



# ADRC Highlights

## Vol.65

Asian Disaster Reduction Center Biweekly News

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➤ **ADRC Visiting Researcher's Report**

□ **Ms. Bolormaa Borkhuu, Mongolia**



Mongolia, due to its geography and climatic conditions, is highly prone to various natural disasters. The major disasters in Mongolia are drought, blizzards, heavy snowfall, dust storms, "zud" (winter disasters caused by extremely heavy snowfall following severe drought in summer), floods, earthquakes, and wildfires.

About 90 percent of the country is vulnerable to drought, 75 percent of the total territory is classified as seismically active, and 12 of the country's major city centers are situated in areas prone to maximum-scale earthquakes.

Since 1996 Mongolia has fought 1,035 serious forest and steppe fires, 29 major blizzards and snowstorms, 60 epidemic outbreaks of animal and human diseases, and 33 toxic spills and radiation leaks. Main factors that hinder Mongolia's economic development are the natural disasters, droughts, and hard winters. If one calculates the amount of damage to GDP caused by droughts and hard winters, the share is as follows: 15.7% of GDP in 2000, 14.8% of GDP in 2001.

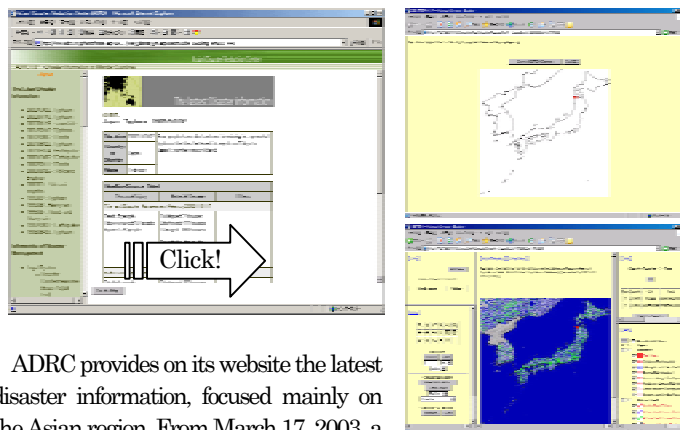
Therefore, the Government of Mongolia is implementing immediate reform, renovation, and development of disaster management systems. First, we need to review international best practices and to see how to apply them in our country. In this context, we have a lot to learn from Japan's disaster management system, although we have limited resources. Of course, Mongolia is a unique country, so in order for international best practices for disaster mitigation and management to be adopted, they will need to be adapted to circumstances in Mongolia.

I joined ADRC on January 8, 2003. Just after arriving in Japan, I had an opportunity to participate in the 5th ADRC International Meeting and the ISDR Asian Meeting. I then attended the JICA-ADRC Disaster Management Seminar, visiting many disaster related organizations and institutions in Japan. Through the seminar, I learnt about the high-level of development of disaster management systems in Japan.

Participating in these meetings and seminars on Disaster Management has been very helpful to my research. I received input on my project proposal for disaster management in Mongolia, which I will submit at the conclusion of my participation on the ADRC Visiting Researcher Program.

(Bolormaa Borkhuu, Officer, Strategic Planning and Management Department, Ministry of Nature and Environment, Mongolia)

➤ **Maps of Disaster-Affected Areas: ADRC's Latest Disaster Information**



ADRC provides on its website the latest disaster information, focused mainly on the Asian region. From March 17, 2003, a new function will be available on the site. Just click the map button on the web page and you will be shown the affected area and a map with Internet GIS functionality.

➤ **Recent Natural Disasters in Asia**

□ **A strong earthquake rocked western China**

A strong earthquake struck the western part of Xinjiang region, China, at 10:03 hours, local time (02:03 UTC), on Monday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003. It affected the counties/cities of Bachu, Jiashi, Yuepuhu, Yingjisha, Maigati, Shule, Shufu and Kashi. According to the Swiss Seismological Service, the magnitude was 6.4 on the Richter scale.

The epicenter was located in sparsely populated Jiashi County but most of the casualties are reported to be in nearby Bachu County. The Civil Affairs Bureau of Xinjiang reported that as of 09:00 hours (local time) on 25 February, 262 people were killed and 2,055 people injured. 10,000 housing units collapsed and 40,000 housing units were damaged. (2003/02/25 OCHA Situation Report No.2)

➤ **New Publication**

□ **A report by the "Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2003"**

The Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2003 was successfully held January 15-17, 2003 in Kobe, Japan. It was co-hosted by the UN/ISDR, Cabinet Office of Japan, Hyogo Prefecture, ADRC and the Disaster Reduction Alliance. A summary report of the conference was published. It includes keynote speeches, session summaries, the chairperson's summary, and other informative documents in PDF format. Upon request, the report can be sent postage paid on delivery. Also, the report is available on ADRC's website:

[http://www.adrc.or.jp/5th/Asian\\_Conference\\_2003/top.htm](http://www.adrc.or.jp/5th/Asian_Conference_2003/top.htm)

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If you have comments or requests for this Newsletter, please write to ADRC at the address on the right.

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