



**Minutes of the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC)
Of
Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building on Disaster Risk Management in the Lao PDR**

Venue: UNDP Office, Meeting Room No. 310

Date: 29 September 2009

Time: from 10 am to 11:40 am

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting began with an introduction of participants (list of participants attached) which was followed by opening remarks from Mr. Dirk Wagener, Deputy Resident Representative (Programme), a.i. He expressed his sincere appreciation to all participants for attending this meeting and especially with special thanks to the Director General of Social Welfare Department, and the Director of the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Mr. Prasith Dethphommathet. He explained the process of project appraisal which requires the endorsement of the participants as a part of an approval process. He also explained that the purpose of this meeting was to make use of a rich pool of expertise in the disaster risk management field in designing this project.

He also highlighted the disaster prone nature of Lao PDR by stressing the 2008 flood in the country. In fact, the 2008 flood situation was one of the most severe natural disasters in Lao PDR and also reminded of the needs for coordination among the agencies working in the disaster management fields including the enhancement of the capacity of NDMO. This project directly addresses the issue of capacity building in the area of disaster risk management at the institutional and the community levels. It is also in line with United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and stipulates the need to enhance capacity at all levels of government on disaster management for preparedness, response and rehabilitation. He said that details of the Project will be made clear in the presentation and requested the participants to have a careful look and provide comments later on.

Presentation

A presentation was made by Mr. Vilayphong Sisomvang, Senior Officer of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. Details of presentation are attached.

Comments from the Participants

French Red Cross: Taking stock of lessons learnt was important and it was planned to accomplish this through the project.

Since there are many areas that this project is going to address that are similar to that of the WB project it was suggested that this project should seek synergy with WB project.

International Federation of Red Crescent Societies has just completed a study on the Legal Preparedness for Response to Disaster and Communicable Disease Emergencies programme where there are some preliminary findings of the legal preparedness programme that this UNDP project will build upon.

IFRC also received funding support from UNDP's Initiation Plan in assisting communities in 3 flood prone provinces in developing community based disaster preparedness plans where some lessons learnt can be shared. IFRC stands ready to cooperate with NDMO in this activity under this new project. Lessons learnt from other countries should also be taken account.

In addition, one of the difficulties in the NDMO was the information management system. It would be beneficial if this area could be emphasized more.



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The Project also addresses the capacity building of NDMO relating to the preparedness and responses in the coordination role. Legal authority for NDMO should also be available to facilitate its coordination.

In addition, it was suggested that the local Red Cross should not be ignored. The local Red Cross was a complementary organization affiliated with the Government and was mandated for disaster risk reduction.

World Bank (WB): WB pointed out that UNDP has comparative advantages in DRM and that the WB and UNDP shall seek to complement and synergize our support to NDMO.

An agreement was made between WREA/NDMO and the WB for a two year grant project where there are many areas for collaboration. It was suggested that the approach of this project implementation should be based on a sector wide approach aiming to be more resilient in the disaster risk.

Developing a legal framework in disaster management sector was also planned to be financed by the WB. It requested a discussion session among UNDP, WB and NDMO to discuss modalities.

There is a need to upgrade the early warning system in Lao PDR. WB funding facilities are quite flexible and WB can provide support on upgrading the equipment in early warning system if needed and more details can be worked out together with UNDP and NDMO.

UNDP's Governance Unit: It was suggested that the coordination mechanism should be addressed more closely and it was suggested that this project should include WB as observer to the project board structure. There should be some links to UXO risks and Governance Unit works on legal system aspects as the activities under this project are relevant to Output 1 of this project on strengthening Institutional Legal System.

UNDP's Environment Unit: There should be cooperation in the implementation process with the climate change office of WREA and a project implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture supported by the Environment Unit.

UNICEF: This project was a strategic move to upstream institutionalization to fill the gap at national level. Last year's flood raised a lot of questions, especially on capacity in coordination. The suggestion was to include the Ministry of Health as a potential partner in the implementation strategy.

In terms of taking stock of the lessons learned, regional wide learning should be practiced in order to cover different natures of the disaster.

WFP: It highlighted its operating mechanism in response to natural disaster. In emergency situations, WFP is a lead agency in food cluster, information communication technology cluster, and logistic cluster. It is operating through 11 field offices in Lao PDR at provincial and district level. WFP will have a 2 year project which focuses on emergency food assessment, food security on provincial and district levels. Therefore, WFP committed its cooperation throughout the implementation of the project in close collaboration with the NDMO especially training on data collection process at provincial level.

