**Position Paper**

Committee: **World Health Organization** (WHO)

Agenda: **Improving access to immunization and halting a spread of vaccine preventable diseases**

Country: **Kingdom of Cambodia**

Delegate: **Ryan Manchanda**



In Cambodia, the Ministry of Health is responsible for all the healthcare matters. In 1990s, the Ministry of Health worked with several international development agencies to reform the country’s healthcare system. In the early stages, the Cambodian government implemented social health programs such as Health Equity Funds, voucher schemes, voluntary community-based health insurance, and private insurance. These programs were well accepted by the public and generated positive results. Since then, the Ministry of Health has continued to invest in these healthcare programs and is now focused on improving Cambodia’s healthcare system.

**Country’s Position**

* Cambodia’s national immunization program covers 11 diseases, including tuberculosis, hepatitis B, polio, measles, and tetanus. Children are scheduled to get them six times within the first two years of life to be fully immunized. Since 2011, UNICEF has worked with the Phnom Penh Municipal Health Department to improve newborn and child health services, including vaccination, in urban poor communities. This includes training health staff and village health volunteers to conduct face-to-face educational sessions and outreach activities.
* Efforts to boost vaccine coverage are accompanied by a host of activities to strengthen children’s overall wellbeing such as:
* Education about proper nutrition
* Feeding practices to curb malnutrition
* Behavioral change campaigns that inform caregivers about the dangers of pneumonia. Cambodia has not reported a single confirmed case of measles since November of 2011, while its neighbors continue to face outbreaks, illness and death from this vaccine-preventable disease.  In 2013, **Cambodia became the first low-income country in Asia to protect its children against rubella.**
* Cambodia, during the devastating COVID-19 era, further proves itself more clearly as “a small country with big heart “and as a country who puts humans’ lives as a priority and respects the universal human right of “the right to live”.
* Against the background, irrespective of the global limited supply of vaccines, Cambodia, although a less-developed economy, has put its strenuous efforts in procuring COVID-19 vaccines that meet its regulatory safety standards.
* As per Cambodia’s foreign policy, Cambodia welcomes all countries as its friends and accepts assistance, vaccines in the context, from any countries, provided they are recognized by WHO and meet the regulatory safety standards and with a condition that the countries respect Cambodia’s sovereignty and independence. Sadly, truth to be told, apart from the three types of the vaccines that is Sinovac, Sinopharm and Covishield, Cambodia has not received any other vaccines, especially those provided by rich countries.
* Cambodia has amazingly made significant progress in vaccinating its citizens, while many other countries, especially poor countries, are either yet to start rolling out the vaccinations or have been able to provide relatively small fractions to their population. **Compared to countries in ASEAN, Cambodia ranks number two to administer vaccinations to its population.**

**Proposed Policies**

To achieve and sustain immunization goals:

* WHO will support the country to reach coverage of 90% or greater in every operational district for all vaccines used in the national immunization programme
* Support the country to increase the percentage of children aged 12–23 months receiving all basic vaccinations as per the national immunization.
* Support the country to reach and maintain the standards of performance indicators for acute flaccid paralysis, measles, and rubella.

**Conclusion**

The country has maintained:

* Polio-free status since 2000.
* Measles-free status in March 2015.
* It also achieved maternal and neonatal tetanus elimination status in June 2015.
* Five new and underutilized vaccines were introduced into the routine immunization system in the last 15 years.
* The 2005 and 2010 CDHS showed that the percentage of fully vaccinated children aged 12–23 months increased from 67% in 2005 to 79% in 2010.

References:

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