



ADRC Highlights Vol.57

Asian Disaster Reduction Center Biweekly News

October 16, 2002

➤ Singapore International Foundation's 2nd Humanitarian Relief Conference

The Singapore International Foundation organized their 2nd Humanitarian Relief Conference in Singapore on the 13th and 14th of September. The theme of the conference was "Disaster Relief in Asia: Sharing Experiences and Forging Ties". Several active Asian NGOs have been invited to share experiences with the Singaporean participants.



ADRC was invited to deliver a keynote speech. Satoru Nishikawa presented a lecture entitled, "Holistic Approach to Disaster Reduction: Towards Total Disaster Risk Management," where he described the necessity of disaster reduction efforts for sustainable development in Asia, the importance of addressing the issue through TDRM approach, and the crucial role of NGOs.

The conference not only helped the Singaporean participants to understand various disaster relief activities in Asia, but was also an important opportunity for the participating Asian NGOs to strengthen human networks.

➤ Report from ADRC member country □ Status Report on Typhoon Rusa in South Korea

In one single day, starting on Aug. 30 and finishing on Sept. 1, 2002, Typhoon Rusa devastated the middle and eastern coast areas of the Korean peninsula. It was the most severe natural disaster in modern Korean history, leaving 217 dead, 29 missing, and causing US \$4.3 billion in property damage as of Sept. 30, 2002. More than 27 thousand buildings and 31 thousand hectares of agricultural area were flooded.

Collapsing of slopes of land, including landslides and flash floods, have caused most of the casualties. Types of damage include overflowing small, local rivers due to insufficient areas for containing water flows, and flooding of urban lowlands due to the lack of drainage pumping capacity and human alterations to the natural terrain. A record-breaking 870.5mm of rain fell in a single day on Gang-Neung City of Gang-Won Province, which is roughly equivalent to two-thirds of the average annual rainfall of Korea. In addition to this record-breaking precipitation, reckless development was reported to have increased urban areas' vulnerability and susceptibility to disaster.

Directly after the typhoon, the Korean government amended the Natural Disaster Countermeasures Act to establish a basis for "Special Disaster Areas". On Sept. 13, 2002, the government declared all severely damaged counties (Myun) as Special Disaster Areas, which enabled the government to provide rapid support to the damaged areas by dispersing emergency funds. On Sept. 27, 2002 a comprehensive recovery plan was disseminated to local governments to ensure timely

recovery from the disaster. The number and amount of volunteers and donations were also record-breaking.

The Korean government is now pursuing several improvements to its disaster management system. A task force for planning comprehensive flood mitigation measures has been set up under the Office of the Prime Minister. Also, the government will try to introduce a natural disaster insurance program. In order to mitigate the increasing susceptibility to disasters brought about by various development efforts, the government has decided to strengthen the Disaster Impact Assessment measure that was put into practice in 1996.

Dugkeun Park, Ph.D., Senior Analyst, National Institute for Disaster Prevention, Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs

➤ Visitors to ADRC □ Risk Reduction Program Manager of SOPAC

Mr. Atu Kaloumaira, Risk Reduction Program Manager of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) visited ADRC on October 1.

ADRC gave him an outline of the functions and activities of ADRC. In return, he made a presentation on the history, performance, and central missions of SOPAC to ADRC staff members. He showed strong interest in ADRC's proactive activities and in the huge amount of information accumulated by ADRC and our neighboring organization, the OCHA office of the UN in Kobe.



ADRC expects to develop and strengthen the relationship with SOPAC through information sharing and other activities in order to facilitate disaster reduction in Asia and the South Pacific.

➤ Recent Natural Disasters in Asia □ Landslide hits Yunnan Province, China

Fifteen people have been killed and 11 others seriously injured due to a massive landslide in China's Yunnan province, about 2,250 kilometers (1,400 miles) south-west of Beijing. The landslide has also cut off communication and transport links to the village, which is home to less than 200 people.

(10/6 BBC News etc.)

□ Floods caused heavy damage in Thailand

In August, September, and October 2002, Thailand was repeatedly hit by flash floods and landslides due to torrential monsoon rains. Initially the floods and landslides only affected northern Thailand, but since late September most of Thailand, including Bangkok, has been deluged. In total, 128 people have died and 62 people in 33 provinces have been injured.

(10/10 OCHA Situation Report etc.)

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

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