

Brief Report on the Activities in Support of the 20th Commemoration of Aceh Tsunami

1. Introduction

In commemoration of the 20th year of Aceh Tsunami, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) and the Tsunami Disaster and Mitigation Research Center of the Universitas Syiah Kuala (TDMRC/USK) jointly organized seminars, study visits, and engaged in other commemorative events held in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The activities paid tribute to the victims and revisited the lessons that transformed disaster management through improved preparedness, strengthened mitigation, enhanced early warning, and build back better.

By co-organizing a series of commemorative events, ADRC and TDMRC/USK hope to raise public awareness, enhance institutional arrangements, strengthen existing mitigation systems, and build community resilience in facing future disasters.

The activities, which are briefly reported below, strengthened the collaboration between ADRC and TDMRC/USK in promoting tsunami research outcomes as well as wider outreach to local government agencies and communities for disaster risk reduction.

2. International Seminar on Tsunami Disaster Mitigation

Date: 7 November 2024

Venue: TDMRC Auditorium, Darusalam, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

In this international seminar, Dr. Mifune and Dr Gerry (both from ADRC) served as keynote speakers. In his speech, Dr. Gerry showed some practical examples from Japan on how to prepare to escape from tsunami and mitigate its impact on life and property. Dr. Mifune shared insights on recovery from tsunami in the context of the Great East Japan Earthquake. He highlighted the importance of: 1) resilient development; 2) land re-adjustments, and 3) emotional recovery.



Photo opportunity with USK Rector, TDMRC Director, and speakers of the seminar



Onsite participants at the TMDRC Auditorium. Other participants joined online due to limited number of seats.

3. International Seminar on DRR and Environmental Policies

Date: 6 November 2024

Venue: BAPPEDA ACEH Conference Room, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Upon joint invitation by BAPPEDA and TDMRC, members of the ADRC team served as speakers to the *Seminar on Disaster Risk Reduction and Environmental Policies in Japan and Indonesia*, which was held on 6 November 2024. Aside from ADRC, BAPPEDA also invited speakers from BNPB (Indonesia's national disaster management authority), TDMRC, and Australian Embassy in Jakarta. About 100 officials from different provincial government agencies participated in the seminar.

Speakers from ADRC shared the disaster management systems in Japan, highlighting key DRR policies and practices. Dr. Potutan presented a general overview of how disaster risk reduction policies in Japan have been updated of following the Great East Japan Earthquake and Dr. Mifune presented the tsunami countermeasures for indoor and outdoor activities.



Acting Aceh Governor Dr. H. Safrizal Zakaria Ali with the boys that the Government provided support



Participants to the Seminar comprising mostly government officials from different agencies in Aceh Province

4. Aceh International Forum 2024

Date: 23 December 2024

Venue: UIN AR-RANIRY Campus, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Dr. MIFUNE Yasumichi (Visiting Researcher, ADRC) participated in this forum, which was jointly organised by Ar-Raniry State Islamic University Banda Aceh and Teuku Umar University (UTU). The main guest was the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Technology, Professor Stella Christie. In her speech, she spoke passionately about the potential of Aceh, and appealed for cooperation with universities to promote the region.

The overall theme of the Forum was "Religion, Togetherness, and Humanity". It was adopted to facilitate a reflective platform in formulating strategic steps for Aceh's future development while remembering the humanitarian values that emerged in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami.



Aceh International Forum 2024

5. Memorial Ceremony on the 20th Commemoration

Date: 23 December 2024

Venue: Baitulrahman Mosque, Banda Aceh

On 26 December 2024, the 20th Memorial Ceremony was held in the forecourt of the Baitulrahman Mosque. At the sound of sirens, hundreds sat in silence for three minutes before the ceremony began. Flags of countries that supported Aceh were displayed and there were series of memorial activities and tributes conducted. (See [Brief Report](#)).



Memorial Activities and Tributes

6. Study visits to impacted areas

ADRC researchers Dr. MIFUNE Yasumichi, Dr. Mizan Bisri, and Dr. Gerry Potutan visited the coastal areas at the eastern part of Banda Aceh to observe the situation 20 years after the Aceh Tsunami. Among the observations are described below Among the sites visited in Banda Aceh were: Alue Naga, Tibang, Lamgugob, Rukoh, and Lampulo – all located near to the coast.

Observation 1: Many new houses are being built near coast. In Alue Naga, houses were totally wiped out during the 2004 Aceh Tsunami. Based on that experience, the building of houses near the coast has been restricted, BUT NOT FOR LONG. Construction of new houses has been ongoing for years. However, there are, obviously, no vertical buildings or tsunami towers for evacuation in the area.



Private companies are building these low-cost housing for local residents



It was reported that Provincial government subsidizes some qualified families

Observation 2: Tsunami signages are NOT regularly maintained.



Color of the signage is almost gone; another is almost covered by a structure (left), pole with signage is tilted (right)

Observation 3: Fishery remains as the major industry in the area. There are big boats that go to the deep sea, and also small boats that go near the shores.



