

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is my pleasure to present to you the report of the 4th Meeting of the ADPC Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management (RCC4) held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, March 29-31 2004.

Following on from the precedent set at the third RCC Meeting (RCC3), the hosting of the Fourth RCC Meeting by an RCC Member Country, this time by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, continues to give the members ownership of the meeting, and increasingly attracts support from and provides a platform to increase the visibility of disaster risk management issues to the political leaders of the member countries as demonstrated by the inauguration of the RCC4 by the Honourable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

As per the desired direction of RCC3 Meeting, ADPC is proud to announce that the Government of Australia has agreed to fund two subsequent RCC Meetings. The generous support provided by the Government of Australia pays tribute to the RCC as an important forum to move the issue of disaster management into a wider context and through which the exchange of views and information about the different topics contributes to disaster mitigation and the reduction of the impacts of disasters in the region.

The Meeting proved a turning point through the consolidation of the RCC mechanism towards a more action-oriented approach in terms of specific new directions, the fruition of heavily ambitious and concrete projects and directions that were earlier identified at previous RCC Meetings that also placed a collective sense of responsibility and challenge on all the participants. This was achieved by the launching of the RCC project of advocacy and capacity building for the mainstreaming of disaster risk management into development practice. It is through the support of the Government of Australia that this project is being realised/implemented.

These achievements meet the challenges set by the previous RCC Meetings to embark on the ambitious direction identified and takes important steps in mobilising support and resources. ADPC continues to meet the needs of the RCC Members, and seeks to do this through it's recent restructuring and the undertaking of a host of new activities. Likewise, the RCC remains a useful tool for ADPC as it allows invaluable access to feedback and ideas from the member countries and the opportunity to continue dialogue with the RCC Members about a variety of issues.

I look forward to meeting you and continuing this dialogue with you at the RCC5 next year.

Sincerely
Dr. Suvit Yodmani
Executive Director, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fourth Meeting of the ADPC Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management (RCC4) was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 29-31 March 2004, in collaboration with the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Meeting was attended by 18 delegates from 15 RCC Member Countries comprising heads of NDMOs from Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Iran, Jordan, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, and Ambassadors and senior officials from Embassies of Myanmar and Philippines attended the meeting. In addition, 24 observers consisting representatives from regional organizations, UN Agencies, and bilateral and multilateral funding agencies: ADRC, AusAID, CDMP, EWC, ICIMOD, MFESB, MRC, USAID/OFDA, SIDA, UNDP, UNESCAP, UN-ISDR, UN-Habitat and WFP, senior officials from the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and ADPC partners from Bangladesh i.e. BRCS, CARE and WV also attended the meeting.

The Honourable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, H.E. Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed inaugurated the meeting and in his address stated that it was well within the powers of Governments to proactively diminish the risks of communities and negative impacts of natural hazards through better decision-making, improved planning, effective risk management, innovation in development and environmental protection. He asserted that risk assessment and disaster reduction should be integral parts of all sustainable development projects and policies. The President stressed the importance of creating awareness of impending disaster and post-disaster rehabilitation activities at the community level as a national duty. He emphasised that under no circumstances should the devastation of natural hazards be allowed undermine initiatives for sustainable development and that it was clear that preventative measures were more effective in combating disaster than relief operations.

Keynote addresses were delivered by Professor Krasae Chanawongse, Chairman of ADPC Board of Trustees, Mr. Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Honorable Minister of Disaster Management and Relief, Mr. Asadul Habib Dulu, Honorable Deputy Minister of Disaster Management and Relief, Mr. Salvano Briceno, Director UN-ISDR, and Dr. Suvit Yodmani, Executive Director, ADPC and Mr. Faruq Ahmed, Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. Attendance at the ceremony comprised Ambassadors and counsellors from embassies in Dhaka, senior officials from UN agencies, representatives of other international organizations and agencies, NGOs, delegates from RCC member countries, senior officials from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and the media.

The meeting consisted of seven substantive sessions. The first two sessions on the first day introduced to the participants the work of ADPC and its follow up actions since last RCC meeting, followed by a Special Consultative Session for the Asian Region in Preparation for the UN-ISDR World Conference on Disaster Reduction. The second day of the meeting began with an introduction of the new ADPC initiative to Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management into Development Practice and a presentation on the UNDP Global Report on Reducing Disaster Risk. This was followed by the special session on the issue, challenges and national and regional experiences of Urban Disaster Risk Management and Sustainable Development faced by the RCC Member countries, the ADPC-UDRM Team as well as a

presentation by UN-Habitat. The third and last day saw the presentations by the host country Bangladesh on their National Risk Reduction initiatives as well as presentations by Care-Bangladesh, the BUDMP and BRCS on their experiences on Disaster Management in Bangladesh. More of the RCC member countries shared their experiences of Recent Disasters and UNESCAP also presented on their activities on Disaster Management. Discussions were held on the proposed ADPC program for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management into Development Practice and significant guidance was given as to how the process was to proceed. The last session of the meeting discussed the future directions of the RCC Meetings and ADPC.

RECOMMENDATIONS/OUTCOMES OF THE RCC-4 MEETING

I. KEY OUTCOMES

Among key outcomes of the Meeting was the recognition of:

- the importance of political will and commitment from the highest levels of government to support disaster risk management initiatives and programmes.
- a greater role be played by the media in publicising the benefits of pre-disaster risk reduction activities.
- the importance of enhancing the role and activities of the national disaster management agencies by building their capacities using training; and
- that regional activities should present a menu of issues from which national governments could select activities that are pertinent to their priorities.

II. WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION, KOBE, JAPAN 2005

In relation to the WCDR, discussions focused on i) the constraints faced by the various countries for effective disaster risk management in their respective countries; ii) processes for National Reporting and Information for WCDR; and iii) the priorities that need to be addressed at the WCDR.

Reporting on constraints for effective risk management, countries identified the need for the enforcement and effective implementation of policies, political commitment, the lack of financial and technical resources, the difficulties in involving other agencies in work of disaster risk management and the consequent need for synergies between agencies and a coordinating role, the need for increased information exchange and communication, training and increased awareness of risks and vulnerability amongst decision makers as well as the populations at risk, and the lack of effective disaster risk assessment. They also identified the need to integrate disaster risk management with poverty reduction and the raising of the awareness of disaster risk management to the current level and status of the integration and awareness of gender issues, as was the need for technical assistance in disaster risk management, the use of technology and knowledge networks, increased access to information and regional cooperation and sharing of good practices among developing countries facing similar constraints.

The list of priorities that the RCC Members recommended to be addressed at the WCDR included mainstreaming disaster risk management as an integral part of development processes, formulating performance indicators to measure the success of disaster risk

management programmes, the provision of technical and financial assistance; increased linkages with and coordination between the different UN-agencies, non-government organizations, private organizations, Local Government Units and the community. The RCC Members also highlighted the need for capacity building by the provision of skilled and trained technical expertise and the need for effective advocacy including the integration of disaster risk management into the different levels of the educational curriculum and that climate change concerns should be integrated in disaster risk management.

III. THE RCC PROJECT ON MAINSTREAMING DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT INTO DEVELOPMENT PRACTISE

The project received much interest and welcome approval from all the participants and the summary of recommendations is that the project should:

- i) Promote adoption of policies in each country for mainstreaming disaster risk management that are directly linked with Poverty Reduction Strategies.
- ii) Focus on the Development of Guidelines and Tools for Establishing Linkages between Disaster Risk Management and Development Plans in specific sectors.
- iii) Develop Guidelines for engaging in dialogue with the different sectors by examining past successful experiences.
- iv) Develop a menu or checklist for identified sectors for mainstreaming which will address activities that are flexible, common, applicable and compatible for implementation in the different member countries.
- v) Identify and target related sectors where the programme can build on existing work that has already been initiated as opposed to single, isolated sectors. And that ideally, the programme should attempt to integrate disaster risk management into all sectors.
- vi) Capture experiences and document successful current examples of mainstreaming.
- vii) Recognise that each country should follow their own implementation policies based on their needs and priorities
- viii) Promote documentation of socio-economic impacts of disasters to demonstrate the scale of losses, as well as demonstrate the benefits of mitigation measures as investment against future losses.
- ix) Promote Disaster Risk Assessment as a useful tool and basis for Disaster Risk Management.
- x) Maximise resources and available funds by linking disaster risk management with international conventions such as the Climate Change Convention and UNCCD.
- xi) Emphasise that although it is important that mainstreaming disaster risk management into development practice should be driven by government, that the national disaster management offices should play an important role in assisting the leaders with making informed decisions.

IV. URBAN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Urban Risk Reduction Issues to be Addressed by ADPC

In the context of Urban Risk Reduction, the RCC participants directed ADPC to enhance and continue the CBDRM initiatives in cities; to facilitate the effective sharing of information, experiences and lessons learnt between RCC Member and South-South countries and the application of the experience in different contexts; to identify the probability of urban risk for each Member Country and inform them of this probability; to work with national governments particularly urban development ministries and city governments on issues of urban disaster management, to advocate amongst community members, implementers and policy makers as this allows for the development of a legal framework and the enforcement of legislation; to provide technical assistance and transfer was needed for the development of a framework for urban projects; to provide support for the enforcement of legislation, regulation and codes; to monitoring and evaluation to ensure that programmes are implemented effectively; and to set-up and ensure that there are effective follow up mechanisms for programmes implemented to ensure project sustainability and replication.

The Needs of City Governments

The needs of city governments were listed as strengthening of linkages and improved coordination amongst different agencies concerned; efficient support from national government, the consideration of all urban risk factors in all development projects; technical assistance for the implementation of activities; the ability to govern better through the delegation of authority and the empowerment of local government through the provision of resource allocation, tools and prerogative; the articulation of requirements for the development of action plans and the integration of mitigation into the city development planning process; tools for risk assessment and the creation of awareness scenarios to test ideas; the allocation of resource to provide finances as a part of the development of sustainable, domestic capital markets and local financial systems that can support reconstruction and negate donor dependency; the promotion of participatory approach and the involvement and development of role of the community; and the identification of a legitimate role for the partnership with private sector.

Capacity Building Needs

In terms of Capacity Building, the needs identified were raising the awareness of problems to seek the involvement of all relevant sectors and to build capacity of the wider audience, through the development of additional teaching materials for schools programmes and curricula; and the focussing on specific hazards using a holistic and multi-sectoral approach; the provision of technical information and institutional functions such as human resources development as part of long-term, targeted and effective training of specialised interest groups such as architects, engineers, health professionals and social workers; enhancement of technical expertise particularly in the area of risk assessment and realistic, holistic, participatory planning; the exchange of skill and capacity especially through the use of electronic medium;. monitoring and evaluation; to assist in the effective delegation of authority; to enhance sensitivities to gender issues and equity; the training of NGOs to enable them to carry out functions that they are comfortable with; and the training of disadvantaged groups to accommodate their requirement; and the standardisation of terminology and methods to facilitate communication between different countries for comparison and sharing if experiences.

Policy Chapter of the Primer on Disaster Risk Management

The Policy Chapter of the Primer generated much interest and the RCC Participants commented that it was extremely useful and urged the Primer team to continue its good work. Suggestions for improvement included the inclusion of a list of existing policies and in the absence of a policy, inclusion of the procedure and guidelines for policy development and implementation; direct or generic principles of interest; the need for bilateral discussions with the RCC participants to discuss the application to a variety of context; and to provide references to other sources and documents on similar issues.

