



# Disaster Management / Risk Reduction Working Group<sup>1</sup> Statement

2013 High Level Round Table Meeting

**November 19th, Vientiane**

The economic transformation we are witnessing in Lao PDR, fuelled mostly by a resource-based production boom is rapidly creating situation of potential concern including the hazard profile, climate change, and environmental degradation. This leads to increasing vulnerabilities by decreasing access to natural resources. Building resilience is important in the Lao PDR context as it includes enhancing understanding of how economic, environmental and social systems interact, and how they may combine to exacerbate possible future risks. It also means empowering people to minimize the impact of shocks and stresses, and adapt to new and changing realities.

International Non-Government Organisations –INGOs– are working together to support a number of national policy frameworks including the National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2011-2015 (NSEDP 2011-2015), the National Disaster Management Plan and aligning our work to regional and international frameworks including the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) and the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA).

The DM/RR WG in partnership with the National Disaster Management Office are actively coordinating disaster risk reduction initiatives in Lao PDR and building the capacity at the national and sub-national level with a focus on communities' participation. This is happening through coordinated efforts of several other INGOs, the Red Cross movement and UN agencies, all working alongside government agencies to safeguard development interventions with a progressive vision of disaster management, focusing specifically on changing the mindset from being reactive to proactive to ensure communities can recover from hazard impacts and continue to develop.

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<sup>1</sup> The Disaster Management / Risk Reduction Working Group is an informal group of INGOs, with a stake in Disaster Management / RR in the Lao PDR.

We are aware that all actors involve need to strengthen their approach to most vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities and children. A clear and decisive gender approach is also needed to ensure full participation of women in the disaster management plan and a special attention to women's needs in case of response and rehabilitation.

The socio-economic goals of the government will not be met unless safeguarding measures are in place to protect their investments and therefore we are witnessing an increasing focus on an analysis of risks and their impacts in various sectors inter alia health, education, and forestry and agriculture.