

A Note on the COVID-19 Impacts in Cambodia: Responses and Challenges

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The COVID-19 outbreak in Cambodia is generally less severe than in other ASEAN countries.

- The COVID-19 outbreak was confirmed in December 2019. So far, the disease has spread to most countries around the world.
- By October 14th, 2020, **over 38 million COVID-19 cases** have been confirmed globally. The death toll has risen to **over one million** (Worldometers, 2020).
- The first COVID-19 case in Cambodia was confirmed on January 27th, 2020. By October 14th, 2020, the total confirmed cases were **283**, among whom **278** have recovered and **there is no death case**.

Economic growth forecast (%) for Cambodia in the time of the COVID19

| Year | ADB | IMF | WB |
|---------------|------|------|---------------|
| 2019 | 7.1 | 7.0 | 7.1 |
| 2020 forecast | -4.0 | -1.6 | -1.0 or -2.9* |
| 2021 forecast | 5.9 | 6.1 | 6.0 or 3.9* |

Data source : The ADB's "Asian Development Outlook" (Sep, 2020), the IMF's "World Economic Outlook (Apr, 2020)"; the WB's Cambodia in the Time of COVID-19 (May, 2020)

*Downside case scenario for sluggish recovery.

Domestic responses: The Cambodian government has announced a plan to allocate up to a few billion USD to combat the COVID-19 impacts. There have also been donations from the public and wealthy people and salary contributions from public workers. Some remarkable responses are as follows.

- **Wage subsidies** and **skill training program** are being implemented for suspended workers from the garment and tourism sectors.
- **Monthly cash transfers** for poor and vulnerable households are being conducted.
- **Poor household identification** is being updated by taking into account informal sector and returned migrant workers.

International assistance: There have been both **bilateral** and **multilateral assistances** to Cambodia

- **Countries** such as Australia, China, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea the United States and Vietnam provided financial and technical assistance and medical supplies to Cambodia in combating COVID-19.
- **Organizations** such as the EU, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the World Health Organization provided millions of USD in credit and grant and technical assistance to Cambodia too.

These assistances help Cambodia to contain COVID-19.

What more can be done?

- Attentions should be paid to the poor as well as **people living marginally above the poverty line**.
- **Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** can help enhance faster responses.
- Responses should take into account **short-term as well as long-term** consequences.

Thank you for your attention!