ACRONYMS

AC	ADPC Advisory Council
ACDM	ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
ADRC	Asian Disaster Reduction Center, Kobe, Japan
AEGDM	ASEAN Experts Group on Disaster Management
ARPD	ASEAN Regional Program on Disaster Management
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AUDMP	Asian Urban Disaster Mitigation Program of ADPC
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BoT	Board of Trustees of ADPC
BRCS	Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
BUDMP	Bangladesh Urban Disaster Mitigation Program
CARE- Bangladesh	Cooperative for American Remittance to Europe - Bangladesh
CBDRM	Community Based Disaster Risk Management
CDMP	Comprehensive Disaster Management Program of Bangladesh
CDRM	Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management
CFAB	Climate Forecasting Applications in Bangladesh
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDMC	District Disaster Management Committee, Bangladesh
DDPM	Department for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation
DFID	Department for International Development, United Kingdom
DM	Disaster Management
DMB	Disaster Management Bureau
DND	Department of National Defence
DRI	Disaster Risk Index
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EWC	East West Center
FMMP	Flood Management and Mitigation Programme
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, Kathmandu
IDNDR	International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMDMCC	Inter-Ministerial Disaster Management Coordination Committee
ISET	International Studies and Environmental Technologies
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (also UN-ISDR)
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LDAP	Local Disaster Action Plan
LUDMP	Lao Urban Disaster Mitigation Program
MDMR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Bangladesh
MDRM	Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management (into Development Practice)
MFESB	Melbourne Fire and Emergency Services Board, Melbourne, Australia
MMIRS	Metropolitan Manila Impact Reduction Study
MRC	Mekong River Commission

NCDM	National Committee for Disaster Management, Cambodia
NDCC	National Disaster Coordinating Council, the Philippines
NDM	National Disaster Management
NDMC	National Disaster Management Center
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIDM	National Institute for Disaster Management
OFDA	Office of the US Foreign Disaster Assistance of USAID
RCC	Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management
RCC1	First Meeting of the ADPC Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management (November 20 - 22, 2000)
RCC2	Second Meeting of the ADPC Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management (October 31 - November 2, 2001)
RCC3	Third Meeting of the ADPC Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management (October 29-31, 2001)
RCC4	Fourth Meeting of the ADPC Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management (March 29-31, 2004)
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Secretariat at Kathmandu)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SMRC	SAARC Specialised Meteorological Centre
TDRM	Total Disaster Risk Management
TUDMP	Thailand Urban Disaster Mitigation Program
UDRM	Urban Disaster Risk Management
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDP-BCPR	United Nations Development Program – Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
UN-ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Asia-Pacific
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Program
UN-ISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCDR	World Conference for Disaster Reduction
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WV	World Vision

I. INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

The fourth Meeting of the ADPC Regional Consultative Committee on Disaster Management (RCC4) was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 29-31 March 2004, in collaboration with the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh. Eighteen delegates from 15 RCC member countries comprising heads of NDMOs from Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Iran, Jordan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, and Ambassadors and senior officials from Embassies of Myanmar and the Philippines attended the meeting. In addition, 24 observers consisting of and representatives from regional organizations, UN Agencies, and bilateral and multilateral funding agencies such as: ADRC, AusAID, CDMP, EWC, ICIMOD, MFESB, MRC, USAID/OFDA, SIDA, UNDP, UNESCAP, UN-ISDR, UN-Habitat and WFP; and ADPC partner from Bangladesh I.E. BRCS, CARE and WV and senior officials from the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh also attended the meeting (**ANNEX I**).

THE RCC

ADPC is an independent, non-profit regional foundation, promoting risk reduction and capacity building in disaster management. The ADPC Board of Trustees (BoT), the international Advisory Council (AC) and the RCC form a three-tiered governance structure of the foundation.

The RCC was established in March 2000 and comprises BoT and AC members working in key government positions in national disaster management systems of countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Membership is by invitation of the Chairman of the BoT, with the 26 present members representing 23 countries and territories (**ANNEX II**).

The first three meetings of the RCC were held in November 2000 and October 2001 in Bangkok, and in October 2002 in New Delhi, in collaboration with the Government of India.

The role of the RCC is to provide a consultative mechanism for

- Development of action strategies for disaster reduction in the region
- Promotion of cooperative programs on a regional and sub-regional basis
- Guidance to the work of ADPC and its future directions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The main objectives of RCC4 were to:

- Seek inputs from the RCC members on the second UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) to be held in Kobe, 2005;
- Seek inputs from the RCC members and observers on the RCC Project on the Development of a Comprehensive Approach to Disaster Risk Management in Asia through Advocacy and Capacity Building for Mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Management into Development Practice;
- Gain an insight into the current status and future needs of the management of urban disaster risks in the RCC Member Countries;
- Learn from experiences of Disaster Management in Bangladesh;

- Share experiences and lessons learned from recent disasters and programs; and
- Seek inputs from the RCC Members on the ADPC Primer on Disaster Risk Management.

The agenda of the meeting is given at **ANNEX III** of this report.

II. THE OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony of the RCC4 was organised by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and ADPC and was held at 10:30 am on Monday, 29 March 2004 at the Osmani Memorial Hall. The chief guest was the Honourable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed, H.E. Professor Dr. Krasae Chanawongse, Chairman ADPC BoT and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Thailand presided over the ceremony; and H.E. Mr. Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Honourable Minister of Disaster Management and Relief delivered a special address. The ceremony was attended by over 600 persons consisting of Ambassadors and Counsellors from embassies in Dhaka, senior officials from UN agencies, representatives of international organizations and agencies, NGOs, delegates from RCC member countries, senior officials from the Ministries of the Government the People's Republic of Bangladesh, other specialist disaster management organizations, representatives of state governments and the media.

The welcome address was given by Mr. Faruq Ahmed, Secretary in charge, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Mr. Ahmed highlighted that disaster management is a crucial issue of any development efforts for sustainability. He emphasised the long-standing relationship between the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and ADPC, elaborating on the past and current ADPC activities in Bangladesh and the Government's pleasure of hosting the 4th Meeting, having been an active participant of the RCC since its establishment in 2000. In recognition of the role of natural disasters in creating havoc in many countries of South Asia, the Secretary informed the attendees that at the recent Summit in Islamabad, heads o Government of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) further endorsed the need for regional cooperation on natural disaster management. Mr. Faruq called on the South Asian countries to take the lead and build a working partnership under the SAARC framework. The Secretary also expressed his pleasure that the world community was meeting in Kobe, Japan in January 2005 for the second World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) and that the RCC served as a preparatory regional meeting in the Asian region, noting that the Asian region had rich experience and insights to bring to the conference.

Elaborating on the disaster management systems in Bangladesh, Mr. Faruq shared with the attendees the institutional arrangements in the form of Council and Committees from national down to union levels. These mechanisms provided policy-making provisions, and their implementation of policies by the highest level by the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC) headed by the Honourable Prime Minister and Inter-Ministerial Disaster Management Coordination Committee (IMDMCC). This well set-mechanism included a long established line Ministry that was solely dedicated to Disaster Management and Relief and its technical arm, the Disaster Management Bureau. In conclusion, the Secretary in Charge thanked ADPC for holding the fourth RCC meeting in Bangladesh.

In his address, Dr. Suvit Yodmani, Executive Director of Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), expressed his appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for taking the initiative to host the meeting. He also acknowledged with gratitude, the generous support of the Government of Australia to the RCC and the pilot implementation of a new initiative to mainstream disaster risk management into development practice in Asia. Deep appreciation was also expressed to the Honourable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for his gracious presence. Dr. Yodmani noted that his kind consent to inaugurate the meeting was testament to the importance that the Government and the President attach to disaster preparedness and management. He commended Bangladesh for being the first country in Asia to establish a separate Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief in 1972 and for its well formulated 'Standing Orders for Disasters'. Dr. Yodmani provided an overview of the ADPC and the RCC, its achievements, the key issues to be addressed by the 4th RCC and its main objective to further consolidate the RCC mechanism towards a more action-oriented approach.

Mr. Salvano Briceno, Director, UN-International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in his address, commended the ADPC for its ability to effectively mobilise key actors in the region in a meeting that represents an irreplaceable opportunity to meet, exchange, share information and experiences, discuss common concerns and identify further step to improve and develop capabilities to reduce the negative impacts of disasters and engage in comprehensive risk management. He thanked ADPC for its active membership of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction and ISDR-Asia Partnership and expressed pleasure with the collaboration between ISDR and ADPC and looked forward to increased cooperation in the future. He also congratulated the Government of Bangladesh on establishing a Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. Mr. Briceno outlined the significance of the 1st World Conference on Disaster Reduction and the resulting Yokohama Strategy. He highlighted that the General Assembly of the United Nations directive to review the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action was a key objective of the forthcoming WCDR. He emphasised the need to accelerate the application of available knowledge and technology and the implementation of policies and measures to reduce risk and vulnerability to natural and technological hazards. He stated that the 2nd WCDR was the opportunity for unite efforts and present a common front to raise awareness and convince the political and economical leaders on the urgency of reducing the impacts that hazards are posing to development and that was a need to use resources for development as opposed responding and recovering from disasters. Promoting disaster reduction was an essential pre-condition to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg objectives for sustainable development. Mr. Briceno concluded by urging the RCC delegates to ensure that relevant authorities in their respective countries participate in the preparatory process and attend the Conference. He confirmed that the ISDR Secretariat was ready to facilitate exchange and negotiations required in this regard.

In his address, Professor Dr. Krasae Chanawongse, Chairman of ADPC Board of Trustees, and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Thailand on behalf of ADPC expressed ADPC's honour at the presence of the Head of State at the opening ceremony and noted that this provided much evidence of the commitment of the country to confidently deal with the disaster risks that it faces. Professor Krasae commended the Government of Bangladesh for

recognising the meaningful roles played by NGOs and for the good partnerships that exists between the government and the NGO sector. The Chairman highlighted the need for political decision makers and resource allocating Ministries such as Finance and Planning to be actively involved in the new RCC initiative to mainstream disaster risk management in development work in Asia and affirmed that this initiative had the full support of the ADPC Board of Trustees. Professor Krasae noted that that the implementation of the programme of action resulting from the 2nd WCDR would be the responsibility of national governments and the need for countries to be forward looking in setting their goals and pragmatic in establishing implementation plans and arrangements. He also expressed his pleasure that an ISDR Asia Partnership had been established with ADPC as one of the founding members. Immense satisfaction and pride was derived from the recognition of ADPC's role in raising awareness, building capacities and promoting cooperation in the region which was exemplified by ADPC being awarded a medal by His Excellency Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia in recognition of ADPC's contribution to Cambodia. Professor Krasae confirmed the ADPCs Board of Trustees support of the RCC as an important forum to deliberate on the priorities of Member Countries and promote cooperative programmes on a regional and sub-regional basis.

H.E. Mr. Asadul Habib Dulu, Honourable Deputy Minister of Disaster Management and Relief of Bangladesh recognised the effectiveness of the RCC as an operational mechanism to provide a network of senior officials committed to disaster reduction in Asia and the Pacific. He informed attendees that the Government of Bangladesh realised that the building of self-reliance and awareness as part of the empowerment of the vulnerable and high-risk community should be the cornerstone of their policies and strategies related to preparedness and mitigation. Mr. Dulu emphasised that the government perceives disaster management and sustainable development as inseparable binding issues and reiterated their commitment to mainstream disaster management in all spheres of development planning.

