

Lao People's Democratic Republic

National progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action

Name of focal point : Mr HOMEPANNGA Khamphao

Organization : National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

Designation : Director

E-mail address : ndmo@laopdr.com, ndmo@laotel.com, khaikham_3@hotmail.com

Telephone : 856 21 219450

Fax : 856 21 213287

Additional Focal points/ other comments :

Reporting period : 2007-2009

Last updated on : 28 August 2008

Print date : 09 Jun 2009

Reporting language : English

An HFA Monitor update published by PreventionWeb

<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/countries/asia/lao/>

Strategic goals 1

Area 1

The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.

Strategic Goal Statement:

The Strategic Plan on Disaster Risk Management which corresponds to three different periods (2003-2005, 2005-2010 and 2010 - 2020) seeks to reduce damages caused by natural or manmade disasters to communities and the country's economy as a whole and safeguard sustainable development. The Strategic Paper aims to promote the protection of the environment and country's rich resources such as forest, land and water.

Area 2

The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.

Strategic Goal Statement:

The Strategic Plan on Disaster Risk Management seeks to shift disaster management being the solo responsibility of government agencies to being people centered practice. The Strategic Plan calls for community based disaster management approaches and building capacities of communities to deal with disasters. The Strategic Plan aims to improve coordination between communities and governments at different levels and to strengthen community's self-reliance.

Area 3

The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.

Strategic Goal Statement:

The Strategic Plan on Disaster Risk Management seeks to shift the focus of government organizations from disaster relief to disaster preparedness and mitigation so as to reduce disaster impacts on communities and their economy. Emphasis is placed on flood, drought, landslide and fire and continuous efforts are made for mitigation and recovery in post disaster period.

Priority for action 1

Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.

Core indicator 1

National policy and legal framework for disaster risk reduction exists with decentralised responsibilities and capacities at all levels.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

A landmark decree No. 158/PM signed by Prime Minister in August 1999 provides the legal basis for disaster management activities and structures of the Government of Lao PDR. The decree calls for the establishment of an inter-ministerial National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC) which has the responsibilities for the development of disaster management policies, mobilization and coordination of national and international assistance, information management and public awareness, disaster preparedness, response and recovery and promotion of local disaster management committees down to the district and village levels.

The NDMC is supported by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), as its secretariat, located in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW). Roles and responsibilities of the NDMO and each member of NDMC are defined in the internal MLSW decree No. 097/MLSW dated 30 June 2000.

Under this decree, disaster management committees are established at the local level such as Provincial Disaster Management Committee (PDMC), District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) and Village Disaster Protection Unit (VDPU). Some provinces including Khamouane, Savanakheth and Saravan have developed their provincial plan on disaster management.

Other disaster related committees established by the Government include National committee on communicable diseases and control, National flood and drought committee, National committee for coordination of water resources, and National road safety council.

Context & Constraints:

The organization of disaster management committees are in place from the national down to the local levels, but they are facing many difficulties and challenges mainly due to inadequate financial resources, lack of knowledge and capacities of disaster management committee members, lack of necessary facilities, equipment, and operational systems. The PDMCs have been better developed in the lowland provinces within the Mekong River plain, but less so in mountainous provinces particularly close to the borders of Vietnam and China. The national strategic plan on disaster management is not actively implemented by all stakeholders, mainly because it was issued as an internal NSLW decree. The NDMO has very limited budget for disaster preparedness and limited authority to engage other Ministries and inadequate number of staff relative to the requirements of the Strategic Plan.

Core indicator 2

Dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement disaster risk reduction plans and activities at all administrative levels

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

During emergencies, the Government allocates following resources;

1. MLWS can propose to use the KR1 budget and about 456 tons of rice stocks
2. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) makes 100 to 200 tons of seeds available for immediate distribution while it allocates a budget of around USD 1.87 million to repair irrigation systems and rehabilitate production areas
3. The Ministry of Public Work and Transportation allocate a budget of around USD6.68 million to repair roads and bridges affected by disasters

4. The Ministry of Defence mobilizes army forces, mobile houses, equipments, transportations, etc

Other resources available during the disaster situation are as follows;

1. Lao Red Cross has stocked relief items in warehouses at central, northern and southern parts
2. MLSW has also stocked the emergency assistance materials at the national as well as at the province level in the whole country. However, the assistance materials are not sufficient and they often do not reach to the requirement when a disaster occurs.

