
2. Highlights of 2011/2012

2-1. Report on the 2011 Thailand Floods

(1) Unprecedented level and nature of disaster impact

The year 2011 has been marked by two particularly notable natural disasters: the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, and the massive floods in Thailand. While the flooding in Thailand is still continuing and even expanding toward the southern provinces, The Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) has been consulting with relevant organizations regarding what types of support will be both needed and feasible during the recovery and restoration phases. As part of these activities, ADRC sent a staff member to Bangkok, from 29 November to 2 December to assess the situation and identify areas in which ADRC might be able to provide support. This was done by consulting with relevant organizations including the Thai government, UN agencies, and other disaster management organizations.

The massive floods in the Chao Phraya basin have been gradually expanding downstream since last October, devastating Ayutthaya province in the central region and the Bangkok metropolitan area and its environs. As of 6 December, approximately 1.75 million households and 4.7 million people had been affected. These figures include 684 deaths and three missing persons, according to the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) of the Thai Ministry of Interior. At the beginning of December, the overall situation seemed to be improving somewhat, as water began subsiding in many affected areas and some factories resumed operations. However, the flood risk is still present, and it is likely to take quite some time before economic activity is restored to pre-flood levels. According to one estimate, the Thai floods rank as the fourth largest disaster in terms of economic damage, behind the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji (Kobe) Earthquake, in that order. The economic damage levels currently being reported primarily take into account direct damage to assets, but do not necessarily include the indirect costs and losses of profit, especially those incurred due to the disruption of supply/production chains not only in Thailand but around the world.



(2) Priorities in recovery process and current efforts

At individual factories, the highest priority is replacing damaged production equipment and reestablishing production lines. A scarcity of necessary equipment and competent professionals may hamper early restoration efforts. Measures must be taken to improve protective facilities and raise the level of embankments in preparation for future flood risks. Great efforts must also be taken to retain skilled workers as well as to maintain hard-won supply and production networks and to sustain relationships with local partners.

(3) ADRC's initiatives

Many aid and UN agencies and research institutes have been already operating in the field. For example, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has provided emergency supplies, such as food, water, and tents, as well as special vehicles to help with water drainage, and has offered support to affected factories and agricultural sector industries. ADRC has been consulting with the Thai government and with the UN and other agencies in Thailand to identify areas where support is both possible and desirable. In the process, ADRC is carefully examining how industries have been affected by the floods and is exploring ways to mitigate possible damages. It may also prove useful to examine such topics as the disaster preparation of businesses and residents, including disaster communications, the management of emergency shelters, and housing recovery in the reconstruction process by comparing cases in Thailand with past cases in Japan. To do this, ADRC will continue to consult with relevant organizations and initiate relevant activities, as deemed