services.

Household food security

Household food security is readily understood in terms of the conventional framework relating to the dimensions of availability, access, utilization and stability. In order not to make the transition to the UNICEF framework, in subsequent sections *availability*, *access* and *stability* are discussed under the heading of food security; and *utilization* is combined with the underlying causes of inadequate care and feeding practices and unhealthy household environment and inadequate health services.

Availability

Availability is no longer seen as a major constraint to household food security in Cambodia, except in terms of the range and quality of the food that is available. The MTSR recognized that it was not useful to continue to focus on production issues in agriculture or to be concerned about the production of the staple rice crop. The MTSR for the NSFSN 2014-2018 proposed the following priorities for improving food availability:

- Diversify agricultural production and emphasize nutritious food production.
- Improve value chains through production, processing (including fortification) and markets.
- Improve food quality and safety (imports, exports and local markets).
- Promote efficient, value-adding, sustainable agricultural techniques.
- Improve the availability, stability and efficient use of inputs.
- Review the export-drive focus, including comparative advantages for Cambodia.
- Promote nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

Increased food availability requires a shift from increasing production quantity to improving quality, with enhanced diversification of production, more nutritious foods and nutrition-sensitive agriculture. Case studies of nutrition-sensitive agriculture in Cambodia established ten key themes for improved nutritional outcomes, including a particular focus on diversification of production and consumption, gender and women's empowerment and the contribution made by

sustainable fisheries.⁴⁷ Diversification and improving quality can raise the incomes of smallholder farmers, increase resilience to shocks and thus improve the access dimension of food security. Diversification will also improve nutrition in the population by increasing the availability of products rich in micronutrients. Improvements in food quality and safety (in both agriculture and the food industry) will be needed to support these changes. These are integral to nutrition-sensitive agriculture that addresses the underlying causes of malnutrition, by supporting the availability, access to and utilization of diverse, safe and nutritious foods, while simultaneously providing income and other resources for producers, and supporting human and environmental health, including accommodating caregiving time.

Improvements in the value chain, including enhancing postharvest storage, processing and fortification efforts, and promoting more efficient value-adding sustainable agricultural techniques and food systems will facilitate the production of more high-value products.⁴⁸ Efforts are required to address the constraints faced by farmers in terms of access to credit, technology, and wider markets. The RGC has already established policies for providing agricultural credit and extension services for better technology and farming practices, and to cap interest rates for microcredit. Coverage by extension services and credit for smallholders can be improved to ensure better access to inputs, infrastructure and technology. Stronger agricultural cooperatives can play an enabling role in this.

High levels of exposure to natural and economic crises necessitate strengthening resilience in production systems. This can be achieved through more diverse agriculture, enhancing the use of monitoring systems for weather, prices and food security and nutrition to prepare for potential shocks. The changing policy emphasis towards diversification of the agricultural sector and exports will assist in strengthening agricultural resilience. Strengthening the existing food reserve system and access to emergency credit will support preparedness for emergency response efforts when required.

Women's empowerment and education is key to nutrition-sensitive agriculture and the adoption of greater diversity of production. In addition, production diversity combined with nutrition-related social and behavioural change communication (SBCC), increases the likelihood of dietary diversification for the household. While current policies reference the issue of gender, they require a more thorough gender analysis of the current situation of men, women, boys and girls, and greater employment of such analysis in decision-making to fully realize the benefits of a gender emphasis.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ **CARD and FAO.** 2017. 10 Common themes for Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture in Cambodia; **CARD and FAO.** 2018. Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture in Cambodia.

⁴⁸ **RGC.** 2016. National Action Plan on the Zero Hunger Challenge in Cambodia 2016-2020.

⁴⁹ **FAO.** 2017. The Impact of Gender Policy Processes on the Right to Food: The Case of Cambodia; **WFP.** 2017. Gender Review of Food Security and Nutrition Policies in Cambodia. 2017; **RGC.** 2014. Fast Track Road Map for Improving Nutrition 2014-2020.

More equitable access to food - leave no one behind

The priority actions suggested for improving food access in Cambodia include the following:

- Increase attention to access to food, especially affordability and access to resources.
- Address access inequalities: deal with disadvantaged or vulnerable social groups, gender and intra-household dynamics.
- Review intervention strategies based on proportional, absolute and layered vulnerabilities when targeting.
- Enhance informed choices around food and promote dietary diversity.
- Enhance social safety nets and ensure links between food security and nutrition and social protection.⁵⁰

With extensive improvements in food availability, increased attention will be required to strengthen access to food, particularly for the most vulnerable people. Food access refers not only to the resources required to acquire an affordable, diverse diet, but also to the wider right to food and consideration of gender and decision-making in food access. While access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food is supported by livelihood improvements, it is by no means a necessary outcome. Access is often understood to be an extension of food availability, particularly at the subnational level and it is therefore recommended that in future strategies this aspect is considered separately and not lumped together with availability. Household access to food, as well as dietary diversity and utilization, are key drivers of food and nutrition insecurity in Cambodia, and should serve as the basis for future strategy.

Addressing inequalities includes improving access by geography, social/ethnic groups and within households. This will require a more in-depth targeting analysis to ensure support is brought to areas where access is most constrained in terms of population numbers, the prevalence of multidimensional poverty is high, and nutrition indicators poor. To enhance purchasing power of the poorest and most vulnerable households and maintain the gains in poverty reduction, there needs to be concerted longer-term investment in human capital in the form of improved access to resources, quality education, and improved health and nutrition. In the shorter term, emphasis will need to be on enhancing livelihoods for the rural poor and the means to realize a 100 percent increase in smallholder productivity and income,⁵¹ strengthening social safety nets, and enhancing informed choice around food purchases to ensure affordable dietary diversity across all food groups, including animal-sourced foods.

