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## **Role of RLG Ministry of Social Welfare. ca. 1970**

United States. AID Mission to Laos  
[s.l.]: [s.n.], ca. 1970

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The Role of The Royal Lao Government Ministry of Social Welfare

In the Refugee Program

I. REFUGEE MOVEMENTS AND ASSISTANCE

Refugee movements are located and reported by provincial officials of the Royal Lao Government (RLG) either by the Ministry of Social Welfare representatives on the staff of the provincial governor (Chao Khoueng) or by military commanders who report the movements to the Chao Khoueng. The Chao Khoueng and the provincial Social Welfare representative then investigate and reports the information obtained to the Ministry of Social Welfare, together with their recommendation for assistance required by the refugees. The Ministry in turn evaluates the information and as appropriate requests assistance from donor groups.

In actual practice when new sightings involve only small groups - a few individuals or families - the determination of eligibility for assistance is made by the Chao Khoueng and his Social Welfare representative. A request for U.S. assistance is then presented to the USAID Area Coordinator or the Refugee Relief Officer on the staff of the Area Coordinator.

Administration of the assistance program is a joint responsibility of the on-the-spot U.S. Government officer and either provincial officers of the Ministry of Social Welfare (when they are present in a given location) or a designated Royal Lao Government official from the office of the Chao Khoueng. These officials insure that criteria for provision of assistance is being followed and that all material assistance is provided fairly and equitably. The type and amount of assistance provided in each area is

determined and approved by the central office of the Ministry of Social Welfare. All commodities are distributed from the central or provincial warehouses on a dual signature basis. Before refugee supplies are sent to any refugee village or site, both USAID or any voluntary agency involved must sign the shipping documents before they are removed from either a USAID warehouse (where commodities already turned over to the Ministry of Social Welfare are sometimes stored for convenience) or the Social Welfare central and provincial warehouses. Distributions are made to the refugees in the presence of the donor country representative and the Ministry of Social Welfare representative. Social Welfare acts as the coordinating Ministry for all relief supplies destined for refugees in Laos.

The decision on whether or not refugees should be evacuated rests with the Royal Lao Government at levels of the government determined by the Royal Lao Government. The decision by the U.S. Government to assist in these evacuations is made by the USAID Area Coordinator and his staff for minor movements and is made by the American Ambassador for major movements.

## II. REFUGEE RELOCATION

Once the decision to evacuate refugees from their home village is made by the Royal Lao Government the relocation process begins. In most cases the U.S. Government will assist the Royal Lao Government in the relocation of refugees. This decision is made, however, on a case by case basis, by the appropriate USAID official concerned depending upon the magnitude of the project.

The program involves both temporary and permanent relocation. The Royal Lao Government agency handling the relocation and resettlement program

