



Impacts of COVID-19 in Cambodia
and National and International Responses

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Abstract

Cambodia officially confirmed its first case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in January 2020, and the number of infection and death cases has significantly increased since the “February 20 community incident.” In 2020, Cambodia recorded a negative economic growth rate, and its growth forecast for 2021 does not seem very promising compared with that in the pre-COVID-19 decade. The control of the outbreak and the mitigation of the COVID-19 impact in Cambodia have been relatively good due to the responses at the national and international levels. However, challenges remain given the high uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation at the domestic and global levels. Efforts to control the outbreak, mitigate the ongoing impacts, and prepare for the post-COVID-19 recovery are necessary.

Key words

Cambodia, COVID-19 impacts, COVID-19 responses

1. Introduction

The initial coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak was confirmed in December 2019, which subsequently spread to most countries in the world. By August 2, 2021, more than 200 million COVID-19 cases had been confirmed, with COVID-19-related deaths surpassing 4 million worldwide (Worldometers, 2021). With such rapid infection and circulation, the virus mutated, generating various variants. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the variants include Alpha (first detected in the United Kingdom), Beta (first detected in South Africa), Gamma (first detected in Brazil and Japan), and Delta (first detected in India). Among these confirmed variants, the Delta variant is considered to be the most contagious, recently causing a resurgence of COVID-19 cases in some countries, such as Thailand and Vietnam. Figure 1 presents the COVID-19 situation in ASEAN countries. As can be seen from Panel A of Figure 1, Indonesia has the highest number of COVID-19 cases. However, if we look at the total cases per one million people (Panel B), Malaysia records the highest number of total cases. Based on total deaths per one million people, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines are experiencing severe situations.

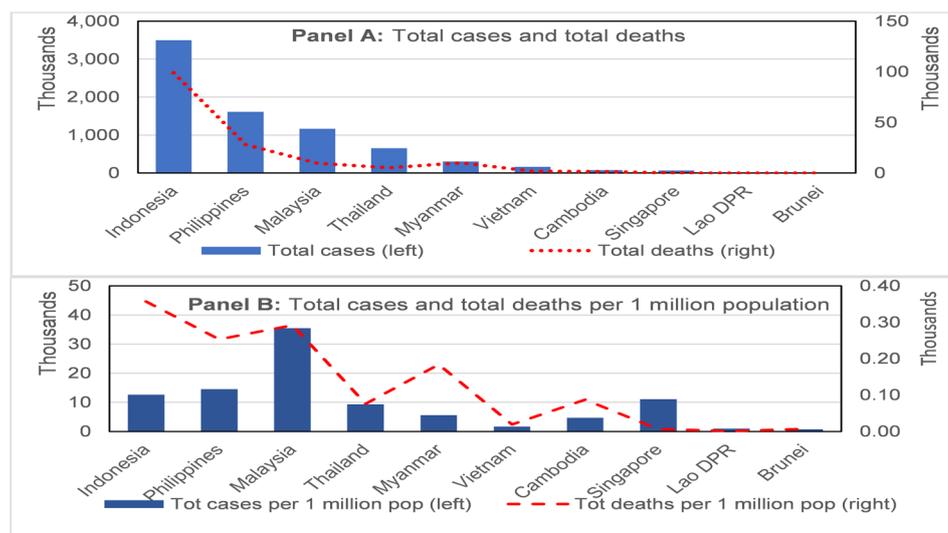
Cambodia confirmed its first COVID-19 case in January 2020, and by early August 2021, it had recorded approximately 80,000 total cases, with approximately 1,500 deaths. The significant number of infection and death cases that have been continuously confirmed in recent months is posing various socioeconomic challenges to Cambodia. To mitigate the impacts, the country has adopted various social support and economic measures. Examples of such measures include cash transfer for poor and vulnerable households, wage subsidies for affected workers, and tax relief for affected businesses and firms in the garment, textile, and footwear as well as tourism and aviation sectors. Loan restructuring for affected borrowers of financial institutions has also been adopted. Moreover, Cambodia launched a campaign to vaccinate 12 million people (10 million adults and 2 million adolescents aged 12–17) of its population of 16 million against COVID-19 by 2022.¹ The country also received various types of assistance from international organizations and its development partner countries.