Context & Constraints:

Although a recent order by the Office of Prime Minister is likely to increase available budget, the government has so far allocated very small budget to support disaster preparedness and risk reduction, particularly for training activities to strengthen PDMCs, DDMCs. Most of the disaster risk reduction, mitigation and community based disaster risk management have been supported by donor agencies, for instances, by ECHO through UNDP/ADPC and Mekong River Commission (MRC) and by AusAID through Care International, Oxfam Australia, World Vision, Save the Children Australia. Many of these organizations work in flood prone districts and fewer projects are implemented in other provinces where the most vulnerable (according to food security indicators) reside.

Core indicator 3

Community Participation and decentralisation is ensured through the delegation of authority and resources to local levels

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

Limited resources available for disaster risk reduction is a major challenge. Thus the NDMC encourages the use of more basic, traditional and local disaster preparedness and response mechanisms especially for monitoring, early warning and actions before and during disasters in order to reduce disaster related loss of lives and livelihoods.

Local disaster management committee (PDMC, DDMC) are the main organizations responsible for disaster response, preparedness, mitigation and recovery. In times of emergencies, the local Disaster Management committee is the first actor to respond to the disaster situation with their own resources and their capabilities. However, if disasters exceed their capacity to cope, they will request assistance from the central government (NDMC). The current structure does not allow the NDMC to make rapid decisions and it relies on the NDMO to operationalize actions. Operational budgets have not been allocated to assist the PDMC and DDMC with pre-disaster pre-positioning of relief items or purchase and maintenance of rescue equipment.

The disaster risk reduction and mitigation activities are undertaken through various project cooperation and support by donors. Many of this cooperation involve the PDMC and DDMC as the main implementing partners of project activities. The communities at the project areas actively participate in assessing their conditions and needs and in data collection and analysis as a basis for project planning and implementation.

Context & Constraints:

Increasing cooperation with NGOs demand that the NDMO should also strengthen its capacities to identify needs in disaster risk reduction so that they can provide guidance to NGOs. Selection of target provinces, districts and communities should be more needs based and demand driven as NGOs have

tendency to focus on the Mekong Area provinces. Further, the NDMO must also enhance its capacities for monitoring and coordination.

There are only few provinces that have received assistance to build their capacities for disaster management. There are still more provinces and districts that have yet to receive project assistance. In these areas, awareness and capacities for disaster management is very limited. Due to limited resources, awareness raising campaigns on disaster reduction have mainly been done at the national level and rarely at the local level.

Core indicator 4

A national multi sectoral platform for disaster risk reduction is functioning.

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

A proposal is under consideration for expanding the membership of the NDMC to include other important sectors. The proposal when approved will be elaborated on the roles and responsibilities of each sector and the location and authority of the NDMO. Good working relationships between stakeholders do exist, although most are on bilateral basis through MOUs between MLSW/NDMO and NGOs. The Inter Agency Standing Committee in country team for natural disaster response preparedness is more actively involving different stakeholders in disaster management with UN agencies currently leading the group. This forum is seen as a potential foundation for a national multi sectoral platform that the NDMC/NDMO may assume leadership in the near future.

Context & Constraints:

There is no agreed plan or road map for the formation of a national multi sectoral platform. Overlapping of mandates and duplication of efforts are key challenges. NDMO's authority to initiate intersectoral actions is inadequate and the current strategic plan on disaster management is too broad to provide appropriate direction for intersectoral actions in disaster risk reduction.

Priority for action 2

Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

Core indicator 1

National and local risk assessments based on hazard data and vulnerability information are available and include risk assessments for key sectors.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

The Mekong River Commission is undertaking the Flood Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping Project (FVAMP-started in June 2007) which is intended to provide flood vulnerability indices to better manage flood and drought impacts in the Lower Mekong Basin. As of February 2008, the project has established that the national line agencies have a more consistent data collection system and their dataset seems to contain substantial information that can be useful for FVAMP. NGOs and international organizations collect data more proactively through community based survey under their rural development and disaster risk reduction projects in remote villages and some others along the Mekong and its tributary

rivers for flood vulnerability assessments.

