

The 6th ADRC International Meeting

Session Summary

5 February 2004

8:00-10:40 Cambodian session

Theme: "Flood Management in Cambodia"

Cambodia has been a country in Asia that has significantly and dynamically moved forward in building its national and local capacity for disaster reduction. This session was aimed at presenting and sharing the interesting developments in the country and the current initiatives of the national government and international organizations concerning disaster reduction. In particular, efforts in flood management and mitigation and early warning systems would be focused on, as well as the coordination and collaboration among stakeholders in Cambodia.

***Facilitator:** Mr. Ross Sovann, Advisor and Aid to the First Vice President, NCDM, Cambodia

***Rapporteur:** Mr. Emmanuel de Guzman, Consultant, Asian Disaster Reduction Center

***Speakers:**

- Mr. Peou Samy, Head of Secretariat, NCDM, Cambodia
- Mr. Antony Spalton, head of delegate of IFRC Cambodia
- Mr. Terje Skavdal, regional advisor of UN OCHA Kobe
- Dr. Trong Tu Dao, Mr. Veasna Bun, officers-in-charge of MRC Secretariat
- Mr. Veasna Bun, Programme Officer in charge of MRC Secretariat
- Mr. Hiroto Mitsugi, Deputy Resident Representative, JICA Cambodia Office
- Dr. Uy Sam Ath, Director of Disaster Management Department, Cambodian Red Cross
- Mr. Phoeuk Sok, Country Director of OXFAM
- Ms. Rebecca Hansen, Country Director of WFP and Co-chair of UNDMT

Cambodia's Experience Flood 2000

H.E. Mr. Peou Samy, Head of Secretariat, NCDM, Cambodia, gave a brief overview of the flood problem in the country and discussed the experience in the floods of 2000 which had affected 21 provinces and claimed 347 human lives, mostly children. These floods had also affected the agricultural productivity and damaged major public infrastructures and lifelines. Total cost of losses was estimated at USD 157 million. H.E. cited the emergency response of the national government, local NGOs and international organizations. He mentioned the constraints encountered by the national government, including the inadequacy of flood forecasting and early warning systems as well as damage and needs assessment system. Also, the national policy on disaster management was not yet officially approved then, including the development of the NCDM. Nevertheless, the country had embarked on a post-flood capacity building program that established the legal framework and policies for disaster management and the development of disaster management information system and disaster preparedness and mitigation programs. H.E. concluded that disaster management is an integral part of poverty alleviation has become an important strategy for pursuing sustainable development.

Disaster Management Coordination in Cambodia

Mr. Antony Spalton, head of delegate of IFRC Cambodia, discussed the priorities of the federation in the country, foremost of which is the strengthening the capacity of CRC at all levels. He mentioned the current focus on community level risk reduction and preparedness and the advocacy mainstreaming risk reduction measures. He elaborated on the requirements of coordination in the country and the country's track record and accomplishments in disaster management. He considered the continuous capacity building efforts in the country as a major challenge now, particularly the institutional development and strengthening of the leadership role of NCDM.

Training Workshops in Cambodia

Mr. Terje Skavdal, regional advisor of UN OCHA Kobe, discussed the training initiatives UN OCHA and ADRC have jointly supported in Cambodia. He elaborated on the principles of liability, greatest possible similarity and the lowest effective operational level, which have been applied in the pursuit of the training activities. He mentioned the objectives of the training, foremost of which was the provision of formal orientation to the participants on disaster damage and needs assessments. He also mentioned the methodology applied and the outcome of the trainings. Overall, he concluded, that the trainings were received positively and that they should be seen as an integral part of the process of strengthening national disaster response mechanisms.

Flood Forecasting and Early Warning of the Mekong River Commission

Dr. Trong Tu Dao, officer-in-charge of MRC Secretariat, and **Mr. Veasna Bun**, Programme Officer in charge of MRC Secretariat discussed the community flood forecast and warning system of the MRC and the tools, methods and protocols for dissemination and use of MRC-prepared flood information. He showed the initiatives at the community level, such as flood mark installation and setting up of community billboards, characterized by community participation and close partnership with American Red Cross and the Cambodian Red Cross.

JICA's Cooperation for Disaster Prevention in Cambodia

Mr. Hiroto Mitsugi, Deputy Resident Representative, JICA Cambodia Office, presented the disaster management activities of JICA in Cambodia and its thrust on improving social and economic infrastructure and the strengthening of flood and disaster response capacity in urban areas. He cited the study on hydro-meteorological monitoring for water quantity rules in the Mekong River Basin, the grant-aid projects and the improvement of bridges on the national highway, among others.

Flood Response in Year 2000 by Cambodian Red Cross

Dr. Uy Sam Ath, Director of Disaster Management Department, Cambodian Red Cross, described the extent and impact of the floods in 2000 and 2002, and the disaster response operations undertaken by CRC. He cited some lessons learned from the incidents, foremost of which was the integration of disaster response and preparedness into the NCDM national plan.

Joint Oxfam Disaster Management Programme: Flood Rehabilitation Project

Mr. Phoeuk Sok, Country Director of OXFAM, presented a profile of the flood rehabilitation project in Cambodia, including the activities on cash for work, seed and tools distribution, wells and harvesting structures and deep tube wells, hygiene promotion, community boats, hand pumps,

flood proof housing and warehouse construction, among others. He also briefly discussed the various learning points from these activities.

Partnership in Disaster Management in Cambodia

Ms. Rebecca Hansen, Country Director of WFP and Co-chair of UNDMT, described the composition of the team and how it contributes to disaster management in the country. For the team's activities and thrusts, she cited the development of joint needs assessment methodology, improvement of coordination, use of existing forums, contingency planning, capacity building, and linking relief to disaster mitigation. She elaborated on the elements of partnership among the UNDMT members, the achievements, lessons learned and challenges. She cited the enhancement of scenario building as priority next step.

Open Forum:

The following issues were raised and discussed:

- (1) Community risk communication plan
- (2) Local partnership for community development and disaster management
- (3) Role of the CRC in early warning
- (4) Enhancement of meteorological capacity of Cambodia
- (5) Building the capacity of NCDM as national focal point and coordinator for disaster management.

Conclusion:

In concluding the session, **H.E. Mr. Peou Samy**, Head of Secretariat, NCDM, Cambodia, gave a brief summary of the main points and highlights of the presentations. The presentations had shown the major developments and initiatives underway on disaster reduction in the country. Moreover, they had effectively demonstrated the dynamic cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders in the country, particularly towards building and enhancing national and local capacity for disaster reduction. The session had emphasized the importance of coordination and collaboration in disaster reduction, especially the local community level.

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