



ADRC Highlights

Vol.108

Asian Disaster Reduction Center Biweekly News

January 1 & 16, 2005



Greetings for the New Year 2005.



We would like to wish a happy new year to our friends and sincerely hope that the impact of disasters this year will be less than the last. During the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, ADRC intends to provide positive inputs with our 7th annual meeting on 19 January at Kobe, Japan. We would like to express our appreciation for all the support extended to us since our establishment in July 1998, which has enabled us to mark this important event for disaster reduction in Asia. Thank you.

➤ **Recent Natural Disasters in Asia:**

□ **Tsunami Disaster in Indian Ocean**

On 26 December 26, 2004, the world's fifth-largest earthquake of the magnitude of 9.0 on the Richter Scale occurred at 00:58 hrs GMT, off western coast of Northern Sumatra, Indonesia. The epicenter was some 10 km under the seabed and 250 km south-southwest of Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The earthquake triggered powerful tsunamis reaching 10 meters high, and these tsunamis moved through neighboring countries of the Indian Ocean at 500 km per hour wrecking coastal areas in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Maldives, as well as in Myanmar, Seychelles, and Somalia.

The tsunamis washed away homes and buildings, roads and bridges, causing over 150,000 dead. Please visit http://www.adrc.or.jp/latestinfo/Asia_20041226/eng.html for ADRC's Flash Report on Field Survey of the Dec. 26, 2004 Tsunami Disaster in Indian Ocean. (GLIDE: TS-2004-000147-IND for India, TS-2004-000147-IDN for Indonesia, and TS-2004-000147-THA for Thailand)

➤ **ADRC Dispatched Survey Teams to the Affected Countries**

From 29 December 2004 to 5 January 2005, ADRC dispatched Tsunami disaster survey teams to Sri Lanka and Thailand respectively. Sri Lanka teams were Senior Researcher, Mr. Teranishi, and Two Sri Lankan Researchers, Mr. Sanker and Mr. Colombage, while Senior Researcher Dr. Hatori and Researcher Nakamura went to Thailand. The following is the report summary of their observations

□ **Survey in Sri Lanka**

From 29 December, 2004 to 5 January, 2005, the team conducted a survey in Sri Lanka. Almost around the coastal area except western part of the country were affected by the tsunami and the damage reached over 30,527 dead, 3,884 missing and 773,636 injured as of 6 January, 2005. The team visited historical town called

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Galle in the South and then Trincomalee in the North-East part of Sri Lanka. The influence of the tsunami was seen over one kilometer landward from the seashore. Since most of houses along the coastal area were made of brick or wood, they turned into the rubble completely.

Reinforced concrete buildings still stood in appearance while the interior of those were in a real mess.



The tsunami also caused destruction over large areas in the Southern

Province. Eight-car train was blown away by the over six meters high wave near Hikkaduwa railroad area and one thousand and hundreds of passengers were killed.

In the northern part of the country, a large number of fishermen houses were destroyed by the tsunami. The team observed that recovery of their means of livelihood; boats and nets should be needed.

Sri Lanka has long not been suffered by such a disaster like tsunami and the people there were not familiar with "Tsunami" and even the name itself. This would be one of reason why the disaster caused great number of victims. Another reason is that the Tsunami warning was not given to the people widely, timely and properly. It was hard to consider that the earthquake in Indonesia would affect Sri Lanka. For more information regarding the Sri Lanka team, please ask Mr. Teranishi (teranishi@adrc.or.jp).



□ Survey in Thailand

From 30 December, 2004 to 2 January, 2005, the team conducted a survey in Thailand. Six provinces facing the Andaman Sea were affected by the tsunami. It claimed over 5,200 dead, half of which were from abroad. Thousands of people are still missing. In cooperation with Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Ministry of Interior, Government of Thailand, the team visited two heavily damaged provinces; Phuket and Phangnga Province.

On 31 December 2004, the field survey was conducted in Khao Lak village, Nam Kem village and

Takua Pa city in Phangnga Province. Known as fine resort area for foreign tourists, Khao Lak village was greatly affected by the devastating tsunami four times. The largest wave was the third one, which was more than ten meters high. In Nam Kem Village where many fishermen resided with low-rise houses, the tidal waves reached more than 500 meters inland from the coast. They destroyed ground floor of the most houses, and washed away the village, claiming many lives of local people.



On 1 January 2005, the team visited several beaches (i.e. Patong Beach, Kamala Beach, Karon Beach and Surin Beach) in the western Phuket Island. The damage situation varied based on location.

No early warning was issued for evacuation and it is considered one of the main reasons for claiming many victims. In addition, lack of knowledge on tsunami caused heavy mortality. It is also reported that many people went into the sea to catch fishes when the sea dropped just before tidal waves came.

Considering that the affected areas in Thailand include world famous beach resort and tourism is one of the major industries for the country, how to proceed reconstruction and recovery successfully will be the critical issues. The team would suggest the following three points for the safer society against Tsunami toward the future. 1) Establishing multi-national information sharing system on earthquake and tsunami 2) Improving information dissemination inside the country, including the one for foreign tourists 3) Raising public awareness for tsunami disaster and informing evacuation procedure, also to tourists from abroad. For more information regarding Thailand survey team, please ask Dr. Hatori (hatori@adrc.or.jp) or Ms.Nakamura (nakamura@adrc.or.jp). The flash report on field survey is now available on the ADRC Website; <http://www.adrc.or.jp/publications/TS2004000147/Home.html>.



For more information regarding Thailand survey team, please ask Dr. Hatori (hatori@adrc.or.jp) or Ms.Nakamura (nakamura@adrc.or.jp). The flash report on field survey is now available on the ADRC Website; <http://www.adrc.or.jp/publications/TS2004000147/Home.html>.

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