



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Lao PDR appeals for \$10 million to rebuild lives and communities after Typhoon Ketsana devastation

Vientiane; 22.10.09

The Government of the Lao PDR and the United Nations today launched a flash appeal to the international community for funds to assist recovery for the southern provinces devastated by Typhoon Ketsana after it struck southern Laos on the 29th September. To support the Government's relief actions, the humanitarian community is seeking \$10,153,872 to address the immediate needs of an estimated 178,000 people who lost homes, livelihoods or other property.

In the presence of His Excellency Mr. Hiem Phommachanh, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Ms Sonam Yangchen Rana, UN Resident Coordinator, Mrs. Onechanh Thammavong, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, launched the appeal to an audience of international representatives in the capital city.

"This Joint Appeal will ensure that the response is effectively coordinated amongst humanitarian partners and the Government," said Ms Sonam Yangchen Rana, UN Resident Coordinator, "and that the most affected and vulnerable receive the assistance and protection they need to restore their lives."

The typhoon devastated parts of the Savannaket, Attapeu, Saravane, Champasak and Sekong provinces. The storm led to severe flooding with some villages completely cut off. According to latest estimates, seventeen people died, tens of thousands lost their homes and the livelihoods of whole communities have been destroyed. The typhoon struck during the lean season when household food stocks are at their lowest, and farmers have lost their upcoming harvest. An added danger to people in these heavily UXO-affected provinces is the threat of displaced unexploded ordnance exposed by the flood waters.

The government response has been led by the Prime Minister who -- together with other senior officials -- visited the affected provinces soon after the storms hit. Trucks, boats, and helicopters have been deployed to provide emergency assistance to affected households.

The United Nations sent food, water and hygiene supplies to provide immediate support to communities hit hardest by the devastating storm and floods. UN agencies are working with the government and other development partners to respond to people's medium and long term health, agricultural, infrastructure and livelihood requirements.

Initial Government estimates found damage to infrastructure, farmland, schools, businesses and homes was estimated 1,011 billion Kip (US\$ 119 million). A detailed assessment by the

Inter Agency Standing Committee of Government, United Nations and INGOs is underway to update the scale of the losses and assess for long term needs.

Notes:

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The United Nations Country Team in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is committed to supporting the efforts of the Government to improve the life of all citizens, especially those most vulnerable. We shall continue to work closely with the Government and all development partners for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Our collective endeavour is to assist the people of Lao PDR to achieve progress and better standards of living for all.