In his address, H.E. Mr. Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Honourable Minister of Disaster Management and Relief of Bangladesh highlighted the importance of sub-regional, regional and international mutual, pragmatic and coordinated collaboration in respect to training, research and effective disaster management so as to reap maximum benefit for the people through frequent sharing of expertise, experience, knowledge and information. The Minister shared with the audience that the importance placed by the Government of Bangladesh to non-structural measures alongside structural ones, allowed for better coordination within its disaster management system. The non-structural measures focused on preparedness and possible actions to reduce risks and losses and better coordinated mechanisms between Government Organisations, Non-Government Organisations and grass-roots communities. The practical measures that were adopted to support a comprehensive disaster management approach involved 1) preparation of legislation, policy and plans for disaster management; 2) training and public awareness build-up; 3) improvement of warning systems and 4) establishment of local disaster action plans at district, upazilla and union levels. Mr. Chowdhury noted that inspite of the achievements made by the Government of Bangladesh in the field of Disaster Management, that gaps and weaknesses still exist and that the Government was making renewed efforts which involved a policy that aims to shift Government emphasis from single agency response and relief dependency culture towards a more comprehensive programming within a broader risk reduction mitigation and

management framework and a coordinated programming environment. He complimented ADPC for its pioneering work in the region and its contribution to Bangladesh and expressed his satisfaction at the opportunity for Bangladesh to host this important meeting of disaster management leaders of the region.

The RCC was inaugurated by the Honourable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, H.E. Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed. In his inaugural address, the Honourable President commended ADPC for its vision of safer communities and sustainable development through disaster reduction. He noted the rising trends and intensities of natural hazards, its impacts on lives and livelihoods and the increasing risks that are faced by both rural and urban communities due the growing population, poverty, greater urban density, environmental degradation and climate change and that this scenario would remain unchanged unless the vulnerability of the people is reduced to an acceptable limit. The President stated that it was well within the powers of Governments to proactively diminish the risks of communities and negative impacts of natural hazards through better decision-making, improved planning, effective risk management, innovation in development and environmental protection. He asserted that risk assessment and disaster reduction should be integral parts of all sustainable development projects and policies.

The president elaborated on the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP), a new initiative implemented by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief with the support of UNDP and DFID. This project aims to reduce disaster risk of the most vulnerable through the development of sustainable livelihoods and to keep the effects of natural, environment and human induced hazards to a manageable and acceptable humanitarian level through the strengthening of institutional mechanisms and expanding preparedness and mitigation programmes. The programme is designed to encompass all aspects of risk management and to facilitate the move from a single agency response and relief system to a holistic strategy that addresses the issue of community vulnerability. Another initiative, the "Natural Risk Reduction Programme" launched by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief seeks to integrate relief resources for risk reduction and poverty alleviation by improving socio-economic conditions of the ultra poor and changing the attitude of the stakeholders. This initiative, implemented from the government's own resources demonstrates the national political commitment by the Government of Bangladesh to support the poorest and most vulnerable household to develop the capacity to manage livelihoods and address disaster risks. The President stressed that the importance of creating awareness of impending disaster and post-disaster rehabilitation activities at the community level as a national duty. He emphasised that under no circumstances should the devastation of natural hazards be allowed undermine initiatives for sustainable development and that it was clear that preventative measures were more effective in combating disaster than relief operations. In conclusion, he congratulated ADPC for its consistent effort towards disaster preparedness through implementing various activities that prepare communities to cope with disasters.

Mr. A.H.M. Shamsul Islam, Director General of the Disaster Management Bureau, MDMR proposed a vote of thanks.

A copy of all speeches at the opening ceremony is given in **ANNEX IV** of this report.

III. SESSION I: INTRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The first session of the RCC Meeting was chaired by Col. Mr. Brian Ward, Director Emeritus and Member of the Board of Trustees, ADPC.

The session commenced with an introduction of each of the RCC delegates and observers present who provided a brief description of the countries and organisations they were presenting. Dr. Suvit briefed the meeting on the role of RCC and the purpose of the 4th RCC Meeting. He explained that RCC meetings were organised with the vision of its member countries collaborating at technical as well as policy and foreign affairs level. The Meetings are also for assessing the needs of its member countries, to encourage regional cooperation, to confirm that ADPC activities are in tune with the identified priority needs of its RCC member countries, to enhance the sustainability of RCC mechanism, and identify ways to mobilise resources.

The agenda was adopted and the following members were invited to serve on the Steering Committee to facilitate the meeting and guide its overall direction, focus its deliberations towards substantive outcomes:

- Bangladesh – Mr. Faruq Ahmed
- China – Professor Li Jing
- India – Mr. Madhavan Nambiar
- Lao PDR – Mr. Phetsavang Sounalath
- Philippines – Col. Elma Aldea
- ADPC – Mr. Earl Kessler
- ADPC – Mr. Loy Rego

The first meeting of the Steering Committee was held immediately after the first session.

An overview of ADPC, its current structure and activities was presented by Mr. Earl Kessler, Deputy Executive Director of ADPC and Mr. A.J. Rego, Director and Team Leader, Disaster Management Systems.

Mr. Kessler provided an overview of ADPC activities, focusing particularly on the recent restructuring and the initiation of a new set of activities. As the ADPC activities evolve, it aims to apply the different tools that it has developed and the good practices that have been identified, use the information that it has gathered and assist in the implementation of policies such that real and concrete changes and results enable ADPC's vision and mission to become a reality, making a difference to the way that people live. The RCC is as seen as an avenue through which the development of co-operative programmes can be used as a mechanism to create partnerships and platforms from which a broader, cross-sectoral activities can be developed. An account was given of the various partnerships in which ADPC was currently involved, namely ASEAN, ESCAP, MRC, ICIMOD, ISDR, SAARC and the World Bank. Gratitude was expressed to AusAid for providing generous institutional support to ADPC which will allow ADPC to enhance its knowledge management capabilities and monitor and evaluate its institutional mechanism as well as the quality of the ADPC products and programmes. A brief description was given of the activities of the re-structured teams, namely the Climate Risk Management, the Disaster Management Systems, the Public Health in Emergencies, the Strategic Disaster Risk Management and the Urban Disaster Risk Management teams.

Mr. A.J. Rego provided a brief review the RCC and it's past Meetings. The presentation included the priority action areas that were outlined at each RCC Meeting, a review of the RCC mechanism and the progress that have been made in implementing the recommendations made. The priority action areas for the previous RCC meetings and the review of the RCC mechanism include:

1st Meeting of RCC (November 2000):

- Mapping strengths and capacities of RCC Member Countries
- Building capacity, training and public support for disaster management and mitigation
- Development of national disaster management plans and information systems
- Improving legislative and institutional arrangements and enhancing political will for disaster management and mitigation
- Integration of disaster risk reduction into national development plans
- Scientific and technical inputs for disaster management (including early warning)
- Enhancing sub-regional cooperation in hazard management (East, South east and South)
 - South East Asia – Assist AEGDM with ASEAN Regional Program, promote flood control management on MRC agenda
 - South Asia – Strengthen cooperative action through SAARC, hold South Asian meeting

2nd Meeting of RCC (October 2001):

- Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Approach (CDRM) to be adopted by all member countries
- Community level risk mapping and community based disaster management piloted in all countries
- Capacity building of national disaster management systems
- Creating awareness, political will and support for disaster management
- Cooperation with sub-regional bodies
- Asian Regional Conference
- Asian Regional Report on Disaster Reduction
- Vulnerability Atlas for Asia
- Building capacity for management of man-made disasters

3rd Meeting of RCC (October 2002):

- Comprehensive approach to disaster risk management and programs to be developed by all member countries
- Capacity building at various levels (national and local) on DM planning, emergency response and coordination, damage and needs assessment and public awareness
- Strengthening regional cooperation in drought management
- Cooperation with/among RCC member countries
 - Capacity building in wildfire management
 - Mekong delta cooperation in flood management
 - ASEAN Regional program on Disaster Management
 - South Asian Action Program
- Sharing experiences on legal and institutional arrangements in RCC member countries
- Development of Primer on Urban Disaster Mitigation

Review of the RCC Mechanism:

- Established itself as a meaningful platform among DM focal points of Asian Governments for discussion, exchange of experiences, identification of new thrust areas and learning from others
- Has helped identify new initiatives to be taken up at national level
- Catalysed action in existing sub-regional mechanisms
- Provided opportunity for UN agencies, donors and technical institutions to understand perspectives, constraints, challenges and priorities for national governments
- Benefited from steady, consistent support of AusAID
- Increasing ownership by national governments and strong participation
- Slow but steady progress on taking up implementation on regional scale projects arising from wide-ranging agenda coupled with constraints of both technical and financial resources
- Members, observers, ADPC and other stakeholders must collaboratively identify ways forward

Comments from the floor were invited.

PLENARY DISCUSSION

Regional Cooperation and Implementation of Regional Projects

Mr. Nambiar, India observed that first three meetings of the RCC have identified valuable priority areas in terms of regional cooperation and that the RCC should examine the new initiative and identify activities in vulnerable regions as a project for regional cooperation. This would assist in experience sharing of good practices for countries that have specific disasters problems. He envisaged that RCC4 would move forward and result in the implementation of regional projects.

Ensuring the Sustainability of Programmes

Ros Sovann, Disaster Management Advisor, Cambodia expressed his concern to ensure that the mitigation programmes that were aimed at strengthening local government remain sustainable and stressed the need of cross-sectoral links that seek to involve the government in the outset. He informed the participants that numerous much-appreciated projects had been successfully implemented in Cambodia that involved response, mitigation and preparedness at the community level. However, on completion of the programme when they are phased out by the donors, little consideration is taken into account on the sustainability of these programme. Therefore there exists a need to attach an element of responsibility ensure that these programmes are sustainable and that they should contain links to a responsible, sustainable agency within the government who would be able to follow-up, continue to adapt and improve on the programmes when the donors or practitioners phase out. What is currently missing is the conjunction between success and sustainability, an important issue that should be discussed such that strategies to establish these links can be formulated.

Mr. Kessler commented that it was an interesting idea and that one of the prevailing issues of development is that of scaling-up, of which there a few instances of a successful demonstration that has scaled-up into a sustained set of programmes that addresses the required needs at a higher scale. Another aspect of this issue relates to the commitment of the countries to set aside part of their national budgets for disaster management and the need for local governments to recognise that they too have a responsibility to ensure the sustainability of successful programmes. Mr. Kessler highlighted that there were ways to secure resources through the domestic capital market for the capital investment that is required so that non-conductive, donor dependent inhibitions and the creation of false expectations can be shed. Roles of the state and national governments should also be considered and ADPC would like to examine how it could assist the RCC Members on this issue.

Drought Issues in India and the Region

Mr. Madhavan Nambiar, IAS, Executive Director, National Institute for Disaster Management (NIDM), India, informed the participants that drought is a major problem in India and that currently nearly 7-8 states in India were reeling under drought. A large amount of information on the emerging issues in drought and climate change was being generated and he urged ADPC, with its relevant experience and expertise, to work with the NIDM in documenting this information. The significant impacts of drought were being overlooked as it was a slow-onset disaster.

Mr. Kessler noted that ADPC is very much interested in the drought issues and that it has within its Climate Risk Management team a set of resources and individuals who are prepared and financed to be able to work for not just a short period but a reasonably long period of time on this set of issues. The dissemination of what is learned in India would also be useful to Sri Lanka which it going through its own issues of drought and it has its own set of drought activities from which lessons can also be learnt. Also of importance was the need to learn from and combine traditional coping mechanisms into contemporary mechanisms. ADPC's interested in working with India on the issue was reiterated. It was also noted that the 3rd RCC meeting, co-hosted by the Government of India in 2002, had drought as a special theme and discussed regional experiences in drought management. Copies of the RCC-3 report were distributed.

Dr. Pak highlighted the partnership between UNESCAP, UN-ISDR and ADPC in a current initiation of a regional project proposal that has been submitted to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), called the Regional Drought Preparedness Network for Asia and the Pacific. The project fall would under UNDP activities as it is one of the GEF implementing agencies. UNDP has already agreed to undertake this project and 11 countries have expressed interest in the project. ESCAP are seeking interest from India, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and it is envisaged that this regional network could be linked to the global network promoted by UNISDR, Mr. Briceno noted that the regional programme would be of more interest to the RCC as the global network provided only a loose framework of support for the regional initiatives. Copies of the UN-ISDR report Drought: Living with Risk, An Integrated Approach to Reducing Societal Vulnerability to Drought were made and distributed to the participants.

