

# PDRSEA

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## Financial Services to Support Community Initiatives for Disaster Reduction



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Financial Services to Support Community Initiatives in Disaster Reduction was one of the major topics in the recently concluded 4th Disaster Management Practitioners' Workshop for Southeast Asia held on 8-10 March in Bangkok. See page 8 for more details

Photo by Helen Hasenfeld www.thediscerningeye.com

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**Microfinance and Disaster Preparedness:  
An Innovative Approach from Vietnam**  
*Financing Disaster Preparedness at the Household Level*

*Guillame Chantry, Development Workshop France (DWF) in Vietnam*

Over the past decade, Vietnam has been emerging from years of poverty. Economic reforms have had a largely positive effect on many families, and many activities are increasingly monetised. This growth and change is vital if families and the community are to achieve more stable and better living conditions. In turn, the improvement of family economies is vital for local and regional development. But the often-tenuous improvement in family and commune conditions is frequently eradicated by the destruction caused by the annual round of storms, typhoons and flooding.

In effect, amongst the many changes in the past decade, a tangible change has been the increase in private expenditure in housing and small-scale rural infrastructure. Families have rebuilt some 80% of rural housing over recent years to replace previous thatch and bamboo houses. Regrettably, this investment in new homes has not been matched by a parallel increase in their resistance to the effects of floods and storms. This weakness is largely because storm resistant building details have been neglected.

This level of vulnerability is both unnecessary and one that can be addressed without great difficulty.

*How? Through preventive strengthening.*

*Preventive action to strengthen community and domestic buildings is an effective and cost efficient manner of reducing economic and material vulnerability, and families and communities can do it themselves.*

**Development Workshop France (DWF)** has implemented projects<sup>1</sup> in Thua Thien Hue Province – Central Vietnam – since 1999, in order to raise the level of ‘prevention awareness’ among both the population and decision makers, through community animation activities, through training and the demonstration of reinforcing housing and small public facilities ahead of the next storm.

For strengthening existing housing, at the outset DWF provided a subsidy combined with the cash participation from the family<sup>2</sup>. But it has become clear that poorer families actually turned to local moneylenders in order to engage in strengthening their home. Whilst this was a positive sign of commitment, it has also created pressure on some families because of high rates of interest exacted by informal lenders, charging up to 20% monthly interest.

In 2002 DWF started a credit system for the families, combined with a partial subsidy of reinforcement works, in 4 communes of Thua Thien Hue Province. This system was then extended to 6 communes. The credit scheme is organised, managed, and developed at commune level by the Commune Damage Prevention Committee (*mainly with Women’s Union or with the Farmers’ Union*).

In 2005, some communes decided to increase the level of subsidy to 2/3 – with credit 1/3 – of the amount of reinforcement works. In a typical poor commune it is generally considered that until the poorer and most vulnerable families have been helped, a subsidy will go on being needed to enable these families to strengthen their homes.

The repayment level has been good (*80% and more, albeit with some delays in many cases*), and successful – taking into consideration the innovative approach and the situation of families – although there have been some specific cases where people have had difficulties due to:

- Credit management problems at Commune level
- Extreme financial difficulties in the case of some families

The credit system for housing reinforcement has contributed to a real progress amongst families. It has demonstrated that people repay short term affordable loans for house strengthening even though this does not have a direct connection to income generation, because families recognise that the safety of the houses and the reduction of vulnerability do indeed represent a key component in economic security. Families make the connection between a safe house and income generation capacity, and are prepared to put their own money into achieving this.

*An example of an initial loan:*

Cost of Works	DWF Subsidy	Family Cont.	Credit	Duration (months)	Interest (by month)	Repayment (by month)
4,600,000 DGS	2,000,000 DGS	600,000 DGS	2,000,000 DGS	18	0.3%	114,000 DGS
300 USD	130 USD	40 USD	130 USD			7.5 USD

*Until December 2005, the number and amount of loans disbursed have totalled 50,000 US:*

	Families	Amount of Loans
Initial Loan from Projects	380	695,000,000 VN Dongs
Loan from Revolving Fund	50	95,000,000 VN Dongs

## DWF Housing Improvement through the Microcredit Program



Before housing improvement



After housing improvement

Future projects need to continue to demonstrate a credit system for those in most need, which can in turn encourage other donors and banks to make credit available. During a round table workshop organised by DWF in Hue on the occasion of the *International Day for Disaster Reduction (12 October 2005, Campaign on Microfinance and Disaster)*, this situation has been discussed by representatives of the banking and insurance system. The development of insurance mechanisms is new in Vietnam, and is focussed on life assurance. The Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development has now expressed its interest in partially funding an expanded programme of loans for housing strengthening and improvement - with guarantees from organisations like DWF and a donor agency.

