



ADRC Highlights

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● Promoting Cooperation with Member Countries ADRC Welcomes New Members — Bhutan and Yemen

In response to their application to join the ADRC, and with the consent of the current 25 member countries, the ADRC is pleased to welcome Bhutan and Yemen as the newest ADRC members. The ADRC is looking forward to further expanding its activities through their active participation. For disaster management information on these two countries, please visit the ADRC website (<http://www.adrc.or.jp/disaster/index.html>).

● ADRC Visiting Researcher Report Mr. Zafar Taj from Pakistan

My name is Zafar Waqar Taj and I am from a landlocked cluster of beautiful valleys in the extreme north of Pakistan, the Northern Areas (NAs), at the convergence of three mightiest mountain ranges in the world: the Himalayas, Karakurum, and Hindukush. These ranges have many of the world's highest peaks, as well as the largest concentration of glaciers outside the polar regions. In the Karakurums alone, 30 peaks tower over 24,000 feet (7,500 m). The highest, K2, at 28,500 feet (8,612 m), is second only to Mt. Everest in elevation. Sheer rock walls and ravines plunging thousands of vertical feet down to the rivers flowing below, mark the scenery.



As Assistant Commissioner in the General Administration Department of the NAs, I have been entrusted to serve as the Deputy Chairman District Disaster Management Authority in that area. I am responsible for the implementation of pre- and post-disaster plans and for ensuring close coordination between the provincial and district Disaster Management Authorities as well as other departments and NGOs functioning in the region. At present, we are working to complete the legal, institutional, and infrastructural formalities for the Disaster Management Authority, which is just being established in the area.

Like other south Asian countries, Pakistan, including the NAs, continues to suffer from a plethora of natural and human-induced hazards that threaten the lives and livelihoods of its citizens. Pakistan is prone to many disasters including floods, droughts, earthquakes, health epidemics, traffic accidents, and fires. The entire Northern Areas, including the capital of Gilgit,

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lie in a seismic zone. As such, earthquake tremors are common in the region. There are also constant threats of drought, landslides, avalanches, floods, and flash floods.

Admittedly, disasters were being addressed through traditional practices and procedures up until 2005. It was only after the massive earthquake of 8 October 2005, which severely jolted the North-West Frontier Province, Azad Jamu & Kashmir, and Islamabad, and claimed about 73,000 lives, that public policy-making bodies were forced to think about adopting new, comprehensive, and modern mechanisms for addressing unexpected emergencies. The establishment of the Earthquake Relief & Rehabilitation Authority and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), and the introduction of National Building Code are a few examples of the efforts made thus far. The field of disaster reduction is a new discipline for Pakistan, a country that is still in the initial stages of disaster management. I am greatly indebted to the ADRC as well as the government of Japan for offering me the opportunity to participate in this research program, as it is sure to enhance my knowledge and understanding of disasters. I am quite optimistic that this research program, which encompasses the examination of pre- and post-disaster strategies as well as field visits, will enable me to supplement the efforts of the NDMA Pakistan in the practical application of best practices in the disaster reduction field.



● Human Resource Development

JICA Training Course: "Strengthening Disaster Management Capacity of Municipalities"

Thanks to financial support from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the ADRC conducted training courses for Turkish local government officials from FY2005 to 2007. The last in this series of training courses, entitled "Strengthening Disaster Management Capacity of Municipalities," was conducted from 24 February to 14 March 2008 at sites including Tokyo, Niigata, Shizuoka, and Hyogo. This course aimed to provide opportunities for local disaster management officials from Turkey to learn about Japan's local disaster management systems and to examine approaches to community-based disaster risk management.

Ten Turkish local government officials comprised of civil engineers and urban planners participated in this course and attended a series of lectures on Japan's disaster management system (central/local governments), seismic design and reinforcement, urban planning after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, town development by NGOs, efforts to raise awareness of residents, the development of disaster-resistant lifelines, and Town Watching activities. What surprised them most during the course of their studies of urban planning in Japan were the lack of parks and the narrowness of roads as compared to Turkey. One trainee mentioned that urban planning is very different in Japan than in Turkey. Since Turkey has approximately double the land area and



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half the population of Japan, the Turkish trainees saw Japan's crowded residential areas and narrow roads as a particularly risky hazard.

On the other hand, one of the trainees was impressed to learn about the community meetings that are held when town redevelopment or land readjustment projects are being undertaken, as these meetings not only help to improve the residents' understanding of those plans, but also help to raise awareness of the importance of disaster risk reduction.

On the last day of the course, the trainees presented action plans that highlighted the need to raise the disaster awareness of residents, coordinate the activities of relevant organizations, integrate disaster risk reduction into urban planning efforts, and seismically reinforce shelters and install necessary equipment. Each trainee will be expected to implement these action plans in their own municipalities upon returning home.

The ADRC wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to all of those who contributed to the success of this training course.



● Announcements

ADRC Website Relunched

We are pleased to announce the relaunch of the new and improved ADRC website on 1 April 2008. Our previous site had served as an important tool for disseminating disaster risk reduction information to users, especially our member countries, since the ADRC's inception in 1998. However, since such massive quantities of valuable information on disaster risk reduction had been accumulated in the website's database over the course of the past decade, some users had been having difficulties finding the information they needed. The new site offers improved accessibility and ease of use, as can be seen from the new home page. We hope that the new website will facilitate the sharing of information, expertise, and experience among member countries and others interested in disaster risk reduction.

(<http://www.adrc.or.jp/>)

Personnel Change

Senior Administrative Manager Mr. Koichi Nagano, Senior Expert (and IRP Recovery Expert) Mr. Masahiko Murata, Senior Researcher Mr. Takaaki Shiratori, and Researcher Mr. Ryo Saito returned back to their original posts on 31 March 2008. On 1 April, Mr. Masataka Onishi was assigned to the position of Senior Administrative Manager, Mr. Yoshihiro Imai to Senior Expert and Mr. Masato Ohori to Senior Researcher.

For Inquiries & Subscription Information

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