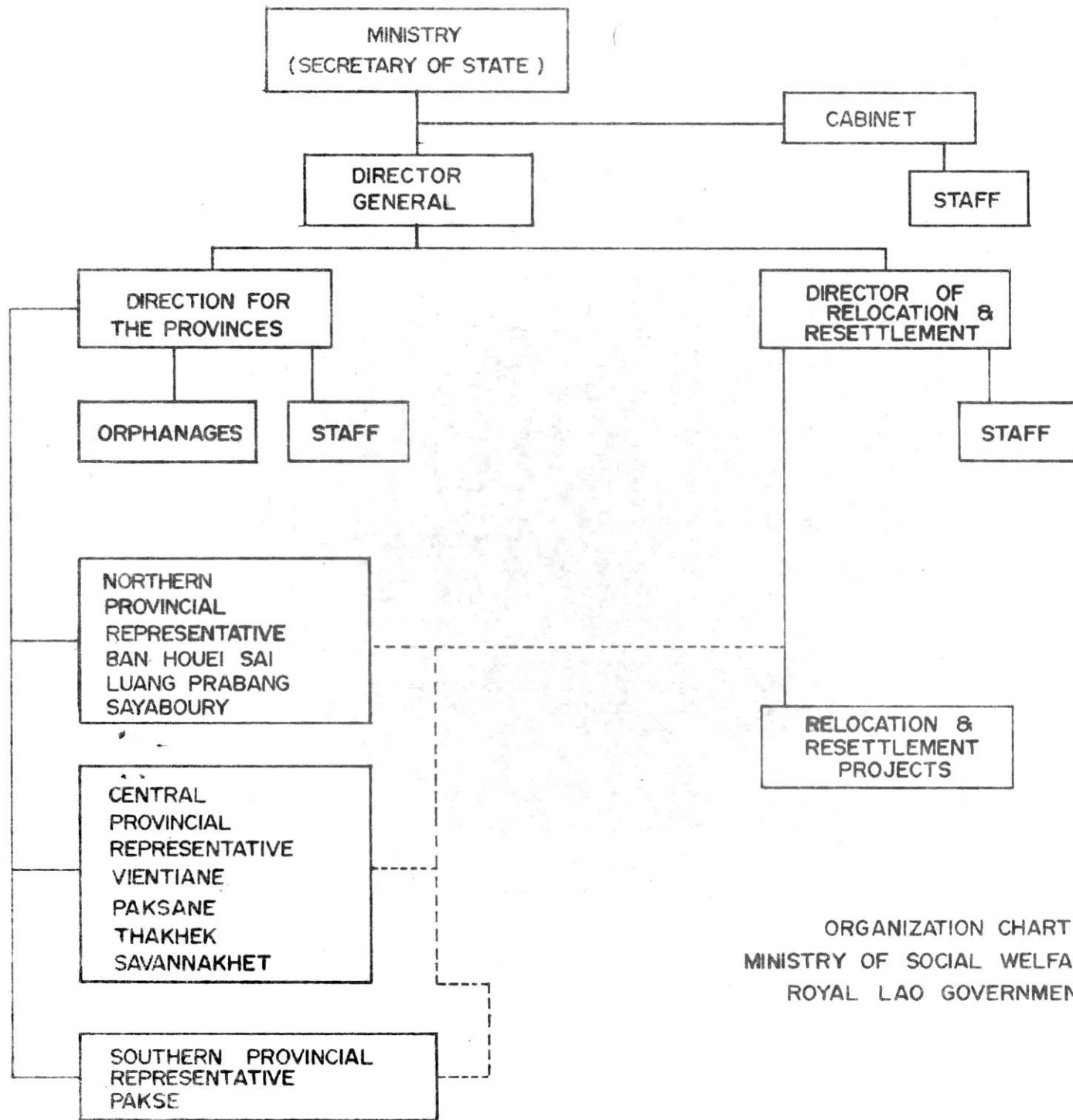
is the Directorate of Relocation and Resettlement within the Ministry of Social Welfare. The organization is headed by the Director of Relocation and Resettlement. His Vientiane staff includes both personnel qualified in village planning and field agents to guide and assist refugees in establishing new villages.

The Royal Lao Government's Director of Relocation and Resettlement is advised and assisted by his USAID counterpart and other members of the USAID Office of Refugee Affairs staff.

Under ideal conditions the procedure is to anticipate the need for evacuating refugees and hence plan and construct the relocation village in advance of the arrival of the refugees on the new site. Because of vacillating security conditions in Laos however, this is rarely the case. For that reason the relocation and resettlement procedure usually followed is to move the refugees on or near a site chosen by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Provincial Officials, as the permanent site (see Land Distribution procedures under Refugee Relocation Program). Assistance is then given in building temporary housing facilities, providing emergency relief commodities and having refugees clear upland rice fields; this is followed by the layout and construction of permanent villages with whatever facilities and services are necessary, such as, schools, wells, dispensaries, assistance in land clearing, preparation of rice paddy land, and distribution of various vegetable seeds, small animals, etc., and technical advice on agricultural procedures and crop diversification. In cases where practical, irrigation will be introduced, to enable villagers to expand their economic base.

The relocation process is carried out jointly with the staff of the Ministry of Social Welfare and USAID and lasts through at least two dry seasons until the village is self-supporting and a viable social and economic unit.

Attached is the Organization Chart for the Ministry of Social Welfare that applies to the refugee program.



ORGANIZATION CHART  
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE  
ROYAL LAO GOVERNMENT