Mr. Bill Berger commented the OFDA has been working on drought issues in India for the last 5 years and their experiences demonstrate that solutions to the issue of drought were not simple. OFDA was funding a study through the ISET that examines adaptive strategies and coping mechanisms of the people in the region. The Project finishes in April and its results will be presented at a meeting in India in June. It is envisaged that more information will be harvested due to the spatial variability of meteorological conditions in India requiring the employment of different mitigation structures. The document will be available on the website of the ISET organisation.

In response to a query on the employment of traditional coping mechanisms in the current drought in India, Mr. Nambiar explained that although the traditional system are in place in places like Rajasthan, the severity of the droughts this year are particularly acute and are placing difficult demands on the traditional coping mechanisms. The attempts to preserve water reservoirs in the deserts have also in the recent year been devastated by drought and at present only relief efforts are working and as other preservation efforts and preventative mechanisms are failing.

IV. SESSION II: SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE SESSION FOR THE ASIAN REGION IN PREPARATION FOR THE UN-ISDR SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION

The session was co-chaired by Mr. Earl Kessler and by Mr A.H.M. Shamsul Islam from Bangladesh and facilitated by Mr. John Harding, UN-ISDR. This session provided an overview of the upcoming World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR), included discussions on the constraints faced by the countries on effective disaster risk management and solicited comments on the Reference Guide for National Reporting and the priorities to be addressed at the 2nd WCDR.

Mr. S. Briceno, Director, ISDR gave a brief presentation to inform the RCC members about the preparations for the WCDR to be held in January 2005 in Kobe-Hyogo. Mr. Briceno informed the participants that more details about the conference was available on the website. Mr. Briceno provide the aims and underlying approaches through which ISDR is implemented and the background to, the objectives of, the preparatory process and the format for the WCDR as well as the expected outputs and impacts of the conference.

One of the objectives was to enhance and expand the implementation of the commitments that were adopted in Yokohama with the intention of adopting stronger and more specific commitments from the countries. The RCC4 Meeting along with the ADRC meeting in February and a conference convened by the National Committee for Disaster Reduction, China in May form part of a preparatory, open-ended intergovernmental process to review the organisational and substantive preparations for the WCDR.

The Yokohama Review forms the first phase of the preparatory process which started with the commissioning of the ISDR Report: Living with Risk, a global review of disaster reduction initiatives that was prepared with the assistance of all the UN Partners and regional institutions. This report has been reviewed and updated will be published and can be access on the website. Another document is the IFRC 2002 World Disaster Report that focuses on reducing risk. A third document was the recent UNDP report on “reducing Disaster Risk”.

Other parallel conferences of interest with links to the WCDR, namely the Small Island Developing States Conference in Mauritius in August to review the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action, the Climate Change negotiations which has identified Adaptations to Climate Change as a main priority and has implications for Risk Reduction practitioners, and the World Urban Forum in September in Barcelona organised by UN-Habitat where urban risk reduction has also been identified as a key priority.

PLENARY DISCUSSION

Following the presentation, general comments were invited from the RCC delegates and the observers.

Clarification on the Preparation of National Reports, Deadlines and Kind of Processes

Request for national information have been addressed to permanent missions/ ministries of foreign affairs in Geneva who are the main UN focal points for circulation to a whole host of different ministries in the respective countries depending on whom is in charge of disaster reduction in those countries (Ministry of the Environment, Planning, Health etc). He highlighted the difficulty in identifying a single authority with whom responsibility for disaster reduction should lie; as reduction risk and vulnerability is a multi-sectoral issue that should be a collective responsibility, which requires contributions from all sectors. Examples of disaster management in different sectors are improving environmental planning to reduce environmental degradation, education to develop/foster a culture of prevention; protecting schools, and hospitals; health and agricultural management etc.

China and Iran were cited as good examples where this mutli-sectoral approach has been organised through the National Platforms/Committees (for Disaster Reduction) involving the engagement of all the sectors and relationships with the Ministry of Agriculture, Health and Environment etc. This may not be the case in other countries where communication amongst the different sectors may not be as well organised, thus effecting their ability and capability to collect the information on their efforts to reduce risk for the consolidation of a set of data and information from each country.

Mr. Briceno asked the participants to examine the proposed guidelines and assess if they have the ability to contribute by coordinating or organising the information required for the National Reports or by providing the information needed to the authority that have been tasked to collect the information.

The deadline for the National Reports is the 15th June due to the tight schedule for the preparation of the conference. The information provided in the national reports has to be compiled, analysed, reviewed, assessed and prepared for more specific inputs for the global programme of action to be discussed in October at the Second Preparatory Committee Meeting for adoption at the WCDR in January 2005. This document is to be produced in the various UN languages, thus the participants were urged to work on their reports in order to meet the deadlines as the participants and their disaster management organisations would be the first people to benefit from a good disaster reduction programme.

Clarification of Expected Conference Outcomes, Strategy, Vision and Programme of Action

The expected outcome of the WCDR is a simple summary document to highlight, the main challenges and goals and the need to include disaster reduction as an integral part of development programmes. Guidelines for the integration of disaster risk reduction as part of development, to finance risk reduction and mobilise local capital markets and capital capabilities in each country in each local community and at the national level, to integrate risk reduction with adaptation to climate change, to ensure that risk reduction is essential in the sustainable development programmes and in environmental management, and the integration of risk reduction into environmental management is envisaged to be the main ideas of the new programme of action for the next 10 yrs as these are new issues, such as climate change and the increasing challenges of urban growth.

The RCC participants were encouraged to follow-up on the outcomes of the preparatory meeting with the permanent missions to the UN in Geneva representing the countries. In particular the programme of action which will include specific elements to address all the range of issues, institutional and organisational development, policies integration and development, development, of legislation, education, training, awareness, risk assessment, identification and management etc to implement for the next 10 years, and to provide guidance to governments, regional and international organisations, and local organisations.

Attendance at the WCDR

Ms. Etsuko Tsunozaki, Senior Researcher, Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) informed the participants that a committee has been created in Japan for the preparation of the WCDR consisting of a group of experts in disaster reduction and with the UN agencies in Japan as observers, which discuss the challenges of mobilising funds for disaster reduction. Ms Tsunozaki also noted that they had been receiving queries from member of the public and Government of Asian countries who are interested in participating at the conference.

Mr. Briceno noted that it was a great challenge to convince the unconverted, who often have the resources to make a difference as the socio-economic benefits of disaster prevention are intangible. Therefore, there is an acute and important need to raise public awareness of the risks that they are incurring, such that they will place pressure on their political and economic leaders to make risk reduction a priority. Thus it is essential to convince people living in disaster prone areas to more vocal. From the perspective of the WCDR, its approach to motivate and convince the leaders from the economic and political sectors to present a common front, message, approach and programme with identified goals and

targets. This stresses the importance of the preparatory meetings where common understanding can be consolidated into a set of common goals and ideas.

In response to the query, Mr. Briceno replied that the WCDR was a UN conference that follows a certain format and procedure and that participation would be restricted to participants who were part of a delegation from a particular government or a member of a recognised observer organisation. When the General Assembly approved the meeting in 2002, it was decided that the WCDR would not be a ministerial summit due to the demands placed by protocol and financial costs that are associated with a big conference. However, due to the recognition of the importance of the meeting, it was decided to convene it at a senior-officials level. This provides more flexibility as a senior-official could be a Minister or a Head of Government. ISDR has received feedback from many governments that Ministers and senior officials have expressed an interest in attending the meeting. Therefore, the WCDR will be attended by a mosaic of Ministers, heads of agencies, directors of relevant ministries, a mixture of delegates from different levels. The importance and relevance of the decisions made will be greater should higher level officials be in attendance, thus the RCC delegates were requested to motivate and convince their ministers to attend the meeting as this would assist in convincing other ministers to attend. As the Government of Japan will be commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake on 17 January 2005, plans have been made to invite head of state of some governments for the memorial activities, who may be likely to stay for the conference.

Fostering Regional Level Commitment

Mr. Sadraddine, Deputy Director General, Bureau for Studies and Coordination of Development, Iran, shared with the participants that from the Iranian experience as a disaster prone country, they have learnt that cooperation at international and UN level has been very effective. The necessary commitment of the political channels in Iran has been very satisfactory and the National Committee for Disaster Reduction, which developed from the earlier National Committee for IDNDR has since the year 2000 been continuously engaged in activities and updating its efforts with the original 9 sub-committees expanding to 22 working groups, not only at national level but also at provincial and district levels. Disasters such as a 5-year drought, floods and the recent earthquake in Bam continue to plague the country. The necessary commitments required from the national authorities has been created, thus focus at the WCDR should be on fostering regional level commitment between countries to each other as these are still lacking on trans-boundary issues such as floods, drought and invasions of locusts. These issues should be resolved and is a topic that the conference should address. This conference has taken very useful steps and there is optimism that things will improve in the future as there is readiness at present address the important issues like prevention, mitigation and promoting the integration of disaster management into development practice. However, an emphasis must be placed on regional cooperation.

Importance of Disaster Risk Assessment

Professor. Li Jing, Deputy Director, National Disaster Reduction Center, China, highlighted that most countries in Asia have insufficient resources and capacity to deal with large-scale disasters. Thus, international support was vital. However, internationally funded developmental projects, such as road and irrigation construction, should include covenants for hazard risk assessment and support to assist this activity. Examples to note include

Nepal amongst other countries where flooding on the same river washed away the same bridge several times, due to the lack of assessment of the disaster risk during times of flooding. In these areas, bridges that have been washed away, are rebuilt at the same location with no consideration of the maximum flood levels and the flood intervals. Therefore, covenants are needed for hazard assessment of development projects.

Mr. Briceno agreed that it was an important point and noted that it is part of environmental management that needs to be addressed as a key risk reduction measure.

Additional Comments

Mr. Sovann gave support to the idea of integration of Disaster Risk Management into development practise. He noted that this was a new theme that has emerged in the development field in which people are hesitant to consider and cooperate. He informed the participants that the Cambodia experienced difficulties in integrating disaster management into development practice. However, he emphasised that it was important to provide development practitioners and national governments with an understanding that they should consider disaster reduction during their daily activities. This should build an understanding that development should serve dual objectives with the additional component towards risk reduction through the use of risk assessment and analysis. Donors should take the opportunity to lead development to consider integrating disaster risk management into development practise. In Cambodia, during the bi-annual floods, development agencies distribute a large amount of rice seed for replanting, only for the crops to be destroyed during the next flood. When questioned on the objective of their activity, the donors cite development and poverty reduction, neglecting to consider that their activity also serves to reduce disaster.

Mr. Briceno agreed with Mr Sovann stating that it precisely one of the challenges of the conference to convince bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors that their investments in development should consider risk reduction and that too few development banks and donors were integrating risk reduction in their projects. What Mr. Sovann pointed out was the reality that is still being faced, that it is easier to obtain funding for relief than for risk reduction.

PRESENTATION OF GROUP DISCUSSION

The RCC delegates and observers were divided into three groups to discuss i) the constraints faced by the various countries for effective disaster risk management in their respective countries; ii) processes for National Reporting and Information for WCDR; and iii) the priorities that need to be addressed at the WCDR.

