

Ms. Bouasy Thammasack from Laos

I have been working as a project coordinator of community-based disaster management, for National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Social Welfare Department, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. (Lao PDR).

Since July 2004, I have been here in Japan as an ADRC Visiting Researcher for 6 months. ADRC has provided me with such a unique opportunity to learn disaster management in Japan. Having been back to my office, I'd like to be engaged in disaster management in Lao PDR.

Lao PDR is classified as one of the least developed countries in the world. Among the main causes are land problems, natural disasters, pests, environmental degradation, and lack of water for potential agricultural production as well as UXO (unexploded ordnance) contamination.

Because Lao PDR is located in the lower Mekong basin, the country experiences floods from May to September when the amount of water increases in the upper Mekong. Floods in 2001 brought damage to agricultural 42,223 hectares, while those in 2002 caused 43,064 hectares.

To deal with natural disasters, the Government, in August 1999, established National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC) as an inter-ministerial policy making and coordination body over 13 ministries. As the secretariat of the NDMC, the NDMO promotes cooperation among Lao's disaster management organizations, other government agencies and UN as well as International NGOs.

Main programs and projects carried out by NDMO are Capacity Building Program for people in affected and vulnerable areas, Public Awareness and Education Program through the media, and Early Warning Information Program.

Representing Government of Lao, the NDMO is also promoting its relationship with ADRC, World Food Programme (WFP), Care International Laos, and Concern Worldwide Laos.