To contribute to the documentation of COVID-19 impacts in the developing world, this study aims to illustrate COVID-19 impacts and explain national and

¹ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/asiapacific/2021-08/04/c_1310106960.htm (Accessed on August 10, 2021).

international responses to this outbreak for the Cambodian case. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the COVID-19 situation in Cambodia. Section 3 discusses the impacts of COVID-19 in Cambodia. Section 4 explains the national and international responses to the pandemic. Finally, Section 5 concludes the study.

Figure 1: COVID-19 and death cases in ASEAN countries as of August 2, 2021



Source: Author's construction based on data from Worldometers (2021)

2. Overview of the COVID-19 situation

After the confirmation of its first case in January 2020, Cambodia kept the COVID-19 situation well under control throughout 2020. By mid-February 2021, the country recorded less than 500 COVID-19 cases and no deaths (Worldometers, 2021). However, in 2020, some COVID-19-related incidents occurred in Cambodia.

The first incident occurred when the Cambodian government gave docking permission for the *Westerdam*, a cruise ship owned by Holland America Line. The ship, carrying 2,557 passengers and crew, docked in the Sihanoukville port on February 13, 2020, after being denied permission to dock at ports in Japan, Taiwan, Guam, the Philippines, and Thailand due to COVID-19 infection concerns.² The *Westerdam*'s passengers were also allowed to tour Cambodia's capital city, Phnom Penh. The government's docking and tour permissions drew criticism and praise. Some critics underscored the risk of the COVID-19 outbreak, whereas some considered the incident a political maneuver by the Cambodian

² <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/hun-sen-rescue> (Accessed on August 10, 2021).

leader.³ However, no domestic infection case could be traced back to the Westerdam. The WHO (2020a) also expressed its gratitude and praised Cambodia for such a response to the Westerdam.

In another incident, confirmed COVID-19 cases were recorded among passengers aboard a cruise ship, the Viking Cruise Journey, from Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City to Cambodia's Kampong Cham Province on March 10, 2020.⁴ Triggered by this incident and the possibility of local community transmission, Cambodia started to take active measures. Examples include the temporary closure of schools, cross-border travel restrictions for countries highly affected by COVID-19, and cancellation of the Khmer New Year and Water Festival public holidays.

In November 2020, two incidents affected the COVID-19 situation in Cambodia. First, on November 3, 2020, Cambodia received a visit from a Hungarian delegation led by its foreign minister, who subsequently tested positive for COVID-19.⁵ A few thousand people with direct and/or indirect contact with the delegation, including Cambodia's prime minister, were urged to undergo a 14-day quarantine and were tested for COVID-19 (WHO, 2020c). However, only a few cases of infection were linked to this incident, and thus, measures related to this "November 3 incident" were ended on November 21, 2020.⁶ The second incident in this month was the first confirmation of a local community transmission case in Phnom Penh on November 28, 2020. Then, by December 29, 2020, 41 COVID-19 cases had been traced back to this "November 28 community incident" (WHO, 2020d). Cambodia's health authority warned that the source of this community transmission had possibly entered the country undetected in October 2020.⁷ Although people were urged to stay alert to more risk of local community transmission, cautious measures related to this "November 28 community incident" were ended on December 29, 2020.⁸ As

³ <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2020/02/24/commentary/world-commentary/hun-sens-political-gamble-covid-19-epidemic> (Accessed on August 10, 2021).

⁴ <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/three-cruise-ship-passengers-test-positive-virus> (Accessed on August 10, 2021).

⁵ <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50781847/hungarian-foreign-minister-infected-his-diplomat> (Accessed on August 10, 2021).

⁶ <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50783788/november-3-incident-close-to-end> (Accessed on August 10, 2021).

