



PRESS RELEASE

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Japan supports Cambodia's safe distribution of COVID-19 vaccines through Emergency Aid Grant to UNICEF

The Government of Japan has donated \$36.9 million in Emergency Grant Aid to UNICEF's East Asia and Pacific Region to improve cold chain management in 12 countries impacted by COVID-19. Nearly \$1million of this funding will support the Royal Government of Cambodia in its COVID-19 vaccination efforts, particularly targeted at improving cold chain capabilities through enhanced infrastructure, equipment, transportation and training for healthcare staff. Cold chain capabilities are essential to transporting vaccines which need to remain at cool temperatures if they are to remain effective, including the new COVID-19 vaccines.

In December 2020, as part of its vaccine-readiness preparations, the Cambodian Government, UNICEF and other partners assessed the country's cold chain capacity. The assessment identified areas that this new funding will help strengthen. The grant will therefore boost Cambodia's health system capacity as it rolls out the largest and most rapid vaccination program in its history. This is critical to ensuring that the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines does not overstretch existing capacities and disrupt essential childhood immunisation services, while also strengthening existing health systems so that Cambodia will continue to benefit when the pandemic is over.

Ensuring equitable access and swift distribution of vaccines is a common challenge for the international community as it works towards the goal of containing COVID-19 across the planet. To contribute in achieving this goal, Japan has also contributed \$200 million to the global COVAX Facility, an international mechanism led by Gavi, CEPI, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF to ensure and accelerate equitable access to vaccines across the developing world.

“Deliveries of vaccines are as important as vaccines themselves. Government of Japan is committed to supporting the improvement of vaccination programmes across the developing world,” said MIKAMI Masahiro, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kingdom of Cambodia. “UNICEF’s long experience of working with the Cambodian Government on immunisation programmes is why we feel fully confident that this grant will have a huge positive impact on the vaccination roll-out. We will continue to cooperate with both UNICEF and the Cambodian Government until we can truly say that together we have contained and recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic.”

As the largest single vaccine buyer in the world, UNICEF has been selected as the lead procurement and supply agency for COVAX. Within Cambodia, UNICEF and WHO have spent three decades as the lead technical agencies supporting the Ministry of Health (MoH) in strengthening its national immunisation programme, which benefits millions of children every year .

“We’re so grateful that the Government of Japan has again stepped in to support Cambodia at this time of need, especially with COVID-19 cases on the rise” said Foroogh Foyouzat, UNICEF Representative in Cambodia. “This global pandemic knows no borders, and vaccines must reach the people at greatest risk from the virus. The funds provided by the Japanese Government will be invaluable in helping us to continue supporting the Cambodian Government with the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines while strengthening the health system. This is a crucial paving stone in the road towards recovery.”