Major Constraints for Effective Disaster Risk Management Faced by Asian Countries

Reporting on constraints for effective risk management, countries identified the need for the enforcement and effective implementation of policies, political commitment, the lack of financial and technical resources, the difficulties in involving other agencies in work of disaster risk management and the consequent need for synergies between agencies and a coordinating role, the need for increased information exchange and communication, training and increased awareness of risks and vulnerability amongst decision makers as well as the populations at risk, and the lack of effective disaster risk assessment. They also identified the need to integrate disaster risk management with poverty reduction and the raising of the

awareness of disaster risk management to the current level and status of the integration and awareness of gender issues.

Comments on the Reference Guide for National Information Inputs

The RCC Members were pleased to learn of requests for National Information inputs in preparation for WCDR, but some RCC Members were yet to receive formal requests and sought more direct communication by ISDR with national focal points.

Priorities to be Addressed at the WCDR

The list of priorities that the RCC Members recommended to be addressed at the WCDR included mainstreaming disaster risk management as an integral part of development processes, formulating performance indicators to measure the success of disaster risk management programmes, the provision of technical and financial assistance; increased linkages with and coordination between the different UN-agencies, non-government organizations, private organizations, Local Government Units and the community. The RCC Members also highlighted the need for capacity building by the provision of skilled and trained technical expertise and the need for effective advocacy including the integration of disaster risk management into the different levels of the educational curriculum and that climate change concerns should be integrated in disaster risk management.

It was also recommended that since the WCDR was a UN conference, poverty reduction and sustainable development should be the main focus. It should also address all the aspects of mitigation and the procedure for mainstreaming mitigation into the development paradigm which examines the both risks and vulnerability to natural disasters such as drought.

Another focus was to increase the coordination between the numerous UN agencies and the World Bank and Asian Development Bank who are engaged in disaster management, so that there is better management and integration, so that there is less duplication of work that is carried out. Emphasis should also be placed on awareness creation within vulnerable communities to encourage community participation that could be further enhanced.

Priorities should be placed on technology in terms of introducing all the best Early Warning Systems to all developing countries and knowledge networking, information technology and disaster resource data base as this would lead to informed decision making through increased access to information; and regional cooperation and the sharing of best practices such that all the countries can benefit from each others knowledge.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Sovann, Cambodia supported the need to create awareness amongst the vulnerable. However, he noted that emphasis should also be placed on creating awareness amongst decision and policy makers in the higher level who are not exposed to risk and who have the power to manage risk. They should be assisted in making their activities more risk assessment savvy.

Mr. Briceno added that risk management is the responsibility of individuals. Everyone has the capacity and needs to develop the capacity to manage their own risks that surrounds them in their daily lives. The main responsibility may lie with those that have the resources, knowledge, capacity and authority to manage risk but education of risk reduction is an

activity that can be addressed by everybody from communities, families, individuals, local and national government and donors in a complementary approach.

Mr. Kessler commended the participants for their useful comments and priorities and highlighted that the issue of the application of technology and its evolution has been a revelation especially in the climate change area where the degree of reliability of prediction is increasing. Raising the awareness of these issues is important that they can be implemented in each of the national programmes and applied at the local level.

With reference to the comments by Dr. Pak Sum Low, Regional Advisor, UN-ESCAP comments, Mr. Briceno responded that focus should be placed on the application of knowledge in many places. Importance should also be placed on giving due recognition to good practices that are being undertaken. RCC delegates were urged to identify specific good practice from their countries as the conference would provide a good opportunity to showcase and share these experiences, through the internet and publications etc. Mr. Briceno noted that all the issues raised were all pertinent and in line with the guidelines that have been proposed. Managing disasters requires concrete, specific and spontaneous and decisive decision making with a command and control approach compared to the management of risk, which requires the opposite complex, slow, education, planning, motivating, convincing which takes place over a longer framework and into which more effort needs to be placed. The challenge lies in getting all these stakeholders to act together. Mr. Briceno thanked the participants for all their useful contributions that will be included in the preparatory process for the WCDR.

Mr. Kessler thanked Mr. Briceno for his presentation and the RCC participants for their inputs. He was glad that the RCC4 was a useful event and emphasised that while preparing the documents for the WCDR, they should not be merely problem statements but examine what countries plan to do about the problems that they have identified and activities that countries will undertake to accomplish those strategies.

V. SESSION III: INTRODUCTION OF THE PROPOSED RCC PROJECT FOR A COMPREHENSIVE DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The third session of the Meeting was delivered in two sessions, one on the morning of the 30th March and the afternoon of the 31st March. The former session was co-chaired by Mr. Phetsavang Sounalath, Director, National Disaster Management Office, Laos and Mr. Madhavan Nambiar, Executive Director National Institute for Disaster Management, India and facilitated by Mr. Earl Kessler, whilst the latter session was co-chaired by Mr. Ros Sovann, Disaster Management Advisor, National Committee for Disaster Management, Cambodia and Professor Li Jing, Deputy Director, National Disaster Reduction Centre of China and facilitated by Mr. A.J. Rego.

Mr. Rego gave a presentation of the concept paper “The Development of a Comprehensive Approach to Disaster Risk Management: An RCC Project of Advocacy and Capacity Building for Mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Management into Development Practice”. The full text of the paper is included as Annex V of the report. This paper was presented to seek a review of the proposed approach from the RCC Members with the aim of using the

feedback to revise the paper. The revised paper would then form the basis of project implementation and further programme development.

The RCC Project on Advocacy and Capacity Building for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management in Development Practise (MDRM) is a project that seeks to systematically promote and encourage the mainstreaming of disaster risk management into sustainable development policies and practices throughout Asia.

Based on the recommendations of earlier RCC Meetings, and with the support of the Australian Government (AusAID), the project envisages the proactive adoption of a variety of good-practise disaster risk management processes that is linked to other efforts at the regional level and built on successful experiences within the region.

The project comprises two key objectives that have a regional and national focus. They are to:

- i) Increase the awareness and political support for the adoption of a comprehensive approach to disaster risk management (CDRM) and the mainstreaming disaster risk management processes into the development practice (MDRM) in the RCC Member countries (Regional Focus), and
- ii) Enhance the capacity of National Disaster Management Systems to develop and implement national plans to mainstream DRM in ongoing national development work (National Focus).

Planned action for the initiation of mainstreaming DRM is envisaged to occur in two phases, commencing with the drafting and endorsement of a Regional Concept Paper on Mainstreaming DRM into Development and Action Plan for Asia; the identification of three pilot countries to undertake implementation to mainstream DRM activities in selected sectors as well as other countries interested in initiating such a programme with national resources; the establishment of a working group, comprised mainly of RCC delegates and experts from the region and Australia to steer the formulation of DRM guidelines and subsequent pilot testing of mainstreaming in specific sectors; preparation of materials for Parliamentarians and Ministers; and endorsement of DRM training materials and programmes.

The second phase of the project involves the presentation of initial results from pilot projects; seeking the support from RCC members to implement similar initiatives in their country with national resources as well as seek support from other donors to implement similar initiatives in five other countries. The project also seeks to pursue the continued development of political and financial support for disaster risk reduction by ensuring that information on successful implementation of mainstreaming DRM into development is regularly submitted to relevant regional ministerial level meetings and national meetings/dialogues with parliamentarians. The lessons learnt from the entire process are to be shared with all RCC member countries through continuing annual RCC meetings. The endorsement of Guidelines and Tools for the Implementation of Good Practices at the National level which will also document a collection of National Experiences of MDRM. A series of advocacy and planning workshops at national level are planned to develop and promote the DRM approach to address community level actions, provision of training on DRM for NDMO and NGO staff in three pilot countries, the development of National Action Plans for implementation of mainstreaming of DRM based on the Guidelines and Tools for the Implementation of Good Practices at the National level, and to undertake initial DRM activities in pilot countries as specified by the National Action Plans.

A key impact of the project is to consolidate the acceptance of the need for a new approach to disaster risk management, thus paving a way for a change in the way disaster risks are currently viewed and managed. The project is also expected to result in:

- The development of an accepted and proven approach to mainstreaming disaster risk management in Asia
- A shift in thinking from a reactive to a proactive approach to disaster management
- Creation of a critical mass of advocates and champions for MDRM
- Greater willingness to include consideration of MDRM in regional and national development agendas
- Adoption of MDRM training and curricula materials

The key priority areas and recommendations of the earlier RCC Meetings on CDRM and Mainstreaming include:

- 1st Meeting: “Integration of disaster risk reduction into national development process”
- 2nd Meeting: “Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Approach (CDRM) to be adopted by all member countries” and “Creating Awareness, political will and support for disaster management”
- 3rd Meeting: All members should adopt a comprehensive multi-hazard approach to disaster risk management and reduction and endorse the need for RCC and its member countries to undertake a programme to promote the approach and noted work done in Bangladesh, China, India and the Philippines.

The main focus of the project would involve the advocacy and capacity building of mainstreaming disaster risk management agenda into development practise. The rationale behind the project was presented as was examples of current national initiatives on comprehensive disaster risk management in Asia, Australia and New Zealand and in the Caribbean. An overview of the regional support for a comprehensive disaster risk management approach was given as well as the key recommendations that resulted from the ADPC-WHO Meeting on Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management into Development Practice in Asia that was held in February 2004. Challenges in MDRM, linkages with concurrent ADPC Activities, with the work by UNDP and the IDSR-UNDP framework for Guiding and Monitoring Disaster Risk Reduction and with the WCDR and Implementation of a 10-year programme was also explained.

PLENARY DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS (30TH MARCH):

Following the presentation of the Concept Paper, general comments were invited from the RCC delegates and the observers as well as the endorsement of the overall approach of the Project. The comments raised included:

- The extent to which the proposal takes into consideration the adaptability of the programme to the different needs and situations faced in different countries.
 - The need for tools to establish linkages between Disaster Risk Management and the development of a checklist
 - The need for a common lexicon

- The importance of discussing Disaster Risk Management in the wider context of Risk Management
- Examples of Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management in India and
- The feasibility of dual-role for relief organisations versus the establishment of DRM specific organisations

Details of these comments follow:

Adaptability of Programme

Ms. Mellgren, Regional Advisor, SIDA noted that mainstreaming would involve many different sectors such as education, health, environment, training and other sectors as well as differences in the methodology of mainstreaming. Presuming that different locations, regions and countries present different situations and therefore different solutions and requirements for mainstreaming, Mr. Brian Parry, President of the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board, Australia further added that the political realities of how each country governed should also be taken into account, such as the different federal, national state or provincial systems that are in place. ADPC was asked if there is an existing blue print for mainstreaming covering different/various situations and issues, the variety of the different planning systems, fundamental systems of governance, the political realities in the different countries and the different ways in which disaster management programmes are financed from country to country.

ADPC responded that the MDRM project would not seek to develop a programme to meet the needs of each and every issue faced by the different countries, but recognised there were certain common elements that would be applicable from country to country when introducing the concept of Disaster Risk Management as part of the different sectors. ADPC realized that they were treading new grounds with a new concept that has yet to be tried and tested and that even experienced disaster management agencies have yet to undertake dialogue and engage with the different sectoral ministries and decision makers within the countries or at the international funding agency level. ADPC was aware that the project was challenging and it was envisaged that in the process of implementation the project guidelines for the methodology for engaging in dialogue with the different sectors would be developed through collective learning.

Development of Tools that Establishes Linkages between Disaster Management and Development Plans and a Checklist

Mr. Kishore, Regional Adviser, UNDP, BCDR suggested that the project should focus on capturing comparative experience of integrating disaster risk management into development practice based on existing initiatives. It was also suggested that the project should develop tools through which the nature and extent of linkages between disaster risk management and development plans could be established as this would allow for informed statements about which sectors to engage. This notion was supported by Mr. Sadraddine from Iran who further suggested the development of a checklist as this would prove helpful for governments and engineers in order to implement and integrate disaster risk management into development practise. Mr. Arambepola, ADPC noted that some of these experiences were being captured in the ADPC Primer on Disaster Risk Management and that this would be detailed in the forth session, dedicated to Urban Risk Reduction and sustainable

development. An assurance was given that the recording of experiences is on-going and will be a continuing exercise.