Social protection and safety net programmes are an increasingly important and recognized means of supporting food security and nutrition improvements. The recent National Social Protection Policy Framework has provided the policy context for these interventions, and with implementation in the early stages, it is necessary to: i) ensure resource allocation to the most

⁵⁰ **CARD**. 2017. Mid-Term and Strategic Review of the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition 2014-2018 Parts I-III. CARD, Phnom Penh.

⁵¹ **RGC**. 2016. National Action Plan for the Zero Hunger Challenge in Cambodia 2016-2025.

vulnerable people; ii) further clarify the implementation arrangements to ensure appropriate accountabilities; iii) enhance links with shock preparedness and response to enable the most vulnerable households to cope better with shocks; and (d) clarify provisions for the urban poor. Strengthening social protection and safety nets requires sophisticated measuring and monitoring systems to understand the multiple dimensions of vulnerability and their triggers. This can inform programming along a parallel track of enhancing the shock responsiveness of both the social protection system and of humanitarian response mechanisms for the protection of the more vulnerable.

Health and education expenses often tip the balance for the most vulnerable families in Cambodia. The country still has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the region (161 per 100 000 live births in 2015).⁵² A WFP study also found that major health expenditures after the El Niño droughts were the most likely factor placing households in debt.⁵³ While government spending on health and education is on the rise, it remains heavily dependent on external funding for service delivery. School-based social assistance in the form of meals and scholarships is receiving increasing attention in schools for the most vulnerable children, but further expansion is required to meet national needs.

Provide stability through risk-reduction and social protection measures

The MTSR (2017) suggested the following priorities for improving stability of availability, access and utilization:

- Improve the shock responsiveness of social protection mechanisms with a view to food security and nutrition.
- Increase the focus on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, including protection against environmental degradation.
- Continue to strengthen disaster management (risk-reduction, preparedness and response) mechanisms for all possible shocks (including climate, economic, health etc.).
- Enhance community resilience to shocks

With Cambodia susceptible to both natural and economic shocks, ongoing efforts are required to improve implementation and the shock responsiveness of social protection mechanisms with a view to protecting food security and nutrition attainments, while simultaneously enhancing community resilience to climate and manmade shocks. Rectifying low levels of awareness and coverage of social protection should be coupled with expanded resourcing and improved implementation arrangements.⁵⁴

⁵² **NIS and ORC Macro**. 2001. Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2000; **NIS and ICF International**. 2015. Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2014.

⁵³ **WFP**. 2017. Resilience and recovery from shocks. Unpublished.

⁵⁴ Social Assistance programmes include: i) The Food Reserve; ii). Nutrition programmes for pregnant women and children; iii) Primary education scholarships; iv) the school feeding programme; and v) vocational training. Social

Programming priorities to promote the stability of food availability, access and utilization in Cambodia include support for monitoring and early warning systems and for building the resilience of farming systems. Social protection should also be made shock-responsive (in line with preliminary work by the RGC and FAO), ensuring greater awareness of these safety nets. Stability also requires the maintenance of water and health conditions, access to health and social services and safeguards for child feeding.

Increasing migration trends have served as a coping mechanism for many, contributing valuable resources to families through remittances. Further analysis is needed on the impact of migration on social protection and on food security and nutrition overall.

With rapid urbanization and infrastructure expansion, it will be critical to implement robust urban planning and strengthen the resilience of Cambodia's infrastructure, including to prevent flooding during the rainy season. The sustainable management of natural resources will need to be strengthened as a foundation for climate resilience.

A framework for disaster management has been established in the 2015 Law on Disaster Management, however, the implementation of the law requires the passage of supporting sub-decrees to clarify accountabilities and secure the associated budget. This will involve increased focus on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, including protection against environmental degradation, as well as strengthening national and subnational mechanisms for risk reduction, preparedness and response.

To support risk reduction, preparedness and response efforts, it will be necessary to gather, analyse and disseminate relevant information on population vulnerabilities by geography, weather monitoring and early warning, and price patterns to increase awareness of possible shocks and guide policy-makers.

Care and feeding practices

The priorities for improving care and feeding practices identified in the MTSR of the NSFSN 2019-2023 were as follows:

- Improve feeding practices and promote exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life and adequate complementary feeding, in addition to breastfeeding, for children aged 6 to 23 months of age.
- Employ a life cycle approach to nutrition: with interventions addressing the first 1,000 days, pre- and school-aged children, adolescents, etc.
- Strengthen efforts to deal with the double burden of malnutrition and NCDs.
- Promote awareness of nutrition as an investment in human capital among decision-makers and advocates.

insurance programmes include the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), as well as specific funds for civil servants, veterans and people with disabilities, and the Health Equity Fund (HEF), to protect against income insecurity.

- Enhance communication strategies and messaging through SBCC, control of advertising, role models etc.

The *Fast Track Road Map for Improving Nutrition 2014-2020*, complemented more recently by the *National Action Plan for Zero Hunger Challenge in Cambodia 2016-2025*, have sought to increase emphasis on improved nutrition, with the aim of meeting SDG 2 Target 2.2: *(By 2030, to end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons)*. During the formulation of the CSDGs and for the purposes of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2019-2023, nutrition was identified as an ‘accelerator’ and accorded high priority to ensure that further positive contributions to CSDGs 3 (health), 4 (education), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work), 9 (industry) and 10 (inequality) flow on from nutritional improvements. Making the case for nutrition as an investment in human capital will be critical to attracting adequate resources to reflect this prioritization. This calls for raising awareness of nutrition issues among decision-makers and information providers and the education of the general public.

