



ADRC Highlights

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➤ **ADRC Joined JICA Field Survey Team to Maldives**

On 26 December 2004, a massive tsunami hit the Maldives, causing 81 deaths, 26 missing, 1,313 injured and 29,577 displaced (Maldives National Disaster Management Center). As the national population counts 290,000 only, the impact of the tsunami has been enormous for the country. There are 199 inhabited islands in the country, of which 53 were severely affected by the disaster. Resort islands, in particular, have been suffering serious damage to the tourism, which is a major industry of the country.

From 26 to 31 January 2005, ADRC Senior Researcher, Dr. Kurita, was dispatched to the Maldives to participate in a JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) mission. The objectives were (1) to survey the current situation of the tsunami disaster, and (2) to carry out needs assessment for Japan's future assistance.

The mission visited the government ministries and areas affected in the capital and local islands. For the survey of Male Island, they inspected the sea walls which were constructed by Japan's ODA (Official Development Assistance). It is reported that the sea walls built around the island protected the city of Male from the devastating tsunami. The mission verified the structural stability of the sea walls.



Sea Wall in Male

From the field survey in Gemendhoo Island, Dhaalu Atoll and Vilufushi Island, Thaa Atoll, there were many collapsed fishermen's houses observed. These houses are vulnerable to tsunamis since residents themselves constructed them with coral stones and burnt gypsum. On the other hand, most public buildings, including offices, mosques and schools, were not affected severely thanks to the strong construction compliant to the building code.



Collapsed Building in Vilufushi Island, Thaa Atoll

The Maldives is highly exposed to tidal waves since highest elevation of the country is just one and a half meter high from the sea level. Based on the trace of the recent tsunami, it is estimated that the wave of 2 – 3m high struck the country. As a countermeasure against tsunamis, the Government of Maldives has initiated developing the Safe Islands Programme. In the Safe Islands with coastal protection, safe zones such as artificial high ground for emergency evacuation and public buildings for vertical evacuation will be installed. In the future, residents in the vulnerable islands like Gemendhoo Island will relocate to the Safe Islands. The international assistance for this program would also be needed. For more information, please contact Dr. Kurita (kurita@adrc.or.jp).

➤ **TDRM's Good Practices are on the web**

ADRC and UN-OCHA Kobe developed a holistic approach to disaster risk reduction known as Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM) approach. In consultation with stakeholders in Asia, ADRC published a user-friendly handbook "Total Disaster Risk Management: Good Practices" for the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction on 18-22 January 2005 in Kobe, Japan. It describes the TDRM concept and related good practices, and is intended to facilitate an enhanced understanding of the TDRM approach and its applications. The publication is now available on our website (http://www.adrc.or.jp/publications/TDRM2005/TDRM_Good_Practices/Index.html). ADRC hopes this publication will stimulate the further promotion of the TDRM approach and contribute to efforts to build a safer world.

➤ **United Nations Award for Disaster Reduction**

The United Nations Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) has launched the nomination process for the 2005 UN Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction. The award was established in 1986 by the initiative of the Nippon Foundation. As in previous years, the award presents in recognition of outstanding experts and organizations that have contributed significantly to the development of innovative practices in disaster reduction. The deadline for the submission of nominations is 29 July, 2005. Nomination forms in English, French, and Spanish can be downloaded from the ISDR homepage (<http://www.unisdr.org>).

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

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