The Need for a Common Lexicon

Mr. Tom Dolan, Senior Regional Advisor Asia, USAID/OFDA also highlighted that a range of different terms used to describe initiatives of disaster risk management e.g. TDRM and CDRM suggests that these are different activities that require different levels of energy and resources. It was stressed that a common lexicon was needed to define a common goal and objective and that this would be beneficial when engaging with the development community.

The Importance of Discussing Disaster Risk Management in the Wider Context of Risk Management

Mr. Bill Berger, Regional Advisor, USAID/OFDA, Nepal suggested that Disaster Risk Management should be discussed in the wider context of risk management as all countries faces a multitude of risks. Failure to do so would invite unwelcome competition of limited funds for other development issues such as poverty. Mr. Briceno agreed with the suggestion, however he highlighted the advantages in distinguishing the activities of agencies such as ISDR and ADPC as specific to disaster risk management.

Example of Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management into Rural Development in India

Mr. Nambiar drew attention to the directives from the Ministry of Home Affairs to the Rural Development Department that the rural housing programmes should include mitigation measures, especially in hazard prone areas, in order to provide safe and better quality housing even if the number of houses built are less. It is this method through which mitigation is being integrated cross-sectorally in each department. Another example was the Forestry Department being encouraged to re-introduce mangrove forests to mitigate the effects of cyclones.

The Feasibility of Dual-Role for Relief Organisations vs The Establishment of DRM Specific Organisations

In addition, Mr. Kessler requested the RCC participants to contemplate the challenges of changing the mindsets of Government organisations focusing on relief and response to take on the additional responsibility of including disaster risk management issues under their objectives; or whether there was benefit in the establishment of new organisations that are solely focus on disaster risk management issues.

PRESENTATION OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS (31ST MARCH)

During the presentation, ADPC sought specific inputs on the:

- Recommendations of the overall approach of the project and comments on the objectives and specific objectives of the project.
- Identification of key target audiences and agencies at the national level that should be addressed by the Regional concept paper and prototype national guidelines document.
- Agreement with the emphasis on Mainstreaming DRM into Development practice and identification of the specific sectors where priority should be placed in developing detailed guidelines document and checklist.

- Identification of specific steps to focus on for mainstreaming and integrating Disaster Risk Management.
- Identification of existing national and regional initiatives that should be linked to the project.
- Identification of the commitments and inputs that should be sought from the 3 pilot countries.

Having had some time to digest the contents of the concept paper presented on the 30th March, the RCC delegates and observers were divided into 3 working groups to focus on separate issues such that each of the topics could be covered in greater depth.

Recommendations of the Overall Approach of the Project and Comments on the Objectives and Specific Objectives of the Project

The **Group I** presentation was made by Director E.C. Aldea from the Philippines. The Group commented that the overall approach was acceptable. They sought clarification of whether there was an existing MDRM model or if it was still under development.

On the concept that the model would be formulated based on best practices, clarifications were sought on the criteria for the identification of best practices and if these best practices took into consideration the difference institutional mechanisms of the different countries and hazards faced that were particular to the different countries.

Clarifications were sought on the 2nd Objective “To enhance the capacity of National Disaster Management Systems to develop and implement the mainstreaming of DRM in selected sectors.” Calls were made to identify the selected sectors or to add the phrase “according to prevailing hazards in the country”. The RCC members highlighted that impacts on sectors are hazard specific and thus sectors that are engaged in one country might differ from that of another country that experiences different hazards.

Suggestions for the formulation of the concept were that although the mainstreaming of DRM should be comprehensive and applicable to all countries, portions of the concept paper should target specific groupings (e.g. South East Asian, East Asians, South Asian). Suggestions were also made that each country or region should develop their own implementation policies based on the main concept paper.

Mr. Rego highlighted that the concept would draw on good-practice from both the Asian region and other parts of the world and the best ideas from this and other forums. He also noted that that the project sought to articulate “Guidelines” for mainstreaming of DRM but not as a “mother or master concept” to be uniformly implemented.

On the issue on the extent to which differences in the different countries are taken into consideration, and if the project will be implemented on a regional or national level, ADPC’s response was that some components will address regional level activities which will seek to find areas of compatibility and common areas of applicability for the different countries as opposed to highlighting the differences between the countries.

ADPC highlighted the wealth of information and experiences that needs to be shared and noted the benefits that can be gained by listening and learning. Practices from one country that could be applicable to other countries will be highlighted in the Guidelines and that the regional programme would provide the opportunity for countries to come together to discuss and exchange information.

Identification of Specific Sectors where Priority should be Placed in Developing the Detailed Guidelines Document and Checklist

Mr. Ros Sovann from Cambodia presented the **Group II** discussions, who gave a resounding agreement with the emphasis on mainstreaming DRM into development practice and went on to note that mainstreaming should occur in all sectors. However, due to the recognition of the large scope of work that would be entailed in the simultaneous implementation of disaster risk management in all sectors, some critical sectors for priority implementation were identified as the social sectors of education, health, awareness of the needs of the community and the environment; and economic sectors such as agriculture, fisheries (highlighted by Bangladesh), manufacturing and industry, micro-finance and the credit sector, as well as that of infrastructure and the shelter sector. Suggestions were also made for specific steps to focus on for the mainstreaming disaster risk management in these sectors.

Agriculture: The use of forecasts for crop planning and the adoption of hazard (drought) resistant crops.

Infrastructure: The enforcement of building codes, proper land-use planning and zoning. An emphasis was placed on the undertaking of Disaster Risk Impact Assessments prior to the commissioning of any new projects on infrastructure and the incorporation of results.

Shelter was identified for the inclusion as a possible sub-sector under the housing sub-sector of the infrastructure sector. Here, retrofitting and flood proofing of homes, building better shelters and the raising of house platforms.

Micro-Finance: Flexibility in re-payment of loan schedules during emergency situations with the micro-financing sector rescheduling loan repayments based on the ability of the people to make the payment as opposed to a rigid system that enforces repayments during periods of critical disaster events. It was noted that these points were also applicable to the financial services sector and local capital markets. Insurance for crop and agricultural products during emergency situations were additional specific steps that required consideration.

Education: The need to incorporate risk awareness in the curriculum, the increased resistance and hazard proofing of schools and construction of schools in hazardous areas to accommodate their use as emergency shelters.

Health – Improved resistance and hazard proofing of health facilities, the construction of resilient and functional hospitals, as well as the increased preparedness of health facilities to maintain operations during disasters were specific steps that were identified under the health sector.

Overall, the group recommended that mainstreaming of disaster risk management into specific sectors should ensure that both policies and plans are in place. Planning should include disaster risk management goals and objectives that demonstrate due consideration of risk issues and be based on disaster risk assessment.

Plenary Discussion on the Need to Make Further Selection from the Identified Sector

Mr. Rego noted that the suggestions were ambitious if these steps were to be taken up under the current project and opened the discussion to the floor for any additional comments. The participants were also asked if they would recommend further selection from the comprehensive and extensive menu of sectors that had been identified.

Ms. Dilruba agreed on the need for further prioritisation of the identified sectors. Suggestions were made that sectors where some integration of disaster risk management issues has already commenced and on which the project can build on, should be a criteria for selection and accordingly such sectors should be singled out for prioritisation. Example of these are the ADPC-CFAB programme where rainfall and water discharge forecasting were used to interpret impacts on agriculture and the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme in Bangladesh where a climate change component and climatological forecasts have been adopted for use by farmers.

Mr. Sovann suggested that in each country, the integration of disaster risk management into the various sectors should not occur in isolation but should be done in a cross-sectoral and joint manner for at least three sectors, according to the priority needs of the country at national level.

Mr. Sadraddine further recommended that priority should be placed in developing detailed guidelines document and checklist at the regional level that could form a “menu” of the sets of interest from which national programmes can implement or adopt according to their priorities.

Mr. Kessler commended the participants for their helpful identification of the specific sectors. The discussion had demonstrated the diversity of the sets of interest and explored the linkages between them enabling the participants to think in a cross-sectoral manner. ADPC reiterated that it would shape the programme through regional activities that could be pared down into bite-size activities to enable the national endeavours to be able to cope with the magnitude of mainstreaming disaster risk management into development practice.

Identification of Existing National and Regional Initiatives that should be Linked to the Project

The **Group III** discussions were presented by Ms. Vichitrananda from AusAid, Thailand. Vietnam, China and Jordan and representatives from the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and ICIMOD participated in this group discussion with each country giving a quick overview of the structure of their national disaster management organisation.

Vietnam highlighted the activities of their national disaster management programme and their national action plan that includes a poverty reduction strategy and Jordan noted the existence of their national plan for the reduction of Disaster Risks. China explained that they had an emergency relief preparedness plan and that disaster management was carried out at different levels, namely at the National Disaster Management Committee, provincial or local levels as well as thematic levels pertaining to specific hazards. The MRC Flood Management and Mitigation Programme (FMMP), in which ADPC is a partner, was cited as an example of an existing regional initiative.

Suggestions of existing initiatives that should be linked to the project included the regional MRC FMMP and the ICIMOD climate change related programme that focused on information sharing between 3 countries on early warning systems for floods and landslides. Mr. Bun Veasna suggested that the project could be linked to and provide additional support to capacity building components targeted towards community based and national disaster managers to assist the member countries to develop their own national plans. It was noted that the timing of both programmes would complement each other as the MRC project was scheduled to commence in the year 2006.

Identification of the Commitments and Inputs from the 3 Pilot Countries

The suggested criteria for the identification of the 3 pilot countries include:

- The presence of political will and support through draft or endorsed legislation
- The existence of structural and non-structural mitigation and capacity building programmes
- The readiness of countries to share experience, knowledge, technology and to engage activity in inter-governmental information exchange,
- The availability and collective analysis of data, and
- The willingness of countries to provide personnel and resources towards the project.

DISCUSSION

Experience of Including Disaster Management into National Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

The RCC recommended that the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers that are currently being drawn up by the various countries should also address, incorporate and include obligations to integrate disaster risk management issues. Another participant expressed concern in making disaster management a separate entity within the poverty reduction strategy paper lest this would divert attention away from the need to integrate disaster risk management into every day development practice in all sectors. Various countries reported on their experience as follows.

Vietnam: The Need for Effective Implementation of Disaster Mitigation Strategies

Mr. Nuoi reported that up the recent poverty reduction strategy of Vietnam includes a disaster mitigation section. Vietnam has a water disaster management action plan developed a decade ago, in order to upgrade structural measures in rural areas. The disaster mitigation strategies differ from region to region e.g. the Mekong River Delta, the Red River Delta, the central mountain regions and the coastal provinces. Following the severe flood of 1999 in central Vietnam there was an influx of financial assistance from donors, governments, non-government and international organizations that led to the establishment of NDM partnership. Through this partnership, donors have provided financial assistance for the implementation of structural measures in disaster prone areas and provinces and non-structural programmes for the building national institutional capacities.

Bangladesh and Laos: Initiatives to Integrate Disaster Risk Management in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

As an example to integrate Disaster Risk Management into the poverty reduction strategy papers in RCC Member Countries, Ms Dilruba of UNDP Bangladesh highlighted the success of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief in Bangladesh in incorporating disaster risk reduction into the interim poverty reduction strategy paper and its efforts at implementation through their embarkation of the national risk reduction programme. Ms. Dilbruba informed the RCC participants that the completion of the poverty reduction strategy paper is envisaged by December 2004. In addition to this, continued efforts for the integration of disaster risk management into the poverty reduction strategy paper is ensured by the Secretary-in-charge of MDMR being a member of a high-level steering committee that drives the formulation of this paper.

