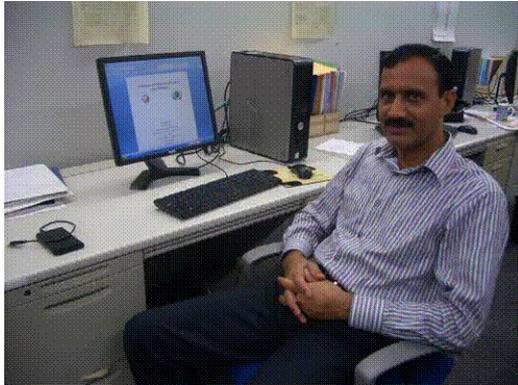


Mr. Shahid Hussain Malik from Pakistan



I am the Director of Administration for the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), Muzaffarabad, Pakistan. The SDMA was established after the unprecedented Great Pakistan Earthquake of 2005. That earthquake devastated the northern part of Pakistan, with nine districts taking a direct hit and the

seat of government and capital city, Muzaffarabad, reduced to rubble. More than 75,000 people lost their lives, and even more were injured. Nearly 70% of the public & private infrastructure was destroyed. More than 200,000 families ended up living out in the open and an enormous number (approx. 116,000) of internally displaced persons (IDPs) sought shelter in 225 IDP camps, which were managed by the Camp Management Organization (CMO). I served as CMO Commissioner, and ensured the delivery of all lifeline utilities and services to the camps, including food, shelter, electricity, education, health, and water & sanitation services. Pakistan's relief and recovery operation has been classified as one of the most successful in the history of the world, and all IDPs were successfully repatriated and rehabilitated to their native areas.

However, the story does not end there. AJK is a disaster-prone area with a high probability of earthquake recurrence. It is therefore incumbent upon us to develop knowledge of disaster risk management (DRM) and to rigorously develop disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures. Considering the seismic environment of the area and the threat it poses to our country, we can safely say that now is the time to develop a disaster-resilient society. Pakistan did not have any national department for dealing with disasters before the earthquake of 2005, but a National Disaster Risk Management Framework was developed to fill in this gap. The SDMA was established as a result. We need to learn the importance of integrating DRR into development policies and processes. ADRC's efforts to strengthen institutions and mechanisms for the purpose of improving resilience to hazards through capacity building are an effective means of working towards the objectives stated above. The ADRC's Visiting Researcher Program endows researchers from member countries with essential skills in this area, and provides opportunities for member countries to learn more about DRR and DRM and to incorporate DRR concepts into the policies of their countries.