A report from the project concluded that all agencies are generally willing to participate in the FVAMP in terms of sharing available data and information in the next phase project. However, almost all agencies recommended that the orientation meeting and a series of consultation should be conducted beforehand. All concerned agencies should be invited to share their ideas on the data collection methodologies and implementation for the next phase.

Context & Constraints:

Although useful data for vulnerability assessments exist in line agencies, NGOs and UN agencies, there is no plan, leadership or incentives to more systematically share information, which may contribute to a comprehensive vulnerability assessment. Limited expertise in hazard assessments is another important constraint to be addressed in the future.

Core indicator 2

Systems are in place to monitor, archive and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

The NDMO has recorded disaster information, particularly flood impact data since 1966, while flood information has been standardized since 2000. Most information is of provincial and district level such as the number of affected provinces, district and villages, number of population affected disaggregated by gender, number of production areas and livestock affected, etc.

The NDMO developed disaster database (2000 to 2005) and is further improving the system. The NDMO is also planning to develop a standard disaster data collection format with line agencies concerned at the national level. The NDMO has not conducted any community based data survey at the village level, however, they cooperated with NGOs partners to implement a project called 'Disaster Risk Reduction and Community Based Disaster Management' in villages prone to flood and drought.

The Lao Red Cross (LRC) is an organization working in the field of disaster preparedness and relief for disaster victims, particularly the victims from flood. Every year LRC coordinates and receives information on disaster damages from Red Cross Provincial Branches by using their own disaster damage and need assessment format. Currently, LRC is implementing a project called 'Community Based Disaster Preparedness Program (2007 - 2011) in 5 flood and drought prone villages in Hinboun district of Khammoaune and Mahaxai district of Savannakhet province. Community based data survey were conducted in the 5 target villages in the form of Hazard, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment. Participatory Rural Appraisal tools have been used for gathering and analyzing information. Village hazard map will show all hazards, particularly flood occurring in villages and element at risk such as housing, roads, production areas, community and other infrastructures, etc. Other tools such as livelihood analysis, problem trees, seasonal calendar, and history profile, are also utilized.

Context & Constraints:

Due to financial constraints, the NDMO lacks the human and information management capacities to meet the requirements to put systems in place for a comprehensive monitoring and dissemination of hazard and vulnerability information.

Core indicator 3

Early warning systems are in place for all major hazards, with outreach to communities.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology is the main agency that produces the early warning information and disseminates to disaster management organizations, mainly to the NDMO. The NDMO then sends this information to the local disaster management organizations to take appropriate actions and disseminate early warnings to communities at risk. The early warning information consists of weather forecast (rainfalls, storms, typhoons) and information on water level along the main river and its tributaries.

Under project cooperation with NGOs, community based early warning systems are developed which include setting up monitoring equipment (flood mark) along the river and assignment of responsible unit and person in charge of monitoring and reporting to the village disaster protection unit head, district authority and province. In addition, village disaster risk maps are produced and placed within the village head. The disaster risk maps consist of information on disaster types in different areas within the village, elements at risk, evacuation route, etc.

A communication system exists from national to the local (provincial) level by using the telephone, fax machines, etc. However, the communication system for issuing the EW information from province to district and villages are inadequate. Thus communities located in very remote areas often can not receive early warning information due to difficult or total lack of access to road, mountain areas with deep slope and isolated villages.

Context & Constraints:

Communication infrastructure in the country is inadequate and the sparse distribution of population in wide and rugged areas poses a major challenges. More attention is given to flood early warning than drought early warning, as floods are 'seen' to be more urgent.