The target is to achieve loan rates up to 80% with low subsidy, (*taking account of subsidies written into the loan system as well*), but so far the programme has shown that families are prepared to invest seriously in making their homes more disaster resistant and through this, their lives less vulnerable. For the long term success of preventive strengthening and similar actions, financial mechanisms supported by local and national institutions are a critical step towards sustainable disaster reduction.

*For more information, please contact Mr Guillaume Chantry, DWF Project Coordinator (Prevent Typhoon Damages to Housing, Central Vietnam), Development Workshop France in Vietnam at [guillaume.chantry@dwf.org](mailto:guillaume.chantry@dwf.org)*

### Housing Financing in Rural Areas

If some credit schemes exist in the formal sector in urban areas (example for civil servants, loan for 10-15 years to purchase apartment), nothing exists in rural areas to contribute to housing improvement or delivery.

In Thua Thien Hue, families have to save money – in cash or in building materials- during several years (average 5) before starting the construction of their new house.

A typical house (5x7m and 2x7 m veranda) costs about 15-20 millions VN Dongs to build. Due to a lack of available funds, and also to the lack of awareness about resistance to storms, the family often live in a unfinished house and thus in insecure conditions (commonly, no wall plaster, no doors and window, poor fixing of the roof covering).

Since 2003-4, an important programme of temporary houses eradication has been launched, with subsidy from 7 or 15 millions Dongs from national authorities (with a contribution of family of 5-10 millions).

In case of natural disaster (flood, cyclones) the family could receive, as support from authorities, up to 3 million VN Dongs for a destroyed house, and 1 million VN Dongs for a damaged house (*data based on damage in 2005*).

<sup>1</sup> Projects funded by

- CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), Alternatives(Canada) and FACV (Fondation d'Aide Canada -Vietnam) 2000-2002
- ECHO-DIPECHO (European Commission) 2003-2006

<sup>2</sup> Average family income: 30 USD/month – Jan 2006 (1 USD = 15, 900 VN Dongs)

ECHOES is a monthly online e-magazine of the Community of Disaster Practitioners and Professionals in Southeast Asia.

<http://www.adpc.net/pdrsea/echoes/>

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This newsletter is a medium for PDRSEA partners and other NGOs to share best practices, program information and experiences on CBDRM, and serves as an important networking tool.



## Establishing a Community Cooperative: Case of Talumpok, Batangas City, Philippines Towards Building a Disaster Resilient Community

Zenaida Delica-Willison, UNDP Regional Office in Bangkok

“We need to organize a cooperative to help us collectively address our needs when a crisis occurs” said Petronilo Baes, an elder in Talumpok East, a rural village in Batangas City, south of Manila, Philippines. His sentiment was shared by many other farmers in the village. This was how the **Talumpok Silangan Multipurpose Cooperative (TASIMPCO)** was initiated and organized on 1 May 1988.

The initial meeting was chaired by a development worker and attended by fifty village residents. An officer of the Philippine Bureau of Cooperatives and from another government agency also attended the meeting. This led to a decision to organize a **cooperative**. The residents pledged in writing to pay a share of Php100 and a membership fee of Php20, or Php 120.00 per person (USD 2.10) which amounted to a total of Php5,000 (USD 92.5). This amount was used to buy consumer goods. (Php 54=USD 1)

### Spirit of Volunteerism

As there was no capital yet at the beginning to finance rental space, the family of Mr. & Mrs. Luiz Perez, local residents in the area, volunteered their house for the conduct of the business of the cooperative. After one month, the residents grouped together to construct a building for the cooperative in the spirit of “*bayanihan*” (voluntary cooperation in the community usually by providing labor). Able-bodied men offered their share of bamboo, wood, nails and tools to help erect the structure. Women came with food for lunch and refreshments. Not a single hour was wasted so that the construction could be finished and business could be conducted as soon as possible. Young people volunteered to take charge of the cooperative.

