
Cambodia Country Report on Disasters Management

**Excellency Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Delegates,
Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

I wish to thank the Parliament of the Philippines for the invitation extended to the Cambodian Parliament to attend this 3rd AIPA caucus in this beautiful city Manila.

Today, I have a great pleasure to be here to present the Cambodian country report on Disaster Management.

During the 2000's, Cambodia has been devastated by flood and drought. In 2000 flooding resulted in 347 deaths and more than 3.5 million people were affected. In 2002, NCDM reported total damage from natural disasters at 33 million US dollars. Natural disasters (flood and drought) most acutely affect poor households. Floods cause homelessness and low production (i.e. rice and fish spawning). This leads to a cycle of debt and poverty. Rice and fish are the staple diet of Cambodia. Flood and drought ensure that vulnerable groups continue to suffer poverty and food insecurity.

The Royal Government of Cambodia believes that investment today is for a safer tomorrow. It has realized that the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) is key instrument for the promotion and improvement of Disaster Risk Reduction, where increase investment in local action is apparently critical. Thus, in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), the Royal Government of Cambodia has developed a Strategic National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (SNAP-DRR) 2008-2013, the development of the Disaster Management Law, the formulation of the National Platform for Disaster Management for both disaster risk reduction and disaster emergency preparedness, the application of the contingency planning for emergency response, etc. with firmly committed to implement and review the process of implementation those action plans.

One of the significant developments is that the disaster management in Cambodia has been integrated in the updated Strategic National Development Plan 2009-2013 based on the achievements and challenges in implementation of the Strategic National Development Plan 2006-2010. It was also clearly identified the natural hazards such as flood, drought, typhoon, epidemics which Cambodia encountered in the past and caused the risk to human lives, damaged agricultural crops as well as properties of people and impacted on the country economy. In the meantime, the Key Policy Priority and Actions 2009-2013 of the present Strategic National Development Plan has focused on the implementation of the Strategic National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (SNAP-DRR) 2008-2013

through the strengthening of participatory mechanism and effective coordination from all stakeholders either in the Royal Government of Cambodia and the development partners, private sectors and civil societies. In order to achieve the strategic goals of the disaster management in the Kingdom of Cambodia, the priority actions set by National Committee for Disaster Management are as follows:

- 1- Review and improve the legislations, policies, guiding principles to accommodate, promote and improve disaster management; including resources and budget allocation;
- 2- Improve and establish system and mechanism of disaster management including guideline, standard operation procedures, and plan that enable to adequately prepare for and respond to the needs at all levels.
- 3- Mainstream disaster risk reduction into social-economic development and poverty elevation agenda; including acceleration of the formulation the National Platform for DM, the establishment of the disaster management team within the inter-governmental ministries and institutions, academia, civil society and the private sector.
- 4- Invest long-term disaster management knowledge building; including awareness, skill enhancement, and formal education for the future leaderships and professionals in disaster management for the country.
- 5- Participate, promote and strengthen regional and international collaboration and cooperation in disaster management, including implementation of ASEAN AADMER, HFA and others.

In the context of climate change, Kingdom of Cambodia is one of most vulnerable to the climate change, because Cambodia is the agricultural country with majority of the population mainly depends on the agricultural products and other natural resources for their daily living. The severe impact of climate change are flood, drought, decrease of crop yield due to the shortage of water and numbers of people faced with epidemic diseases caused by water, thus the climate change is the threat hazard which cause high disaster risk in Cambodia.

Flooding of the Mekong River is a recurrent event. The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) prioritizes disaster management as one of the major strategies for poverty reduction in Cambodia. Better intervention and a more effective approach will increase environmental sustainability and improve resource management, reducing the vulnerability of Cambodian people who are living on flood plains. Therefore, different disaster management interventions are recommended. In addition to natural disasters, manmade problems have had significant impacts on these vulnerable communities.

The Cambodian government has set up priorities on followings:

- Circulars No. 01 and 02 S.R of Samdech HUN SEN Prime Minister have outlined a delegation in disaster prevention through Line Authorities, Ministries, and Provincial Committees for Disaster Management (PCDM), District Committees for Disaster Management (DCDM) and Commune

Disaster Management Groups. This structure assists the existing committees at village and commune levels in the implementation of disaster management activities.

- Funding received from international organisations (IOs) for training on disaster preparedness and mitigation is at all levels from national, provincial, district and commune. (NCDM statement on disaster status in 2003)
- With the consent of Samdech HUN SEN Prime Minister, the NCDM has formed a partnership with the larger IOs in becoming a member of an ASEAN disaster reduction and management planning programme and centre, which is being constructed (NCDM statement on disaster status in 2003: 3)
- The Humanitarian Accountability Project (HAP) conducted humanitarian assessments with organizations working on disaster management in Cambodia. The recommendations from these findings have led to the establishment of the Cambodian Humanitarian Accountability Network “HANet”. These findings are now being incorporated into a training and action plan programme.
- There is a greater participatory role of NGOs working in poverty reduction.
- ADB and World Bank have established emergency flood control and irrigation rehabilitation projects supporting vulnerable communities from the effects of flooding.
- The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has taken a proactive approach to flood relief operations by understanding the need for a long-term strategy in addition to the distribution of emergency food and shelter.
- Many NGOs are now integrating this initiative for Disaster Preparedness into their project and programme strategies as well as at village/commune levels.

There are Key Issues that the Cambodian government has undertaken

- Lack of disaster information and dissemination. The alert and warning system is still limited with unclear roles and responsibilities within the existing structure on the disaster response process.
- Limited human and financial resources in responding to disasters
- Impact of flooding - There is a lack of reserved funds for disaster action plans. This results in physical illness, loss of food stock, disease/injury (malnutrition to women and children), social change and financial instability, (health care, shelter, transportation, reconstruction and farming needs) among vulnerable communities.
- While there are international agencies and an increasing number of local Cambodian NGOs working towards poverty reduction, they frequently focus on the establishment of programme activities and there is little attention paid to quality, accountability, reporting and monitoring requirements.
- Women in rural Cambodia who head families have the responsibility of household workload and worries about income generation and are among the most vulnerable groups within the community (WFP, 2000:5).

- That development and poverty alleviation initiatives be encouraged, as they can result in increasing family assets and agricultural productivity. This may be through rehabilitation of infrastructure and emphasizing multiple livelihood components such as managing natural resources and accessing credit.

The Royal government of Cambodia appeals to the Donors and NGOs as follow:

- That funds be made available to support the disaster management programme in Cambodia through training and strengthened disaster preparedness action plans at village and communes levels where floods may occur.
- That technical support be provided to all levels of ministries and local authorities in developing a clear strategy for disaster preparedness, relief, mitigation and rehabilitation under coordination from NCDM.
- That a counter plan be developed for disaster preparedness and mitigation response and integrated into the long-term programme strategy.

Thank you.