

Mr. Baasansuren DEMBERELYNAM from Mongolia



I am Demberelnyam BAASANSUREN, and I am from Mongolia, a land known for its wide steppes and the Gobi Desert. After I completed my undergraduate degree in international relations, I earned by certification to work for a government organization by passing Mongolia's civil service exam. I started my career as a specialist in charge of foreign relations in the National Emergency

Management Agency (NEMA) of Mongolia, a key organization in the disaster management field. To simply describe my assignment, NEMA is charged with coordinating the activities of different stakeholders who are involved in disaster response, including non-governmental and governmental organizations, the private sector, community groups, and international organizations. To effectively engage international contributors in our major disaster response activities, we keep donors and international stakeholders updated with the latest disaster information and develop contingency plans in cooperation with UN agencies. My main responsibility is to collect and upload information and assist with international projects in the field of disaster mitigation, response, and recovery.

To strengthen the professional skills of our emergency personnel, it is essential to enable them to participate in international trainings and seminars such as Urban Search and Rescue Training and Disaster Preparedness and Firefighting Training. These types of trainings give them great opportunities to enhance their knowledge and thinking through comparative study and exposure to creative approaches to disaster management. Thus we, the foreign relation officers, seek out such opportunities for our personnel to attend international trainings and seminars, or joint disaster preparedness exercises or drills for emergency personnel. In 2010, NEMA sent a total of 165 high or mid-level emergency personnel to international trainings and joint exercises. The Foreign Relations Division coordinates all of the administrative and communication details with the hosts.

As a representative of the younger generation of disaster management practitioners in Mongolia, I have had the privilege of learning from distinguished experts from various countries who are committed to the work of reducing potential disaster losses, and

creating safer and more peaceful living environments. Thus, I am highly satisfied with my work and am dedicated to strengthening the disaster management capacity and international cooperation capabilities of my organization.

The geography of Mongolia is highly varied, with the Gobi Desert to the south and cold, mountainous regions to the north and west. Much of Mongolia consists of steppes. Since it is a landlocked country in East and Central Asia, bordered by Russia to the north and the People's Republic of China to the south, east and west, we do not experience such disasters as tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, or lava and debris flow. Nevertheless, Mongolia is prone to plenty of other types of natural disasters triggered by climate change and global warming, such as desertification, dzud (severe winter disasters), earthquakes, landslides, snow, dust and thunder storms, and flash floods, as well as manmade disasters including forest and steppe fires, industrial accidents, and building fires. Since no disaster is confined to the territory of only one state, it is important to develop close cooperation in the field of disaster management between organizations at the regional, national, and international level. Thus, I find the ADRC Visiting Researcher Program to be one of the best practical examples of disaster management collaboration at the international level, specifically in the area of disaster mitigation. It is a great opportunity for me to become familiar with the good practices and lessons learned from previous major Japanese disasters that Mongolia has never experienced before.

There is a popular quote that says, "To the world we may be just one person, but to one person we can mean the world" (Brandi Snyder). We are all committed to strengthening our disaster management capacity as well as protecting our population from all types of natural, biological and social threats, and we can achieve great things if we work together.