

2019 Round Table Pre- Consultation Minutes

*On Post-Disaster Recovery and Disaster Risk Reduction,
Indicative support, and integration into 9th NSEDP*

Date: 5 November 2019

*Venue: Meeting Room,
Nhongtha Guest House, MLSW*



The Pre-consultation chaired by Minister of Labour and Social Welfare and Co-Chaired by UNDP Resident Representative.

In the opening remark by the Minister Dr. Khampheng Saysompheng, he highlighted the importance of moving from disaster response to disaster preparedness and strengthening the early warning system, given the increase in frequency and scale of the disaster year by year. He noted that the early warning was very efficient in the 2019 floods with a significant reduction in death toll during the September 2019 flood disaster. He stressed continuous support from partners which is highly appreciated.

Remarks by Ms. Ricarda Rieger, UNDP Resident Representative

In UNDP remarks by Ms. Ricarda Rieger, UNDP Resident Representative, she emphasized on risk-informed development planning with 3 concrete steps: i) collect data on disaster loss, ii) ensure Build Back Better in recovery, and iii) to integrate DRR into the national planning process. Innovation in Disaster Risk Management plays a critical role to allow advanced technology to support DRR work.

Presentation on Disaster Risk Reduction and Post-Disaster Recovery by Ministry of Labour and Social welfare with a focus on DRR, Recovery Framework and the Next steps

Representative from MoLSW, Ms. Vimala Khounthlangsy, Director Disaster Preparedness and Response Division, Social Welfare Department. Presented summary of the 8th NSEDP achievements and on the principles to focus on during recovery which includes:

- a) Rapid building of people's livelihoods and the revitalization of the local economy, focusing on the most vulnerable and socially disadvantaged group,
- b) Securing of development gains,
- c) coordinated and coherent approaches to recovery; and
- d) building back better.

While the key priorities for resilient recovery include:

- i. ensuring the safety and security of the affected population,
- ii. economic recovery and revitalization focusing on the neediest,
- iii. creating resiliency through BBB,
- iv. building the capacity of the national and local governments and communities for DRM for sustainable development and
- v. Improving coordination with development partners and local governments.

Questions and answers

Representative of the European Union

Factors that lead to the difference in death toll between 2018 and 2019, the nature of flood or existence of the measures?

Response from DG

The self-enhancement at the NDPCC and the nature of flood are the two main reasons leading to such difference. The experience and lesson learned from the 2018 flood disaster event facilitated the national level to get prepared for the disaster in advance, with a better emergency response plan and information exchange platform. The early warning system developed, and training held at provincial level early in 2019 had successfully reduced the damage and loss with increasing preparedness are the two main outputs.

Remarks from the Minister

The flood event in 2018 was more catastrophic than the one in 2019 with the dam, namely Sepian, collapsed. This created a cascade of tsunami-like incidents and hence plans could not be implemented.

Representative of Embassy of Australia

What kind of recovery strategies is likely to ensure the long-terms effects on the food security issue caused by the natural disaster?

Response from DG

Ministry of Agriculture and Forest Sector have collected data and done assessment especially on food security, and damage and losses.

Remarks from the Minister

Under the equally inaccessible road network these two years, the impact in Sanamxai district, Attapeu Province had been reduced in 2019. Besides, food and water supplies were able to distribute to the victims with training on cooking despite the broad affected areas this year.

Representative of World Bank

Shared their support to GoL on road reconstruction and maintenance, which will be improved with a better early warning system.

Requested an economic cost comparison between the flood event in 2018 and 2019.

Response from DG

The joint PDNA, with contribution from World Bank, in 2018 analyzed and assessed the economic cost in different sectors and by what means the flood had deteriorated the GDP growth. Nevertheless, the post-disaster recovery was not specialized in economic cost this year due to the broad influenced sectors. The concerns on the destruction of a 5-year agriculture plan will be raised at the panel discussion.