Core indicator 4

National and local risk assessments take account of regional / trans boundary risks, with a view to regional cooperation on risk reduction.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

The floods in 2000 caused significant damages to the countries in the Lower Mekong Basin, with 450 million USD for Viet Nam and Cambodia. Therefore, the MRC council instructed the MRC secretariat to prepare the flood management and mitigation strategy for Lower Mekong Basin, and the strategy was endorsed by the council in 2001. In order to implement the MRC flood management and mitigation strategy, the flood management and mitigation programme (FMMP) was formulated, which includes 5 components: (1) establishment of regional flood management and mitigation center, (2) structural measures and flood proofing, (3) transboundary flood management, (4) flood emergency management strengthening, and (5) land use. The objective of FMMP is to prevent, minimize or mitigate people's suffering and economic losses caused by floods while preserving the environmental benefits of floods.

MRC needs quantifiable flood vulnerability indices in order to direct on going and future activities of each of five FMMP components into the most cost-effective and socially-effective areas. MRC recognizes that if the FMMP Program does not make significant improvements in reducing flood vulnerability at the community level, the program misses its mark. Therefore, the flood vulnerability assessment and

mapping project (FVAMP) started under the FMMP component 1, the project phase I and fact findings and concept development were carried out during 18 June - 13 July 2007. Assessments were done in terms of the project needs and relevance to agencies operating at the community level and the potential contribution of these agencies to the project.

Context & Constraints:

Information on this is not available

Priority for action 3

Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels

Core indicator 1

Relevant information on disasters is available and accessible at all levels, to all stakeholders (through networks, development of information sharing systems etc)

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

As mentioned earlier, different stakeholders do possess relevant information on disasters, and they do share and exchange information willingly. However, there is no one comprehensive information management system where all the available information is gathered and maintained together with easy access by all interested parties.

Context & Constraints:

Due to financial constraints, the NDMO lacks human and information management capacities to meet the requirements to develop information management and sharing systems.

Core indicator 2

School curricula, education material and relevant trainings include disaster risk reduction and recovery concepts and practices.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

In 2007, a UNDP Regional Project funded by ECHO was initiated in order to mainstream disaster risk reduction into the education sector. The project was implemented by the NDMO with ADPC with an aim to integrate disaster risk reduction into the secondary school curriculum. The project should provide valuable national mainstreaming examples to build support for further mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development policy and planning.

The project has two complimentary objectives; i) Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into Secondary school curriculum: through pilot projects, and ii) Research on the physical and socio-economic impact of disasters on the education sector for use in advocacy and consensus building on the benefits of disaster resilient schools.

Another project started in cooperation with the NDMO and the Ministry of Education, the Sayaboury District Education Department and ADPC to reduce vulnerability of children, young people and

communities in Xieng Hone District to natural hazards. The project which is scheduled to be implemented from July 2008-June 2009 supports 2 primary and 2 lower secondary schools in Xieng Hone to deliver disaster risk education and equip children with the knowledge and skills to contribute to building disaster resilient communities.

Context & Constraints:

Information is not available

Core indicator 3

Research methods and tools for multi-risk assessments and cost benefit analysis are developed and strengthened.

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

Information is not available

Context & Constraints:

Information is not available

Core indicator 4

Countrywide public awareness strategy exists to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience, with outreach to urban and rural communities.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

Disaster management and awareness campaign are regularly conducted both at the national and local levels. Every year, in October the NDMO organizes activities to celebrate the International Day on Disaster Reduction. Activities include walking, meetings, exhibitions, sports, news and drama in television, radio and newspaper, etc.

Context & Constraints:

Due to financial constraints, the NDMO lacks the human and logistical capacity to meet the requirements for countrywide public awareness programme.

Priority for action 4

Reduce the underlying risk factors

Core indicator 1

Disaster risk reduction is an integral objective of environment related policies and plans, including for land use natural resource management and adaptation to climate change.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

The Government of Lao PDR has recently established a National Steering Committee on Climate Change with 7 technical working groups such as agriculture & food security, forest and land management, energy management, hydrology and water resources, city infrastructure, economic management and financial instruments. These technical working groups will be chaired by different ministries and aim to formulate a national climate change strategy for 2020 and a first national action plan in alignment with the 7th national socio economic development plan.