### Where It Is Now

To date, after 16 years of operation, the total assets of TASIMPCO has reached at least Php 5,650,000 (USD 113,000). Although it still engages in selling consumer goods up to the present, the cooperative has also evolved into a more complex microfinance enterprise which provides a credit facility management and animal dispersal. A total of 145 families are benefiting from the cooperative today, and they speak highly of their participation in the

*A cooperative is a member-owned enterprise with membership open to those who use its services. Democratically controlled and based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, equity and solidarity, a cooperative returns profits to members on the basis of patronage.*

development of this small collective business venture.

### The Making of a Disaster Resilient Community

Talumpok is often visited by strong typhoons, but the village have not requested relief assistance in times of crisis. It was only when the roofs of the village elementary school were destroyed by strong winds did village officials request assistance from the local city government’s calamity fund to strengthen the school. Truly, Talumpok can be considered a “*resilient community*”. Many people agree that the cooperative was a contributory factor to this resiliency.

The cooperative is a reliable instrument for financial sustainability and disaster risk reduction. Members receive important benefits from the cooperative, such as annual dividend shares and patronage refunds. However, they do not avail of these benefits when they have sufficient resources for the year so that these funds can be reserved for emergencies. The cooperative’s credit facilities are made available to members during crisis or emergencies. The credit system used is based on procedures formulated by the Board and approved by the general membership. Repayment comes from from the sale of animals raised through TASIMPCO’s microfinance scheme. There are also indirect benefits such as the money saved by members who no longer need to travel to the city to purchase prime commodities which are now readily available through the cooperative. Women in this village hold the purse of the family. Husbands surrender all their income to their wives who manage it for the family’s subsistence.

### Partnership to Move Forward

TASIMPCO is considered a huge success by its members. They also recognize that this success is partly owed to the support of many partner NGOs, such as the *Citizens’ Disaster Response Center (CDRC)*, which provided a loan at the early stage of the cooperative, and the *Center for Disaster Preparedness (CDP)* which provided a training on community based disaster preparedness. A government cooperative agency also helped TASIMPCO by providing guidance in policy development and operation. TASIMPCO has already received several citations from this cooperative agency.

### Reflections and Lessons Identified

Some factors that contributed to the success of this cooperative include: the persistence, cooperation and volunteerism of members; the facilitation of a development worker who guided the initial set-up and listened to the voice of the farmers; sound policy development and making sure that policies are followed and implemented; and the cooperation of NGOs and government agencies. Continued support and patronage to the activities of the cooperative are likewise guaranteed by members themselves to ensure the success of their financial investments. They have a stake!

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Located on the banks of the Red River in Northern Vietnam, Nga Quan is a typical rural mountainous village with a population of nearly 2,000. The local economy, based on agriculture, livestock, and aqua cultivation, provides villagers with an average per capita income of only USD 200 a year. According to government criteria, Nga Quan is still considered a poor community highly susceptible to major hazards such as flooding, flash floods, and landslides. In its recent history, the village has suffered from six major floods which caused dykes to be breached twice resulting in serious property and crop damage.

Since January 2005, the **Community-Based Disaster Management (CBDRM)** project has been implemented in Nga Quan village by **Save the Children** and its Vietnamese partners, the **Committee for Flood and Storm Control**, the **Committee for Family Population and Children** and the **Vietnam Red Cross**, with funding from **DIPECHO**.

According to Mr. Cao Ngoc Hung, the Chairman of the local people's committee, the project has helped the community to systematically conduct a Hazard, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (HVCA) and to improve the annual disaster planning process. In particular, he shares with pride that this was *"the first time the whole community including old people, farmers, veterans, women, youth, and children were mobilized to participate in a disaster management project, from training to action planning to final implementation of all project interventions."*

Through the HVCA, Nga Quan village was able to identify a number of activities and small-scale projects that needed to be implemented in the coming years, including the strengthening of the local dyke, broadening irrigation channels, upgrading the community's gridline, and constructing an evacuation center for the community. Local residents also proposed to plant trees as part of a reforestation scheme, construct safe playgrounds for children, and train and enhance capacity for emergency response and rescue teams.

Out of these priorities, the project has already approved Euros 3,000 for the community to strengthen the dyke, and incredibly more than 500 people from the small village participated in the preparations.

The local people mobilized their own resources and manpower to dig a solid embankment which resulted in an upgraded dyke measuring 800 meters - a vast improvement compared to the initial plan of 200 meters. The dyke now has a strong foundation and large surface that serves as an inter-village road, allowing access to large trucks where previously only motorbikes could pass.

