

Mr. Ali Bakhtiari from Iran



As a Senior Expert for the National Disaster Management Organization (NDMO) of Iran, I am currently serving as a Visiting Researcher at ADRC in Kobe. Over the course of my work, I have been involved in several international and domestic projects related to disaster risk management. I also have been a lecturer at the University of Applied Science and Technology (UAST) of Iran since 2010.

My main responsibilities at NDMO are to oversee the international coordination and administration of all activities related to DRR, to disseminate technical documents on DRR, and to conduct disaster trainings. During my time in Japan, I am expecting to study special programs typical of ADRC-member countries in the field of mainstreaming DRR into development planning at the national and local levels.

Geographically, Iran is located in West Asia and borders the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea. With an area of 1,648,000 km² (636,000 sq. mi), Iran ranks 18th in size among the countries of the world. Iran shares its northern border with three nations: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan. Its western borders are with Turkey in the north and Iraq in the south. The Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman lie along its southern border. To the east, Afghanistan lies to the north and Pakistan to the south. The population of Iran is estimated at over 77 million as of 2013. The capital and largest city is Tehran.

Located along the world's dry belt, most of Iran is covered with mountains; the central parts of the country are comprised of desert and are largely uninhabited. It is also located in the high seismic hazard zone of the Himalayan belt, one of the most famous earthquake-hazard regions of the world. Due to its location, Iran is a disaster-prone country. Earthquakes, floods, droughts, and wild fires are its most common natural disasters. Iran has suffered severe economic and social damage resulting from seismic activities within its borders. Earthquakes are therefore a high priority for both the public and the authorities.

During my stay in Japan, I have visited various research institutions and governmental organizations along with my fellow Visiting Researchers from other member countries. Lessons learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of January 1995, the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of March 2011, and other disasters that have caused enormous damage led the government of Japan to change its Earthquake Disaster Management Strategy, which calls for efforts to be made to reduce fatalities and economic damage. After the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, 11

major redevelopment projects were undertaken around Kobe and all were completed in 10 years. The progress achieved by Kobe after such a major disaster was one that astonished the world.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to the governments of both Iran and Japan for affording me the opportunity to participate in this program, as well as my appreciation to everyone, especially at ADRC, who has made my time in Japan an experience that thus far has surpassed my every expectation. Finally, I extend my deepest admiration to all those who continue to devote their time and efforts to reducing human suffering and to providing a safer tomorrow for us all.