Mr. Phetsavang provided information about the status in Lao PDR, where the current government policy on poverty reduction includes many provisions targeted to assist the poor, however, in its implementation there is no clarification of specific poverty reducing disaster mitigation activities that are to be undertaken to assist the target group in their coping mechanism during disaster events.

Cambodia: Inclusion of Disaster Management as a Separate Sector

Mr. Sovann shared the Cambodian where the production of the poverty reduction strategy paper in which the Government declared the inclusion of disaster management but not disaster risk reduction. Cambodia called for the meeting to consider the necessity of disaster management to form a separate section of the national poverty reduction strategy paper as it tends to encourage the formation of separate programmes and institutions that are responsible for disaster management that deal solely with response and relief issues. A preferred alternative suggestion was for disaster risk reduction to be integrated into all sectors and that all the sectors should implement and operate disaster risk reduction measures as opposed to actions being taken by one separate disaster management body.

Philippines: Institutionalisation of Disaster Risk Management and Cost Effective Non-Structural Measures

The long experience of the Philippines in the introduction of disaster reduction measures was noted by Director E.C. Aldea. Examples of this included the last big explosion of the volcano Mt. Mayon in the Bicol region during 1999 where there was zero casualty. This was achieved due to the preparedness measures that are in place but not as a conscious effort of poverty alleviation. Only recently in January 2004 has the economic impact of disasters in the Philippines been well documented by a World Bank study, where previously the monthly and annual disaster losses has been taken for granted as inevitable. This study demonstrated that the potential improvement of the Philippine economy had these disaster been prevented. Examples of earthquake reduction studies include, in particular, in the province of Marikina. Other current large-scale mitigation programmes include the Metro Manila Impact Reduction Study (MMIRS) in cooperation with JICA. However, most of the mitigation activities were structural and hence costly and only recently have disaster insurance and non-structural measures been considered.

Additional Challenges and Mechanisms to Mainstream Disaster Risk Management into Development Practice

Mr. Phetsavang from Laos, PDR noted that national disaster management offices of Asia were interested and ready to pursue the mainstreaming of disaster risk management into development practice. However, it was highlighted that difficulties might be encountered as it is dependent on the existing political will of the governing decision maker of the country at any one time. It was stressed that development plans are often viewed in terms of maximising the direct economic gains regardless of the environmental impacts. The challenge lie with sustaining political interest in disaster risk management at all levels. Hence, the formulation of tools or checklist to assist the decision makers to mainstream disaster risk management into development practices and finding new ways to interest and interact with them will encourage political adoption of the concept and the commitment to allocate the additional costs involved in mainstreaming disaster risk management into development practices.

Mr. Phetsavang also reported on efforts of the ASEAN Committee for Disaster Management (ACDM), to convene a Ministerial meeting on disaster management with the purpose of bringing to their attention of the effects of disasters on countries development plans. Namely, that the economic losses brought about by disasters of some countries amount up to 5,6-10% GDP which interrupts, causes huge delays in the countries development plans and forces the re-allocation of budgets toward response, relief and rehabilitation costs.

Roles and Responsibilities of the National Disaster Management Organisations

Mr. Phetsavang also brought up a key point that decision-making is based on economics, available resources and that governments always seek the most economical options. Although there is a need for planning and decision making to be more flexible, it is the responsibility of the national disaster management organisations to provide informed options to the decision makers, demonstrating the benefits of carrying out disaster risk assessment and encourage transparent, decision making processes.

Discussion on the Benefits of Disaster Risk Assessment Studies and Research on the Socio-Economic Impacts of Disasters

Dr. Pak from ESCAP suggested that the issue of research should be addressed by the national disaster management organisations. In particular disaster risk assessment studies should be undertaken and the amount of GDP that is directed towards disaster relief and rehabilitation should be quantified. The potential to set back the millennium development goals and other development priorities of the various countries, should also be demonstrated. Therefore, it was urged that the various countries should look into undertake comprehensive research to analyse the cost of disaster events for a particular country and the benefits of mitigation measures, to bring to the attention of decision makers the economic costs involved in ignoring disaster risk assessments.

Mr. Rego noted that research initiatives will be undertaken by UNESCAP and UNDP on developing a methodology of measuring the socio-economic impact of hydro-meteorological disasters in May 2004. Similar methodologies, known as the ECLAC methodology which was developed in the Latin American and Caribbean region and introduced by ADPC in 2002 during a Provention World Bank workshop on disaster prevention. ADPC is also currently working with the Gujarat Government to develop a damage assessment and loss estimation methodology in Gujarat. The workshop in May, which will have synergies with the programme to mainstream disaster risk management in development practice.

The Importance of Synergies between Disaster Risk Management and the Climate Change Convention and Inclusion of DRM into the National Sustainable Development Plan

Given the lack for resources for international and conventional activities and the constrains of financial resources, the RCC participants were urged to consider the importance of synergies between Disaster Risk Management activities and Climate Change activities. Dr. Pak brought to the attention the existence of a financial mechanism under the Climate Change Convention and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) from which countries could obtain funds to make adaptations related to the impacts of climate change (e.g. floods, drought, cyclones and typhoons; land degradation, water resources

management issues). This Global Environment Facility (GEF) represented a source from which monies could be tapped should the national disaster management offices work with the national committee for climate change to integrate their national disaster risk management plans as part of their national climate change adaptation plan. The GEF could also be tapped by establishing links between disaster risk management and biodiversity conservation. The RCC members were encouraged to think beyond immediate Disaster Risk Management issues and establish linkages at the international convention level to tap precious financial resources.

UNDP PRESENTATION ON REDUCING DISASTER RISK

The UNDP Report on Reducing Disaster Risk: a challenge for development was presented by Mr. Kamal Kishore, Regional Disaster Reduction Advisor, UNDP Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery. The objectives of the report launched by UNDP in February 2004, the links between development and disaster risk, the global disaster risk index (DRI) based on mortality, the concepts of absolute and relative physical exposure and relative vulnerability indicators was explained in the context of earthquakes, tropical cyclones and floods. The presentation explained the limitations of the DRI and the conclusion and recommendations of the report. The report highlights the discrepancy between the exposure to disasters and its impacts on high and low human development countries. A copy of the report was made available to each country delegation.

PLENARY DISCUSSION

Dr. Pak, UNESCAP commended UNDP for a highly useful report. He commented that it is a universal phenomena that the poorest people with the lowest coping or adaptive capacities that are the most vulnerable to any kinds of disasters. The comparative studies should be carried out in areas of similar geographical settings, locations and circumstances as these affect the analysis of the results and allow for comparable conclusions to be drawn.

In response to Dr. Pak's comments, Mr. Kishore noted the linkage between poverty and disaster risk. Whilst it was true that the poor were more vulnerable, this is not necessarily always the case at the country level, the scale at which analysis was done. For examples in the case for floods, the relative vulnerability is highest for the medium development index countries and the low development index countries like Bangladesh has lower relative vulnerability due to the efforts over the last 20 years to reduce the vulnerability.

Mr. Sadraddine, Iran, commented that Iran faces the highest vulnerability to earthquakes including 30 other types of globally identified disasters and experienced very high mortalities and casualties as a consequence. And although the average population is similar to that exposed to similar disasters in America, the difference in mortality and casualty rates is due to Iran and other developing countries have no access to sophisticated technology. It should be the mandate of meetings like the RCC to encourage the developing countries to benefit from transfer of this technology as part of humanitarian efforts to reduce the mortality and economic and physical losses faced.

In conclusion, the co-chair of the first plenary session, Mr Nambiar noted that ADPC has set itself a formidable agenda for the RCC Meeting both in terms of capacity building, risk assessment and the MDMR project. This has been reinforced by the presentation made by Mr. Kishore in which he revealed the tremendous amount of cooperation that is required in

addressing the issue of poverty through the disaster management paradigm. This is a challenge and there exists a need to share experiences of certain country strategies, so that other countries can benefit especially through knowledge networking and resource mobilisation and other various aspects. It is time to revisit some of these issues and to focus on regional cooperation during RCC4 and in the coming months. He urged the RCC members to work on the guidelines for their country strategies and in addition study the good practices that could be shared as well as examine the possibility of cooperative joint projects as a first step towards regional cooperation. Mr. Nambiar thanked everyone for their fine participation.

The co-chair, Mr. Phetsavang commented that the idea of developing indicators on disaster risks and impacts was a useful one, however, he noted that the intensity of disasters differ and may affect the preparedness of the countries. Coping mechanisms for annually occurring disasters and extreme events differ. Mr. Phetsavang thanked all the RCC delegates, partners organisations and stakeholders for active participation in a successful discussion and hoped that similar discussion would continue at future RCC Meetings.

VI. SESSION IV: URBAN RISK REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: EXPERIENCES OF RCC MEMBER COUNTRIES, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL INITIATIVES

The rest of the second day's agenda covered Urban Risk Reduction and Sustainable development, the theme proposed at the 3rd RCC Meeting. This session was conducted in three sub-sessions each of which was co-chaired by a different panel of RCC delegates. The sessions comprised of presentations that analysed the experiences in Urban Risk Reduction of the RCC Member Countries, ADPC and UN-Habitat, and the lessons that can be learnt for broader application. Progress on the ADPC Primer on Disaster Risk Management for Asia was also presented and general comments and specific comments on the draft of the chapter on Policy and Institutional Arrangement were solicited during the group discussion.

The first sub-session, held in the morning of 30th March, and was co-chaired by Mr. Faiz-ur Rahman, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Pakistan and Major General P Dash, Head of the National Disaster Management Agency of Mongolia. The facilitator for this sub-session was Mr. Earl Kessler.

Mr. Rahman began by highlighting factors that increase risks in the urban areas. Noting that the perception of urbanisation as modernisation attracts migration from rural to the urban areas resulting in a mushroom growth that disrupts urban planning, creates difficulties in the proper implementation of urban strategies and increases urban risks. A second factor that increases urban risk is the unregulated release of toxic industrial waste due to the high concentration of industrial sites in the urban areas resulting in health hazards. Another area of concern is the enactment and enforcement of legislation to regulate exhaust from automobiles as these release CO₂ and contribute to air pollution and health hazards. Mr. Rahman also noted his concern for the need of stakeholder agencies to be structurally reformed such that they could better combat urban risks such as fires, accidents, black-outs, disruption of communication networks and expressed his expectations that the presentations

would examine risk reduction management and the introduction of additional and new methods to reduce risks to an acceptable level.

Mr. N.M.S.I. Arambepola noted that the formation of the Urban Disaster Risk Management team was in the recognition of the risks faced in urban areas. He complimented the RCC members for having the foresight to proposed Urban Risk Reduction as the theme for RCC4 as this was testament to the importance of Urban Risk Reduction placed by the RCC Member Countries on this issue. He thanked USAID/OFDA for their 9 years of support to ADPC's Asian Urban Disaster Mitigation Programme (AUDMP) that has resulted in pilot projects in 30 cities in 10 countries. From the lessons learnt from AUDMP, ADPC has gain invaluable insight into the challenges and issues faced by cities.

