



# ADRC Highlights

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## ● Participation in International Conferences

### ADRC Attends International Forum on Recovery and Reconstruction of Yingxiu, Sichuan Province

The International Forum on Recovery and Reconstruction of Yingxiu, organized by the Sichuan Provincial Construction Department, Guangdong Provincial Construction Department, the government of Aba Prefecture, and the China Academy of Building Research, was held in Chengdu, China, from 7 to 9 April 2009. As a co-sponsor of this forum, the ADRC sent three representatives to attend.

During the keynote speech, Mr. Koji Suzuki, ADRC Executive Director noted that preparations are being made, with the ADRC serving as a gateway, to utilize Japanese technologies, experiences, and lessons related to earthquake disaster risk reduction in the promotion of recovery and reconstruction efforts following the Wenchuan Earthquake that struck Sichuan Province in May 2008. Mr. Suzuki also indicated that when a massive disaster strikes, there are limits to what a government can do on its own, and thus emphasized the importance of everyday preparedness by citizens. One effective means of raising the sense of participation in disaster reduction efforts among local residents and ensuring that they take appropriate action in the event of an emergency is to promote collaborative hazard map creation projects involving residents, government officials, and other experts. The ADRC confirmed the efficacy of this method and discussed the success of its training sessions in the countries of South and Southeast Asia.

The forum's 250 participants included experts from China, Japan, Italy, Germany, Canada, and New Zealand, as well as government officials from disaster-stricken Wenchuan County. After learning about the damage sustained in Wenchuan, the epicenter of the earthquake, and the progress being made toward recovery there, participants split up into three groups to hear presentations and engage in discussions regarding restoration planning, earthquake resistance and disaster reduction, and construction and the ecology. In these sessions, the ADRC representatives gave presentations on "Japan's Seismic Reinforcement Promotion Policies and Technologies" and "Lessons Learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake: Strengthening Community Disaster Risk Management Capacity."

The presentation on "Japan's Seismic Reinforcement Promotion



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Policies and Technologies” given by Dr. Kenpei Kojika, ADRC Senior Researcher, highlighted the urgent need for seismic assessments and seismic reinforcement work to be done on the buildings that were spared from collapse in the Sichuan Earthquake, based on the revised building standards for seismic design issued by the Chinese government in July 2008. It also noted that to reduce damage in the future, it is important to proceed with seismic assessments and seismic reinforcement work in other earthquake-prone regions as well, and that political support is imperative to the promotion of such efforts. Based on the lessons learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, the Japanese government enacted the Seismic Renovation Promotion Law in December 1995, and pursuant to revisions to that same law in 2006, enacted a tax deduction for the costs associated with seismic assessments and seismic renovations, and required local governments to formulate their own seismic renovation promotion plans. In addition, the presentation discussed the seismic assessment and seismic reinforcement methods and technologies being used in Japan.

The presentation on “Lessons Learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake: Strengthening Community Disaster Risk Management Capacity” given by Mr. Masataka Onishi, ADRC Senior Administrative Manager, emphasized the importance of the disaster reduction capabilities of communities using data from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake indicating that 80% of those rescued from collapsed homes were rescued by family members and neighbors. After the earthquake, volunteer disaster reduction organizations were spontaneously developed by local citizens, and Hyogo Prefecture increased the organizational efficiency of these groups by providing them with material, technological, and financial support. The prefectural government has also been promoting joint public-private partnerships to hold disaster drills and disseminate relevant knowledge and technologies.

In introducing the activities of these volunteer disaster reduction organizations, Mr. Onishi touched on the creation of hazard maps for local communities, and explained that there are several ways to give residents a greater sense of participation in community disaster reduction. These include providing opportunities for citizens to become more aware of the hazards facing their own communities, enabling them to discuss with other residents what actions should be taken in the event of a disaster, and facilitating the exchange of ideas between citizens and government officials and experts.

The ADRC will continue to support restoration efforts in the disaster-stricken region and efforts to strengthen the disaster reduction capabilities of the affected communities.

## **ADRC Participates in 4th Meeting of Working-Group on Disaster Prevention and Preparedness of UNESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee**

The ADRC participated in the 4th meeting of the Working-Group on Disaster Prevention and Preparedness, which was jointly organized by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Typhoon Committee Secretariat, and the National Emergency Management Agency of the Republic of Korea in Seoul on 8-29 April 2009.

The 22 participants who attended the meeting included representatives from China, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, the USA, Viet Nam, Hong Kong, and the Macao Special Administrative Regions, as well as representatives from the three organizing institutions. During the meeting, participants discussed future activities of the working group, such as upgrades of the Typhoon Committee Disaster Information System (TCDIS), which is expected to be a useful typhoon-related disaster database for Asia. The ADRC gave a presentation on the role of GLIDE numbers, which are to be assigned to disasters contained in the individual databases of different organizations, and on the ADRC’s contributions to the working group this year.



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The next meeting scheduled is the Integrated Workshop of the Typhoon Committee, to be held in the third week of September in the Philippines. The Typhoon Committee has two other working groups on meteorology and hydrology, in addition to the working group on disaster prevention and preparedness.

**●Promoting Cooperation with Member Countries****ASEAN Project: Capacity Building of Local Government Officials in Disaster Management**

The second year of this ASEAN project, which is aimed at building the capacity of local government officials involved in disaster management in the region, was launched in the Philippines and Thailand in April 2009. The program covers Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand this year.

The ADRC held kick-off meetings on 22-23 in Manila, and then on 27-28 April in Bangkok with the national disaster management organizations in those countries: the Philippines' National Disaster Coordination Council (NDCC), and the Thai Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), respectively. The meeting participants identified their training needs based on their disaster management systems and the results of the training programs they have already provided for their disaster management officials. They then discussed such issues as the training topics to be covered by this project, the use of experts as lecturers, details regarding the training provided for trainers and the subsequent training provided for local government officials, and the development of training materials. The participants also visited training facilities for disaster management in both countries, the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP) and the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Academy (DPMA) in Thailand.

Several events are scheduled as part of this project in 2009.

For example, kick-off meetings will be held in Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia in May, and training programs for trainers will be held in June in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam, where the programs started last year.

Local government officials play pivotal roles in every phase of the disaster management cycle, and this project is expected to further strengthen the expertise and capacity of local government officials, and to contribute to disaster risk reduction in rural areas in the region. We appreciate the understanding and cooperation of the NDCC and DDPM on the planning and implementation of these meetings.



[Kick-off Meetings in the Philippines (top) and Thailand (bottom)]

**●ADRC Staff Profile No. 36****Mr. Akira Morimoto, Senior Researcher, IRP**

My name is Akira Morimoto, and I was sent by the Hyogo Prefectural Government to serve as a senior researcher for the International Recovery Platform (IRP) in April.

While working for Hyogo, I have been involved in various fields, such as the subsidization of private education, countermeasures for birthrate decline, and international economic relations. This is my first time working in a field related to natural disasters.

Few believed that a large-scale earthquake would occur in the Kansai area before the Great

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Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995. Experiencing the sudden violent tremors and seeing the destruction wrought on once-beautiful towns made me keenly aware of the importance of disaster preparedness. Since that earthquake, large-scale natural disasters have caused numerous casualties and extensive property damage throughout Asia.

I look forward to serving with the IRP secretariat, which contributes to better recovery for people all over the world through the collection of information and dissemination of lessons learned. I will do my best to further the efforts of the IRP during my assignment here, and appreciate your continuous support.

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