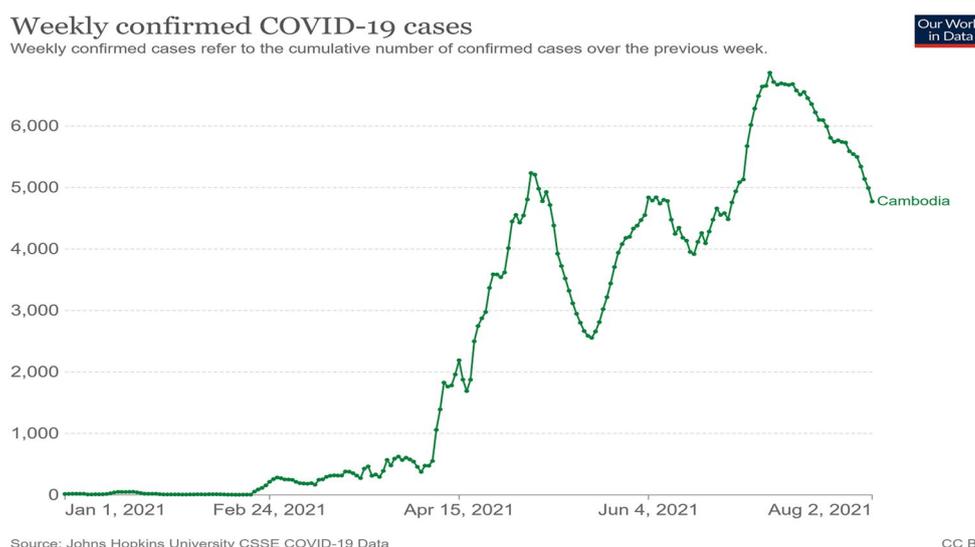
⁷ <https://cne.wtf/2020/12/03/local-covid-outbreak-different-strain-from-november-3-cases> (Accessed on August 10, 2021).

⁸ <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/pm-nov-28-event-concluded> (Accessed on August 10, 2021).

mentioned, by mid-February 2021, Cambodia had recorded less than 500 COVID-19 cases and no deaths. Various factors possibly contributing to the effective control of COVID-19 include mass COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, active measures related to cross-border travel, school closures, and bans of religious activities (Nit et al., 2021).

However, the COVID-19 situation in Cambodia has marked a new phase since late February 2021 due to the “February 20 community incident.” That is, a few Chinese nationals who breached quarantine at a hotel and spent time at various locations in Phnom Penh by bribing security guards later tested positive for COVID-19.⁹ The “February 20 community incident” is considered to be the main factor contributing to the large-scale COVID-19 outbreak in Cambodia that continues as of this writing, August 2021. Figure 2 presents weekly confirmed cases between January 1 and August 2, 2021. It shows that the COVID-19 cases in Cambodia have rapidly increased since late February 2021. Cambodia recorded its first confirmed COVID-19-related death on March 11, 2021 (WHO, 2021b). Between February 20 and August 2, 2021, the average number of daily confirmed cases was approximately 500, with approximately 80,000 total infections and 1,500 deaths. While a significant number of infections and death cases is still being recorded, the highly contagious Delta variant has raised more concern in recent weeks (WHO, 2021c).

Figure 2: Weekly confirmed COVID-19 cases in Cambodia, Jan 1 to Aug 2, 2021



Source: Our World in Data (2021)

⁹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/5/the-house-always-wins-cambodias-casinos-roll-the-dice-on-covid> (Accessed on August 10, 2021).

3. COVID-19 impacts

Despite Cambodia's relatively less severe COVID-19 situation compared with other larger countries in ASEAN, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed various socioeconomic challenges to the nation. The administrative and health measures imposed by authorities to limit infections as well as social distancing have led to a significant decline in economic activities, particularly in labor-intensive and high face-to-face interaction sectors, such as tourism, restaurant, and other entertainment, garment, textile, and footwear sectors. The overall aggregate effects of COVID-19 on the Cambodian economy depend on the outbreak situation at the domestic and global levels. Table 1 presents a summary of Cambodia's economic growth rates based on data from several international organizations. Overall, Cambodia's growth rate declined from roughly 7% in 2019 to approximately -3% in 2020, which is the lowest growth rate in the last decade.

Table 1: Economic growth and growth forecast (%) for Cambodia

Year	Asian Development Bank (ADB)	International Monetary Fund (IMF)	World Bank (WB)
2019	7.1	7	7.1
2020	-3.1	-3.5	-3.1
2021 forecast	4.0	4.2	4.0 or 1.0*

Source: Author's construction based on data from ADB (2021a), IMF (2021a), and WB (2021a).

