

# Cambodia Country Report 1999

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## I . Background

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Cambodia is one of fourteen countries in Asia considered to be most prone to disaster. Cambodia has been frequently affected by two kinds of disasters: natural and man-made. The natural disasters mainly include flood, drought, storms/typhoons. The man-made disasters caused by wars and civil strife have been the major problems for more than two decades resulting in large number of refugees, internal displaced persons, handicapped, orphans and poverty. Fortunately, since the formation of the Royal Government for the second mandate (1998-2003), peace has been established in the whole country. The present government is facing too many problems so as to rehabilitate all damaged infrastructure, resolve social problems, reduce poverty, ensure the well-being of people and reconstruct the country.

In 1995, the Royal Government of Cambodia has founded a systematic coordinated institutional structure, National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) to implement its strategy aiming at building the disaster management capacity throughout the country. The progress has so far been made step by step with the assistance of UN agencies, International organizations, NGOs. A number of NCDM core staff have been sent abroad to participate the international training/workshop in terms of human resource development.

For the second mandate of Cambodian Government, NCDM sub decree has been amended and improved according to the actual situation of Cambodia. The National Policy on Emergency Management, output of 1997 workshop, is also under process of improvement in accordance with the contents of the new sub decree issued in 1999. (See NCDM structure in Country Paper).

## II . Disasters and NCDM Experiences

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Nearly every year, Cambodia is affected by floods. In 1991 there were flash floods in south-eastern provinces due to the heavy rainfall in mountainous region, West of Phnom Penh. Numbers of houses and other infrastructure have been seriously damaged.

In 1995, there were flash floods in north-western provinces due to the heavy rainfall in the chain of Kravanh mountain. Crops as well as houses were also damaged.

In 1996, there were floods more seriously than the previous years due to, one part, the rapid flow of Mekong River caused by thunderstorms and heavy rainfall in upstream countries, another part was due to the heavy rainfall in mountainous region, west and north of the country. 13 provinces in which 88 districts and 617 communes were affected.

In 1997, Cambodia faced 3 kinds of disasters: drought, air crash and Linda Typhoon. Drought has affected many provinces causing food shortage to the people living in remote areas. Due to the change of water current of Mekong River, there were landslides along River bank in Phnom Penh, Kandal, Kampong Chain and Prey Veng provinces. An air crash of Vietnam flight occurred near the International Airport of Pochentong causing deaths of nearly all passengers and crew on board. Linda Typhoon hit the island of Pou-Le-Wei causing destruction of houses and wreckage to fishing boats in the sea.

In 1998, another air crash of "Vol Sans Frontiere" occurred in Stung Treng province, a group of 6 person of "Medicins Sans Frontiere" were slightly injured and were evacuated to Phnom Penh.

In 1999, there are floods and Cyclones occurred in 10 provinces causing destruction of rice crops (17,732 ha), houses (491) with 37,527 families affected.

Because of disaster planning and preparedness developed by NCDM and Provincial Committee for Disaster Management we can reduce the losses of human lives and the loss of private property of people. NCDM working groups help PCDM to prepare and mobilize available local resources in terms of emergency preparedness, mitigation and response.

After establishment of NCDM, Secretariat staff in close co-operation with Cambodian Red Cross, all members ministries and non-members of NCDM, UN agencies and International organizations has conducted the disaster management activities, including monitoring, conducting assessment, public awareness and education, performing emergency relief operation and formulating appeal for assistance from donor countries, UN agencies, International organizations, private companies and donors.

In terms of Capacity Building for Integrated Disaster Management, UNDP has provided an assistance project of CMB/96/008 which started from 1997. ADPC has been playing role as technical assistance by developing a draft of National Policy for Disaster Management which was the topic of National workshop held by the end of 1997

With the technical assistance of ADPC and administrative support of UNDP, NCDM General Secretariat has developed its own Workplan aiming at building the capacity through training activities at both national and provincial levels, emergency co-ordinating activities, emergency preparedness program, mitigation, emergency response and post-disaster rehabilitation in concert with Cambodian Red Cross, partner of NCDM.