Rates of malnutrition vary extensively by geography and population density, and are impacted by economic and socio-cultural factors, a mother’s nutritional status and (often recurring) shocks that are both natural and economic. There is a need to continue the focus on maternal health and prevention efforts, such as ensuring that pregnant and lactating mothers are adequately nourished, and on nutrition education and counselling for pregnant women. Simultaneously, efforts to address high stunting and wasting prevalence should continue to focus on the need for children to receive exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life and adequate complementary feeding, in addition to breastfeeding, for children aged 6 to 23 months.⁵⁵

...the rapid economic transformation in the last two decades may have led to a massive change in eating habits. In many discussion groups, it was reported that almost all of those present went to work or school without eating breakfast, and had their first (hot) meal at the earliest between 11 and 12 a.m., but often not until 2 p.m. Those with little money (and this is the case for a large part of, particularly, the rural population for many months in the year) are unable to buy any snacks, or only buy those of low quality in the long hours before the meal. These snacks represent a further problem. Since people do not eat at home (before work), they generally buy cheap products of low nutritional value, which nonetheless cost so much that they burden the household budget and for instance have the effect that school children can bring only little money to school. This makes school feeding an important topic in Cambodia.

⁵⁵ **CARD, UNICEF and WFP.** 2013. *The Economic Consequences of Malnutrition in Cambodia*; WFP. 2017. *Fill the Nutrient Gap. Cambodia.*

*A consequence of this sociocultural context, or the behaviour formed by financial constraints and historic legacy, is that the problem of nutrition has not disappeared with the improvement of the economic situation of many households, and that there is a very great need for education and change in behaviour across virtually the whole country and in almost all groups of the population.*⁵⁶

The economic challenges of access can be mitigated by promoting agricultural diversification, as well as improving the availability of micronutrient-fortified complementary and staple foods at affordable prices. The latter requires additional efforts to strengthen and enforce legislation around fortification programmes (e.g. salt iodization among others).

Socio-cultural practices also need to be addressed through nutrition-specific interventions that include enhancing SBCC messaging and strategies on nutrition (including controlled advertising, particularly around the consumption of salt, sugar, fat, the use of role-models etc.), improved feeding and sanitation practices. This is particularly true in the case of stunting, which is prevalent in both areas of low and high non-affordability of food, highlighting the importance of behavioural change if the vision of reaching zero stunted children under two years of age is to be reached by 2030.⁵⁷

The current focus in nutrition is on the first 1 000 days of a child's life. While there is a continuing need to invest in the early years, this will need to be expanded to a lifecycle approach to nutrition to protect the investments made in the first 1 000 days. This will require simultaneous efforts to assist other targets groups, such as pre- and school-aged children and adolescents.

Undernutrition prevalence rates remain high throughout the country, but are particularly high in the plateau areas in the northeast of the country. However, higher population density along the Tonle Sap also means higher absolute numbers, for example of stunting. Smart intervention strategies will be needed to ensure that limited funds can address the needs in areas where absolute numbers of people affected highest, as well as in areas of highest prevalence. As well as ongoing efforts to target high stunting levels, serious attention must be paid to the problem of acute malnutrition among children under five, which has shown little improvement over the years. The RGC provides treatment for both moderate and severe acute malnutrition, although geographic coverage requires further improvement.

An additional strand of strategy will be to tackle changing dietary practices and convenience food consumption, the increasing problem of overweight and the rise in NCDs. These are linked to rapid urbanization, the excessive consumption of rice and growing consumption of snack foods, particularly by children. In urban areas, 22.5 percent of women were overweight or obese

⁵⁶ Bliss, F. 2017. Home-Grown School Feeding as a "Good Practice" for Poverty Alleviation and Nutrition Security in Cambodia. Institute for Development and Peace (INEF), University of Duisburg-Essen.

⁵⁷ RGC. 2016. National Action Plan on the Zero Hunger Challenge. 2016-2020.

compared to 17 percent in rural areas, and 2 percent of children under 5 years.⁵⁸ The efforts to address overweight and obesity should include double duty actions as part of the focus on nutrition in the SDGs, with targets on ending malnutrition in all its forms (Target 2.2) and reducing NCDs (Target 3.4). Since policy-makers have limited resources (fiscal, human and time), identifying opportunities to achieve multiple goals and targets with single interventions will be key. This is the aim of double-duty actions,⁵⁹ which include interventions, programmes and policies that have the potential to simultaneously reduce the risk or burden of both undernutrition (including wasting, stunting and micronutrient deficiency or insufficiency) and overweight, obesity or diet-related NCDs (including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers). Double-duty actions leverage the coexistence of multiple forms of malnutrition and their shared drivers to offer integrated solutions. Double-duty actions are not necessarily new actions. They may often be in use to address single forms of malnutrition and also have the potential to address multiple forms of malnutrition simultaneously.

Based on the critical nutrition indicators, key target groups include children and pregnant and lactating women throughout the first 1 000 days, pre- and school-age children and adolescent girls. However, given the key role that men play in their families and the growing role of the elderly as caregivers in place of migrating parents, these groups will need to be targeted as part of awareness-raising efforts. Recent research by the MoH and FIDR (2017) suggests that nutrition problems, including stunting and wasting, are serious for school aged children generally (up to 17 years of age).⁶⁰

Household environment and health services

The priorities for improving the household environment health services as identified in the MTSR of the NSFSN 2019-2023 were to:

- Improve access to WASH and promote behaviour change for WASH.
- Improve access to social and health services and behaviour change.