Context & Constraints:

Information is not available

Core indicator 2

Social development policies and plans are being implemented to reduce the vulnerability of populations most at risk.

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

Recognizing the increasing importance of disaster risk reduction, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2007-2011) seeks to support the Government of Lao PDR's Sixth Five Year National Socio Economic Development Plan (2006-2010). Under this UNDAF, disaster risk management is listed as a key area for cooperation and one of the critical components of poverty reduction framework. UNDAF Outcome 1.4 indicate "enhanced ownership and capacity for pro poor planning and implementation and harmonized aid coordination and disaster management". This UNDAF framework when implemented may provide the resources to increase attention to disaster risk/vulnerability reduction. UNDP has further reaffirmed its support under this UNDAF through the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) from 2007-2011.

Context & Constraints:

There have been a number of preparatory missions to assess needs and capacity gaps. The recent national disaster management planning workshop organized by the NDMO initiated the process to develop a common framework for disaster risk management practices in Lao PDR. One of the key component of the plan will be mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development. The plan should also address the needs of most vulnerable populations such as women, people with disabilities and different ethnic groups.

Core indicator 3

Economic and productive sectorial policies and plans have been implemented to reduce the vulnerability of economic activities

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

Information is not available

Context & Constraints:

Information is not available

Core indicator 4

Planning and management of human settlements incorporate disaster risk reduction elements, including enforcement of building codes.

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

As mentioned earlier, the UNDP Regional Project implemented by the NDMO and ADPC conducted a research on the impact of disasters on the education sector. The findings and lessons learnt from the research will be used to advocate for the construction/retrofitting of disaster resilient schools. They should also provide valuable national mainstreaming examples to build support for further mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development policy and planning as well as for making other buildings disaster resilient.

Context & Constraints:

Information is not available

Core indicator 5

Disaster risk reduction measures are integrated into post disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

Information is not available

Context & Constraints:

Disaster management is not new in Lao PDR, as the UNDAC capacity assessment pointed out, but it happens often on an ad-hoc basis when a disaster hits. Limited resources with competing demands to meet basic needs pose major challenges to enhancing post disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes with disaster risk reduction measures.

Core indicator 6

Procedures are in place to assess the disaster risk impacts of major development projects, especially infrastructure.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

Information is not available

Context & Constraints:

Information is not available

Priority for action 5

Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

Core indicator 1

Strong policy, technical and institutional capacities and mechanisms for disaster risk management, with a disaster risk reduction perspective are in place.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

The NDMO has fairly strong internal capacities in several important areas. As an organization, it has developed positive relational capacities with some stakeholders. The NDMO leadership also has the requisite awareness of which ministries/agencies/international bodies need to be engaged with in given situations related to disaster management. Furthermore, NDMO has gained experience in training and mentoring provincial and district focal points in some provinces.

A number of key stakeholders and partners laude NDMO's capacities in as much as they have the resources to effectively deploy those capacities. While this 'bounded' sense of capacity translates into an ability to effectively carry out a limited number of expected functions in a limited number of geographical areas, it does not add up to the complete range of capacities that it needs to function effectively. The two key areas where NDMO can be said to be functioning satisfactorily are clearly in the areas of a) information coordination and b) training/mentoring of sub-national focal points.

Context & Constraints:

The NDMO is inadequately mandated in all three important areas of authority, power and influence. In turn, because NDMO lacks authority, it is not granted the resources (broadly defined) to fulfill its duties, which further erodes the credibility of the organization. Further complicating NDMO's operating environment is the fact that the organization's mandate is not consistently understood by all actors and stakeholders in the DRR/DM sector. As stated in the UNDAC report, NDMO's mandate is to coordinate and organize disaster preparedness, prevention, recovery and response activities in Lao PDR. This is also the perception NDMO staff has of their role in disaster risk reduction/disaster management, although this mandate is unable to be fulfilled due to capacity needs and financial constraints.

The paucity of budgetary finances, the strain on staff resources, and the inadequacy of infrastructure resources also cannot be overlooked. The lack of training opportunities for NDMO staff (both in terms of introductory and refresher trainings), a consequence of financial resource constraints, is particularly unfortunate given that staff have demonstrated a motivation to perform their jobs well.

