



# ADRC Highlights

Asian Disaster Reduction Center Monthly News

Vol. 194  
May  
2009

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## ● Promoting Cooperation with Affiliated Institutions Disaster Reduction Project Using Satellite Imaging (2)

The Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) is working with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) to promote a disaster risk reduction project using satellite imaging data in the Asian region. This is the second part of a series that was started in Highlights Vol. 193 (<http://www.adrc.asia/highlights/NewsNo193>).

### 1. Follow-Up Survey

First used in October 2006, Sentinel Asia is a disaster management support system for conducting emergency observations that provides results in the form of satellite images.

We conducted a survey to determine how the data provided by this system was actually being used, but found that a questionnaire survey alone was insufficient for ascertaining the specific usage information we were looking for. Thus, we decided to

conduct interviews in the countries that have requested emergency observations, allowing us to talk directly with people who have received those images and learn more about how the images have been used. In 2008, interviews were conducted in Laos, Nepal, and Vietnam.

We interviewed organizations specializing in remote sensing\* technologies and disaster risk reduction, which possess the technologies necessary for processing satellite images, but learned that cooperation between these organizations and disaster risk reduction organizations is inadequate in some countries.

During the interviews, there were some indications of a lack of know-how regarding the use of satellite images in disaster risk reduction efforts. This highlighted the need to compile examples of how satellite images have thus far been used in the field of disaster risk reduction, and to provide this information to Sentinel Asia members.

In some countries, there is a considerable gap between head offices and local offices in terms of their technological capabilities. This suggests the need to provide human resource training at the local office level to ensure that satellite data will be used effectively. Until local offices are able to secure the human resources they need, it will be important to provide data based on images that have already been processed, so that it can be quickly put to use by local office engineers.

\*Remote sensing is a method of acquiring information on geological formations, topographical features, physical bodies, and other features from a distance. The term often refers to technologies used to observe the earth's surface from satellites or



[Follow-Up survey in Nepal]

## **Continued**

airplanes. Remote sensing is achieved using cameras, lasers, and radar equipment mounted on airplanes, helicopters, and satellites.

### **2. Efforts in FY 2009**

The follow-up survey conducted in FY 2008, though only conducted in three countries, provided information on the usage of satellite data in each of the countries surveyed and confirmed the issues that need to be addressed to ensure the effective use of such data in the future. In FY 2009, we will once again survey the countries that have issued emergency observation requests. Based on the results, we will then make efforts aimed at promoting the use of satellite images in the field of disaster risk reduction.

## **● Letter from a Former Visiting Researcher**

### **Mr. Arun Pinta from Thailand**

I was a visiting researcher at the ADRC from January to June 2007. My research focused on “Earthquake Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Plans: Learning from the Experience of Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan.” I was also involved in a research to collect information associated with past disasters in Thailand. As recommended and facilitated by the ADRC, I also had opportunities to participate in many other activities aside from my research work. Among them was the JICA Seminar on Disaster Management, a 45-day training course for disaster management practitioners and managers from countries around the world. This training course was particularly useful in helping me improve my knowledge of various areas of disaster management such as floods, volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, and landslides.



When I returned home from Japan at the end of June 2007, I was able to start utilizing the experience I had gained during my time with the ADRC. I submitted my research report to the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), where it was circulated internally and published on the DDPM website as a source of reference. Several times, I have been invited to give lectures and presentations to DDPM staff members who are interested in earthquakes, tsunamis, and the collapse of buildings caused by disasters. My research on Thailand’s past disasters served as a useful reference tool for subsequent studies conducted by some of my colleagues.

My familiarity with working with foreigners in an international organization like the ADRC proved to be very helpful when the opportunity arose to assist my department in hosting two major ASEAN events in 2008, i.e. the ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Simulation Exercise (ARDEX-08) and the 2008 ASEAN Day for Disaster Management (ADDM).

Additionally, working at the ADRC really helped me to increase the scope of my personal network. I met with and got to know many people, ranging from university professors to students. Many former ADRC visiting researchers from countries neighboring Thailand, such as Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar, are now playing active roles in ASEAN cooperation on disaster management.

At present, I am still working in the Research and International Cooperation Bureau of the DDPM. In my position as Senior Officer (Planning and Policy), I am responsible for coordinating and supporting the international affairs of the DDPM, especially within the frameworks of ASEAN, the ADRC, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). The ADRC, meanwhile, is planning to implement a project entitled the ASEAN-Japan Cooperation Project on the Capacity Building of Local Government Officials in Disaster Management over the course of the next 20 months from May 2009. There will be many more cooperative projects implemented in the coming years, and I look forward to supporting and assisting the ADRC in these efforts.

**●ADRC Staff Profile No. 35****Mr. Tetsuo Ibaraki, Senior Researcher**

I was sent from the Hyogo prefectural government to serve as a senior researcher at the ADRC in April 2009. In my time with the prefecture, I have primarily been working on flood control issues and have been involved in the planning and implementation of flood control projects. I also have experience organizing committees of concerned citizens for the purpose of discussing flood disaster reduction measures. Citizen input is important since any river improvement plan has to cover not only infrastructural issues, such as the widening of rivers and embankments, but also systemic issues, such as the development of early warning systems and evacuation plans.

I have also spent some time working in field offices, where my job included patrolling rivers and transmitting information on floods to concerned local governments. Although my experience is limited to only a few disaster reduction activities, I hope that I will be able to use what I have learned to help to achieve the objectives of the ADRC.

**●Participation in International Conferences****Participation in the 2nd Consultative Meeting on Establishment of Regional Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordination Centre in Central Asia**

The ADRC participated in the 2nd Consultative Meeting on Establishment of Regional Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordination Centre in Central Asia, which was organized by the Kazakhstan government and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN/OCHA) in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 15-16 April 2009.

The participants, which included representatives from the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Tajikistan, discussed the specific conditions and definitions of terms that would apply to the establishment of the Coordination Centre, which was agreed to over the course of several meetings on mutual cooperation for disaster risk reduction in Central Asia. Delegates from the Central Asian countries were actively involved in this discussion. The documents pertaining to the establishment of the Centre were reviewed article by article until a consensus was reached on each. Over the course of the discussion, it was decided that the Centre's name should be changed to the Central Asia Coordination Centre on Disaster Response and Risk Reduction, in consideration of the important role that the Centre is expected to play in disaster risk reduction in the area. The ADRC will continue to work in close cooperation with the countries of Central Asia and the relevant UN agencies to support this process.

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