

# Violence Against Children in Cambodia

Core Commitments to Prevent and  
Respond to Violence Against Children  
in Cambodia



**PROTECT  
OUR  
CHILDREN**  
CAMBODIA





# Together We Can End Violence Against Children

Government Commitments to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children and Leading to the Development of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Children in Cambodia.

Presented by the Government of Cambodia on the occasion of the Launch of the Findings from Cambodia's Violence Against Children Survey 2013.

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Phnom Penh





# Ministry of Women's Affairs

## The Ministry Will Call for Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence

1. The Ministry of Women's Affairs will lead the development and implementation of a comprehensive multi-sectoral behaviour and social change strategy to respond to the social and cultural norms that legitimize and promote violence against children, targeting key actors at national and sub-national levels and promoting positive changes in mentality, attitudes and practices. This will increase people's ability to identify and raise awareness on the negative impact of violence against children.
2. The Ministry will contribute to positive parenting and family and childhood education programmes to promote non-violent forms of child discipline and protect children from violence and abuse.
3. The Ministry will facilitate developing a comprehensive communication strategy at national and sub-national levels to promote gender equality and equity to reduce violence against women and children. The Ministry will promote positive models of masculinity and programmes that give perpetrators the skills to stop using violence, especially sexual abuse.
4. The Ministry will collaborate with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport to improve the communication, problem solving, conflict resolution and life skills of children and young people.
5. The Ministry will develop, implement and enforce a Child Protection Code of Conduct for Judicial Police Agents and ensure all Judicial Police Agents are trained and adhere to the Code of Conduct. The Ministry will push for disciplinary action against offending officers, especially in cases of sexual abuse against children and young people.
6. The Ministry will increase the number of Judicial Police Agents at the district level and enhance their capacity and skills in case management and primary counselling to effectively respond to cases of violence against children and young people.
7. The Ministry will continue to raise awareness and strengthen the implementation and enforcement of the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims, including advocating for the development of the implementing regulations enabling commune/sangkat and village officials to act to protect victims of domestic violence.
8. The Ministry will coordinate the development of the National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children in close collaboration with line ministries and government agencies.
9. The Ministry will lead the coordination of a strengthened and harmonized civil society response to violence against children that complements initiatives by the Royal Government of Cambodia.
10. The Ministry will include key indicators of violence against children in the Data Collection and Follow-up System on violence, to be developed to monitor and evaluate the 2nd National Action Plan on Violence Against Women (NAPVAW II).



# Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation

## **The Ministry Will Call for Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence**

1. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation will, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, support the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive multi-sectoral behaviour and social change strategy to address the social and cultural norms that legitimize and promote violence against children, targeting key actors at national and sub-national levels, and promoting positive change in perceptions, attitudes and practices. This will increase people's ability to identify violence against children, raising awareness of its negative impact and empowering children and families to report incidents of violence and abuse.
2. The Ministry will contribute to coordinating and harmonizing existing hotlines responding to violence against children in Cambodia, to ensure hotlines are fully functional and easily accessible for children and families wanting to report incidents of violence and abuse.
3. The Ministry will create and implement a gender-sensitive child abuse complaint and reporting mechanism, including all children who are separated from their families or relatives in residential care institutions, foster care or other alternative care placements, under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation. The mechanism will ensure safety, privacy and confidentiality. The Ministry will cooperate with the police and other key actors to ensure proper care, treatment and follow-up of abuse cases. The Ministry will ensure children, especially girls, are encouraged to speak out against violations of their rights and report sexual and physical violence and abuse.
4. The Ministry will prepare the groundwork for a coordinated and integrated multi-sectoral reporting, referral and response system at national and sub-national levels to abuse and violence against children, especially child sexual abuse, across relevant sectors. The Ministry will coordinate the development of child-friendly and gender-sensitive procedures with minimum operating standards, guidelines and protocols to respond to cases of violence against children. The Ministry will work with relevant actors to ensure child protection frontline workers and other duty bearers and service providers are trained to prevent, identify, refer, report and respond to all forms of violence and abuse of children, and have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
5. The Ministry will actively promote child participation in decision making that affects their lives, such as decisions about family placement.
6. The Ministry will formulate, implement and enforce a Professional Code of Conduct for Child Protection for all officers working in the area of child welfare, and will ensure the officers are trained and adhere to the Professional Code. The Ministry will, in cooperation with line ministries, coordinate and facilitate the development and review of Child Protection Codes of Conduct and will ensure these include stipulated penalties for any child abuse or gender violations, especially child sexual abuse.
7. The Ministry will invest in the social and child welfare system at national and sub-national levels to enable the expansion and training of the social work force and increase budgets for social support services, such as family search programmes, case management, support during police-court procedures, reintegration and follow-up services.