NCDM has organized with other partners, national and international, to carry out the co-ordination activities during disaster and has identified 3 important issues:

need for standard assessment procedures, need for seeking emergency assistance and need for the formation of emergency working groups to be dispatched to different areas affected by disasters. These 3 issues are very important in delivering effective supplies, conducting public awareness and education, and providing other forms of assistance to the victims. With the assistance of UN-DMT and IOs, NCDM could launch a consolidated appeal through which Cambodia received positive and immediate response from NGOs, UN agencies, IOs, and donor countries.

NCDM has experiences in receiving international assistance during serious floods in 1996. The emergency response to the need of victims at that time was beyond the capacity of National Government. As result of Government appeal, many donor countries, UNHCR, IOs and private companies have provided donation in kinds and cash to contribute to the emergency response.

The concept of field assessment is a very important process for NCDM in order to collect accurate information regarding the damage and the actual needs of victims.

Every distribution of relief supplies is carried out whenever there is an agreement between NCDM and the Team Work. If it is beyond the Team Work capacity, NCDM proceeds the request for assistance from the Government, both emergency relief operation and post-disaster rehabilitation.

### III. Policy of NCDM

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For more than two decades, Cambodia has been suffering from both natural and man-made disasters nearly every year and everywhere, especially from flooding, drought, storms, landmines, epidemics, fire...

Some natural disasters are , one part , the consequences of man-made activities, such as:

- Deforestation
- Filling up the pond, lakes, low land areas for construction
- Alluvial soil brought every year by Mekong River makes the bottom of river and lakes shallower and shallower.

All these factors are very hazardous and considered as the real threats to the environment: unequal widespread of rainfall, shortage of water reservoirs, high rise of water flow causing rapid inundation, erosion and landslides.

NCDM conceives that the following tasks are to be achieved:

- strengthening the capacity building for integrated disaster management at all levels, national and sub-national, especially approaches for reducing the impact of disasters.
- Seeking co-operation with UN agency, ADPC, International organizations and foreign countries in Asia and the Pacific Region in the field of emergency relief response, emergency preparedness, disaster prevention and mitigation, and post-disaster rehabilitation.
- Developing the hydrological infrastructure with an appropriate irrigation system.
- Equipping with an effective early warning system to ensure an accurate information and database regarding the meteorological forecast, prediction of disastrous weather.
- Conducting training Workshops to develop human resources in disaster management.
- Establishing national procedures for requesting the international and regional response, especially seeking funds for NCDM functioning and for achieving all NCDM Workplan according to the established activities of the project.
- Providing disaster relief priorities and alternative approaches and methodology for provision of disaster relief.
- Developing laws and legislation relating to construction, transportation by roads, trains, boats.

- Identifying the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies, national and international including military and defense assets involved in disaster response operation.
- Developing common, comprehensive protocols for international assistance in disaster relief operations in the region.

In short, NCDM could identify the operational issues such as standardization of procedures, common training objectives, informal and formal communication networks, transparency of administration, bilateral and multi-party arrangements, agreed management system, common language, agreed technology, operational criteria. Without a shared understanding on the purpose, directions, methodologies and strategy, as well as political will on the part of the state involved, there will be limitations on the degree of progress possible on practical matter of operational delivery.

**KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**  
**Nation Religion King**

1. National Committee on Disaster Management  
**Secretariat**

## COUNTRY PAPER

by

Mr. PEOU SAMY, Secretary General  
Of The National Committee  
For Disaster Management

Second ADRC International Meeting  
(5-8 December 1999)

**KOBE-JAPAN**

### I . Introduction

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Cambodia is one of fourteen countries in Asia considered by UN-Department of Humanitarian Affairs to be the most prone to disasters. Cambodia has been frequently affected by two kinds of disasters: natural and man-made. The natural disasters mainly include flood and drought. The man-made disasters caused by wars and civil strife have been the major problems for more than two decades resulting in large number of refugees, internally

displaced persons, handicapped, orphans and poverty. Over six million mines lie buried in Cambodian soil threatening the lives of thousands of people, especially in rural areas.

