

## Hripsime Vardanyan

I am from Armenia and a visiting researcher of ADRC.

Armenia is one of the Caucasus countries – a region of numerous natural hazards and man-made disasters. Analysis of the loss caused by various hazards revealed that the most catastrophic one in the region is earthquake. The Caucasus countries are in the zone of high seismic hazard of Alpine-Himalayan and Balkan-Carpathian seismic belts.

One of the most tragic seismic events in the recent history of the region was the Spitak earthquake on 7 December 1988 in Armenia. More than 25,000 people lost their lives, 20,000 were injured, and 515,000 became homeless.

The seismic risk has been highly increased by the potential threat of new earthquakes, the secondary hazards caused by earthquakes such as landslides and fires, and rapid urbanization and population growth in the region. Taking into consideration the tragic lessons of the Spitak, other seismic catastrophes, and the continuing activation of seismic process, the seismic risk reduction becomes vital in order to protect the population.

I work in the National Survey for Seismic Protection (NSSP) under the Government of the Republic of Armenia (RA). The basic goal of the NSSP of the RA is to reduce the Seismic Risk in the country. That is why I consider my stay at ADRC, as visiting researcher, is very important for me.

During my three-month-research in Japan, I visited various research institutions and governmental organizations and made two presentations to share my experience and information on disasters in my country with ADRC researchers. I appreciate the valuable experience in ADRC.

With ADRC's support, I was also able to visit disaster-affected areas in Hiroshima and Ehime, where Geiyo earthquake (M=6.4) occurred on 24 March 2001. The visit gave me a good opportunity to inspect a lot kinds of damaged objects and to learn wide range of disaster management, including knowledge of disaster prediction system, earthquake countermeasures, early warning and public awareness, and GIS system. I am sure that my research experience in ADRC will benefit my work once I return to my country.

ADRC's Visiting Researcher Program is unique. It is a coordinating body that provides the member countries with necessary opportunity to study the world's experience of disaster reduction. I would like to use this opportunity to express my gratitude to all staff members of ADRC for their kindness, hospitality and readiness to support me whenever I needed in the three months.

