## Preparing for the Inevitable -

9th International Training Course on Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction

Interest Story

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**BANGKOK, Thailand** – The rapid urbanization is swiftly increasing vulnerability to earthquakes in the developing world. Vulnerability reduction measures are inadequate in many countries, and communities lack knowledge on how to respond to the increasing risk caused by seismic events.

ADPC's training course on earthquake vulnerability reduction in late April in Bangkok focused on the principles of earthquake risk reduction as well as the diagnostic tools and techniques for earthquake vulnerability and risk assessment. Participated by professional from Bhutan and Bangladesh, the training also dealt with multi-sector partnerships as a tool for implementing comprehensive earthquake vulnerability reduction strategies.

## No sleep until the job is done

A decade ago, earthquakes weren't a large concern in Bhutan. People knew the country is located in a seismic area, but earthquakes were a distant thought. That mindset changed after a team of international scientists revealed that the area was due for an earthquake. Soon after, in 2009 and again in 2011, the area suffered major earthquakes and it was clear something needed to be done.

Ms. Dago Zangmo, Executive Engineer in the Engineering Adaption and Risk Reduction division under the Department of Engineering Services of Bhutan, is part of the team that reduces the structural risks of earthquakes. For her team, ADPC's training course provided guidance that went well beyond structural risks.

"The risk assessment tools were considerably new to us and are really relevant to what we are going to do at home. Now we know which tools would work for us taking into consideration our resources and capacity", Ms. Zangmo says.

She can return with her colleagues to Bhutan with



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clear knowledge of what's next for their earthquake preparedness efforts.

"Bhutan is still new in earthquake vulnerability reduction. We have learned we have miles to go before we sleep, but we are not going to sleep until we get everything done," she adds.

## Learning from the past, preparing for the future

Bangladesh, one of the countries in attendance, has a history of fatal earthquakes. The country has put a lot of effort into better preparing for disasters in the future.



## Asian Disaster Preparedness Center

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The 9th International Training Course on Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction focused on the principles of earthquake risk reduction as well as the diagnostic tools and techniques for earthquake vulnerability and risk assessment.

After working for sixteen years in his department, Mr. Md. Eftekharul Islam, Director of the Department of Disaster Management and Relief in Bangladesh, continues to further his understanding of earthquake preparedness and recovery.

He knows that many cities in Bangladesh are prone to earthquakes, including the capital city of Dhaka located on an active fault line.

"In the long run, a big earthquake will happen. Our country deserves to go to these kinds of trainings to learn more about earthquake risk reduction, collect information and learn new techniques. From this training, we've gathered a lot of information thanks to the many high profile teachers helping us", Mr. Islam states.

"We will share the new knowledge with our stakeholders when we get back into our country and encourage them to apply the techniques," he said.



In an earthquake simulation game conducted during the training course, participants took on the role of different societal actors.Understanding the roles and responsibilities of such actors allows for the more efficient allocation of resources during a real earthquake situation.

By Don Tartaglione