Project funding along with community fund matching also helped to repair a small irrigation dam broken by a recent typhoon. The former soil irrigation dam was repaired with concrete and stone materials which will remain solid for many years to come.

When the project team visited the community in November 2005 to attend the completion ceremony of the small-



## Community Resource Mobilization: Mobilizing Community Support in Vietnam Creating Positive Change through Participation

Ngoc Cong Chinh, Save the Children Vietnam

scale mitigation work, they were thrilled with the achievements that the community accomplished within such a short period of time and with modest project funding. Due to the great efforts of all concerned stakeholders which included the local community, central and provincial partners, DIPECHO, and Save the Children, the project was able to successfully reach its objectives and produce quality results.

Even with limited funding, Nga Quan village was able to mobilize all available resources such as the contribution of materials and labor, provision from the commune budget, technical support from the district and provincial disaster management offices and the private sector.

During the completion ceremony, the director of the local contract company that repaired the dyke and dam said: *"We are here to help the community to strengthen the dyke, road, and dam. You come from afar to help the people, but we are a local agency, so why should we not reach out to help our own community?"* The contractor offered a non-profit contract to help the commune upgrade another 300 meters of inter-village road, charging only machinery costs and some stipend for the workers.

The local people of Nga Quan village were indeed proud of the positive changes to their community. The project received valuable attention from local, district, and provincial authorities as well.

When communities are empowered and supported, they could achieve marvelous results.

Mr. Cao Ngoc Hung, chairman of the local People's Committee, added that *"with the support of the Save the Children and DIPECHO project, Nga Quan was able to accomplish even more."*

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# Overview of MICROFINANCE in Community Development and Disaster Risk Management

Vicky Eleen Diopenes, Information Manager, PDRSEA3, ADPC



too poor to qualify for traditional bank loans. In developing countries, micro-credit enables very poor people to engage in self-employment projects that generate income. Providing micro-finance services to the poor requires innovative operating methods to manage risk and reduce transaction costs.

over a long period of time many microfinance clients actually graduate out of poverty. Access to credit allows poor people to take advantage of small economic opportunities. While increased earnings are by no means automatic, reliable sources of credit provide a fundamental basis for planning and expanding business activities. Many studies show that clients who join and stay in the microfinance programs have better economic conditions than non-clients, suggesting that programs contribute to these improvements.

## On Women Empowerment

A lot of microfinance programs have targeted poor women, helping them gain self-empowerment and enabling them to become economic agents of change. By providing access to financial services only through women — making women responsible for loans, ensuring repayment through women, maintaining savings accounts for women, providing insurance coverage through women — microfinance programs have sent a strong message to households and communities. Many qualitative and quantitative studies have documented how access to financial services has improved the status of women within the family and the community. Women have become more assertive and confident. In regions where women's mobility is strictly regulated, women have become more visible and are better able to negotiate the public sphere. Women own assets, including land and housing, and play a stronger role in decision making. There are even reports of declining levels of violence against women.

## Disaster Risk Finance

In the aftermath of a disaster, microfinance can quickly provide relief, and then support sustainable recovery and rehabilitation. Today, there are a few microfinance institutions and NGOs engaged in “disaster risk finance” or implementing microfinance programs that incorporate disaster preparedness, mitigation and coping mechanisms at the community level. Some of these programs include microcredit facilities for strengthening houses against flood and cyclones; food security, asset building and small loans to fund alternative income sources during drought; cash for work programs; and etc.

In developing countries, microfinance has had many successes in overcoming poverty and in providing livelihood for the poor, and has therefore con-

Loss of life and property continue to increase as a result of disasters. Poor households will make adjustments to cope financially, and lack of guidance on proper coping strategies normally result to higher long-term losses. Risk reduction strategies for the poor should work towards reducing economic vulnerability, and at the same time, reduce vulnerability to disasters. The financial service needs of the poor are simple - access to convenient, liquid and safe deposit services which are protected against inflation. Savings and sources of alternative or additional income can help shield against catastrophic events, and help finance small-scale projects or infrastructures that help mitigate disasters in the community. Poor communities should be discouraged from engaging with illegitimate lending sources to avoid exploitative financial relationships.

