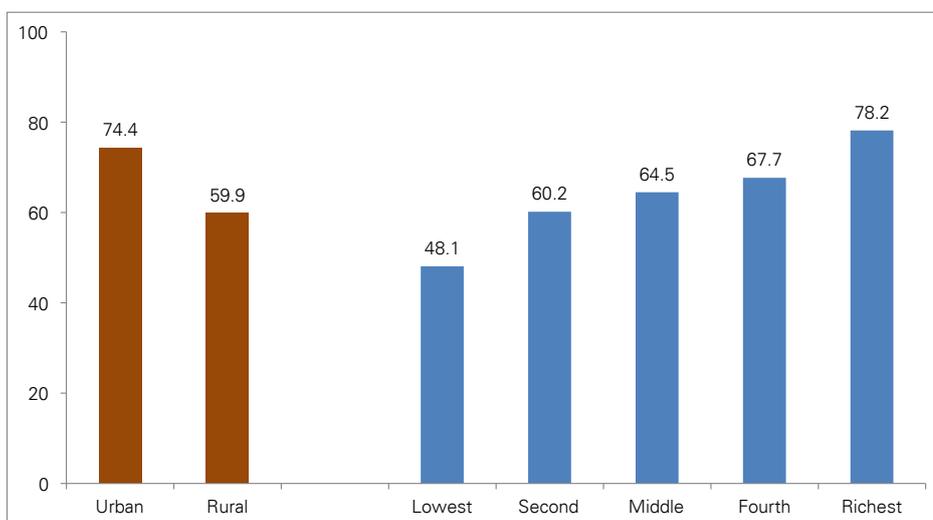


## BIRTH REGISTRATION: FOR EVERY CHILD THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO AN IDENTITY

### I Progress on Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDG)/National Strategic Development Plan (NDSP)

Prompt registration at birth is seen as an essential means of protecting a child’s right to identity, as well as ensuring realisation of his/her fundamental rights. Birth registration is also essential to protection efforts such as: i) preventing child labour by enforcing minimum-employment age laws; ii) ensuring that children in conflict with the law are not treated legally and practically as adults; iii) protecting children from under age military service or conscription; iv) prohibiting child marriage; and v) reducing child trafficking as well as assessing children who are repatriation and reunited family member. Data for births are essential for government for planning of services for populations, setting priorities, formulating essential national strategies and making decision about resource allocation at national and sub-national level.



According to the Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS) 2010, just over 62 per cent of children under five are registered in Cambodia, which is lower than the 2005 figure of 65 per cent. CDHS 2010 also shows a huge gap in birth registration between urban and rural, and between the rich and the poor. 60 per cent of children live in rural area registered their birth comparing to 74 per cent of children living in urban. There is gap between the rich and the poor as well with only 48 per cent of the poorest children registered as opposed to 78 per cent of the richest as shown in the graph.

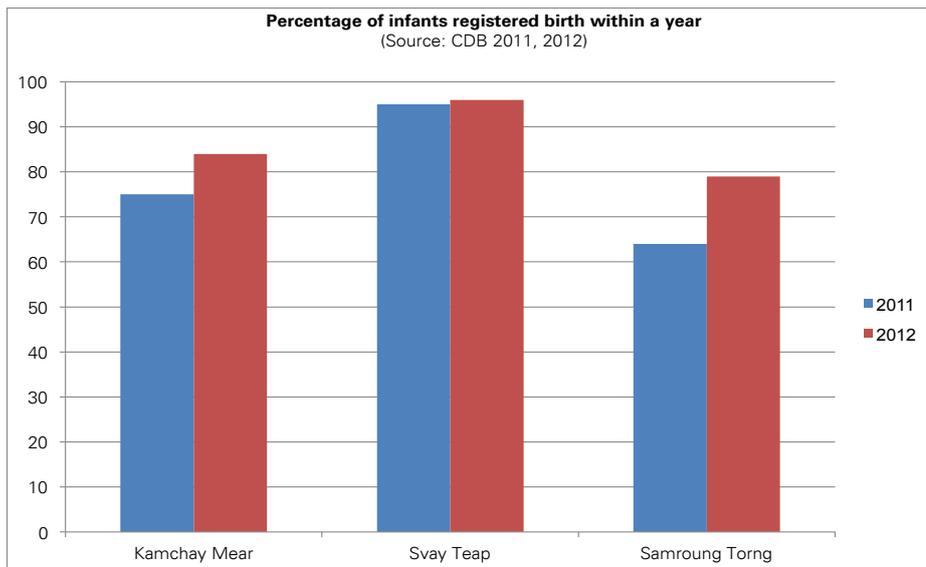
### II Key Achievements

In October 2004, the Ministry of Interior of the Royal Government of Cambodia, with support from a number of development partners including the Asian Development Bank, Plan International and UNICEF, launched a civil registration campaign which deployed 13,000 people to mobilize communities to register vital events. By October 2006, 11 million people or about 92 per cent of the total population had registered their births. Unfortunately, birth registration declined after the campaign.

Since 2011 MOI, with UNICEF support, has been implementing a pilot initiative in 32 communes of three districts in Kampong Speu, Prey Veng, and Svay Rieng Provinces to model the most effective ways to address the issues that cause low levels of birth registration. The pilot outcomes will also guide key stakeholders for policy and programme adaptation.

Key activities of the pilot initiative are:

- Capacity building for critical staff of the Statistics and Civil Registration Office at the Provincial Administration Division and District Administration and Finance Office to support commune councils to deliver effective and timely birth registration services in the focus districts.
- Social mobilization of duty-bearers from civil society organizations and sub-national administrations.
- Strengthening awareness of the importance of birth registration within 30 days after delivery through dissemination of action-oriented messages through print and media information, education and communication materials.



Within a short period of implementation (2011-2012), the pilot initiative has demonstrated positive results in the three focus districts (as shown in the graph).

### III Key Challenges

- **Lower value of and demand** for birth certificates
- The form/design of the **birth certificate is not durable** especially for rural families, who are at higher risk of damage and loss.
- Communes and districts often experience a **shortage of birth certificate supplies** causing inconsistency and delays in providing birth registration services.
- Parents find the **process of birth registration** of newborn children - especially late registration - complicated and rigid.
- In some instances **informal fees** charged for birth registration discourage families especially the poorest.
- The paper-based, manual monitoring and reporting system leads to poor data management, low information quality and irregular or late information flow.

### IV Key Recommended Actions

- Development of capacity within the Ministry of Interior to increase awareness on the importance of, and demand for, birth registration at community level.
- Make available at commune and district levels adequate supplies of birth certificates (to provide originals and certified copies) and registration books to record births.
- Reinforce implementation of existing laws and guidelines on civil registration and eliminate informal fee collection.
- Exempt poor families from penalties for late registration (thirty days after a child's birth).
- Implement monthly routine outreach and real-time reporting of birth registration through short-messaging services (SMS).
- Strengthen collaboration with health services and activities to make it easier to register babies at health facilities.