Baskets of fish are sold in the fishing port in Lampulo, Banda Aceh



Big boats in Lampulo (left) and small boats in Alue Naga (right)

Comparison of photos from previous visits

Aceh (Left 2005, Right 2023)



Aceh Airport (Left 2005, Right 2024)



Preserved vessel (Left 2005, Right 2024)



Preserved commercial facilities (Left 2005, Right 2024)



Mangrove (Left 2005, Right 2024)



Mosque in Urere Area (Left 2005, Right 2023)



Preserved power generation vessel (Left 2005, Right 2023)



Beach (Left 2005, Right 2023)



Coastal area (Left 2005, Right 2024)



6. Interview with M. Syahputra Azwar (Tsunami Museum)

In the afternoon of 6 November 2024, the ADRC team interviewed the head of Aceh Tsunami Museum, M. Syahputra Azwar. Below are examples of the questions that the team asked:

Question 1: What are the challenges that you encountered in managing the museum?

- 1) **Number and quality of collections:** limited original collections
- 2) **Vetting, validating, and cost of items:** price negotiation
- 3) **Protection of museum:** damaged or lost items

Question 2: What are the initiatives you have undertaken to promote the museum?

- 1) **Digitalization** – touch screens, interactives, videos, simulations, etc.
- 2) **Mobile museum** – bringing the museum to the rural schools and communities
- 3) **Museum tourism** – ensuring captured visitors and partnering with other provinces and countries (e.g., Malaysia)



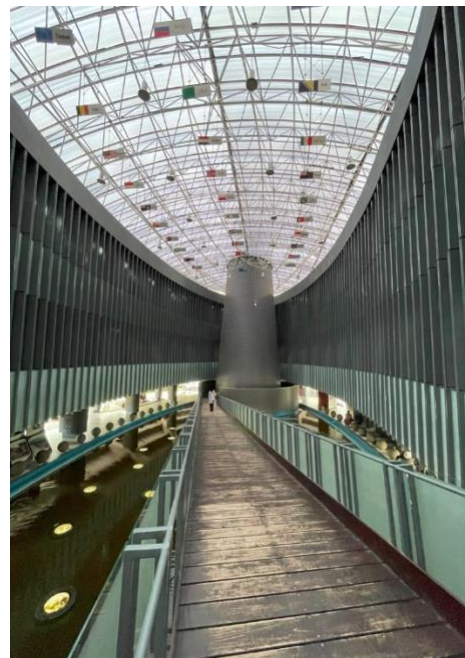
Photo opportunity with the head and staffers of Aceh Tsunami Museum

7. Tour at Tsunami Museum

The Aceh Tsunami Museum is big enough to having movie halls and variety of thematic exhibits. The photos below show a glimpse of what's inside the museum.



There is a wide and big screen inside the museum that simulates the occurrence of tsunami. The screen shows the ocean receding, and a little while big tsunami comes (left). Also inside the museum is the a “Bridge of Peace” (right). This symbolizes that because of Aceh Tsunami, the long years of insurgency and armed conflict between the government and the rebels was finally settled so that they can work hand-in-hand for the recovery process.



8. Tour at key TMDRC research facilities

TDMRC owns a number of recent state-of-the-art facilities for tsunami disaster mitigation research. Among facilities that the ADRC team visited are: 1) Real-time earthquake observatory center – using its own earthquake sensors installed in Banda Aceh, TDMRC partners with BMKG (Met agency of Indonesia) in earthquake and tsunami monitoring for research purposes; 2) Tsunami modeling facility – this can simulate the strength and impact of tsunami; 3) Shaking table – to simulate the strength of an earthquake shaking and how it impacts properties that are not earthquake-resilient.



Real-Time Earthquake Observatory



Shake Table Facility



Tsunami Modeling Facility

9. Interview with Dr. H. T. Ahmad Dadek (BAPPEDA)

In the morning of 6 November 2024 (Wednesday), ADRC team visited the office of Dr. H.T. Ahmad Dadek, the provincial head of BAPPEDA (a provincial branch of national planning office). Below is the one of the questions, the team asked:

Question: *Why has the government allowed the private companies and former residents to build houses again in the coastal areas?*

Answer: The land titles in those areas are owned by those families and communities. Since they have the rights to the land, many of them sold it to private companies and real estate developers.

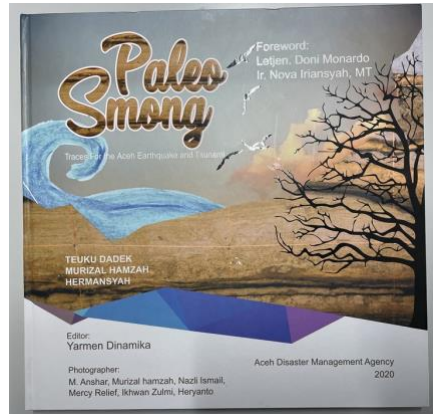


Photo opportunity with the head of BAPPEDA Aceh at his office (left). Dr. Dadek provided each of the ADRC member a copy of the book he co-authored titled, “Paleo Smong”, which traced back the history of tsunami incidents in Aceh as well as documentation 2004 Aceh Tsunami (right).

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