Since 1995 the Royal Government of Cambodia has founded a systematic coordinated institutional structure whose mission is to implement the government's future strategy aiming at building the disaster management capacity throughout the country. Much more progress has been made step by step despite the lack of technical experience, material and finances. In 1996, the National Committee on Disaster Management headed by both Prime Ministers as co-presidents instructed its secretariat to conduct a damage survey and formulate an appeal for relief from national and international donors, and to meet the response to the immediate needs of victims.

For the second mandate of Cambodian Government, NCDM sub decree has been amended and improved according to the actual situation of Cambodia. The National Policy on Emergency Management, output of 1997 workshop, is also under process of improvement in accordance with the contents of the new sub-decree issued in 1999.

## II. Country Information

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### 1. Outline Of The Government Organization Responsible For Disaster Management

- Country
- Name of organization
- Contact information
- Name of co-ordinating department

• Address

• Phones

- Fax
- E-mail
- Current co-ordinating official
- Number of staff

Cambodia  
National Committee for Disaster Management  
General Secretariat of NCDM  
General Secretariat of NCDM, Council of Ministers,  
Royal Government of Cambodia  
#3 Road 55, Chatomuk sub-district, Daun Penh  
District, Phnom Penh  
(855 23) 216 234  
(855 15) 852 029  
(855 23) 216 194/212 876

Mr. Peou Samy, Secretary General, NCDM 83 not including PCDM and DCDM permanent key staff

### 2. Climate, Temperature and Rainfall

Cambodia is situated between the latitudes of 10-15 North and Longitudes of 108-120 East and covers an area of 181,035.00 sq. km. It consists of 20 provinces, 4 municipalities, 172 districts. Bordered on the North and West by Thailand, North and East by Vietnam. The South and West have around for 38% of the country land area in which 80% is devoted to rice production but also include upland crops/plantations, shrub and grasslands, flooded forests and urban and barren lands. Mountain forest covers 62% of land area and includes evergreen, dense, mixed and secondary forests and woodlands of scattered trees.

### 3. Climate, Temperature and Rainfall

1) Climate

Temperature

Seasons

May-November	27-3 5	Rainy (South- West monsoon)
November- February	17-27	Dry (North-East monsoon)
February- May	29-3 8	Hot, almost no rain

## 2) Rainfall

The average annual rainfall in mountainous areas in the East ranges from 2,000.00-3,000.00 mm. The South-West coastal areas experiences around 4,000.00 mm of rain a year, whilst in the plain area, the average annual rainfall is only 1,400.00-1,600.00 mm. However, annual rainfalls fluctuate very much (monthly fluctuation is also high).

## 4. Annual flooding

25% of the plain area on average is flooded annually by the Mekong River and its tributaries and local downpours (rainfall-runoff is often blocked by the high water level in the Mekong River and Tonlesap Great Lake).

## 5. Population

The estimated population of Cambodia is about 11.5 million. Density of population is estimated at 51 persons per sq. km. The sex imbalance is estimated at 52.2% female and 47.8% male. 7.7% of the population live in urban areas, 6.9% live in main towns and 85.4% in rural areas.

# III. The Major Hazards In Cambodia

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## 1. Natural Disasters

### 1) Floods

In Cambodia there two main types of floods: flash flood and river flood. They frequently occur during the rainy season (South-East Asian monsoon). The country is rarely hit by coastal floods. The floods are mainly caused by deforestation, erosion of river banks causing the river to become shallower. Cambodia has so far lack of building and engineering codes, lack of appropriate irrigation systems and the domestic rainfall is heavy in mountainous areas, North and West of Phnom Penh Capital.

### 2) Drought

The imbalance in the distribution of monsoon rainfall over recent years has resulted in drought condition in some parts of Cambodia. During the rainy season from May-November, a dry spell of 10-20 days can give rise to extensive drought and damage to paddy field. Some areas in Cambodia have been affected by prolonged drought from 1997 to 1998. Cambodian people would face food shortage and poverty if this disaster continued to exist.

