



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
Nation Religion King

Demographics of Population Ageing in Cambodia, 2012



National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning
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FOREWORD

So far there has been no official in-depth analysis of the data on Elderly Population (aged 60 years and more) in Cambodia. Population ageing is the increase in the number and proportion of older or elderly persons in the population. The present study on the number and characteristics of the elderly population is very important and is bound to be useful in programmes of development of this important and vulnerable section of the population. The National Committee for the International Day for the Elderly and Ageing People has disseminated relevant government policy on ageing to the local authorities at provincial level through National Strategic Development Plan.

The Elderly person analysis is not just a matter of academic interest, but is of vital important for planning purposes. The NSDP has identified the elderly among the vulnerable groups receiving priority attention in poverty alleviation and other social sector interventions.

Under the Political Platform of the Third Legislature of the National Assembly, the Government will increase its intervention in social affairs, strengthening cooperation with national and international organizations in improving employment opportunities, enhancing emergency assistance and expanding welfare improvement programs for the elderly among other. These measures will be further reinforced by the implementation of the Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency which includes the expansion of welfare improvement programs for the elderly. It also encourages the enhancement of the Law on Social Security, which includes pension funds.

This first study has been made by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) with UNFPA funding. It attempts to analyse based on consistent criteria under Sub-Decree No. 40 dated 7 May, 1999; the National Committee for the International Day for the Elderly and Ageing people was established in 1999 and designed October 1st to be commemorated as the international Day for Elderly and Ageing People. The data of Population census 1998 and 2008 and the Population projection 2008-2030 are used to determine the increase of Elderly people. The exact policies, practices and models of services and programs developed by other ASEAN countries can serve as models for Cambodia to adopt. In this report, the policies of selected countries have been synthesized to highlight their relevance for Cambodia.

We are grateful to UNFPA for supporting the two Population Censuses 1998 and 2008 and the follow up activities. I thank Mr. Yi Soktha, PD Program Officer and Mr. Chap Ratana, PD Assistant of UNFPA for their close coordination with NIS. My thanks are due to H.E. San Sy Than, Director General of NIS and H.E. Mrs. Hang Lina, H.E. Meng Kimhor, Mr. Yem Suong, and Mr. Sin Sereivuth, associated with this study.

It is hoped that Ministries, international agencies, researchers and the public will find this report useful.



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Phnom Penh, October 2012

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Abstract

Until recently, population ageing was seen as a phenomenon occurring mainly in the developed countries of Europe and North America. It is now recognized that while both developed and developing countries are experiencing growing proportions of elderly, developing countries currently are ageing faster than developed countries. In Cambodia, the proportion of population aged 60 years and above was 6.34 per cent in 2008 (848,911) and expected to increase to 11.01 per cent (2,024,171) by year 2030. The paper explores the demographic profile of older persons in Cambodia using the 1998 and 2008 census data and projections up to 2030 to build knowledge base to understand the implications of changing population age structure.

While the shift from a young to an older age structure reflects a successful record in health improvements in the country, the fact that individuals are reaching the older ages in unprecedented numbers and with varying needs and resources is likely to pose many policy challenges arising out of increasing proportions of elderly and decreasing proportions of children. This trend leads to a increasing and after that decreasing support base combined with higher levels of old age dependency. Working age persons supporting more number of elders, greater likelihood of experiencing the loss of one's spouse, especially for women, and low levels of literacy are some of the sources of vulnerability that are faced in old age. At the same time, the transition away from a young age structure is not uniform across the country. Some provinces and natural regions, particularly in the Plain region are at the forefront of this transition. The shift to an older age structure has important implications for the country as well as for elders and their families. Therefore, there is a need to promote harmony between development and demographic change by increasing the economic and social sources of support for the elderly, among others.

1-Introduction

A major emerging demographic issue of the 21st century is the ageing of population as an inevitable consequence of the demographic transition experienced by most countries. Across the world, declining fertility and increased longevity have jointly resulted in higher numbers and proportions of older persons 60 years and above. This trend will continue as the estimated 737 million older persons in 2009 (United Nations, 2009) is likely to increase to two billion by 2050 at which time the population aged 60 and above will outnumber children 0-14 years of age. The oldest-old age segment (80 years and above) is the fastest-growing segment and by 2050, about 20 per cent of older persons will be 80 years and above. The coming decades therefore are characterized by ageing of the aged. This will have significant implications for the older persons themselves, as well as the families and societies they live in. This recognition has resulted in the World Assembly on Ageing held in 2002 with 159 countries adopting the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing which focuses on how the needs of older persons can be mainstreamed into development. Of particular relevance is the fact that in 2009, two-thirds of the world's older persons lived in developing countries (55 per cent in Asia) that are much less prepared to deal with this aspect of population dynamics compared to developed countries.

Cambodia is a signatory to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, held April 2002. In line with its theme - Building a Society for All Ages- the Madrid Assembly reiterated the need for Government, civil society and the community to ensure

that older persons are fully integrated into society and assured a life of dignity and good health. The Royal Government is committed to implementing the MIPAA.

For many years population ageing was considered to be a phenomenon of the developed countries of Europe and North America. At 21 per cent of the total population 60 years and above in 2009, the proportion of older persons in the more developed regions was much higher compared to the 8 per cent in developing regions. However, both groups are expected to have vastly increased proportions in the near future (33 per cent and 20 per cent respectively in 2050) with as many as 1,592 million older persons in developing regions. This is a huge population that must receive attention from policymakers and social scientists across the world.

In Cambodia, the proportion of the population aged 60 years and above was 6.34 per cent in 2008 and was projected to increase to 11.01 per cent by the year 2030. In absolute numbers, the elderly population in 2008 was approximately 848,911 and is expected to sharply increase to more than 2,024,171 by 2030. The more developed provinces in the plain region like Kampong Cham and a few others in Tonle Sap region like Banteay Meanchey, Battambang, and Siem Reap have experienced demographic transition ahead of others and therefore are growing older faster than other provinces. Certain regions, primarily in the Coastal and Plateau and Mountain parts of the country, still have high fertility and mortality levels, and therefore, younger population age structures. While improvement in health, decline in fertility, and increase in longevity are desirable, the projected increase of elderly population over the next few decades is a development concern that warrants priority attention for economic and social policies to become senior citizen-friendly.

This paper explores the demographic profile of senior citizens aged 60 years and above in Cambodia using the 2008 census data and projections up to 2030 (only 22 years from now) to build a knowledge base that will help to better understand the implications of changing population age and sex distribution for development planning. The data for this paper is drawn from censuses for the period from 1998 to 2008 and may be viewed as an update of an earlier analysis based on previous census data. Projection data is taken from the Population Projections of Cambodia and its provinces and natural regions, 2008-2030. The analysis is also carried out by natural regions of provinces that are experiencing population ageing at varying degrees.

2-Socio-Demographic Profile of Older Persons

According to the 2008 Census, the total number of older persons in Cambodia was approximately 848,911 and is expected to cross 2,024,171 by 2030 as the life expectancy at birth is projected to increase to 68.65 years for males by 2030 (from 60.81 years in 2008) and 71.98 years for females

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