

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT
Reducing Urban Risk Through International Cooperation

Organized by

Government of Maharashtra
Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai
Indian Institute of Technology Bombay
Earthquakes and Megacities Initiative

Dates

December 4-6, 2003

Background

Some of the worst disasters in recent times have occurred in Asia, causing immense misery a very large number of people. These disasters have affected both developing and developed countries with similar consequences illustrating the need for better preparedness and disaster management capabilities in this region. Some of the most notable urban disasters include earthquakes in India, Turkey and Japan, flooding in India, Bangladesh, China and Thailand, landslides in several parts of Asia, and cyclonic storms in the Pacific Rim and South Asia. Each of these disasters resulted in high human casualty and severely impacted the economic activities in the region.

The high impact of disasters in Asia is primarily due to intense population concentration in the urban regions and low level of economic development in most countries. In many Asian countries, very large or mega-cities have developed due to demographic pressure and lack of economic opportunities in the rural regions. Most recent migrants in these cities are from economically disadvantaged sections of sections of society and are inherently vulnerable to disasters.

The Earthquake and Megacities Initiative (EMI) is an international non-profit initiative endorsed by international organizations such as International Council for Scientific Union (ICSU), World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO), UNDP, UNEP etc. and has been actively contributing to reduction of disaster risk in major cities around the world. The EMI has recently launched the Asian Cities Cluster of the Cluster Cities Project (CCP). The main objective of the CCP is to bring together the decision makers from these cities and experts from scientific community on a single platform to identify problems, share knowledge and work towards development of sustainable solutions to reduce the risk of disasters in the cities. The CCP participants also include leaders from the business community and civil society in addition to the government participants and technical experts. The CCP works on the spirit of mutual cooperation and also intends to create network of cities to enable them to work together for mutual benefit.

The Asian Cities Cluster members consist of Mumbai, Dhaka, Kathmandu, Tashkent and Beijing (observer). This cluster has been recently launched and is in the process of deciding on its agenda and methodology. The first workshop of Asian Cluster Cities Project, in which all the city heads are expected to participate in order to develop the agenda for this CCP, has been tentatively scheduled for December 4-6, 2003 in Mumbai. The Asia Cluster will benefit from the experience and knowledge accumulated by EMI through its other city clusters, more notably the East Asia City Cluster, which includes Kobe, Manila, Seoul and Shanghai. Representative from these cities and other EMI city partners will be invited to participate in the workshop.

The expected outcomes of this workshop are as follows:

1. Training of participants in disaster risk management.
2. Increase in understanding and awareness of the hazards (both natural and man-made) facing these cities and their current disaster risk management capabilities.
3. Exchange of information on methodologies and systems being used in similar megacities in different countries, and evaluation of their effectiveness for specific hazards.
4. Development of roadmap for sustainable and effective disaster risk management system for each participating city. The short- and long-term steps are also expected to evolve during workshop deliberations.
5. Development of roadmap for sustainable collaboration of corporate sector in different disaster risk management activities.
6. Development of roadmap for sustainable collaboration of media and NGOs in different disaster risk management activities.
7. Identification of opportunities of international collaboration involving cities, multilateral agencies and expert agencies.