

## So Ban Heang

Cambodia is located in Southeast Asia. The country has been frequently affected by natural disasters such as floods, drought, and storm. Besides the natural disasters, Cambodia also experiences man-made disasters like war and fire. Among these disasters, floods continue to be one of the most severe annual disasters in Cambodia and in Asia as well. The intensity of floods appears to be increasing in Asia, especially during the past few years.



The 2000 Floods in Cambodia were exceptional and appeared as the worst disaster in the Cambodian history, lasting longer, being more widespread and severe than those in the past years. They affected 750,618 households in 21 Provinces or municipality, damaged 688,021 ha of consumption and cash crops, and caused a great deal of loss to properties and infrastructure. Given the extensive damage caused by the floods, a conclusion was drawn that disaster management processes in Cambodia needed improving and strengthening.

For this purpose, General Secretariat of the National Center for Disaster Management (NCDM) focuses its attention on several areas of activities to strengthen capacity of staff from the national down to the local levels. The NCDM is planning to formulate the disaster prevention/reduction plan firstly at the national level, and then introducing the idea to the provincial and district staff to formulate such plans at their respective levels.

As a visiting researcher from such a disaster-prone country, I wish strongly to share the disaster information from my country with ADRC member countries and also learn from them. Apart from sharing of information I am eagerly interested in conducting research on disaster reduction and management. The ADRC Web site coupled with access to Internet GIS "VENTEN" provides large scale of disaster management information all over the world. One month has passed since I joined ADRC as a visiting researcher and I found the experience here excellent and satisfying. This is owed to the good support and the kind assistance of ADRC staff who are eager to share their knowledge.

Finally I would like to extend my profound gratitude to ADRC and its staff for providing NCDM with the Capacity Building for Disaster Preparedness and Reduction Programme. With the ADRC support, the NCDM was able to conduct the training courses for the officials in the three disaster prone provinces, Kampong Cham, Kandal, and Pursat. I also would like to express my sincere thanks to ADRC for giving me an opportunity to work as an ADRC visiting researcher. I believe this shall be considered as equipping the NCDM with expert knowledge and new technology related to Disaster Reduction and Management.

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