### 3) Forest Fire

This disaster is very rare in Cambodia. In 1997 there was a forest fire occurred in Kirirum mountain, but it was a small scale disaster which lasted for a few days. Frequently, Cambodia is affected by house fire, especially in the big cities, and the fire fighting engines are not sufficient for the whole country and could not access to the building on fire due to the lack of laws and legislation relating to construction.

### 4) Landslide

In 1997 the flow of Mekong River has caused landslide in Kandal, Kampong Chain, Prey Veng provinces and in Phnom Penh city. The current of water has carried along with it houses, fruit trees. Cambodian people living on the river bank are facing hazards of landslide and they are not equipped with appropriate measures of prevention and reduction.

### 5) Storms

Some provinces of Cambodia are also hit by storms and Typhoon. By the end of 1997, Linda Typhoon hit Pou lo wei island causing wreckage of 81 fishing boats and hundred of victims. In 1999, 2 cyclones hit one district of Phnom Penh city and another district of Kandal province causing destruction of nearly 500 houses.

# IV. NCDM Structure

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NCDM consists of the following:

·Prime Minister	: President
·Minister of Interior	:vice President
·Minister of National Defence	:vice President
·Minister in charge of the council of Ministers	:member
·Minister of Economy and finance	:member

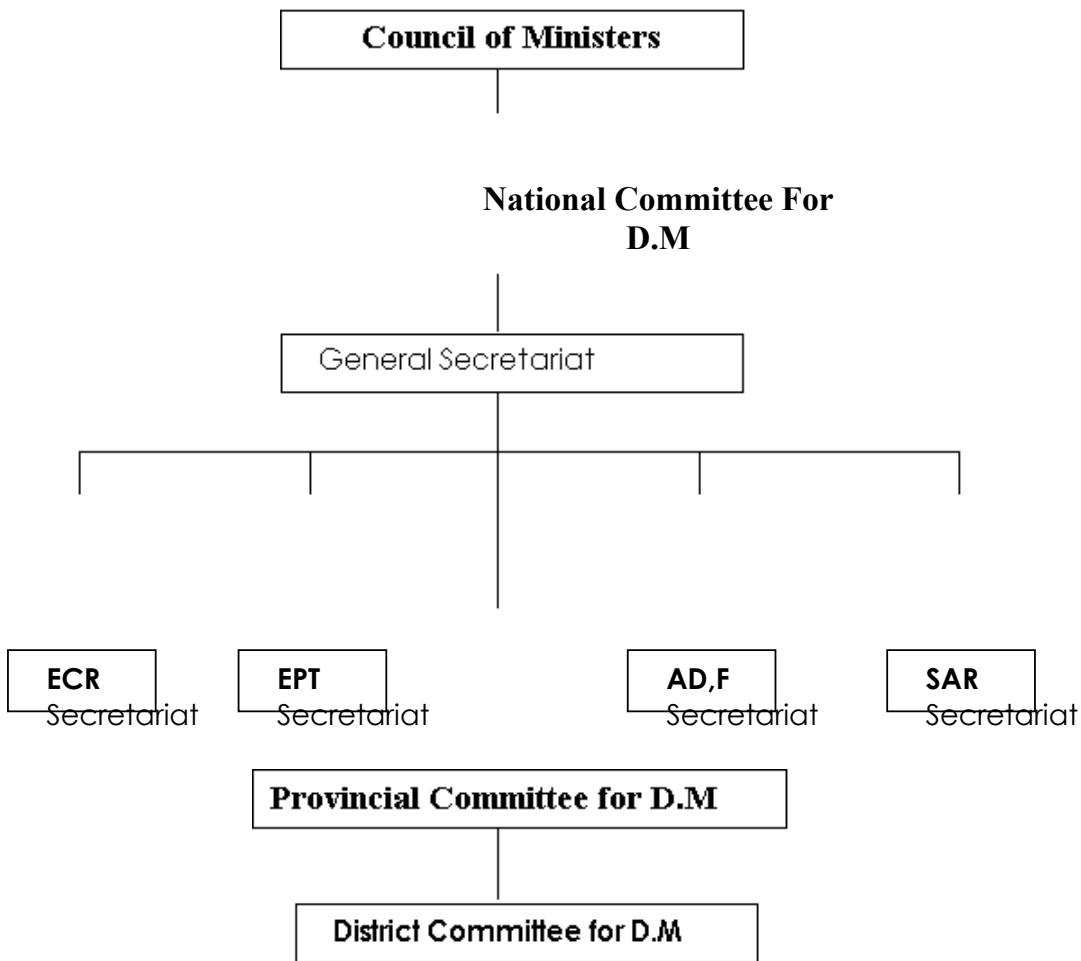
- Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation :member
- Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology :member
- Secretary of State for Civil Aviation :member
- Higher Commander of RCAF :member