There is a keen need to improve access to basic health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene. The nutritional status of both children and adults is highly affected by the quality of water, sanitation, and hygiene. The most progress has been made in water access, though improvements in water quality testing are required to ensure enhanced safety.

In general, the performance of the WASH sector has exceeded targets and this trend is likely to continue. The strategy has been to focus on behavioural change communication and to secure private investment, both from households and from WASH service providers. The remaining

⁵⁸ UNICEF. 2016. National Nutrition Report; NIS and ICF International. 2015. Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2014; WFP. 2017. Fill the Nutrient Gap. Cambodia.

⁵⁹ WHO. 2017. *Double-duty actions. Policy brief*. Geneva, World Health Organization.

⁶⁰ MoH and FIDR. 2017. Development of recommended dietary allowance and food based dietary guidelines for school-aged children in Cambodia.

challenge is to ensure access to a safely managed water supply and sanitation services. With an active WASH-Nutrition Subgroup working on cross-sectoral linkages for both rural and urban locations, there is considerable promise in this area.

Strategic priorities for food security and nutrition

The framework for the proposed strategic priorities for food security and nutrition from 2019-2023 is presented in Annex 1. This framework separates sector-led priority actions from initiatives that require multisectoral coordination or integration. The latter actions have been deliberately limited to fit the mandate, capacities and financing available to CARD and the possibility that the strategy will be extended to the subnational level. This pragmatic approach ensures that CARD can concentrate on matters within its own jurisdiction and that other sectors take responsibilities for priority setting, implementation and reporting on their own actions. CARD can provide support through advocacy, convergence and coordination under the overarching strategy.

The cross-cutting priorities suggested in the MTSR 2017 were:

- Strengthening targeting to leave no one behind.
- Promoting engagement by all society.
- Strengthening domestic, public and private financing of the priority areas identified above.
- Enhancing knowledge management on food security and nutrition to ensure informed and evidence-based decision-making.
- Mobilizing multisectoral support for selected cross-cutting initiatives such as fortification, and improved water quality and sanitation.

The priorities for CARD lie in the coordination of these actions and a particular focus on joint actions by concerned ministries, development partners, the community and the private sector. The joint programming priorities suggested for the NSFSN 2019-2023 are:

1. Healthy diets;
2. Nutrition-sensitive WASH;
3. Food value chains and food safety;
4. Community-led nutrition;
5. Social assistance and food security and nutrition;
6. Food security and nutrition in disaster management and climate change.

These joint priorities require multisector coordination and are in addition to cross-cutting issues of gender and youth, environment and equity, and the sector-led food security and nutrition priorities for the agriculture, health, education, commerce and industry sectors. Consultations were held across all provinces in Cambodia to test popular understanding of these priorities and to assess their relative importance on a national basis. The ordering of the priorities above reflects this ranking. Within each sector-led programme, there are actions involving different ministries, the private sector and civil society. They are distinguished by the existence of sectoral coordination mechanisms, with control of the programmes mostly held within the sector. In

addition, there is a governance strand for the institutions and partnerships involved in multisectoral coordination. The strategic framework is summarized in Figure 5.

For this purpose, governance is broadly defined as ‘the interactions between public and/or private entities ultimately aiming at the realization of collective goals.’⁶¹ Governance should not be confused with government, which is associated with more hierarchical and state-centred modes of managing public issues. In the context of Cambodia, the governance of food security and nutrition involves governments, development partners, civil society organizations, the private sector and citizens. These multiple stakeholders need to be coordinated around complex and multidimensional issues. Governance can be considered as both a potential driver of, and a potential solution to, situations of nutrition insecurity – even when poor governance is not the main cause of food insecurity, it can be a significant contributory factor when it fails to effectively address natural, economic, or social drivers of conjunctural or structural hunger (Committee on World Food Security, 2012). Good governance for food security and nutrition at all levels is a prime requisite for progress in the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR FSN IN CAMBODIA



Figure 5: The Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition in Cambodia.

⁶¹ Termeer, C, Dewulf, A, van Rijswijk, H, van Buuren, A, Huitema, D, Meijerink, S, Rayner, T and Wiering, M. 2011. The regional governance of climate adaptation: A framework for developing legitimate, effective, and resilient governance arrangements, *Climate Law 2*, 2011 pp. 159–179.

The strategic priorities for food security and nutrition in Cambodia require improved governance, especially at the subnational level. This includes filling data gaps, developing human resource and institutional capacities, private sector engagement, comprehensive financing, improved coordination, policy coherence and integration of sector-led actions to meet priorities for joint action. The passage of the Food Safety Law and supporting regulations is a prominent area for immediate improvement in the sphere of governance.

All of the cross-cutting priorities from the MTSR 2017 have been accommodated in the joint programming priorities, especially in terms of strengthening governance. Among these priority actions for joint programming, the EU investments are linked to social protection, small-scale fisheries and nutrition-sensitive initiatives in the education sector. This latter aspect also has strong linkages with social protection. Likewise, for FAO Cambodia, the support to fisheries is critical to the country programme and will include collecting fisheries information as part of the annual survey of agriculture, voluntary guidelines for small-scale fisheries and social protection for fishers. Both FAO and the EU delegation have expressed significant interest in promoting food safety in Cambodia, aligned with RGC priorities.

