

Mrs. Phurimon Puneam from Thailand



I am Phurimon Puneam from the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) of Thailand. I am spending four months as a visiting researcher at ADRC (January to April 2010) to learn about Japan's disaster management system.

Thailand is located between 5 and 21 degrees north latitude and 97 and 106 degrees east longitude, bordering Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Malaysia and covering an area of 513,115 sq. km. The country is divided into four regions: northern, central, northeastern, and southern. Thailand has a warm and rather humid climate, with an average high temperature of 34°C and a low of 23°C. Thailand has a population of about 66 million, with 31.1% comprised of an urban population living in the capital city, and 94% comprised of Thai-speaking Buddhists.

Thailand is vulnerable to many natural disasters, including floods, landslides, droughts, cold spells, fires, and wind storms. The northern region is mountainous and thus is vulnerable to flash floods, landslides, and debris flows. The northeast is an arid area that suffers from flash floods and inundations during the rainy season, as well as severe drought and cold spells during the summer and cool seasons. The central region is a vast fertile land that is vulnerable to riverside flooding and urban inundations during the rainy season. The southern region is hilly along the west coast but flat in the east. It occasionally experiences flash floods, mudslides, tropical storms, and forest fires.

Prior to coming to Japan, I was working in Thailand as an official involved in plan and policy analysis for the Research and International Cooperation Bureau of the DDPM in the Ministry of Interior of Thailand. My primary responsibility was to gather information and conduct research on natural and man-made disaster management systems.

I believe that Japan provides the best model of effective flood management, and I am interested in learning about Japanese flood prevention systems. I believe that my studies here will prove very useful to my future work in Thailand. I want to thank the ADRC staff for sharing their knowledge, expertise, experience, and kindness, and for giving me an experience that I will remember for the rest of my life.