NCDM has a General Secretariat to act as Executive Board headed by one Secretary General and 1 Deputy Secretary General. The General Secretariat of NCDM consists of 4 Departments:

- Department of Emergency Co-ordination and Rehabilitation (ECR)
- Department of Emergency Preparedness and Training (EPT)
- Department of Administration and Finance (AdF)
- Department of Search and Rescue (SAR)

The Sub-national structure of NCDM consists of Provincial Committee for Disaster Management (PCDM) and District Committee for Disaster Management (DCDM).

### Organisation Of NCDM



## V. NCDM National and Sub-national Strategy

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### 1. National Strategy

The strategy of NCDM has been identified to meet its responsibilities as follows:

- -An institutional philosophy based on understanding and using the terms of hazards analysis, vulnerability analysis, emergency management and disaster reduction.
- -Emphasis on linking emergency management to the national development strategy
- -Promotion of support for and implementation of the IDNDR Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World.
- -Emphasis on the co-ordination function of NCDM.

- -Adoption of a partnership approach with other actors in the field, including government Ministers, Departments, Authorities and Agencies, technical and academic institutions (local and international), inter-governmental bodies, donors, local and international NGOs and UN agencies.
- -Intensification of collaborating relations between CRC and NCDM in terms of disaster reduction and emergency response operation.
- -Development of network of collaborating academic center.
  - Focus on key issues as identified by the members of NCDM.
  - Adoption of a role for NCDM in general safety promotion.
  - Adoption of a role for NCDM in advocacy for the protection of victims, emergency response personnel and infrastructure in emergency situations.
  - Promotion and encouragement of a spirit of self-reliance and mutual benefit in government agencies and local communities.

## 2. Sub-National Strategy

The following elements have been identified as defining the NCDM strategy for working at sub-national level:

- Work primarily through the Provincial and Municipal CDM.
- Ensure that the provision of emergency and humanitarian relief is timely, relevant and well co-ordinated.
- Co-operate with local community organisations,
- Encourage national programmes for emergency management to support local initiatives,
- Ensure that emergency response can be used to promote long-term development,
- Provide support for rehabilitating damaged infrastructure,
- Use all available resources in the local area before asking for assistance from higher authority,
- Broaden activities to include sectors other than government in disaster reduction activities,
- Assess and analyse vulnerability of communities, their environment and their infrastructure to specific hazards,
- Strengthen and streamline procurement, supply and personal procedures,
- Promote local purchasing and employment of local expertise.

## VI. National Emergency Management Policy

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NCDM will assist Ministries, Departments, Authorities and Agencies to prepare for and respond to emergencies. The following are some of the products that can be expected having a strong and active NCDM:

- -National policies, national plans and standard procedures for emergency management.
- -Managerial units in each of the Ministries, Departments, Authorities and Agencies mandated for a role in emergency preparedness and emergency response activities, including mechanisms for participating in inter-sectoral co-ordination process.
  - Funds for emergency preparedness and emergency response from international support as well as from national sources.
  - Mechanism for receiving and accounting for international assistance during an emergency.
  - Plans and procedures for emergency preparedness and emergency response for each of the Ministries, Departments, Authorities and Agencies e.g. in health services: disaster medicine, mass casualties and hospitals, temporary emergency services, epidemiology and disease surveillance, nutrition, environment health, hazard-specific plans, resource management etc.
  - Co-ordinated with Ambulance, Fire, Police, First Aid and Search and Rescue services upon the outbreak of disasters.
  - An emergency management component of the curricula of all sectoral and public service training institutions.
  - Manuals, guide-lines, reporting formats, technical aspects and training materials.
  - Cycles of refresher training for emergency management, including simulation exercises and drills.
  - Communication and information systems for emergencies, including databases, stockpiling and buffer stocks
  - A national development planning process which includes data relevant to emergencies including early warning systems.
  - Public information, public awareness and community participation programs for the public information and community participation aspects of emergencies.
  - Reduction in number of deaths and injuries and property damage caused by the effects of hazards and consequently, preservation of national wealth.