Core indicator 2

Disaster preparedness plans and contingency plans are in place at all administrative levels, and regular training drills and rehearsals are held to test and develop disaster response programmes.

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

At present, no contingency plan for natural disaster events has been elaborated by the NDMC, neither at the national, nor provincial level. Several projects between NDMO and NGOs however at the province levels produced annual and multi year disaster management plans.

Context & Constraints:

Inadequate mandate and resources of NDMO.

Core indicator 3

Financial reserves and contingency mechanisms are in place to support effective response and recovery when required.

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

During emergencies, the Government allocates following resources;

1. MLWS can propose to use the KR1 budget and about 456 tons of rice stocks
2. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) makes 100 to 200 tons of seeds available for immediate distribution while it allocates a budget of around USD 1.87 million to repair irrigation systems and rehabilitate production areas
3. The Ministry of Public Work and Transportation allocate a budget of around USD6.68 million to repair roads and bridges affected by disasters
4. The Ministry of Defence mobilizes army forces, mobile houses, equipments, transportations, etc

Other resources available during the disaster situation are as follows;

1. Lao Red Cross has stocked relief items in warehouses at central, northern and southern parts
2. MLSW has also stocked the emergency assistance materials at the national as well as at the province level in the whole country. However, the assistance materials are not sufficient and they often do not reach to the requirement when a disaster occurs.

Context & Constraints:

Information is not available

Core indicator 4

Procedures are in place to exchange relevant information during hazard events and disasters, and to undertake post-event reviews

Level of Progress achieved:

1: Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy

Description:

The recent floods on the Mekong was a good reminder that good information collection, analysis and dissemination system and procedures need to be put in place. Key stakeholders gathered together and made efforts to conduct a common rapid damage and needs assessment. Lessons will be learnt from this experience in preparing for future possible hazards.

Context & Constraints:

Information is not available

Drivers of Progress

a) Multi-hazard integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and development

Levels of Reliance:

No/ little reliance: no acknowledgement of the issue in policy or practice; or, there is some acknowledgement but nothing/ little done to address it

Do studies/ reports/ atlases on multi-hazard analyses exist in the country/ for the sub region?:

No

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

Crisis impacts are currently being managed without due regard to multi hazard integrated approach. Several task forces/committees exist that may be integrated under strong leadership of NDMC.

b) Gender perspectives on risk reduction and recovery adopted and institutionalized

Levels of Reliance:

No/ little reliance: no acknowledgement of the issue in policy or practice; or, there is some acknowledgement but nothing/ little done to address it

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

The current strategic plan on disaster management has not incorporated gender perspectives on risk reduction and recovery. The National Disaster Management Plan whose planning process has just been initiated will address issues and concerns of most vulnerable groups including female populations.

c) Capacities for risk reduction and recovery identified and strengthened

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

In December 2007, the Capacity Development Team of the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok conducted a capacity assessment (CA) of the NDMO. The request for a CA emerged from recommendations of UNDAC and OCHA-UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery missions that took place earlier in 2007. Specifically, these mission reports argued that improvements to the disaster risk reduction/disaster management (DRR/DM) sector would be realized, in part, through a process of strengthening institutional capacities. The NDMO, the intended focal office for DRR/DM, was identified as an entry point for achieving this goal. The December 2007 CA mission, in turn, was tasked with assessing NDMO's strengths and areas for improvement, as related to its mandate within the DRR/DM sector. The mission was fielded with the primary objective of recommending capacity development strategies that could be implemented to make NDMO a more effective organization, therein improving the overall DRR/DM outlook in Lao PDR.