*Slow recovery under the assumption of repeated lockdowns and travel restrictions.

3.1. Impacts on the tourism sector

In 2017, revenues from the tourism sector accounted for roughly one-fifth of Cambodia's approximately USD 23 billion gross domestic product (GDP) (ADB, 2020a). In 2020, the sector experienced an 80% drop in its approximately 6.6 million international visitors and a loss of an estimated USD 5 billion in revenues (MOT, 2020; PATA, 2020). From a survey conducted in July 2020 among 997 micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in Cambodia's main tourist destinations,¹⁰ 90% reported that they had experienced a decline in their business revenues. In addition, approximately 23% of their total employees (10,238) had been laid off due to COVID-19 (Asia Foundation, 2020). The sharp decline in this sector has had negative impacts on the overall economy, including the livelihoods of people directly and indirectly engaged in the sector.

¹⁰ The destinations include Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and coastal and northeastern zones.

3.2. Impacts on the garment, textile, and footwear sector

The garment, textile, and footwear sector, another main pillar of the Cambodian economy, employed nearly one million workers and accounted for almost 80% of Cambodia's total exports prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (ILO, 2019). The production was temporarily disrupted due to disruptions to the raw material supply line from China in early 2020. However, the sector has been able to maintain its production to some extent partly owing to its low-cost advantage and the quick recovery of the raw material supply line from China. Nevertheless, the sector's main exporting destinations, namely, the European Union (EU) and the United States (US), have been severely affected by COVID-19. Buyers in these main destinations have requested lower prices and asked for extended payment terms (Arnold, 2021). In 2020, hundreds of factories in the garment, textile, and footwear sector had partially or fully suspended production due to the decrease in purchase orders from their main buyers, particularly in the EU and US (ILO, 2020).

In 2021, the sector's production was again disrupted, and this time, the disruption was caused by COVID-19 outbreaks in various factories.¹¹ Tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs, and many of them were asked to work fewer hours than normal (Arnold, 2021). A survey of 1,525 workers in the garment, textile, and footwear and tourism sectors conducted in August 2020 recorded a significant decline in employment and income among workers in these sectors because of the effects of COVID-19 (Ngo et al., 2021). This situation has negatively affected not only their incomes but also the livelihoods of their households.

3.3. Impacts on the financial sector

As economic activities are interconnected, COVID-19 can have direct and indirect impacts on the entire economy through sectoral linkages (Baldwin, 2020). The financial sector is no exception. In Cambodia, domestic credit to the private sector has grown to surpass its GDP in 2019 (WB, 2019). Households, businesses, and firms borrow from banks, microfinance institutions (MFIs), and/or rural credit operators. The decline and suspension of economic and production activities due to COVID-19 have resulted in the decrease in and/or loss of employment, income, and revenues. Thus, borrowers may face difficulty

¹¹ <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/cambodia-92-factory-workers-tested-positive-for-covid-19-on-7-july> (Accessed on August 11, 2021).

in repaying loans or obtaining new ones. In 2020, credit to households decreased from 8% in 2019 to 5% in 2020 for microfinance deposit-taking institutions (MDIs). Moreover, this credit decreased from approximately 13% in 2019 to a negative rate in 2020 for non-deposit-taking MFIs (NBC, 2020). Poor households and small businesses and firms can be more vulnerable to this because of the limited resources available to them to mitigate the impacts.

The ratio of non-performing loans (NPL) (loans whose repayment was more than 30 days overdue) for the banking and microfinance sectors increased by a small magnitude. This small increase is partly due to the measures that urge financial institutions to adopt loan-restructuring practices for borrowers facing difficulty repaying and requesting loan restructuring since April 2020 (NBC, 2020). The NPL ratio increased from 2% to 2.1% for the banking sector and from 0.8% to 1.8% for the microfinance sector between 2019-Q4 and 2020-Q4 (NBC, 2020). By the end of 2020, approximately USD 4 billion of loans (about USD 3 billion from banks and USD 1 billion from MDIs and MFIs), covering roughly 243,000 accounts (about 43,700 accounts from banks and about 199,000 accounts from MDIs and MFIs), were requested for restructuring (NBC, 2020).