8. In close collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the VACS Steering Committee on Violence Against Children, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation will coordinate the development of the National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children.

9. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation will coordinate a strengthened and harmonized NGO response to violence against children that complements government-led initiatives and is aligned with the findings of the Cambodia Violence Against Children Survey.

10. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation will facilitate and promote data collection systems across relevant ministries, institutions and actors to arrive at a user-friendly monitoring mechanism around the prevention of and response to violence against children, and ensure quality data is collected in a systematic manner.



# Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport

## **The Ministry Will Call for Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence**

1. The Ministry will integrate positive parenting and positive fatherhood strategies to prevent violence against children in families into the guidelines for parent and caregiver education and the training of educators, as part of its work on early childhood care and development.
2. The Ministry will closely collaborate with the Ministry of Women's Affairs to target children, young adolescents and youth through school-based and out-of-school interventions and ensure that education activities address traditional gender norms and practices, gender inequality, discrimination and power imbalances. The Ministry will promote norms that condemn rape and gang rape beliefs and practices by targeting teenage boys and using peer-group approaches.
3. The Ministry will strengthen the implementation and enforcement of the Law on Education and ensure that all education staff are trained and adhere to the Teachers Professional Code. Disciplinary action for crimes and professional misconduct, especially sexual violence, will be taken against offending education staff, working closely with the police and justice sector.
4. The Ministry will promote the use of non-violent teaching and learning methods among education staff to eliminate and prevent physical punishment in schools.
5. The Ministry will strengthen and scale up the implementation of the Child-Friendly Schools Policy, with increased attention on the 'protective' dimension of the framework and with school-based primary prevention programmes to ensure schools are free from all forms of violence. Children will learn and understand norms that condemn all forms of violence and promote gender equality. Teachers will be able to identify and show authorities acute cases of violence. The Ministry will promote child participation in decision making, such as decisions about school management and the quality of education.
6. The Ministry will establish effective, child-friendly and gender-sensitive child abuse complaint, reporting and referral mechanisms in schools, by designating teachers and ensuring confidentiality and coordination through School Management Committees, local authorities and stakeholders for proper care, treatment and follow-up of abuse cases. The Ministry will ensure children, especially girls, are empowered to speak out against violations of their rights and report cases of sexual and physical violence and abuse.
7. The Ministry will ensure designated educational staff receive complementary training on child-friendly and gender-sensitive guidance, primary counselling skills and services to promote a protective environment within all schools. The Ministry will ensure these educational staff members have the knowledge and basic skills to prevent, identify, refer, report and respond to all forms of violence in schools.
8. The Ministry will increase investment in both formal and non-formal education, especially the Child-Friendly School Framework and its protective component at the basic education level.



# Ministry of Health

## **The Ministry Will Call to Reinforce the Mechanisms and Measures Addressing Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms To Respond to All Forms of Violence**

1. The Ministry will develop guidelines for health clinics and effectively train health professionals on how to respond to violence against children, including identification of child survivors, care, reporting and referral of cases of violence against children to the appropriate social services. Child-friendly care services include counselling, forensic examination, treatment, HIV transmission prevention, emergency contraception for adolescent girls and other necessary medical care.
2. The Ministry will reinforce the provision of community-based services, including family support, education on child cognitive and physical development and awareness raising on the negative effects of violence against children and corporal punishment, to promote relationships between children and their parents and caregivers that are safe, stable and nurturing.
3. The Ministry will continue to enforce the implementation of a code of conduct for professionals who provide health services, focusing on services that are child friendly (e.g. listen to the child, provide services without discriminating, teasing or neglecting the child) and which are provided in a safe, private and confidential manner.
4. The Ministry will raise awareness on the harmful impact of alcohol and draft a law on the prohibition of the sale of alcohol to children and young people under 21 years of age.
5. The Ministry will incorporate child protection issues in its annual plan of action and programmes.
6. The Ministry will include data on violence against children in the health information system.