There is strong support for an integrated approach, allowing progress against the NSFSN on all fronts. To build on this, priority actions need to be costed and resourced both in human and financial terms, and ensuring alignment with domestic planning and resourcing processes. Domestic financing needs to be complemented by external assistance for nutrition and social protection issues in Cambodia. There are opportunities for creative domestic financing solutions through stronger government budget allocation, innovative public-private partnerships, and incentivizing remittances to be channelled into investments that promote household food security. To ensure appropriate resourcing, strategies need to be appropriately costed. Currently this has only been done for a few areas; the *Fast Track Roadmap for Improving Nutrition 2014-2020* was costed at approximately USD 50 million; only 30 percent of the funds have been secured. Similarly, for the MAFF Public Investment Programme (PIP) budget for 2018-2020 of USD 275 million, only USD 42.4 million has been committed. External funding through concessional loans from financial institutions such as IFAD and ADB represents more than 50 percent of the required total for the PIP. The NSFSN does not have an associated budget from the RGC except by virtue of allocations to individual ministries and agencies, and resourcing for CARD itself is limited.

Themes for key policy assistance going forward

Successfully implementing the cross-cutting strategies will require efforts to ensure that the RGC is firmly in the driving seat, agreeing on areas where there is added value from integrating work and areas where sectors and line ministries should move forward independently. Clear accountabilities for line ministries must be articulated and focal points empowered to take action.

Targeting involves critical decisions around priority setting, for example, between situations with high prevalence of deprivation, or where the absolute burden is greatest and there is the highest intensity of challenge associated with multiple deprivations. The lack of statistically significant data on malnutrition at subnational levels hinders effective decision-making in such cases. The formulation of the Cambodia SDGs reflects the full set of international goals, as well as an

additional goal relating to demining. As previously noted, Target 2.1. has not been included in the CSDGs, probably due to the difficulties involved in collecting the data needed to report on that target.

Once the NSFSN 2019-2023 has been released, policy development activities should shift to the design and implementation of an effective information system to support evidence-based policy and decision-making, with the agriculture sector as a primary focus. This is especially relevant for meeting the targets for the Cambodia SDGs and other national planning targets. There is an ongoing need for capacity building within CARD, MAFF, MoP and the subnational coordination systems needed to support implementation.

The TWGs need additional support to improve their focus on policy formulation, strategic planning and promoting progress by linking results to economic impacts, and advancing economic arguments to support investments in improving food security and nutrition.

It is foreseen that the same challenges facing the MTSR in terms of data collection and evaluating progress will also be encountered in the opening of the strategic period 2019-2023, because of the heavy dependency on the CDHS to measure many aspects of progress. The next CDHS is scheduled for 2020 and results are not expected to be available until 2021, halfway through the strategic period for the NSFSN 2019-2023. To fully enable a coordinated multilevel and cross-sectoral approach, information gathering, analysis and dissemination will need to be strengthened and made available through a common platform, building on the expanding access to technologies across Cambodia and ensuring capacity building for staff at all levels. Improved, sustainable food security and nutrition results will require scaling up awareness raising, including through mass media, schools and community mechanisms.

Data on progress are currently available through, for example, the Health Management Information System (HMIS) and others; this includes information on the management of severe acute malnutrition, the distribution of deworming, and the early initiation of breastfeeding. Line ministries have annual reporting systems, which are critical sources of information for monitoring and evaluation and are becoming increasingly useful for coordination at high levels. There are good opportunities for strengthening the aggregation of data and the use of the information garnered from diverse sources for the purposes of reporting progress for the CSDGs, strategic planning and decision-making. The statistical system needs to develop the capacity to regularly supply data that are significant to – at least – the provincial level. In addition, a revision of the commune database will be helpful to ensure that annual data are available at all levels. The commune database has the potential to be an important tool for subnational planning, including for the improvement of food security and nutrition. These are critical areas for investment and capacity building.

There should be increasing emphasis on subnational coordination mechanisms for food security and nutrition as well as to support the implementation of programmes at the subnational level. The past emphasis of the NSFSN was at national level, with no guidelines for subnational arrangements. The decentralization efforts underway can be made to incorporate food security and nutrition issues, coordinating with provincial line departments and local level governments. It will

be important to ensure civil society engagement, and to strengthen public services through community-based approaches, including for example, by building on existing volunteer structures.

Until now, certain groups have not met their potential to support the improvement of food security and nutrition in Cambodia; these include the private sector, parliamentarians, the media and academia. The Development Partners and the RGC can cooperate more fully in efforts to harness these contributions, especially in addressing the double burden of malnutrition. The creation of a SUN Business Network is an important step towards the constructive engagement of the private sector.

Annex 1: SAFE Systems Assessment for Priority Actions under the NSFSN 2019-2023

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUSTAINABILITY	ACCEPTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	EFFECTIVENESS	TIMING
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES					
<p>Gender and Youth</p> <p>Ensuring all sector-led and joint priority actions reflect explicit objectives for gender and youth responsiveness.</p>	<p>Investments critical to sustainability.</p> <p>Key element of targeting and coherence.</p>	<p>Growing acceptance and internalization of importance of gender responsiveness.</p> <p>Limited power to influence ministries.</p>	<p>Politically feasible.</p> <p>Underinvestment by sectors. Needs additional support.</p> <p>Requires ongoing support in all fora and contributions from all sectors and priority areas on policy and programming.</p>	<p>Critical to success of the NSFSN to focus on women and children.</p> <p>Capacities limited.</p>	<p>Immediate action required and ongoing advocacy.</p>
<p>Equity</p> <p>Address access inequalities. Expansion of the Health Equity Fund.</p> <p>School-based nutrition-sensitive social assistance.</p> <p>Maternal and child cash transfer schemes for the poor.</p>	<p>Formalization of social protection systems and growth of contributory and insurance schemes moves responsibility to households and generates opportunities for greater private sector involvement.</p> <p>Challenge for management of open</p>	<p>High-level political commitment and popular support for cash transfers.</p> <p>Some challenges for MoEYS to take over responsibilities for school feeding</p>	<p>Cash transfers tested in project work.</p> <p>Administration will be challenging, especially with transfer of the responsibility from MoH to MoSAVY.</p> <p>Improved enforcement and management of</p>	<p>Requires monitoring and support from a coordinated SBCC.</p> <p>School feeding programme can serve as foundation for broader school-based nutrition programmes.</p>	<p>Immediate action required to support social protection and to develop linkages to social assistance programmes.</p>

