



PROGRAMME COORDINATION GROUP ON NATURAL DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES

Providing more effective UN assistance

Natural disasters in Viet Nam

Due to its geographical location, Viet Nam is constantly at risk of natural disasters. Every year such disasters lead to, on average, 750 deaths and economic losses equivalent to 1.5 percent of national GDP (source: World Bank). The Government of Viet Nam has a strong track record of dealing effectively with natural disasters. In 2000 the United Nations awarded Viet Nam the Sasakawa Certificate for Disaster Reduction, highlighting the Government's efforts in this field. With climate change, disasters are predicted to affect Viet Nam more and more and disaster management is a priority for both the Government and the UN.

The programme coordination group

The UN in Viet Nam is strongly committed to delivering as one to help the country prepare for and respond to natural disasters and emergencies. As part of the One UN Initiative, inter-agency Programme Coordination Groups have been set up to deliver results in a more coordinated and effective way. Created in 2008, the Programme Coordination Group on Natural Disasters and Emergencies (PCG 10) comprises eight UN agencies: FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UN-HABITAT and WHO. Co-chaired by UNDP and UNICEF, the goal of PCG 10 is to ensure coordination of UN assistance to the Government in the areas of disaster preparedness, mitigation, relief/rescue, rehabilitation and reconstruction. The group aims to achieve the 21 expected results captured in Outcome 5 of the One Plan, the common UN action plan which has been approved by the Government.

PCG 10 members meet monthly, or as often as required in an emergency situation, to work on common projects and coordinate their efforts. The group acts as the focal point for all UN agencies engaged in disaster and emergency activities in Viet Nam. Working together with the Government, PCG 10 has developed an ambitious plan aimed at addressing capacity gaps in disaster risk management. UN initiatives are aligned with the National Strategy for Disaster Prevention, Response and Mitigation to 2020 which was approved by the Government in 2007. PCG 10 members are already working together within the framework of a common UN disaster management project and are contributing according to their comparative advantages.

DELIVERING AS ONE IN VIET NAM

Initiated within the context of the Paris Declaration and the Hanoi Core Statement on Aid Effectiveness, the **One UN Initiative** aims to enhance the efficiency and impact of the United Nations in Viet Nam. In December 2006 Viet Nam was selected as the first of eight countries to pilot UN reform at the country level through the One UN Initiative. The One UN Initiative is a tripartite (Government, donors and UN) undertaking, and has made considerable progress in Viet Nam due to a committed UN Country Team, a supportive donor community and very strong leadership by the Vietnamese Government. The One UN Initiative comprises five elements: One Plan (with five outcome areas), One Budget, One Set of Management Practices, One Leader, and a green One UN House.



Photo: UN Viet Nam\2008\Do Quoc Trung

Select activities

PCG 10, in consultation with government ministries, NGOs and international partners, prepared a UN disaster and pandemic response plan in 2009. This comprehensive plan provides a framework for delivering effective and timely humanitarian assistance to people in need in a way that facilitates mitigation, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. The plan recognizes the importance of bridging the gap between emergency relief, early recovery and long-term development. The UN plan also serves as an example for the Government as it is in the process of producing its own disaster and pandemic response plan (for which it has requested the assistance of PCG 10).

PCG 10 is also a key actor in implementing the thematic Cluster Leadership Approach in Viet Nam. This new coordination mechanism allows for a more effective response from the Government, NGOs and UN agencies in case of a natural disaster or emergency. PCG 10 members act as co-leads of the different clusters (such as emergency shelter, early recovery and nutrition), with overall leadership by the Government. The cluster approach enables UN agencies to better support national efforts and share information with NGOs and other partners active in the aftermath of a disaster. In this sense, PCG 10 plays a crucial coordination role in the event of a disaster.

Furthermore, PCG 10 not only facilitates communication and project implementation with the Government of Viet Nam but also with local and international NGOs through the Disaster Management Working Group. Through this national forum NGOs, donors, disaster management practitioners and UN agencies interact and work together on different issues and projects.

UN reform aims at reducing transaction costs and boosting coherence and coordination. In this spirit, PCG 10 acts as a facilitator and represents all UN agencies in Viet Nam working in the disaster field. This allows for a more effective use of UN resources and simplifies interactions between the UN system, the Government, donors, NGOs and other partners who have all expressed their support to the single UN disaster focal point.

With the concept of “delivering as one” at the centre of UN reform, PCG 10 helps UN agencies perform their everyday tasks more efficiently, and contributes to more effective and sustainable projects carried out by the UN in Viet Nam on disaster management. Finally, having all relevant agencies interact through this group assures that cross-cutting themes such as gender and climate change are mainstreamed into projects and various disaster-related activities.



Photo: UNICEF Viet Nam\2006\Cao Viet Hoa

ONE PLAN - A SINGLE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Outcome 5, section 1:

“Viet Nam has adequate policies and capacities to effectively reduce the risks of, and vulnerability to, natural disasters, communicable diseases, and other emergencies.

Disaster Risk Reduction, Emergency Preparedness and Response:

- Strengthen evidence-based disaster risk reduction legislation, strategies, policies and plans, including disaster risk management training capacities and facilities;
- Increase capacities for research on vulnerability reduction, sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis;
- Support the formulation of sustainable financial mechanisms to reduce disaster risks, and expand national emergency preparedness through plans and programmes related to health and climate change;
- Strengthen institutional systems, awareness and processes to enhance coordination and integration of disaster risk reduction actions and adaptation to global climate change; and
- Strengthen early disaster warning systems as well as systems for assessing and addressing the nutrition and related health needs in emergency situations.”

UNITED NATIONS VIET NAM

Add: No. 25 - 29, Phan Boi Chau, Hoan Kiem, Ha Noi | Tel: +84 4 39421495 | Fax: +84 4 3942 2267

Email: info@un.org.vn | Web: <http://www.un.org.vn>