

Mr. Ross Sovann from Cambodia

As more than 85% of the territory lies in the lower basin of Mekong River, Cambodia is highly susceptible to floods caused by monsoon rainwater. Almost every year, floods wash away dams, destroy crops and damage homes and other community infrastructures. They also cause loss of lives, affects livelihood and hinder the development processes, and aggravate poverty. The flood in 2000 caused 347 lives and damage of US \$ 157 millions.



As a result of experiencing recurring floods, the Government of Cambodia has established the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) in 1995 as an inter-ministerial level organization under the Council of Ministers chaired by the Prime Minister to assist the government by providing necessary recommendations, coordination, dissemination of information, and disaster response.

Since June 2002, I have been serving as a Disaster Management and Legal Advisor to the NCDM of Cambodia. From January this year, I have joined ADRC as a Visiting Researcher (VR) and will stay until July 2005.

Japan is one of the most disaster-prone countries to natural disasters, as it is frequently suffered by catastrophic disasters such as typhoons, torrential rains, floods, and landslides due to its rugged topography. Much experience in disaster reduction with excellent organizational structure and wise application of high-level technology into disaster management practices has made Japan ideal to disaster reduction efforts. As a consequence, Japan has become globally a central institution for learning and research for disaster management practices.

While staying in Japan, I would like to focus on the following two aspects (1) Existing laws, policies and other frameworks related to disaster management in Japan, and (2) Processes, experiences, and lessons used to address the challenges during implementation of the existing legal foundations, which would also be useful for Cambodia. It is my personal and professional hope that I could promote cooperation between Cambodia and Japan.