



ADRC Highlights

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➤ ADRC Visiting Researcher's Report

By Philomena Miria



Papua New Guinea lies in the great Pacific Ocean within the area of latitude 0 to 14 degrees south and longitude of 141 to 160 degrees east of the equator. The mainland of PNG shares the boundary line with the eastern part of the Republic of Indonesia known as Irian Jaya. Tectonically, Papua New Guinea is bisected by one of the most geological active seismic region of the world known as the "Pacific Ring of Fire".

It (PNG) is more exposed than most countries in the world to the effects of disaster-causing natural phenomena. The nation has a history of

natural disastrous events that have affected its people and economy adversely. This is because of its natural location in the area where tectonic plates meet and where Pacific and India air stream meet or interchange. The natural disasters that PNG is prone to includes earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, drought, tropical cyclones, floods, landslides and even frost in the highlands. In addition to the natural disasters, PNG also experienced man-made disasters such as oil spills, industrial pollution, unregulated land use, environment degradation caused by development activities and population movements. The complexity of the disaster causing events tend to increase as Papua New Guinea develops into a combination of transitional and modern society.

The most disastrous event that occurred in the history of Papua New Guinea was the Aitape Tsunami of July 17 1998, killing over 2200 people, hospitalizing over 300, and leaving more than 11,000 homeless. Lessons learnt from the tsunami of 1998 and other major disasters such as the Rabaul Twin Volcanic Eruption and the 1997 - 98 Drought showed that PNG as a community was not prepared to meet the challenges that these natural disasters imposed on its communities. As a young developing nation with limited resources, Papua New Guinea is making efforts to address the issue of effective disaster management.

Bearing in mind that natural disasters cannot be stopped, the least a country can do is, to ensure that vulnerable communities are better informed and are more aware of their own risk, and are better prepared and able to cope with disasters when they occur. And the Government of Papua New Guinea through the National Disaster Management Office considering lessons learnt from previous disasters has launched an Education and Awareness Program for the 21st century for the entire country and particularly for the vulnerable areas with the ultimate aim of reducing disasters.

I work with the Risk Management Section of National Disaster Management Office as the Training/Education Officer. The National Disaster Management Office is the Office responsible for Disaster Management in Papua New Guinea. Coming to ADRC, I had a vague idea of the Visiting Researcher Program. However, during my orientation program, I came to learn and fully understand that the Visiting Researcher Program does not only provide training rather it provides an environment where researchers from the 23 member countries come to share their experiences and knowledge, contribute and co-operate with disaster related experts and professionals at ADRC and in Japan.

I also learnt that apart from sharing experiences and knowledge, the visiting researcher program provides opportunities for Visiting Researchers to visit various disaster prone areas such as volcanic eruption, earthquake, and landslides and also visit Japan Government Organizations and other Institutes and Agencies that are associated with disaster management. At the end of the program the Visiting Researcher does not only gain experience but also enhances his or her knowledge and skills in the field of Disaster Management.

I look forward to learning, sharing ideas, working, co operating and contributing to the activities of ADRC.

< Philomena Miria, Training Officer, National Disaster Management Office, Dept. of Provincial & Local Government Affairs, PNG >

➤ Participation to International Meeting

□ WHO WPRO Consultation on Developing EHA Regional Information System

From 18 to 21 June 2001, ADRC staff members participated in Consultation on Developing EHA (Emergency and Humanitarian Action) Regional Information System hosted by WPRO (Western Pacific Regional Office) of WHO (World Health Organization). On June 20, we introduced ADRC activities such as providing information of latest disasters in Asia, and member countries' laws, organizations, and plans for disaster management through Internet. We also explained about VENTEN, Internet GIS for disaster management system developed by ADRC. And we asked cooperation and understanding to a project for mapping of disaster related data promoting in collaboration with WPRO. As WPRO is addressing to the development of RISEM (Regional Information System For Emergency Management), the data sharing with ADRC will contribute to the improvement of the system especially in the disaster related database.

➤ Message from a former ADRC Staff

Three months have passed since I left ADRC. During these 3 years at ADRC, I had many good friends around the world through a lot of opportunities such as ADRC International Meetings, IDNDR Programme Forum (1999), and GDIN (Global Disaster Information Network) Meetings. In addition, it was my greatest pleasure that the Unique ID Project which I proposed was adopted at the GDIN Canberra Meeting this March.

Now, I work for Hyogo Prefectural Government and I am in charge of setting up a disaster information center, tentatively named "the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake Memorial Center". Here, I would like to give an overview of the center.

We are planning to open the 1st building of Memorial Center in spring 2002. The four main functions are as follows: 1) Exhibition of materials related to the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, 2) Comprehensive research focusing on practical steps for effective (earthquake) disaster management, 3) Assistance to disaster response and human resource development for disaster-ready personnel, 4) Promotion of communication and networking with disaster prevention organizations both within Japan and abroad. (<http://web.pref.hyogo.jp/hukkou/memoriaru/index.htm>)

Dr. Yoshiaki Kawata, Professor of Kyoto University will be the first Executive Director, and ten (non permanent) senior researchers have already been appointed. We are now seeking applications for 10 permanent researchers who will be trained to become all-capability experts ready for practical disaster management in 3 to 5 years. The 2nd building of the Memorial Center will be opened in 2003, in which international disaster related organizations such as ADRC, OCHA, UNCRD, EDM will be located.

I would highly appreciate your kind understanding and cooperation on the preparation of the establishment and its future activities.

<Masahiko MURATA, Former Senior Researcher of ADRC/Assistant Director of the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake Memorial Center Development Office, Hyogo Prefectural Government>

➤ Visitors to ADRC

□ Member of JICA TRAINING PROGRAM

Disaster Prevention Professionals from African nations visited ADRC as a part of JICA's training program "Disaster Relief activity and Disaster Prevention System" on June 14. Enthusiastic discussions were held about the Great Hanshin Awaji earthquake reconstruction and ADRC's Disaster information & training program. They were particularly interested in the process of Hanshin Awaji Earthquake reconstruction and ADRC's training program.



We recognized the importance of receiving information from disaster-experienced countries. (<http://www.adrc.or.jp/visitor.asp?id=22>)

If you have comments or needs for this Newsletter, please write to ADRC in the right box.

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