

NA opens 8th Ordinary Session with approval of 100 billion kip for Ketsana victims.

(KPL .16.11.09) The National Assembly's 6th legislature held its 8th ordinary session here yesterday with a consensus on giving green lights to the National Budget to provide 100-billion-kip aid package for helping the victims of typhoon Ketsana in three southern provinces of the country. The meeting whose opening ceremony of the session draw participation of both Party and state leaders, including President Choummaly Sayasone and National Assembly President Mr Thongsing Thammavong. The session heard a report from Minister of Finance Mr. Somdy Douangdy on the destruction of Ketsana storm.

“The flood triggered by Ketsana storm at the end of September has caused 800 billion kip in loss to the three southern provinces of Sekong, Saravane and Attapeu,” said Mr. Somdy. He said that providing emergency assistance to the people suffering from Ketsana storm in the three southern provinces was necessary and urgent to restore their living condition mainly through rehabilitating infrastructure such as roads, irrigation systems, electricity and water supply as well as hospitals, schools and government offices. With the approval from the National Assembly, the government will then spend 100 billion kip from the state coffer to help Sekong and Saravane (each 25 billion kip) and the hardest hit province Attapeu (50 billion kip). However, Mr Thongsing Sayakone, a member of the National Assembly for the 9th constituency in Sekong province, said that 100 billion kip was not enough for the remedy of the damage which has been estimated as much as 800 billion kip, but admitted that the package was necessary for restoring the basic infrastructure in the province and the living condition of the locals. According to the Minister of Finance, the government also proposed the National Assembly to approve a revised national reserve which was 50 billion kip higher than the previous one to ensure the expenditure of Party and government leaders in foreign countries. The addition to the national reserve would come from the state budget for 2009-2010 fiscal year, of which the current amount is 160 billion kip. At present, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Welfare are encouraging domestic and international donors and organisations to provide assistance for Ketsana victims in southern provinces.