### 1. Declaration of Policy

Therefore, it is the policy of the State that:



- Self reliance shall be developed by promoting and encouraging the spirit of self reliance and mutual assistance among local and their constituents.
- The primary responsibility for emergency management rests on the mandated government agencies in the affected areas in collaboration with local people themselves and in co-ordination with relevant local authorities.
- This responsibility will be exercised through a Provincial or Municipal declaration of a State of Emergency.
- The Royal Government may assume control of a crisis by declaring a State of Disaster.
- All government Ministries, Departments, Authorities and Agencies and administrative sub-division of the country shall set aside a reserve of budget to establish an Emergency Relief fund.
- It shall be the responsibility of all administrative subdivision of the country to have documented plans of their emergency functions and activities.
- It shall be the responsibility of all government Ministries, Departments, Authorities and activities.
- Each administrative subdivision of the country shall utilise all available resources in the area before asking for assistance from neighbouring entities or higher authorities.
- All government Ministries, Departments, Authorities and Agencies shall utilise all available resources before asking for assistance from other entities or higher authorities.
- In the absence of duly constituted Provincial government, national government offices at the provincial level shall be led and operationally controlled by an official so designated by the National Committee for DM.
- Planning and operation shall also be done on the District, Commune and Village level in an inter-agency, multi-sectoral basis to optimise the utilisation of resources.
- Responsibility for leadership rests primarily on the Provincial and Municipal governor.
- All District leaders shall designate in advance evacuation areas for use in emergencies and shall define plans for providing essential services to those sites when in use.
- When an emergency affects an area covering several towns and cities, the local CDM, their personnel and their facilities shall be placed under operational control of the Provincial or Municipal Governor for the duration of the emergency.
- The national government is to support the local governments. In time of emergencies and according to their level of assignment, all national government offices in the field shall support the operations of the local government.

To ensure that all responsible agencies, their staff and the public are familiar with policy, plans and procedures, periodic exercises and drills shall be conducted at all levels, principally at the District level.

## 2. Special Policy Issues

### 1) Declaration of a State of Emergency or Disaster

A Governor of a Province or a Municipality may declare a State of Emergency when conditions are such that the province or municipality has insufficient human or material resources to control a particular hazard. In declaring a state of emergency the governor concerned shall seek ratification from NCDM within 24 hours. A declaration of a state of emergency devolves special powers on specific government officials and is *de facto* a request for NCDM to provide national resources to the affected province or municipality. In proclaiming a State of Emergency, the Governor retains leadership of the management of the crisis.

The President of NCDM may declare a State of Disaster when the threat of a hazard is such that the Royal Government of Cambodia has insufficient resources to deal with the relief effort. Declaration of the State of Disaster empowers NCDM to take over management of the problem from local authorities and the NCDM. Secretary General is to seek international assistance, both financial and material.

## VII. Conclusion

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- Since the foundation of NCDM up to the present, the Capacity Building for Integrated Disaster Management in Cambodia has been developing and as result, NCDM and its partners, bilateral and multilateral) have well performed their duties in terms of disaster preparedness, mitigation and emergency response.
- NCDM appreciates that effective co-operation and information sharing with Cambodian Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent, UN agencies, IOs, as well as with line authorities and members of NCDM are the best ways to reduce the effect of disasters and to response on time to the emergency situation.
- NCDM eagerly needs technical support from ADRC and other supports in cash and kinds from international communities, UN agencies, IOs, to strengthen its capacity regarding the disaster preparedness,

mitigation, prevention and emergency response operation.