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUSTAINABILITY	ACCEPTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	EFFECTIVENESS	TIMING
Conservation of open access and community resources including fisheries and forestry.	access fisheries resources and control over the forestry domain.	High-level commitment to open access for fisheries resources.	common property resources required.	Major investments by EU and others to support fisheries. Ensure shock responsiveness and equitable access to social protection programmes.	
Environment Provision of environmental safeguards for the protection of primary productive capacities and service flows and the provision of healthy household environments.	Contributions critical for sustainability and must be considered for all actions.	Strong RGC support for environmental improvements and engagement of MoE at community level. MoE has good support and understanding of FSN issues. Many challenges for management of community and private sector behaviours.	Technical solutions available. Funding is the key challenge for improvement.at national level.	Strong connections to basic conceptual model and recognition by MoH and MRD of the linkages with nutrition outcomes.	Immediate actions required for promoting healthy household environments, especially in rural areas. Longer term investments required to provide environmental safeguards.
SECTOR-LED					
Agriculture Diversification of production systems, building resilience and value chain development. Basic	Diversification, resilience-building and private sector investment build sustainability for agriculture.	Key actions are strongly supported by the MAFF. Sector emphasis is on modernization and commercialization.	Major investments are required to meet the challenges of markets, climate and modernization.	Contribution of nutrition-sensitive agriculture difficult to separate from other	Contributions required as input to key plans (ASDP 2019-2023 and ASMP 2030). Some part of World Bank value chain

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUSTAINABILITY	ACCEPTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	EFFECTIVENESS	TIMING
hygiene education with nutrition linkages.		Smallholder situation and own-production of food remains relevant.	Technically feasible. Economic transformation lags behind other sectors.	objectives for agriculture. Align intermediate indicators with MAFF reporting and data gathering and ensure production and food availability is not the whole focus.	investments reserved for nutrition-related value chains.
<p>Health</p> <p>Infant and young child feeding, including promotion of exclusive breast feeding, focus on nutrition over the 1 000-day window, supported by SBCC and growth monitoring.</p> <p>SAM treatment.</p>	<p>Funding for national programmes required.</p> <p>Equity and access supported by Health Equity Fund.</p> <p>Coordination of actions of civil society and DPs to build national systems and capacities.</p>	<p>High-level political endorsement for health and nutrition.</p> <p>NNP ensures consistency in messaging and links actors to common approaches.</p> <p>Regulation of the private sector requires enforcement of the regulations for sale of breast-milk substitutes and food fortification.</p> <p>Strong support from SUN Networks.</p>	<p>Linkage between the health system and administrative system remains an issue at subnational level.</p> <p>Good progress in designated funding for nutrition by MoH, but heavily dependent on funding from DPs.</p> <p>Major investments by World Bank for SBCC and capacity building.</p>	<p>Messaging and capacity building required to boost effectiveness.</p> <p>More information needed for effective decision-making. Data required for delivery of effective services at local and national levels.</p> <p>Cooperation with other agencies for enforcement of regulations, including for private clinics.</p> <p>Effectiveness enhanced with all actors working under unified programmes.</p>	<p>SAM treatment a health priority.</p> <p>World Bank investments to cover entire strategic period for selected provinces.</p> <p>Provision of health services with national coverage needs longer term.</p> <p>CDHS 2020 (supported by USAID) provides critical measures of progress and guides decision making.</p> <p>Overweight and obesity is not yet a severe public health issue but preparedness</p>

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				Link civil society, private sector and public-sector contributions.	required. Actions should be set in place and targets set once CDHS 2020 is available.
Education Promotion of food-based nutrition education. Nutrition education to support dietary diversity and food hygiene education. Work with youth for behavioral change.	Long term arrangements support sustainability.	MOEYS reluctant to advocate strongly, due to financial implications. NSPPF endorses school feeding.	Financial challenges. WFP and USAID may support transition of responsibility to RGC.	Good prospect for longer-term impact on behavioral change. Coordinated approach to integration of SBCC messaging and developing curriculum is required.	Transitional programmes required to maintain momentum.
Commerce Regulation of markets, promotion of competition and consumer protection and support for customs at national borders.	Constructive engagement of the private sector and sound legislation create enabling environment for sustainability.	Alignment of commercial and public interests is challenging. Requires sound legal basis, quality standards and systems and effective regulation.	Technical and financial feasibility. Market improvements necessary for hygiene and food safety (e.g. live bird markets).	Effective only with climate of public service reform and effective enforcement of market regulations. Needs strong authority for sectoral coordination.	Building legislation for consumer protection, competition and food safety as part of enabling environment for improvement of food security and nutrition.
Industry Ensuring food safety, promoting food quality and encouraging value adding to contribute to food security and	Linkage between private sector and public interests contributes to sustainability.	Private sector interest in workforce productivity needs stimulation. Messaging to show Cambodia represents	Many challenges for industry in achieving hygiene and food safety standards for food processing.	In line with migration and urbanization trends and demographics of young population moving to industry.	Follow constructive leads in the garment industry. Engage the International Labour Organization in efforts. Long-term benefits in