Remarks from the Minister

The flood event was concentrated in Sanamxai district, Attapeu in 2018 whilst a wide-spread disaster was taken place this year. Even though there was no huge loss in human lives, the infrastructure and socio-economic infrastructure were devastated. Such ruination hindered the accessibility to the flood zone, and hence the accuracy of the obtained data. The final data report this year is now in preparation.

Representative of ILO

Suggested long-term support and mechanism for prevention, such as employment opportunities creation, skill acquisition, should be incorporated in the 9th NSEDP.

Response from DG

Agreed on the gravity of livelihood restoration and lined ministry should be collaborated on sustaining such measures. With support from ADB, vocational training has been taken place with the inhibited people in the flood zone, particularly in the agricultural sector. It aimed to safeguard their abilities to generate income on future occasions.

Panel Discussion

The Panel discussion was moderated by **Mr. Vilayphong Sisomvang, DG, Department of Social Welfare and Mr. B. Murali, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative**. The panelists invited for discussion includes representatives from **MPI, MoPWT, MoF, ADB, FAO, and UN-Habitat** around the topic of mainstreaming DRR into the 9th NSEDP.

While World Bank is having a project directly supporting Department of Planning, MPI to mainstream DRR into the 9th NSEDP, develop the M&E Framework and work closely with ministries to ensure DRR is in the sectoral plan, UN agencies, such as FAO, WHO is also directly supporting the sectoral development plans with DRR integrated.

Ministry of Planning and Investment

Presented by Ms. Samaiphone Boumthidate, Deputy Director, Social Development, Planning Division

The frequent changing climate is threatening the socio-economic potential development, food security and agriculture sector. With the implementation of early warning systems, there is a necessity for MPI to learn more about preparedness, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and post-disaster recovery.

The outcomes in NSEDP has been increased from three to six in the 9th NSEDP. DRR has been ranked as the second critical target in the 8th NSEDP whilst it will be indicated as Outcome 4 in the 9th NSEDP. Based on the 8th NSEDP, natural resources management was the driving force, yet no track has been done. Thus it will be classified as one of the major outputs in 9th NSEDP to ensure the natural resources will be utilized sustainably. Besides, risk settlement areas will be added to the outcomes to ensure the proper utilization of land and reduce the aftermath of natural disasters. As for the green growth strategy, it will continue developing the readiness and preparedness framework for disaster.

With the occurrence of the incidents, the GDP growth has been limited. There was merely a 6% growth in the first 6 months of 2019 whilst the industrial sector and agricultural sector were shirking. The demand for recovery plans in the development sector is overwhelming as well. Regarding the funding, Government of Laos (GoL) has contributed LAK 100 billion to the disaster with support from various development

partners. Notwithstanding, MPI has proposed on 4th November 2019 for an additional request on the contribution from GoL to the standing committee.

Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Presented by Mr. Sak Dalath, Director of Division, Road Department

The consequences on the infrastructures, such as roads, waterways, bridges, are the key issue in the flood events in 2018 and 2019. LAK 300 billion has been 100% allocated for the immediate recovery of 485 infrastructural loss. Yet the problems remain at the remote area with insufficient funding.

A new strategy on the national road preparedness has been implemented after the flood events. Different sections of the national roads have been allocated to a certain national contractor, who will be responsible for the contingency plan for road networks cut-off within an hour.

Setting priority on the recovery schedule depends on the strategic significance and socio-economic benefits and creating alternative routes will be their recovery solution in the long term.

Ministry of Finance

Presented by Ms. Chanthaly Vilaythong, Director of Personnel administrative Department

Re-emphasized the GoL has contributed LAK 500 billion for the current flood event and the request on an additional 100-billion-kip is under the consideration of the National Assembly. The mismatch on the supply and demand of the funding is the biggest issue for Lao PDR to deal with the natural disaster.

