

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT
Reducing Urban Risk Through International Cooperation
December 4-6, 2003

Workshop Summary

The *International Workshop on Disaster Management* with the theme **Reducing Urban Risk Through International Cooperation** has been organised by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, in cooperation with Government of Maharashtra, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay and Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative. The workshop had a very comprehensive agenda covering almost all aspects of disaster management. Over 250 delegates participated in the workshop, including 40 international participants from 10 other countries.

The various sessions focussed on different aspects on disaster management. The first plenary session had presentations from the Government of India, Government of Maharashtra and Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai wherein they described their respective policy and activities in this field. This session also included a presentation from Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative in which the salient features of the Cluster Cities Project (CCP) were explained. Mumbai is a member of Asia CCP, and the range of possible activities that can be taken up under the CCP with other Asia Cluster cities, viz. Kathmandu, Dhaka, Beijing and Tashkent were also described in the session.

Additional plenary sessions discussed the risk profile and disaster management activities of the EMI Asia Cluster member cities, viz. Dhaka, Kathmandu, Tashkent and Beijing. The presentation of activities, plans and support initiatives of several international organisations including Asian Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme, Earthquake Disaster Mitigation Research Centre, Japan, and Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, Thailand were described. The post-earthquake rehabilitation programmes initiated in Turkey following the Marmara earthquakes of 1999 were also presented during the plenary session.

A novel feature of the workshop was to divide the delegates into smaller groups for more focussed discussions on important themes related to disaster management. The four themes discussed during this workshop are: (1) Administrative structure and procedures for implementing disaster management plans, (2) Development control regulation and techno-legal issues, (3) Role of corporate sector in urban disaster risk reduction, and (4) Role of NGOs and media in urban disaster risk reduction. Each breakout session was moderated by delegates with expertise in disaster management and the theme under consideration, while the session Rapporteurs consisted of Professors from IIT Bombay.

The main points that emerged during the workshop include the following:

1. There is tremendous scope for international cooperation between cities in disaster management. Several disaster management initiatives of Mumbai have been found to be effective, and the city can provide assistance to implement them in other international cities. Similarly, disaster management initiatives of other participating cities, for example the school buildings strengthening program of Kathmandu, may be of interest to Mumbai.
2. The participating cities need to create avenues of regular interaction to enhance partnerships in disaster management. The delegates and city leaders felt that their city officers should meet more frequently in smaller groups for implementation of different cooperation programs.

3. The Deputy Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Mr. Rajaram Shrestha graciously offered to host the next Asia Cluster Cities Project workshop. This offer was greatly appreciated by all delegates who also felt that the agenda should be developed to foster further partnerships between the cities of the cluster.
4. There is some awareness of disaster management issues in the people. However, due to lack of proper understanding of the different issues in disaster management, the public and other stakeholders feel that disaster management is sole responsibility of the government. This perception can be changed through improved communication by the government and by forming more effective partnerships with other stakeholders.
5. All stakeholders, viz. government, corporate sector, academic institutions, professionals and NGOs want to improve the disaster management capabilities of their cities and localities. However, lack of awareness and proper communication regarding the on-going activities inhibits cooperation between the different stakeholders.
6. Most current activities are focussed on improving response mechanisms following a disaster. While these activities are very important, the more important activity of mitigation does not get adequate attention or resources. It is therefore important to strongly focus on mitigation and preparedness as the cornerstone of the disaster management plans.
7. Effective response plans for both natural and man-made disasters should be based on the basic principle of reducing losses to the people. Therefore, training programmes for the local community as first responders for providing first-aid and rescue should be emphasised.