3.4. Other impacts

Using various surveys of the same 1,687 households, Karamba et al. (2021) found that COVID-19 has negative impacts on household employment, business, and income. Other recent studies also provided evidence that the impacts of COVID-19 on livelihoods are more severe among the poor and women (Asia Foundation, 2020; Im and Oum, 2021). Furthermore, some studies demonstrated that affected households have borrowed money or reduced their food and non-food consumption as coping strategies due to income loss or decline. However, such efforts are not sustainable and may have pushed them into poverty (ADB, 2021b).

In addition, many Cambodian migrant workers started returning home from Thailand after the Delta variant more severely hit Thailand in recent months.¹² Meanwhile, Cambodian migrant workers in other countries, such as the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, and Japan, have been affected by the decreased economic activities in such countries. As a result, Cambodia has experienced a 17% decrease in international remittance from USD 1.5 billion in 2019 to USD 1.2

¹² <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/2148731/over-2-000-cambodian-workers-leave-thailand> (Accessed on August 11, 2021).

billion in 2020, which is an important financial resource for many rural households (NBC, 2020). In an analysis of COVID-19 impacts on available resources for investment that focused on public, private, national, and international sources, UNDP (2021a) estimated that COVID-19 has led to approximately USD 3.6 billion loss of financing flows (accounting for 19.8% of total flows in 2020) for supporting investment in Cambodia.

COVID-19 has also had various non-economic impacts. Karamba et al. (2021) showed the decline in children's engagement in learning activities because of school closures, with the impacts being stronger among poor households who have limited resources and means to access remote education.

4. COVID-19 responses

To mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, at the national level, Cambodia has adopted various measures since the early stages of the pandemic. In 2020, approximately USD 760 million had been disbursed, and a larger amount is in the disbursement plan for 2021 (ADB, 2021c). Domestic financial donations have been received from the public, wealthy citizens, businesses, and firms as well as salary contributions from public officials and workers to the government. Moreover, international organizations and development partner countries have provided various types of assistance to Cambodia to support the nation's responses to COVID-19.

4.1. National response

Since February 2020, Cambodia has released various social support, economic, and other measures to mitigate the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. By the end of June 2021, nine rounds of overall measures had been released.¹³ Although these rounds have had different scales and scopes, their main purposes have been to provide support to the poor and affected households, workers, and businesses and firms in different sectors, such as garment, textile, and footwear, as well as tourism and aviation.

To support poor and vulnerable households, a COVID-19 cash transfer program was introduced in June 2020 using the IDPoor system.¹⁴ The program initially covered 562,000 households and was subsequently expanded to roughly

¹³ <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/cambodia-issues-ninth-round-of-stimulus-measures> (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

¹⁴ The IDPoor system was established in 2006 to support poverty reduction policy. This program identifies poor households by classifying them into Poor Level 1 (very poor) and Poor Level 2 (poor), based on their living conditions.

700,000 households (approximately 2.7 million people). By June 2021, the government had disbursed more than USD 320 million through this program.¹⁵ The amount allocated to a household depended on its poverty status (Poor Level 1 or Poor Level 2), its location (Phnom Penh or other urban or rural areas), and its member characteristics (age, disease conditions, and others). The average monthly amounts received by Poor Level 1 and 2 households were USD 67 and USD 52, respectively (ADB, 2021b).

In supporting workers in the garment, textile, and footwear and tourism sectors whose jobs had been suspended, Cambodia has provided a wage subsidy of up to USD 40 per month (approximately 20% of the legal minimum wage) to more than 300,000 workers since April 2020. Moreover, the government had disbursed nearly USD 30 million through this means by mid-2021 (ADB, 2021b; ADB, 2021c). The actual amount received by individual workers depends on the length of their job suspension. Businesses and firms in the targeted sectors affected by COVID-19 have been exempted from contribution payments for occupational risk and health care to the National Social Security Fund (NSSF). They have also been allowed to delay the implementation of the NSSF pension scheme for their workers (Asia Foundation, 2020).