## Microfinance and Microcredit

*Microfinance* is the provision of relevant and affordable financial services to poor households that do not have access to the services traditionally offered by most financial institutions. “Micro” is a general prefix meaning “small” or “small-scale” and in this case refers to the size of the financial transactions. Microfinance services include small loans (microcredit), savings, insurance, transfer services and other financial products targeted at low-income clients. Microfinance services are often provided by rural banks, cooperatives, governments, NGOs and some INGOs.

*Microcredit* refers to the provision of small loans to entrepreneurs who are

Poor households do not usually have physical assets to offer as collateral for loans, so microfinance providers have developed substitutes. The most common form of substitute collateral has been the formation of groups of borrowers and the establishment of joint-liability procedures, where loan group members effectively guarantee one another's loans. Microfinance providers deal with these loan groups rather than with individuals and they outsource various administration tasks to the groups.

## On Poverty Alleviation and Community Development

Microfinance plays an important role in the community particularly in the fight against poverty. Microfinance can help the poor to increase income, build viable businesses, and reduce vulnerability to sudden emergency events. By reducing financial vulnerability and increasing income and savings, financial services allow poor households to make the transformation from “everyday survival” to “planning for the future.” Households are able to send more children to school for longer periods and to make greater investments in their children's education. Increased income from financial services lead to better nutrition and better living conditions, which translates into a lower incidence of illness, ability to seek and pay for healthcare services when needed, rather than go without or wait until their health seriously deteriorates. With access to micro-insurance, poor people can also cope with sudden increased expenses associated with disaster, death, serious illness, and loss of assets. Studies have shown that

tributed to lessening vulnerability to disasters. However, microfinance is not a standalone solution – it should be part of a greater strategy of disaster risk management.

### Issues and Challenges

Microfinance provides flexible and less-demanding financial services and opportunities with long-term impacts that can develop the economic empowerment of the poor.

Microfinance also has great potential for reducing disaster impacts but must further be developed for this purpose. When coupled with a comprehensive disaster risk management strategy, microfinance can be a powerful tool

and play an important role in integrating disaster preparedness and mitigation at the community level. More disaster risk finance programs should be developed before a disaster occurs. Participatory approaches should also be applied through self-management by beneficiaries as it develops ownership and ensures more successful fund recovery. It should also be innovative so that it can offer sustainable products for communities.

In disaster recovery, microfinance should complement other mechanisms to rebuild people's lives, and help make communities less vulnerable and more sustainable.

Some **microfinance schemes** in disaster preparedness/mitigation/response:

#### Grants

- Limited relief activities through in-kind aid like food, clothing, medicines and shelter after disasters

#### Training and Education

- Integrated programs that provide training on disaster management using financial and non-financial means
- Programs that provide information regarding safety measures to protect assets against disasters

#### Loans

- Special loans for preventive and mitigative measures against disasters
- Re-scheduling of existing debts; making emergency and new asset replacement and recovery loans
- Repayment schedules tailored to suit predictable disaster periods

#### Insurance

- Life and credit insurance to cover debts of clients diseased due to disasters

#### Savings

- Post-disaster, access to accumulated savings that would not be otherwise possible until member leaves
- Limited experiments with voluntary savings
- Special savings for coping with disasters; contingency funds

#### Leasing

- Lease of assets (equipments, machines) for use in small business and income generation
- Facilitating replacement of lost assets due to disaster

#### Disaster Loan Funds

- Centrally placed donor funds that can be accessed by microfinance institutions to cope with liquidity problems and provide new loans after a disaster
- Special funds at the institutional level that can be accessed during disasters

Southeast Asia, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Timor Leste, Vietnam



**Research Report on the Institutional Capacity of Disaster Preparedness Institutions to Support CBDRM**

Cambodia, Lao PDR, Timor Leste, Vietnam



**National Strategic Plan for Integrating Community Based Disaster Risk Management into the Socio-Economic Development Process**

Participants' Handbook Trainers' Guide



**Community Based Disaster Risk Management for Local Authorities**

Regional MEDIA KIT



**Community Based Disaster Risk Management and the Media**

To be released on April 2006:

Critical Guidelines for Community Based Disaster Risk Management in Southeast Asia

Proceedings of the Fourth (4th) Disaster Management Practitioners' Workshop for Southeast Asia

For more information on these publications, please contact [mzubair@adpc.net](mailto:mzubair@adpc.net)

Sources:  
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## The Fourth (4th) Disaster Management Practitioners' Workshop for Southeast Asia

The 4th Disaster Management Practitioners Workshop for Southeast Asia was held last 8-10 March 2006 at the Century Park Hotel in Bangkok, Thailand. At least 70 disaster practitioners from over 12 countries participated in the workshop. It was organized by ADPC, under the 3rd phase of its Partnerships for Disaster Reduction in Southeast Asia project, implemented in cooperation with UNESCAP, and funded by DIPECHO. The workshop was also organized in cooperation with UNISDR.