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUSTAINABILITY	ACCEPTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	EFFECTIVENESS	TIMING
<p>nutrition. Food hygiene and safety infrastructure and standards to safeguard nutrition. Workplace programmes promoting healthy diets and good nutrition.</p>	<p>Long-term investments in economic development.</p>	<p>more than just cheap labour for industry. International standards and trade regulation, especially for ASEAN help to drive change.</p>	<p>Technically and financially feasible</p>	<p>Underpinning economic development programmes.</p>	<p>creating platform for promoting healthy diets. Linkage to value chain approaches through good manufacturing practices.</p>
JOINT PRIORITIES					
<p>Healthy diets Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food and providing dietary diversity Adoption of good feeding practices for small children. Addressing MAM. Dealing with growing problems of overweight and obesity. Constructive engagement and regulation of the private sector.</p>	<p>Strong links to sector-led activities required and to actions for the improvement of food systems generally.</p>	<p>Limited awareness and attention to NCDs and healthy diets. Education of general public and constructive engagement of the private sector are difficult issues. CSO focus on women and children, vulnerable populations and key influencers.</p>	<p>Strong SBCC required. Needs a coordinating body with system-wide interests and influence. Growing awareness of food safety issue but many challenges in the market. Challenge of halting overweight and obesity.</p>	<p>Leadership through NNP and NCD Alliance in conjunction with CARD. Lifecycle approach to address food security and nutrition challenges for different vulnerabilities.</p>	<p>Priority for urgent action. SBCC an immediate priority and education a medium-term strategic thrust. Needs enabling legal environment and discussion of policy measures (such as taxes or subsidies) to curb intake of high sugar, fat and salt in processed foods.</p>

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUSTAINABILITY	ACCEPTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	EFFECTIVENESS	TIMING
<p>Food value chains and food safety</p> <p>Promotion of more diversified agricultural production system and the evolution of nutrition-sensitive food systems. Co-ordination of food safety along value chains. Fortification.</p>	<p>The protection of the natural resource base is a critical challenge for sustainability.</p>	<p>Food Safety Law not yet passed. Multiple ministries involved in the value chain. Need for harmonization with other laws affecting food safety. Not an identifiable interest beyond agriculture, processing and commerce. Capitalize on the impetus for modernization of agriculture and agro-industry.</p>	<p>Needs a coordinating body with system-wide interests and influence.</p>	<p>CARD to provide leadership to draw in the multiple stakeholders involved.</p>	<p>Need to instigate a coordinating body to initiate concerted action. This has been delayed for a period of years since drafting the law.</p>
<p>FSN in Disaster management and climate change</p> <p>Developing resilience of production and distribution systems. Integrating disaster risk management and social assistance. maintenance or expansion of the Emergency Food Reserve. Dealing with climate change</p>	<p>Critical for sustainability of food security and nutrition improvements overall.</p>	<p>Political and institutional support for climate change action and disaster management. Good opportunities to connect to international support.</p>	<p>Technical solutions exist. Awareness and uptake slow. May be a challenge to link disaster management and climate change interests.</p>	<p>Supported by NCDM, MAFF, MoE, HRF and NSPC. Challenges for coordination, especially in emergency situations.</p>	<p>Need to strengthen coordinating efforts of NCDM and humanitarian response.</p>

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUSTAINABILITY	ACCEPTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	EFFECTIVENESS	TIMING
<p>Social Assistance and FSN</p> <p>Maintaining and promoting linkages between food security and nutrition and social protection to ensure effectiveness of programmes.</p>	<p>Strong prospects for sustainability as RGC revenue base is strengthened.</p>	<p>Separation of social protection to MEF and de-linkage of the TWG change the political setting. Focus on maintaining linkages and promoting coordination for common goals.</p> <p>Move programmes to national scale. Strong political endorsement and linkage to domestic funding.</p> <p>Challenging to roll out nationally.</p>	<p>Technically feasible.</p> <p>Challenges in transitional stages for school feeding and maternal and child cash transfers for the poor.</p> <p>Capacity building and coordination at subnational level.</p> <p>Ensure CARD functions effectively in both food security and nutrition and in supporting social assistance programmes for NSPC.</p>	<p>Requires strong messaging and support from line ministries and subnational administration.</p>	<p>Timing for the major social assistance measures is critical.</p> <p>Critical funding is available for short term.</p> <p>Needs mobilization of resources and capacity building to support longer term needs.</p> <p>Challenge to link EU investments in education.</p>
<p>Nutrition-sensitive WASH</p> <p>Improving water quality, curbing open defecation and improving sanitation around farm homesteads. Providing improved WASH for all.</p>	<p>Private sector involvement and encouraging household responsibility provides sustainability.</p>	<p>WASH and Nutrition Sub-working Group provides strong leadership. Socio-cultural change is occurring in rural areas.</p>	<p>Technically feasible, low-cost solutions available</p>	<p>Lack of WASH investments a major factor limiting the effectiveness of other interventions in the past.</p>	<p>Important element for short-term success.</p>

