



**Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia**

**Message
from
Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia
on the Commemoration of the World AIDS Day, 1 December 2020**

- *My humble respects to the Great Supreme Patriarchs of both Sects, Samdech Chief of Buddhist Monks, Deputy Chiefs of Buddhist Monks, and Venerable Buddhist Monks*
- *Samdechs, Excellencies, Lok Chumteavs, Ladies, and Gentlemen,*
- *Beloved compatriots,*

On the World AIDS Day, 1 December 2020, I, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, would like to join the whole world in the commemoration of the World AIDS Day taking place on Tuesday, 1 December 2020 under the theme, “Global solidarity, shared responsibility.” This Day is held with the common global purpose of showing support for the people carrying HIV and the people being affected by HIV and commemorating those who have lost their lives due to AIDS.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my full support for all the activities, carried out in promoting more widely public awareness throughout the country, to change behaviors towards HIV infection and transmission for the good health of us all. Definitely, HIV and AIDS does not only affected health and life of individuals, but it also has strong negative impact on country socio-economic development as well. From this perspective, we all need to continue focusing attention on the prevention of the spread of HIV and AIDS without complacency.

We commemorate the World AIDS Day under the theme “Global solidarity, Shared responsibility” to demonstrate the Royal Government of Cambodia’s shared responsibility in the fight against HIV and AIDS that the United Nations has resolved to eliminate by 2030.

According to the National AIDS Authority’s reports, the rate of PLHIV among adults, aged between 15 and 49, declined to 0.5% in 2019 from 0.8% in 2010. Among them, the number of adults died of AIDS dropped to roughly 1,300 in 2019 from 2,300 in 2010. At present, 84% out of all 73,000 PLHIV had undergone HIV testing, all those who got tested (or 100%) are currently receiving antiretroviral therapy and 96% out of those on treatment have their viral loads suppressed and gaining ordinary health. The number of new infections of all ages dropped to 780 in 2019 from 1,900 in 2010.

These achievements are showing positive signs of high effectiveness and quality of our intervention in the prevention of the HIV spread towards reaching the 95-95-95 targets or the objective to end AIDS by 2025, five years ahead of the UN deadline.

Nonetheless, we should never be reckless and complacent about the success we have attained, because since the outbreak of HIV epidemic in the 1980s, the world has not yet discovered either any vaccine or drug to definitely cure AIDS. Besides, in Cambodia, we have some 12,000 PLHIV who have not yet returned for blood test to confirm their HIV status, while some other patients have been abandoning treatment. In addition, key populations, such as men having sex with men (MSM), transgender (TG) groups, and entertainment worker (EW) women, whose number has grown up and who have high HIV infection rate, could as well transmit HIV to the general population.

In the face of the risk of a recurrence of AIDS, I would like to again call on our compatriots, be they either men or women, or young or old, to strive to prevent HIV and AIDS by joining the Royal Government in a single national movement towards successfully ending AIDS in Cambodia by 2025. The joining consists mainly of HIV blood test, extensive use of condoms, non-discrimination against PLHIV, support for the poor PLHIV, and so forth.

The Royal Government of Cambodia still considers the fight against HIV and AIDS a high priority, because HIV constitutes a threat to public health, poses danger to the citizens' lives, and seriously affects social and economic development. The Royal Government, with the National AIDS Authority as its core operator, will further strive to take all types of measures with a view to moving towards achieving the objectives: no more than one new HIV infection and no more than three AIDS-related deaths per day.

I am firmly convinced that our Cambodia is able to achieve this goal, because our AIDS program has the following foundations:

- 1) Ownership and leadership:** The Royal Government has been directly and actively leading, managing, and coordinating the fight against AIDS. In the past, while the Ministry of Interior included the fight against AIDS in the Village-Commune Safety Policy, the Ministry of Planning provided ID Poor cards to PLHIV, allowing them to receive social protection like the poor in general. At present, we are in the process of integrating the AIDS program into the Royal Government's action plan at both national and subnational levels. Within the framework of decentralization and deconcentration, the National AIDS Authority is working directly with the Capital City, provinces, municipalities, districts, communes, and sangkats to allow all levels of local authorities to take part in preventing the spread of HIV, helping people living with HIV (PLHIV) come to receive treatment services, helping create conditions to prevent discrimination against PLHIV, and helping search for and provide assistance to PLHIVs in every locality through the social protection system.

- 2) **Partnership:** The Royal Government has been continuing close and effective cooperation with all partners, including donor countries, international organizations, such as mainly the World Health Organization (WHO), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Global Fund, and so forth as well as with national and international nongovernmental organizations, actively involved in the prevention of the spread of HIV in Cambodia.

Through the Second Plenary Meeting of the National AIDS Authority in 2018, the Royal Government has recognized the importance of the civil society organization in the HIV and AIDS response. Should there have been no close partnership cooperation, we would not have been able to attain the success.

- 3) **Investment:** To prevent the HIV spread, the world has spent billions of dollars. In our Cambodia, the Global Fund and other development partners have also already spent hundreds of millions of dollars. As for Royal Government, it, too, has regularly contributed by increasing budgets for the AIDS program year after year, making our counterpart funding reach more than one-third of the cost of fighting this disease. In fact, from 2021 to 2023, the Royal Government plans to disburse \$19.64 million in counterpart funding of which \$11 million will be allocated for the purchase of ARV.

To reach the sustainability program in the future while international aid continues to shrink, the Royal Government will try to boost national budget to help buy ARV for further treatment of AIDS patients. It will also expand social services budget at the subnational level, according to the annual economic growth possibility, to enable local officials in communes and sangkats to utilize it to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The efforts exerted by the Royal Government reflect the strong will of all of us to end AIDS by 2025.

I would like to dedicate the content and meaning of the World AIDS Day held on 1 December 2020, under the theme “Global solidarity, shared responsibility” to becoming a great national movement towards reaching the three targets: no new infections, no AIDS-related deaths, and no discrimination against PLHIV and AIDS patients.

I would like to call on all the ministries, institutions, departments, Capital City, provinces, municipalities, districts, communes, and sangkats to work in join hands and in a multisectoral manner and cooperate closely with the Cambodian Red Cross, national and international organizations, civil society, private sector, PLHIV, key populations, and communities to eradicate HIV transmission and prevail over HIV as scheduled.

I would like to bestow best wishes on Samdechs, Venerable Buddhist monks, Excellencies, Lok Chumteavs, Ladies, Gentlemen, young nieces and nephews,

students, and all the compatriots. May you all be endowed with the four germs of Buddhist blessing--longevity, nobility, healthiness, and strength--without fail.

Phnom Penh, November 25, 2020
(Signed)

Hun Sen