



ADRC Highlights Vol.80

Asian Disaster Reduction Center Biweekly News

October 16, 2003

➤ **Japan –“The Tokachi-oki Earthquake in 2003”: Survey Mission by ADRC**

From September 28 to 30, 2003, ADRC dispatched an earthquake survey mission. Members were Senior Researcher Dr. Tomohiko Hatori and Dr. Tetsushi Kurita. They have provided us the following summary of their observations.

□ **Situation Report**

Two powerful earthquakes, one of them measuring 8.0 on the Richter scale, rocked northern Japan, missing 2 people, injuring 591 people and forcing thousands more to evacuate their homes. The bigger quake, the strongest to hit Japan in almost nine years, occurred at 4:50 am (1950 GMT Sep 25) on September 26, 2003. Its epicenter was located some 80 kilometers off the southeastern coast of Hokkaido island and 42 kilometers below sea-level, some 750 kilometers north of Tokyo.

Strong ground motion stricken area extended from Hokkaido island to the northeastern area of Honshu island, with the maximum intensity “6 weak” on the JMA (Japan Meteorological Agency) scale. JMA immediately disseminated a tsunami early warning through broadcasting and public information system. Maximum tsunami height was reported 4m.



This earthquake is characterized with the following aspects; affected wide area (several hundred km square), occurrence of tsunami, damage to road / bridge / harbor by ground liquefaction, and fire of oil-tanks. Despite its large seismic energy, the damage of human lives and property was limited. This is because the epicenter was far from the coast and relatively deep. In addition to this, houses in Hokkaido are solidly built against heavy snowfall and repeated earthquakes.



□ **Observations by Dr.T.Hatori**

Having conducted individual interviews with several officials of municipal governments and fishery unions, they seemed to depend too heavily on their own past experiences. Learning from past is important but not enough in some cases. As soon as the earthquake, many

citizens evacuated on their own free will, and many fishermen came to harbor to keep their ships safe. Two missing people must have been fishing at the mouth of the Tokachi River. We should increase awareness of crisis management.

Two cases of oil tank fire at Tomakomai port has given us a major issue in emergencies. It is said that there are over ten thousand oil tanks located along Japan's coast and around 70% of them are vulnerable to earthquakes. Government and related enterprises are supposed to take immediate measures against this situation. For more information, please ask Dr.Hatori (hatori@adrc.or.jp) or Dr. Kurita (kurita@adrc.or.jp).

➤ **Public Forum "Living with Risk" has attracted over 250 audience on October 4**

Commemorating the 80th year after the Great Kanto Earthquake and the 2003 International Disaster Reduction Day, the Public Forum "Living with Risk - are we prepared for the next big one?" was held at UNU, Tokyo, Japan, on October 4 (Sat), which attracted great interest.



The forum was co-organized with United Nations University (UNU), Cabinet Office of Japan, UN ISDR Secretariat, World Seismic Safety Initiative (WSSI), Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), and with great cooperation from NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation).

The forum provided an opportunity to discuss the current status and challenges of earthquake disaster preparedness in Japan. Speakers were Dr. Tsuneo Katayama, President, National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Prevention (NIED), and Dr. Kimiro Meguro, Associate Professor, University of Tokyo, and Prof. Haresh Shah, Professor of Stanford University, as well as Dr. David Mammen, President, Institute of Public Administration (IPA). Mr. Tsuyoshi Matsuo of NHK played a crucial role as a coordinator of the forum. For details of lecture content, please ask Ms.Tsunozaki (tsunozaki@adrc.or.jp) or Mr. Kochi (kochi@adrc.or.jp).



If you have comments or requests for this Newsletter, please write to ADRC at the address on the right.

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