# Ministry of Interior

## **The Ministry Will Call for Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence**

1. The Ministry will strengthen existing community-based prevention programmes and mobilize communities to challenge the social and cultural norms that promote acceptance of violence against children. The Ministry will continue to engage national police officers at community levels to act as resource persons at schools on the role of the police in addressing all forms of violence.
2. The Ministry will ensure its existing hotlines that respond to violence against children in Cambodia are fully functional and operated by teams of police officers (117 and 118 for the Commissariat General of the National Police and 1288 for the Department of Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection).
3. The Ministry will ensure the Professional Code of Ethics of the Cambodian National Police includes child protection standards and that all police officers are trained on, understand and adhere to the Professional Code of Ethics. Working closely with the justice sector, disciplinary action for crimes and professional misconduct, especially sexual violence, will be taken against offending police officers.
4. The Ministry will ensure that all administrative police stations provide child-friendly services, in a confidential and supportive environment, to children who report violence and abuse. The Ministry will ensure that police investigations will be governed by child-friendly investigation procedures which meet the specific needs of child victims. Administrative police stations will be staffed by designated female police trained on child-sensitive interviewing. The Ministry will promote child participation in decisions affecting their lives, to the extent possible.
5. The Ministry will strengthen the capacity of national police officers to identify, respond to and refer cases of violence against children, including capacity building and skills training on case management and primary counselling, ensuring privacy and confidentiality, using specific protocols for children, and actively addressing prevalent socio-cultural norms governing adult/child relationships affecting how children are treated by police officers. The Ministry will increase the recruitment of designated female police to respond to cases involving children.
6. The Ministry will increase proactive investigations to promote victim identification and roll out Community Policing.
7. The Ministry will strengthen cooperation with key line ministries in addressing child abuse. The Ministry will strengthen existing structures at town/district/khan and commune/sangkat levels, including Commune Councils, Women and Children Consultative Committees and Commune Committees for Women and Children, to ensure child abuse cases are reported and referred to competent authorities to prevent and respond to violence against children.
8. The Ministry will strengthen enforcement of the implementation of existing laws and policies to protect children from violence and abuse.
9. The Ministry will request including budget commitments for child protection in Commune Development Plans and Commune Investment Plans.

10. The Ministry will support the coordination of a strengthened and harmonized civil society response to violence against children that complements government-led initiatives and is aligned with the findings of the Cambodia Violence Against Children Survey.

11. The Ministry will empower local authorities to report cases of violence against women and children under the Commune/Village Safety Policy. The Ministry will include indicators to monitor violence against children in the commune database.



# Ministry of Justice

## **The Ministry Will Call for Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence**

1. The Ministry of Justice will continue its endeavour to strengthen the legal competency and code of ethics of law enforcement officials on child protection and ensure compliance with national and international laws.
2. The Ministry of Justice will take strict legal measures against law enforcement officials who breach the code of ethics and work to eliminate impunity.
3. The Ministry of Justice will endeavour to push the court to implement child-friendly procedures in juvenile proceedings and enhance quick solutions to juvenile cases.
4. The Ministry of Justice will continue to strengthen its cooperation with relevant institutions in the delivery of legal and social services for children to ensure the protection of the legal rights of the child.
5. The Ministry of Justice will continue to review provisions of national laws and prepare further provisions consistent with international norms and standards.
6. The Ministry of Justice will continue to strengthen training and follow-up in relation to case registration to enhance the effectiveness of the registration and monitor the actions taken from the initial stage to the end of the procedure.
7. The Ministry of Justice will gather data of children in conflict with the law and child victims to ease monitoring of the increase or decrease of child victims and perpetrators so as to seek remedial actions.



# Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training

## **The Ministry Will Call for Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence**

1. The Ministry will strengthen its efforts to raise awareness among children in child labour on reporting mechanisms related to violence and abuse at schools, the workplace and in communities where children live.
2. The Ministry will continue to strengthen the capacity of staff and child labour inspectors, to effectively identify, respond, report and refer cases of child labour, raising awareness of stakeholders on children's rights and laws and regulations related to the employment of children. The Ministry will contribute to the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and ensure that child labour inspectors are trained and deal only with child labour cases.
3. The Ministry will strengthen inspection, enforcement, monitoring and follow-up systems on child labour in both the formal and informal sectors. The Ministry will strengthen the implementation and enforcement of the Labour Law and International Conventions which Cambodia has ratified.
4. The Ministry will enforce and implement a Professional Code of Conduct for Child Protection for staff and labour inspectors. The Ministry will ensure staff and labour inspectors are sufficiently trained and adhere to the Professional Code and will take disciplinary action for crimes and professional misconduct.
5. The Ministry will continue to apply child-friendly procedures in labour inspections, rescue and reintegration of children to families and communities. The Ministry will continue to establish partnerships with line ministries and development partners to withdraw and reintegrate children in the worst forms of child labour back into families and communities.



# Ministry of Tourism

## **The Ministry Calls for Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence**

1. The Ministry will establish 'community watch' systems against trafficking of women and children and train sub-national authorities on their roles in community monitoring.
2. The Ministry will continue to strengthen cooperation with line ministries and stakeholders to raise awareness among children and adolescents and their parents and caregivers on Child Safe Tourism and on reporting channels for incidents of violence, abuse and exploitation.
3. The Ministry will facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive information and communication campaign at tourism businesses, targeting children and their families as well as international and national tourists, empowering them to report incidents of violence and abuse. The Ministry will continue to raise awareness on children's rights and laws and regulations related to trafficking and child labour in such businesses.
4. The Ministry will implement and enforce a Professional Code of Conduct for Child Protection to improve Cambodian tourism. The Ministry will ensure businesses and actors in the tourism sector are trained and adhere to the Professional Code and will take administrative disciplinary action for crimes and professional misconduct, especially sexual violence, against offending officers, working closely with the police and justice sector.
5. The Ministry will build the capacity of officials at sub-national levels on Child Safe Tourism, raising awareness of stakeholders on children's rights and laws and regulations related to trafficking and child labour.
6. The Ministry will continue to inspect, enforce and monitor tourism establishments in both the formal and informal sectors on child safe conditions and practices, and enforce the implementation of the Tourism Law. Monitoring and inspection practices will be governed by child-friendly procedures.
7. The Ministry will establish coordination mechanisms with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, the Ministry of Interior and victim support agencies for referral of child victims of trafficking or exploitation of children in the tourism sector.



# Ministry of Information

## The Ministry Will Call for Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence

1. The Ministry will facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive multi-sectoral behaviour and social change strategy to address the social and cultural norms that legitimize and promote violence against children, targeting key actors at national and sub-national levels, and promoting positive change in perceptions, attitudes and practices. This will increase people's ability to identify violence against children and raise awareness of its negative impact.
2. The Ministry of Information will protect children from harmful information, in particular from television programmes and films containing brutal violence and pornography, and guarantee their access to appropriate information.
3. The Ministry will strengthen its efforts to suppress and prevent electronic dissemination of obscene female and child images.
4. The Ministry will, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, facilitate the implementation of a communication strategy at national and sub-national levels to promote stable, safe and nurturing relationships between parents and their children, calling for zero tolerance to corporal punishment.
5. The Ministry will, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive communication strategy at national and sub-national levels, targeting children and their families and empowering them to report incidents of violence and abuse.
6. The Ministry will improve media responses to and reporting on violence against children by developing, implementing and enforcing a Media Code of Conduct aligned with national laws and regulations such as the Law on the Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation.
7. The Ministry of Information will provide training at both national and sub-national levels on the Media Code of Conduct.