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUSTAINABILITY	ACCEPTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	EFFECTIVENESS	TIMING
<p>Community-led nutrition</p> <p>Coordination and implementation of all stakeholders for nutrition programmes at community level.</p>	<p>Wide range of community-based nutrition programmes in place</p> <p>42 organizations joined the SUN CSA (Feb 2019)</p>	<p>Aligned with the decentralization and deconcentration reform being implemented by the RGC through NCDD</p> <p>Adequate policy environment</p> <p>Donor and civil society priority.</p>	<p>Limited awareness on nutrition issues at subnational level</p> <p>Need for coordination mechanisms at subnational level</p>	<p>Multi-sectoral and integrated approach</p> <p>Focus on community mobilization and behavioural change at household level</p>	<p>Continue momentum through extension of existing initiatives</p> <p>World Bank investments commencing in 2019 in 7 provinces</p>
INSTITUTIONS and PARTNERSHIPS					
<p>Multisectoral coordination</p> <p>Ensuring policy coherence. Building linkages between stated priorities, responsibilities and allocation of finances.</p> <p>Constructive engagement of the private sector.</p>	<p>National level mechanisms in place</p> <p>Financing dependent on DPs.</p>	<p>Different challenges at national and subnational level.</p> <p>Local government issues and the risk of systematic exclusion of food security and nutrition functions at subnational level under NCDD reforms taking effect in 2020.</p>		<p>Greater analytical powers required for evidence-based policy and decision-making.</p>	<p>Immediate concern is for awareness raising and advocacy at subnational level and with MoI to consider whether a sub-decree is required to legitimate food security and nutrition functions for local governments.</p>

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUSTAINABILITY	ACCEPTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	EFFECTIVENESS	TIMING
<p>Information systems and M&E</p> <p>Setting targets and monitoring progress in a limited information environment and harmonizing data collection and reporting systems.</p>	<p>The sustainability of the food security and nutrition information system is a critical challenge.</p>	<p>Well understood and acknowledged as a limitation to decision-making.</p> <p>Requires cooperation from supporting agencies and harmonization of efforts.</p> <p>Needed at all levels of government and recognized by DPs</p> <p>CSDG reporting and data needs included in UN and Prime Minister dialogue for 2019, reflecting high-level interest.</p>	<p>Information requirements need systematic review.</p> <p>Financial commitments very challenging.</p> <p>Statistical system needs review and harmonization to meet information needs.</p>	<p>The lack of information critically affects targeting, planning and reporting.</p> <p>Project-based M&E systems serve project purposes but mostly fail to contribute to national information systems and capacities.</p> <p>Opportunities for greater efficiency in data collection and sharing and for more effective use of information in decision-making.</p>	<p>Needs immediate investment. Practical intermediate indicators and a data collection system required for management of the CSDGs and other reporting requirements.</p> <p>Data for medium term (at mid-point for the NSFSN 2019-2023 from the CDHS in 2021).</p> <p>Immediate opportunity to elevate discussion of data needs and CSDG reporting in high-level dialogue.</p>
<p>Capacity building</p> <p>National level capacities to support the functions of coordination, information systems, monitoring and evaluation, policy analysis and training</p>	<p>Challenge to maintain the trainer pool. Training cascades very costly and limited reach to the subnational level and implementers.</p>	<p>Training opportunities popular but little demonstration of results. MEF reluctant to fund training. DPs wary of training proposals involving cascading approaches.</p>	<p>Major World Bank funding directed at WASH and Health Services in specific project provinces.</p>	<p>Extensive capacity building required.</p> <p>Need to expand thinking beyond the food security and nutrition trainer pool and to make best use of the pool.</p>	<p>Concentrate on mobilizing resources for dissemination of the strategy, awareness raising and advocacy.</p> <p>NSFSN to serve as a tool for the SBCC and readily translatable</p>

PRIORITY ACTIONS	SUSTAINABILITY	ACCEPTABILITY	FEASIBILITY	EFFECTIVENESS	TIMING
<p>and international representation.</p> <p>Addressing capacity gaps at the subnational level.</p>				<p>Reach to districts and commune level required.</p> <p>Link to NCDD and Mol programmes for local government capacity building to enhance effectiveness.</p>	<p>into local contexts and plans. Need a plan to extend scope to national coverage.</p>
<p>Cross-sectoral dialogue</p> <p>Maintaining sectoral commitments to food security and nutrition and meeting cross-sectoral challenges, including increased public funding and securing private sector investments.</p>	<p>DP support required for national level.</p> <p>Structure at subnational level to be determined.</p> <p>Preference to make use of existing structures.</p> <p>Funding challenges at local level.</p> <p>Separation between political and technical roles and staff turnover challenge multisectoral coordination.</p>	<p>Sectoral interests dominate coordination efforts.</p> <p>Strong and regular participation at national and subnational events reflect interest at all levels and across all key sectors.</p>	<p>Feasible and desirable to extend coordination efforts to subnational level.</p> <p>Existing examples demonstrate different models of success.</p>	<p>Major achievements at national level must be extended to the subnational level for direct influence on implementation.</p>	<p>Immediate priority to address priority directions identified in the MTSR.</p> <p>World Bank and USAID investments with MoH, MRD and Mol reflect DP support</p>

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR Food Security AND Nutrition IN CAMBODIA



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ALIGNING THE JOINT PRIORITIES AND THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR Food Security AND Nutrition

NSFSN
2019-2023
IN CAMBODIA



Healthy Diets

Strengthen the food environment and consumer behaviours.



Food Value Chains and Food Safety

Promote diversified nutritious food production and strengthen value chains for nutritious foods, including food safety and quality.



Nutrition-Sensitive WASH

Increased availability, access and utilization of quality WASH and health services.



Governance and partnerships

Ensure effective governance arrangements for FSN.



Community-Led Nutrition

Coordination and implementation of all stakeholders for nutrition programmes at community level.



Social Assistance and FSN linkages

Promote equity in access to sufficient, nutritious and diverse foods and good nutrition.



FSN for Disaster Management and Climate Change

Protect food security, nutrition and health from shocks and stresses and natural disasters, including climate change.





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