Affected businesses and firms in the tourism sector in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Preah Sihanouk, Kep, Kampot, Bavet, and Poipet, including those in the aviation sector, have also received tax relief since the early rounds of the government measures (Asian Foundation, 2020). These exemptions from NSSF contributions and tax relief were estimated to total more than USD 130 million by December 2020 (ADB, 2021b). Approximately USD 130 million in credits have been channeled to support SMEs in key sectors across the economy in 2020 through a newly established Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) Bank and the state-owned Agriculture and Rural Development Bank (IMF, 2021b). Moreover, the financial resource was allocated to the Credit Guarantee Corporation of Cambodia, which is a new institution established in March 2021 under the Business Recovery Guarantee Scheme to enhance credit for businesses and firms (ADB, 2021b).

The National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) has adopted various monetary measures since March 2020 as part of its COVID-19 response. Such measures include the reduction of the reserve requirement ratio for financial institutions

¹⁵ <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/cambodia-issues-ninth-round-of-stimulus-measures> (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

from 8% for KHR and 12.5% for foreign currencies to 7% and 0.5% cut of the minimum interest rate on liquidity-providing collateralized operation (LPCO) for decreasing financial institutions' funding costs in domestic currency (NBC, 2020). Furthermore, as previously explained, in April 2020, the NBC issued a framework and urged financial institutions to adopt loan-restructuring practices for borrowers facing difficulty repaying loans and requesting restructuring. By the end of 2020, loans amounting to approximately USD 4 billion, covering roughly 243,000 accounts, had been requested for restructuring (NBC, 2020).

Cambodia has also adopted various health and administrative measures. Since the early stages of the pandemic, health and related authorities have issued a variety of guidance to increase public awareness of and attention to COVID-19 prevention. Such guidance has included common practices, such as wearing of mask, hand washing, physical/social distancing, physical temperature checking, and 14-day quarantine. Cross-border travels have also been subjected to restrictions and health measures. In December 2020, Cambodia announced a guideline called “three dos (wearing a mask, washing hands, and maintaining physical distancing) and three don'ts (avoiding closed spaces, avoiding crowded spaces, and avoiding touching each other)” to further enhance prevention practices.¹⁶

After the “February 20 community incident,” Cambodia moved further to enact the Law on Measures to Prevent COVID-19 and Other Fatal and Harmful Diseases on March 11, 2021. The objective is to strengthen measures for mitigating the COVID-19 outbreak. According to the law, violators of the COVID-19-related health and administrative measures will be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison and fined up to USD 5,000.¹⁷ The rapid increase in COVID-19 cases since February 2021 has brought concerns to Cambodia's limited health facility capacity. In response, the national stadium and some prominent convention and exhibition centers and wedding halls have been converted to temporary COVID-19 treatment facilities.¹⁸ On April 6, 2021, health authorities prepared a guideline for home-based treatment of COVID-19.¹⁹ The state of

¹⁶ <https://pressocm.gov.kh/en/archives/69457> (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

¹⁷ https://www.vdb-loi.com/kh_publications/covid-19-in-cambodia-what-are-the-consequences-of-violating-the-covid-law (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

¹⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/cambodia-uses-wedding-halls-covid-patients-cases-surge-2021-04-18> (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

¹⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/cambodia-pm-orders-home-treatment-covid-19-patients-hospitals-strain-2021-04-06> (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

emergency has not yet been implemented since its legal enactment in April 2020. However, various administrative measures have been taken in recent months, including partial lockdowns and curfews in Phnom Penh and other provinces, such as Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, Kandal, Koh Kong, Oddar Meanchey, Preah Vihear, Pailin, Pursat, and Siem Reap, specifically to prevent an outbreak of the Delta variant.²⁰

Cambodia has been enhancing its vaccination campaign against COVID-19 since February 2021 using Sinopharm, Sinovac, and AstraZeneca/Covishield vaccines. The country has also recently received Johnson & Johnson vaccine from the US. By August 7, 2021, approximately 8 million people (roughly 50% of the country's total population) had been vaccinated, including 6 million fully vaccinated individuals (Our World in Data, 2021). Cambodia's vaccination rate is higher than those of its neighbors, namely, Thailand and Vietnam. Cambodia also recently launched a campaign to provide booster doses (third shot) to people and to vaccinate youth aged 12–17.²¹ The nation has acquired COVID-19 vaccines through purchases and bilateral and multilateral aid. By August 7, 2021, Cambodia had acquired approximately 21.5 million doses in total (Sinopharm, 7.2 million doses; Sinovac, 11.5 million doses; AstraZeneca/Covishield, 1.739 million doses; and Johnson & Johnson, about 1 million doses).²²

4.2. International response

Cambodia has received multilateral and bilateral assistance from various international organizations and development partner countries.