# Ministry of Cults and Religion

## **The Ministry Will Encourage Participation to Prevent Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence**

1. The Ministry will promote morality and religious discipline for religious leaders in Cambodia, including child protection standards, and push religious leaders to adhere to their religious disciplines especially related to sexual abuse. This will be done in cooperation with the justice sector.
2. The Ministry will raise awareness in religious communities through the National Annual Monk Congress, the Buddhist school curriculum, the Buddhist radio programme “Buddhism and society”, the training layman and laywoman, meetings and workshops, and during the National Day of Prayer and Action for Children to eliminate all forms of violence against children.
3. Religious leaders of different faiths will promote the rights and dignity of children and will use their religious teachings or precepts to provide good examples and actions to prevent violence and challenge the norms that promote violence against children.
4. Religious leaders commit to disseminate religious principles to prevent corporal punishment and emotional violence against children and to promote religious principles on non-violent forms of child discipline in educating children, to ensure stable, safe and nurturing relationships between parents and caregivers and their children.
5. Religious leaders will raise awareness on the harmful impacts of gambling, drugs and alcohol among parents and caregivers, children and youth, actively promoting positive behaviour and integrity.
6. The Ministry will promote inter-religious cooperation, sharing experiences and practices in preventing violence against children through workshops or monthly and annual meetings.



# National Institute of Statistics of the Ministry of Planning

## **The Ministry Will Call for Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence**

1. The Ministry will contribute to the evaluation of specific prevention and response actions which are part of the National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children, to measure their impact and ensure they are continually improved.
2. The Ministry will continue to cooperate with the Ministry of Women's Affairs to periodically conduct the Violence Against Children Survey to track prevalence and measure trends over time.
3. The Ministry will continue to cooperate with the Ministry of Women's Affairs to conduct analyses of these survey data to uncover findings that can inform prevention strategies and public policies, complemented by qualitative research to deepen understanding of the context of violence against children.
4. The Ministry will continue to cooperate with the Ministry of Women's Affairs to conduct further research on violence against children living outside households, children with disabilities and children living with HIV/AIDS, as well as other forms of violence not covered in the Violence Against Children Survey.
5. The Ministry will facilitate the establishment of an integrated data and monitoring mechanism to report on the achievements made towards the National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children.







# Cambodian National Council for Children

## **The Cambodian National Council for Children Will Call for Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence**

1. The Cambodia National Council for Children (CNCC) will strengthen its efforts to disseminate information and raise awareness on the Convention on the Rights of the Child to line ministries, local authorities and communities, paying particular attention to ethnic groups in rural and remote areas.
2. The CNCC will build children's own resilience to violence and promote child participation in any reporting related to children's rights.
3. The CNCC will strengthen its efforts to raise awareness of children, families, communities and those working directly with children on relevant laws and policies that protect children from violence and abuse, raising awareness about the illegal nature of such acts.
4. The CNCC will disseminate the gap analysis of existing legislation on child protection in Cambodia. Based on this comprehensive review, the CNCC will develop an advocacy strategy with recommendations for amendments or new laws presented to the appropriate bodies.
5. The CNCC will actively advocate for increased investment to address the issue of violence against children among all its members.
6. The CNCC will establish an integrated data collection and monitoring mechanism to report annually on the achievements made towards the implementation of the National Action Plan for Children



# National AIDS Authority

## **The National AIDS Authority Will Call for Zero Tolerance of Violence Against Children and Will Promote Social Norms That Condemn All Forms of Violence**

1. The National AIDS Authority will mainstream and integrate zero tolerance of violence against children in the national Three Zeroes strategy to respond to HIV and AIDS.
2. The National AIDS Authority will make available (develop, produce and disseminate) educational resources for children to learn to reduce their risk and vulnerability to violence that promotes increased risk of HIV transmission.
3. The National AIDS Authority will cooperate with the Ministry of Health to make all required services (voluntary confidential counselling and testing, abortion, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, birth-spacing, sexually transmitted infections, etc.) available for child survivors of violence and for those affected by HIV and AIDS.
4. The National AIDS Authority will monitor and evaluate the progress, achievements and impact of the HIV and AIDS response among children at risk and vulnerable to violence.





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