INTRODUCTION

Vietnam’s 10 most susceptible provinces are among the top 25% most vulnerable areas in Southeast Asia, including Ben Tre [1]. Climatic events are likely to increase in intensity and frequency as climate is changing. Hence, a study which investigates the impacts of climate change on residents, their awareness and preparedness, and adaptations is opportune.

The study evaluated the impacts of typhoon, salt water intrusion, and erosion on coastal households; assessed their autonomous adaptations and investigated their awareness and preparedness.

METHODOLOGY

Three focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with the representatives of government and residents which resulted in hazard mapping, historical timeline of climatic events and vulnerability matrix. Results from FGDs provided an overview of impacts of climate change in the province. A household survey of 300 samples was then conducted to enhance further investigations.

FINDINGS

UNUSUAL TYPHOON DURIAN

Ben Tre was known as a typhoon-free area. However, two devastating typhoons, Linda in 1997 and Durian in 2006, officially removed this belief from residents’ mind. Durian was responsible for the devastation of USD 154,155 (300 samples), and filled inhabitants with fear for years later. Aquaculture suffered the most (USD 53,004). Thousands of houses collapsed or unroofed as Durian with velocity of over 133 km per hour swept by.

SALT WATER INTRUSION

Salt water intrusion occurs annually province-wide. 271 households of all 300 were impacted with total loss of USD 77,151. Aquaculture and agriculture were most impacted. Salt water intrusion also brought about serious lack of freshwater.

EROSION

36 of all 300 households affected by erosion with the total loss of USD 28,492. Losses in aquaculture and agriculture were substantial, USD 8,970 and USD 3,419 respectively.

HOUSEHOLDS’ ADAPTATIONS

Adaptations taken by households are pretty simple. They made some house improvements as simple as putting sand bags on the roofs before a typhoon, and as passive as replanting farms, replacing fish stock, ... after its end. Concerning salt water intrusion, adaptations are somewhat more preventive but remain simple: harvesting rainwater and/or buying freshwater from vendors.

HOUSEHOLDS’ AWARENESS AND PREPAREDNESS

References