FAO

Presented by Mr. Nasar Hayat, Representative

Agriculture is the first sector influenced by any climate-related event; about 70% of the rural farmers are subsistence farmers while the rest 30% are the commercial farmers. This provides a concrete reason why transformation is necessary to adapt to the changing climate. The application of successful alternative practices to adapt to climate change from other countries, mitigation on the data and information gap, and elevation of the investment in R&D are the questions need to be addressed. Education and modification of financing instruments should also be strengthened to support the local farmers. In order to tackle this challenge, high-level coordination is the key. Therefore, FAO is currently working with MoFA to integrate building resilience in the next NSEDP.

UN-HABITAT

Presented by Mr. Avi Sarkar, Regional Advisor of UN- Habitat Lao

The integration of spatial planning to climate change adaptation and DRR measures is the key to resilience building and building capacity. UN-HABITAT has conducted small projects on vulnerability assessment in some targeted provinces. How to scale-up the project? How to raise awareness and conduct spatial planning at the sub-national level? These are the questions to the floor.

Building Back Better (BBB) approach should be adopted to cope with the overwhelming population, urbanization, and amplifying natural disasters.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Presented by Ms. Soudalay Souannavong, Lao PDR Resident Mission

With a disaster team based in Philippine Malila, they provide technical assistance to MOLSW on the formulation of disaster management law and the National Disaster Risk Management Strategy. They agreed on the significance of the capacity building as the priority of DRR, and CCA should be integrated to DRR. Revisiting the budget, integrating financial elements into 9th NSEDP and developing SOP are their suggestions.

Open Discussion

Representative of UNFPA

Support for the marginalized group like women, pregnant women and children are missing in the 9th NSEDP. For instance, provision of survival kit and separation of the toilet according to the gender. Suggested to consider the gender mainstreaming and capacity building for the health-care sector to reduce the violence on women.

Representative of OXFAM

Suggested to consider priority on search and rescue sectors in the 9th NSEDP. A decree on the foundation was enacted with focus on emergency response to be improved.

Response from DG

The humanitarian support was distributed instantly once it received in 2019 through helicopter. The fact that individual contribution has a shorter response time has been pointed out. Thus they tend to mobilize and utilize the individual contribution prior to the INGO contribution with a formal reviewing process.

Representative of World Bank

The integration of disaster risk into the 9th NSEDP has been discussed with MPI and collaboration with the line ministries on the Monitoring and Evaluation framework will proceed.

Representative of World Vision

As malnutrition has a prolonging effect on the vulnerable persons, nutrition should be considered. Lack of resources that includes budget allocation and human resources, and limited capacity and awareness of DRR, have been highlighted as main obstacles. The recommendation is made to set up a specific budget for drills at line ministries to stay ready for disaster. With the coordination among partners and line ministries and sectors, the measures can be taken place effectively and efficiently.

Representative from the Embassy of Philippines

Suggested that DRM is too general for country's effective strategy. In the Philippines, the strategy is around 4 key thematic areas: 1) Disaster and Risk Prevention and mitigation (with focus on infrastructure), 2) Disaster Preparedness (with focus on people), 3) Disaster Response (focus on provision of goods and services) and 4) Disaster Rehabilitation and Recovery. The Philippines has changed their strategy from the top-down centralized approach to bottom-up and participatory. Such approach involves community and taking the vulnerability of the people as the center. There is a need to shift from disaster response to disaster reduction, with the 4 thematic areas integrated and supplement to each other. Education to raise awareness on DRR should be introduced as soon as possible, even with the early stage of education.

Concluding remarks by the Minister

The Minister, in his closing remarks, continued to highlight the escalating extreme global weather pattern in Lao PDR this year. Apart from the natural disaster, new threats from epidemic and trans-border diseases are surging. Gender issues should be integrated across the DRM Strategy. From the 2018 experience, better management on flood assistance with more drills and rehearsal are inevitable. Given the tight State's budget, continued support from the external partners is strongly needed to cover the gap and overcome the discussed challenges.

Annex I: Participant's List



RTM

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Annex II: Photos



Dr. Khampheng Saysompheng Minister for Labour and Ms. Ricarda Rieger Social welfare and UNDP Resident Representative



Presentation on DRR and Post Disaster Recovery Framework



Group photo