One of the recommendations of the CA was implemented in July 2008, with the High Level Workshop on National Disaster Management Strategy and Plan. The objectives of the high-level dialogue and workshop were to:

- 1) Confirm with key policy makers on the importance of disaster risk reduction and management for the country's development and poverty reduction initiatives,
- 2) Discuss the Lao Government's commitment to enabling communities to increase their resilience to natural, environmental, and technological disasters and to reducing associated human and socio-economic losses,
- 3) Discuss current disaster management practices as well as capacity gaps and challenges and identify possible ways to improve them, and
- 4) Identify the key components of a Comprehensive Disaster Management Plan and responsibilities for NDMO and all stakeholders. The planning process will continue to develop a comprehensive disaster management plan for Lao PDR.

d) Human security and social equity approaches integrated into disaster risk reduction and recovery activities

Levels of Reliance:

No/ little reliance: no acknowledgement of the issue in policy or practice; or, there is some acknowledgement but nothing/ little done to address it

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

As mentioned earlier, a number of disaster risk reduction projects are implemented in flood prone districts and fewer capacity building support are provided to provinces and communities where most food insecure populations reside.

e) Engagement and partnerships with non-governmental actors; civil society, private sector, amongst others, have been fostered at all levels

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

There is an observable and remarkable shift of NGO projects supported by donors from the traditional emergency response (famine relief in 1996 and drought episodes of 1997-1998) to community based disaster risk management. The following is a list of ongoing or planned projects with NGOs during the reporting period:

- 1.Capacity Building of Local Government Officials on Disaster Management (ASEAN Project No.: 1620/ENV/DIS/07/003/REG) by Asian Disaster Reduction Center (2008-)
- 2.Integrated UXO Action Project in Mahaxay District, Khannouane Province between MLSW/NDMO and World Vision Lao PDR (June 2007-November 2012) funded by AusAID.
- 3.Community based Disaster Risk management in Upland Communities of Saravane and Sekong Provinces (July 2007-December 2012) between MLSW/NDMO and OXFAM Australia funded by AusAID.
- 4.Sayaboury Integrated Hazard Mitigation Project between MLSW/NDMO and Save the Children Australia (July 2007-December 2012) funded by AusAid.
- 5.Disaster Risk Education for Children in Xieng Hone, Save the Children Australia

f) Contextual Drivers of Progress

Levels of Reliance:

No/ little reliance: no acknowledgement of the issue in policy or practice; or, there is some acknowledgement but nothing/ little done to address it

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

No information available

Future outlook

Area 1

The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.

Overall Challenges:

The current strategic plan on disaster risk reduction was issued as an internal MSLW decree, and has not been fully owned by other line ministries. Due to limited available resources, the plan has not been fully translated into projects and programme to achieve the goals, and as a result the plan is often referred as a 'sleeping document'.

Future Outlook Statement:

Following the recent discussions to meet the commitment to the Hyogo Framework for Action, institutional changes are under consideration by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's Office issued a Government Order signed by the State Secretariat on December 12, 2007 to shift the emphasis of the government strategy from disaster response to disaster risk reduction. The PM order stated the following:

1. Assign the NDMO to review HFA commitments and facilitate the planning of activities, monitoring and reporting of progress.
2. Assign the Ministry of Planning and Investment to plan and coordinate the integration of disaster risk reduction into the socio economic development plans.
3. Assign Government agencies to allocate budget for preparedness and relief

Area 2

The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.

Overall Challenges:

The institutional arrangement where the NDMC is chaired by MLSW and the NDMO sits within MLSW has been identified as a constraint to fostering multi-sector disaster risk reduction approaches. The current structure does not provide especially the NDMO with necessary authority and resources to fulfill the mandates.

Future Outlook Statement:

In 2008, a proposal to upgrade the National NDMC is being considered by the Prime Minister's Office. The proposal seeks to restructure the NDMC into a higher political committee chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister with two Vice-Chairpersons (MLSW and MAF). The proposal is also to expand membership of other key ministries increasing the number of committee members from 11 to 18.

Area 3

The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.

Overall Challenges:

Disaster management is not new in Lao PDR, as the UNDAC capacity assessment pointed out, but it happens often on an ad-hoc basis. As stated throughout this report, Limited resources with competing demands to meet basic needs pose major challenges to enhancing risk reduction approaches.

Future Outlook Statement:

The National Disaster Management Plan, when it is developed, will address preparedness, response and recovery having disaster risk reduction throughout the entire disaster management cycle.