

Mr. Ara GHONYAN from Armenia



I'm a visiting researcher at the ADRC from Armenia. Geographically, Armenia is located in the northeast of the Armenian Upland between the Caucasus and Southwestern Asia. The Armenian Upland is one of the most active segments of Alpine-Himalayan seismic belt.

Armenia is one of the most disaster prone countries in the southern Caucasus. It is vulnerable to a number of disasters caused by natural hazards, such as earthquakes, droughts, floods, landslides, mudslides, strong winds, snowstorms, frost and hail. All of these adverse events disrupt the routine life of a community and have a wide range of human and material consequences. Homes are destroyed, communities are isolated, and basic services are damaged.

Located in one of the world's most active seismic zones, Armenia frequently experiences earthquakes. Numerous strong earthquakes have occurred over the course of Armenia's history, destroying many buildings and taking many human lives. The last and the most catastrophic event was the Spitak earthquake (1988), which caused massive destruction and took the lives of more than 25,000 people. Seismic observations and seismic hazard assessment tasks are the responsibility of the National Survey for Seismic Protection of the Republic of Armenia (NSSP). This governmental organization was established in 1991, after the catastrophic earthquake of December 7, 1988, with the aim of drastically improving the seismic observation system and seismic risk reduction measures, thereby protecting people against earthquakes.

I work for the Armenian Western Survey for Seismic Protection (AWSSP) which is a state noncommercial organization within the Ministry of Emergency Situations that is responsible for earthquake disaster risk reduction in Armenia with particular emphasis on the capital city of Yerevan. The main tasks of AWSSP are multidisciplinary seismic hazard assessment and seismic and environmental risk reduction. And the AWSSP operates with a seismic network and can provide information about seismicity and seismic regime patterns in Armenia as well as in Yerevan.

The lessons learned from the Spitak earthquake showed that seismic risk reduction

strategies and disaster management systems are integral factors in national safety. ADRC has been a coordinating body in the fields of risk and hazard assessment, risk reduction, and disaster management for the Asian region since its founding, and it is an institution that allows member countries to share not only their theoretical knowledge, but also to share their practical knowledge in the disaster field. I think my purpose and position at ADRC as a Visiting Researcher is very important. During my stay in Japan, I visited various research institutions and governmental organizations and gave two presentations intended to share my experience and information on disasters in my country with ADRC researchers. I appreciate the valuable experience I gained during my time at ADRC. I expected to learn about disaster prevention and preparedness, disaster emergency measures, disaster recovery and reconstruction, and earthquake disaster countermeasures. I am sure that my experience at ADRC will be beneficial to my work for the AWSSP, and will also prove beneficial to the work being done by other governmental and nongovernmental organizations responsible for disaster management and prevention.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to the entire staff of ADRC for their kindness, hospitality and readiness to provide any support needed during my stay in Japan.