At the multilateral level, among others, the World Bank (WB) provided USD 20 million assistance to Cambodia in April 2020 for COVID-19 emergency response by focusing on health sector support (WB, 2020). In June 2021, the WB also provided USD 200 million in concessional credit to Cambodia to help the country support affected people, facilitate a robust economic recovery, and build resilience against future shocks (WB, 2021b). In addition, the EU provided Cambodia with approximately USD 480 million in concessional assistance in

²⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/cambodia-impose-covid-19-lockdowns-areas-bordering-thailand-2021-07-29> (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

²¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/cambodia-mix-vaccines-booster-shots-fight-covid-2021-08-01> (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

²² <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50910426/remaining-japan-donated-astrazeneca-vaccines-arrive-in-cambodia> (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

June 2020 to help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.²³ Meanwhile, the ADB approved USD 250 million concessional loans for Cambodia in July 2020 under the Cambodia COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) program (ADB, 2021b). The CARES program aims to support Cambodia's COVID-19 responses by focusing on health response, social support, and revival of SMEs (ADB, 2020b). In early August 2021, the IMF approved the allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to its member countries based on their quotas in the IMF to enhance the global economy (IMF, 2021c). When this scheme comes into effect in late August 2021, Cambodia will be able to benefit from it, when necessary. Other international organizations, such as the WHO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), have also provided technical assistance and support to Cambodia in the health sector and other socioeconomic aspects since the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak (WHO, 2020b; UNDP, 2021b).

At the bilateral level, Cambodia has received financial and technical support and medical supplies from its development partner countries, including Australia, China, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, and the US, among others. For instance, Japan agreed to provide up to JPY 25 billion (approximately USD 230 million) in a concessional loan to Cambodia to support its COVID-19 response (JICA, 2020). It had also provided a variety of medical equipment to Cambodia, such as 70 ambulances, 10 X-ray machines, 63 oxygen generators, and 100 beds for intensive care units (ICU) by June 2021.²⁴

As aforementioned, Cambodia acquired COVID-19 vaccines through purchases and bilateral and multilateral donations. The first package of 324,000 doses of the AstraZeneca/Covishield vaccine arrived in Cambodia in early March 2021, under the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) program (WHO, 2021a). As a part of their contribution to the COVAX program, Japan and the US recently disbursed approximately one million doses of AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson vaccines, respectively, to Cambodia.²⁵ However, China has been the main supplier of COVID-19 vaccines for Cambodia through donations and

²³ <https://cambodianess.com/article/cambodia-to-receive-483m-from-eu-to-address-covid-19-socio-economic-fallout> (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

²⁴ <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/japan-gives-more-ambulances-cambodias-covid-fight> (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

²⁵ <https://kh.usembassy.gov/u-s-donates-over-one-million-doses-of-covid-19-vaccine-to-cambodia>, https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press3e_000218.html (Accessed on August 14, 2021).

purchases. By August 7, 2021, China's Sinopharm and Sinovac accounted for nearly 90% of Cambodia's total 21.5 million doses of vaccines acquired. In early August 2021, as a part of its bilateral donation, the UK also distributed 415,000 doses of AstraZeneca to Cambodia.²⁶

5. Conclusion

Cambodia experienced a negative growth rate in 2020 due to the impacts of COVID-19. By adopting various social support, economic, health, and administrative measures with the assistance of international organizations and development partner countries, Cambodia has been able to manage the outbreak and adjust to the impacts. However, the COVID-19 situation remains highly uncertain. Cambodia needs to divert its utmost efforts and attention to controlling the outbreak and adjusting to the ongoing impacts while preparing for the post-COVID-19 recovery.

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