

Press release on efforts to protect the health and growth of Cambodian children

Phnom Penh, February 25, 2019: The Executive Committee of the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance (SUN CSA) in Cambodia commends the strong actions taken on the 11th and 12th of February 2019 by the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Ministry of Health against two separate companies found to be in violation of Sub-Decree 133. Each violating company was fined 2,500,000 Riel for repeat activities promoting breast milk substitutes, endangering the lives of infants and young children in the Kingdom. SUN CSA Cambodia Executive Committee members Helen Keller International, Save The Children, Save Vulnerable Cambodians, World Vision International and Plan International, on behalf of the alliance's 40 local and international member organizations, applaud such actions and would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Ministry of Health for taking this major step to protect the health and well-being of Cambodian children.

Sub-Decree 133 on The Marketing of Products for Infant and Young Child Feeding plays a critical role in promoting and protecting the nutrition and health of children in Cambodia. It does so by monitoring and restricting the advertising, marketing and labeling of infant formula and other breastmilk substitutes. Since the establishment of the National Oversight Board and the Executive Working Group for Sub-Decree 133 in 2014, the Royal Government of Cambodia has worked to improve the monitoring and enforcement of the Sub-Decree despite many challenges.

Scaling up appropriate breastfeeding practices can prevent an estimated 823,000 child deaths every year¹, with breastfeeding proven to contribute to improved cognitive development, school achievement and future earning potential. The Ministry of Health, along with other partners, calls for exclusive breastfeeding throughout the first six months of life, and continued breastfeeding until two years of age or beyond.

Sub-Decree 133 helps protect Cambodian children and their families from misleading and inappropriate promotion of infant formula, breastmilk substitutes and other young child feeding products. Effective monitoring and enforcement requires integrating Sub-Decree 133 monitoring into the routine training, monitoring and reporting services of relevant ministries, as well as taking action against violators. Doing so will ultimately result in better futures for the children of Cambodia.

The SUN CSA Cambodia applauds the continued dedication and commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia in their efforts to protect and promote the wellbeing and nutrition of children throughout the Kingdom.

Finally, we strongly call on all businesses in Cambodia to comply with national regulations that protect infants and children.

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¹Victora, Cesar et al. *Breastfeeding in the 21st Century: epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect*. The Lancet, Vol. 387 No. 10017. January 2016.