UNDP's Policy Management Support Unit (PMSU): PMSU would like to congratulate NDMO and UNDP team for developing this project proposal. PMSU had the pleasure of reviewing the earlier draft and already provided our interim comments.

This project document is one of the best that has been presented to the LPAC – the situation analysis is very comprehensive, and the strategy is well articulated as to how best to respond to the identified needs and capacity gaps. It intends to help build and develop national institutional capacity through **upstream** policy advice on one hand, and to deliver tangible outputs **on the ground** on the other. A conscious effort at gender mainstreaming is visible, too. A very holistic approach and congratulations again.



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There are some very minor **stylistic improvements** that can be made in finalizing the document. For instance, there seems to be **some inconsistency** between the outputs in the 2009 AWP and the overall Results and Resources Framework. Some Outputs could be "SMART'er." Also, the Strategic Plan KRA (on Cover Page) may not be Goal 1, but one related to CPR, for instance. PMSU stands ready to provide assistance in improving the document.

As many colleagues have already said in the LPAC, PMSU also agrees that the **Partnership Strategy** part could be strengthened more by specifying the exact collaboration(s) with the ongoing initiatives of other partners like the World Bank, Red Cross and other UN Agencies to minimize duplications and maximize synergies from our respective comparative advantages.

In addition, given the funding gap (close to 30%), a clearer **Resource Mobilization strategy** could be explicitly articulated as part of the Strategy section.

Also, the project team may wish to consider how to benefit from the experiences from the fellow developing countries through **South-South Cooperation** (e.g. study tour) – Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Bangladesh, etc

PMSU would like to commend NDMO and UNDP/CPR Unit again, and looks forward to working with the project team in the implementation stage through, for instance, **project management capacity development** that our Unit is assisting.

Lao Red Cross: Community based disaster risk management activities were on going through funding provided by UNDP with implementation support from French Red Cross. It would be in a ready position for further collaborations for capacity building at the community level.

Statistics Department: Implementation strategy to achieve Output 2 addressed the coordination with Statistics Department especially in the development of information management system. The Department is using Lao Info Data Base System in analyzing the millennium development goals (MDG). It was suggested to apply Lao Info system in the disaster management.

Ministry of Defense: In the field of disaster risk management, the Ministry cooperates in the early warning system at a grass roots level. The Ministry would cooperate in the future simulation exercise.

WREA: WREA has 2 WB supported projects and it was suggested that the project should synergize its activities with WB. It also had cooperated awareness and communication activities with the Environment Unit and would like to cooperate with the project as well.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Department of Planning: Next year the department will carry out national agricultural census. The data and information available from the census can be applied in the disaster management planning process. Also, the Department of Planning has a project funded by ADB on watershed management which has many findings that can support a disaster risk management plan especially on the affects on natural resources and environmental degradation that has impact on climate change and agricultural and plantation planning. The Department of Planning was also willing to collaborate with this project in the area of capacity development on disaster management data and disaster management planning.

Summary and Closing:

During the discussion, principle all the participants agreed that the Project was a comprehensive approach to strengthen the capacity in the disaster management in the country. For the stock piling of the lessons learnt, it is recommended that the disaster prone countries such as Philippines and Bangladesh be visited as a study tour. In the implementation strategy, cross cutting issues such as climate change, contamination of UXO should also



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be addressed. With the support from the Governance Unit, achieving the Output 1 could be facilitated by the strong linkage with activities relating to the development of the legal framework. With regard to a sector wide approach, there is a coordination system in place such as an inter-agency standing committee (IASC) through the initiation of the UN Office of Resident Coordinator and leadership of the Government to strengthen the coordination in the disaster risk management. NDMO also explained its coordination system with line departments which was in progress. It also highlighted the coordination with Statistics Department to make use of Lao Info Data Base System as a potential data pool in managing and planning the disaster risk reduction activities. There should be more comprehensive action planning through participation and supporting the simulation exercises for emergency response organized by the Ministry of Defense.

With incorporation of the comments and suggestions mentioned above into the final Project document, the Chair endorsed the core outputs of the Project since all participants agreed to cooperate and coordinate in its activities.

The Chair expressed his gratitude to the participants for endorsing the Project Document and also gave special thanks to the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare for its strong commitments towards achieving the objectives of the Project.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40.

Approved by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Wagener', written over a horizontal line.

Mr. Dirk Wagener, *o/c*
Deputy Resident Representative a.i
UNDP

Date: 8.10.2005