Participants of the 4th DMP SEA Workshop

The Opening Remarks and Welcome Address were given by Dr Suvit Yodmani, Executive Director of ADPC. H.E. Dr. Friedrich Hamburger, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR gave the Key-note Address. Remarks were also given by Mr. Rae Kwon Chung, Director, of the Environment and Sustainable Development Division of UNESCAP, and

Mr. Joe Chung, Senior Regional Officer of the UNISDR Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific.

The theme for this year's workshop, *"Learning from community based practices: Strengthening policy and partnerships"* emphasized the need for continued learning about community based approaches to disaster risk reduction and underlines the importance of for-

mulating policy and strengthening partnerships for wider integration of CBDRM into the social and economic development processes. The workshop focused on three major themes: *Innovative Approaches to CBDRM; Integrating CBDRM into the Socio-Economic Development Process; and Partnerships and Networking to Enhance CBDRM.* Workshop papers and proceedings will be available on April 2006.

### Other PDRSEA Workshops and Events from Jan-Mar 2006

#### Regional Workshop on CBDRM Standards, Bangkok (Jan 24-27)

The Regional Workshop on CBDRM Standards was held last 24-27 January 2006 in Bangkok. The purpose of formulating CBDRM standards is to contribute to improvements in the practice of community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM) in the countries of Southeast Asia, to provide guidelines to decision makers and practitioners for designing, implementing and evaluating community-based initiatives and projects. As a result of this workshop, the *"Critical Guidelines for Community Based Disaster Risk Management in Southeast Asia"* was developed. This document includes Process Guidelines and Outcome Guidelines in the implementation of CBDRM.

#### Strategic Collaborative Planning Workshop, Indonesia (Jan 30-31)

The Strategic Collaborative Planning Workshop for Indonesia was held from 6-7 February 2006 in Bogor, Indonesia. The workshop, also held in the other project countries, aimed to develop a five year National Strategic Plan for Integrating Community Based Disaster Risk Management into the Socio-Economic Development of the country. The plan was to be developed with technical and funding support from PDRSEA.

#### National Workshop on CBDRM Standards, Timor Leste (Feb 9-10)

National workshops are being organized in five PDRSEA project countries for developing criteria on good practices and impact indicators for CBDRM projects. The national workshop for Timor Leste was held in Dili on 9-10 February 2006. One of the significant results of this workshop was the development of the criteria (and indicators) for assessment of vulnerability at the family and community levels. Other national workshops are scheduled in Cambodia on 28-29 March 2006, and Indonesia on April 2006.

#### Joint Meeting of the Four Regional Committees, Bangkok (Feb 16-17)

A Joint Meeting of the Four Regional Committees (*HTTF, ACDM, TC, MRC*) was held on 16-17 February 2006 in Bangkok. The meeting brought together the Chairpersons of the Haze Technical Task Force (HTTF), ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM), Typhoon Committee, and the Mekong River Commission (MRC) to explore areas of bilateral and multilateral collaboration. Components of their respective CBDRM programs, gaps, areas for cooperation and possible technical support from ADPC and UNESCAP were reviewed.

#### 2nd Meeting with Business Groups in Vietnam (March 15)

A half-day Working Group Meeting on *"Promoting Business and Disaster Preparedness"* was held on 15 March 2006 in Hanoi. The seminar was organized by the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) with technical inputs from PDRSEA. The event was endorsed by the Standing Office of the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CCFSC). The Working Group Meeting served as a follow-up to the *"Business and Disaster Preparedness: Seminar and Roundtable Discussion"* that was held on 1 December 2005 in Hanoi. The key recommendations for priority actions agreed during the Meeting included:

- Identification of DRM information needs of the private sector by VCCI and provision by DMC/CCFSC,
- VCCI application of membership to the Disaster Management Working Group,
- Workshops and seminars to raise the awareness of Business Groups on disaster preparedness and the role that they can play,
- The establishment of a Disaster Preparedness component under the Action Plan of the Business Office for Sustainable Development, and
- The dissemination of outcomes of the Meeting to the wider audience.