The issues faced by present day Asian cities are the limited funds available to cater to the rapid urban population growth, of which approximately 34% percent of live below the poverty line, and resulting unplanned urban sprawl. The percentage of the Asian population living in cities is predicted to increase to from 38% in 2000 to 55% by 2025. This leads to escalating vulnerability to a host of natural and man-made hazards that form one of the many problems faced by urban authorities. The urban risk reduction challenges faced by city governments is the establishment of appropriate, proactive strategies for integrating disaster risk management within their overall framework for achieving economic well-being, social development and environmental sustainability, and by moving away from the relief and rehabilitation strategies. These risk reduction strategies should seek to promote safer construction; limit damage to property, assets and infrastructure; ensure adequate emergency facilities; build capacity for better land use management; reduce poverty; empower communities; provide good governance; and ensure transparency of government and within the private sector. A key tool for urban risk reduction is disaster risk assessments to ensure that new developments do not contribute to increased risks and vulnerability.

CHANGING THE PARADIGM (FILM)

A film "Changing the Paradigm" provided an overview of the objectives, approach and activities of the Asian Urban Disaster Mitigation Programme (AUDMP), examples of low cost and low technical structural and non-structural measures that were adopted during the AUDMP projects in Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Lao and Indonesia and new initiatives that have arisen from the programme.

The co-chair Mr Rahman noted that the urban risk reduction issues highlighted of Mr Aramebepola's presentation and the film are the provision of portable water; the need for the preservation and improvements to environmental conditions; increased public awareness; the need to make available adequate amenities in rural areas to curb rural-urban migration; and the establishment of authorised institutions to enforce risk reduction measures.

PLENARY DISCUSSION

Mr. Kessler emphasised that the mitigation strategy is proactive pursuit that involves anticipatory planning to reduce loss. One of the ways this could be achieved is to re-examine and revitalise the shelter sector options in low vulnerability areas, as opposed to the reactive efforts such as home improvement lending and slum up-gradation. The need also exists to expand the definition of urban infrastructure development and financing to include dykes, raised walk-ways, traditional water storage facilities as a coping mechanisms

for drought, in addition to the traditional water and garbage utilities. Another area to be explored in the current climate of the Asian economic growth is the development of the domestic capital market as a means of financing urban risk reduction initiatives as opposed to seeking resources from the international donor community.

Mr. Ross Sovann, observed that the presentations were interesting and an example of good documentation of the success of the programme. He was personally involved in the successful AUDMP project in Cambodia which provided good opportunities where grassroots community able to build capacity and at the same time develop ownership of the programme. However, more needs to be done in the follow-up of the programme to ensure that the benefits and good practise from the programme is sustained.

Ms Mellgren noted that there are often different approaches amongst urban financial planners on the process of achieving economic growth as well as instances of corruption, and sought clarification on how the programme were able to over come this issue and if the activities included awareness creation and information dissemination targeted at this sector of decision makers.

Mr. Arambepola responded that key decision makers had been identified as an essential group for awareness creation as well as the development of actions plans so that budgets can be allocated towards the risk reduction measures. The action plans were also designed to include other stakeholders such that they could implement some of the activities. This ensured that there was two-way communication and that the programme was results oriented, thus generating much interest amongst the decision makers and urban authorities.

Mr. A.H.M. Shamsul Islam sought further clarification on the progress on the Primer for Disaster Risk Reduction and which ten countries the UDRM intends to target for the institutionalisation of appropriate training under the their strategy for knowledge development and capacity building.

Mr. Arambepola replied by saying that the UDRM team aims to develop two volumes this year to be translated into three or four national languages. The 10 countries for institutional training would build on the interest shown in training during AUDMP and in follow up activities.

The co-chair Mr. Rahman thanked the participants, concluded the question session and invited the presentations of the country papers.

MANAGING URBAN DISASTER RISKS IN NEPAL: CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE NEEDS

Mr. Durga Raj Sharma, Under Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Nepal gave the participants an overview of the current status and future needs relating to urban risk reduction in Nepal. The range of natural hazards faced, major disaster events over the last century, a list of government and non-government agencies that were responsible for disaster management, statistics of damages caused by disasters in 2002 and 2003 and the mechanism of data collection and dissemination and the disaster management objectives and strategies of the Ministry of Home Affairs was shared with the participants.

The causes of urbanisation and a comprehensive analysis of factors that contribute towards urban risk in Kathmandu was presented as well as the organisational structure of the relief and response mechanism in Kathmandu and budget provisions that was available for relief. Mr Sharma noted that although the National Action Plan had been prepared in 1996, it needed to be revised and effectively implemented. The Government of Nepal realised the huge and challenging task ahead and that steps had been taken to improve its capacity to

manage disasters. Further assistance from the international community was encouraged especially in the raising of public awareness and the sharing of technical and information systems.

WATER DISASTER MITIGATION FOR URBAN AREAS IN VIETNAM

Mr. Nguyen Sy Nuoi, Deputy Director, Department of Dyke Management, Flood and Storm Control, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam gave a comprehensive presentation on the current status and future needs of water disaster mitigation for urban areas in Vietnam. These areas are most susceptible to floods and storms resulting in 6,735 fatalities and estimated economic losses equivalent to 2 billion USD over the last decade. The varied structural and non-structural urban water disaster mitigation measures that were being undertaken for mountainous urban areas, Hanoi, the central coastal cities and for urban areas in the Mekong River Delta was presented.

Mr. Nuoi noted that the political commitment of the Vietnamese Government to reduce the effects of storms and floods along with Vietnam's thousand year experience and the rapid development of science and technology in flood control management, and the strong regional and international cooperation and support in terms of finance and technology transfer. However, shortfalls were still experienced in the resistance requirements of infrastructure to meet the intensity of recurring floods and storms, the lack of community awareness and experience in flood and storm preparedness and the limited financial resources for annual flood and storm control activities.

Dr. Pak Sum Low made an observation that when he was last in Vietnam, he visited a place called Nam Ting, along the coasts where his Vietnamese colleagues were able to show him how much the sea level has risen in 10 years. This exemplifies a potential hazard associated with sea-level rise that should be noted by coastal cities.

In response to Mr. Azadeh sought clarification on how flood warnings were transmitted to communities downstream. Mr. Nuoi responded that an UNEP funded initiative exists, during the flood system, the meteorological information is provided and thus dissemination of potential floods is easily relayed. He noted that coastal provinces were experiencing coast-line erosion and this along with sea-level rise present real threats to coastal and low-lying cities such as Ho Chi Min and even slight rises by 20-50 cm poses risks to the city.

Mr. Rahman concluded the sub-session by noting that some of the questions raised were quite meaningful to the context of urban risk management, namely, the importance of informed decision making; pilot programmes initiatives; the taking of a proactive approach; public awareness and risk communication through grassroots organisations; and the development of guidelines for effective disaster risk management.

Following a lunch break, Mr. A.H.M Shamsul Islam, Director-General, Disaster Management Bureau, MDMR, Bangladesh and Mr. E. Barzi Sadraddine, Deputy Director General, Bureau for Studies and Coordination of Development, Iran co-chaired the second sub-session that was facilitated by Mr. N.M.S.I. Arambepola. This afternoon session comprised of country presentations as well as a paper by UN-Habitat.

MANAGING URBAN DISASTER RISKS IN THE PHILIPPINES: CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE NEEDS

Director Elma C Aldea, Deputy Administrator, Office of Civil Defence, Philippines presented a paper on the disaster risks faced by Metropolitan Manila. Area. Factors that exacerbate the countries vulnerability to disasters and its socio-economic development were rapid population growth (2.5%), change in land use patterns, migration to urban areas, environmental degradation and unplanned urbanisation. Metro Manila comprises of 13 cities and 4 municipalities and 1,890 barangays with 10 million residents within an area of 636 sq kms. This number swells by several millions during the weekdays due to transient workers and students from nearby towns resulting in a density of 16,000 per sq km. 36% of the total population are squatters despite the GDP of Metro Manila being 2.5 times higher than the nation's per capita GDP.

The primary hazards encountered in Metro Manila are rain-induced floods, structural fires and earthquakes. Factors contributing to floods include administrative lack of coordination between the Local Government Units particularly in the technical construction of drainage, the intrusion of informal settlers that obstruct the drainage systems, the lack of funding to rehabilitate the water-ways and the tidal regime along Manila Bay and Laguna Lake. Systems and programmes are in place to reduce the disaster risks in Metro Manila however a concerted effort was needed to channel funds allocated to intervention and relief towards enhancing equitable and sustainable development. Future needs include improving the capacity for damage and needs assessments; the integration of disasters into national risk management framework, a bottom-up approach with participation of all stakeholders and the development of a risk sharing/financing mechanism. The challenges lie in empowering the local governments, political commitment to enforcement of legislation and in building a culture of prevention where benefits are intangible.

URBAN DISASTER REDUCTION IN CHINA: CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE NEEDS

Professor Li Jing, Deputy Director, National Disaster Reduction Center of China presented a paper on the current status and future direction of urban disaster reduction in China. The current urbanisation rate in China is 39% and this is expected to rise to 45% in 2020. Losses due to disasters in China in the year 2002 amounted to 2% of the GDP. 45% of cities in China are situated in areas of high seismic risk where earthquake magnitude is greater than 7 and 70% of the cities are threatened by flood, drought and marine storms. A key challenge that is faced by urban areas in China is the lack of an integrated command and control system amongst the 17 different departments who are each responsible for various specific phases of disaster management e.g. forecasting, rescue and relief and inadequate sharing of information. Thus the future needs identified was that of a comprehensive disaster management system, an urban alarm and emergency command system, development of information technology to facilitate informed decisions during emergencies, and the enforcement of appropriate legislation and to strengthen regional cooperation. Ongoing activities to address urban risks in Beijing was the construction of 1000 emergency shelters and temporary shelters at sports complexes and large parks, an emergency response planning team and system, equipping the sub-way systems with emergency facilities, and new satellite monitoring systems.

MANAGING DISASTER RISK IN YANGON, MYANMAR

Mr. U Than Oo, Director General, Relief and Resettlement Department, Myanmar presented a paper on managing disaster risk in Yangon. The hazards to which its 6 million population are exposed are fire, floods and storms. Fires were particularly concentrated in areas with unplanned high-density settlements with narrow lanes, however this problem has been alleviated with the building of new towns with adequate draining systems and the segregation of residential and industrial zones. Institutional arrangements for disaster management is present in the form of the Central Committee on Disaster Preparedness who have drawn up a disaster prevention plan that include activities before, during and after disaster events. Reserve water supply systems are situated throughout the city for emergency purposes and sluice gates have been installed to mitigate the effects of tidal storms. With increased rates of urbanisation in Yangon, increased incidence of road accidents and environmental pollution are expected.

MANAGING DISASTER RISK IN ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA

Major General P. Dash, Chief of National Disaster Management Agency Mongolia gave a comprehensive presentation on managing disaster risk in Ulaanbaatar. Ulaanbaatar covers an area of 470,000 and is home to 821,700 residents or 33% of the Mongolian population. Population growth and urban migration are factors that contribute to urban growth resulting in a population increase by 41% during 1989-2002. Poverty is of a major concern in urban areas due to high unemployment rates despite 40% of GDP generated by the capital and a 20% growth in GDP in 2001. Hazards faced by the population of Ulaanbaatar include forest and steppe fires, technical accidents and floods, human and animal infectious diseases, chemical substance release and to a lesser extent radioactive contamination, earthquakes and sever snow and dust storms.

The Parliament of Mongolia passed a law on Disaster protection on 20 June 2003 and established a national Agency for Disaster management on 7th January 2004. Future needs to reduce earthquake and flood risks was presented along with future directions envisaged to improving and building capacity of disaster protection organisations and adapting good practices through expanding external relationships and cooperation with other countries and organisations such as ADPC.

The co-chair, Mr. A.H.M. Shamsul Islam, thanked Major-General Dash for his presentation and noted that he had touch almost every point starting from the general situation of demography, population growth, general sociology especially poverty, general economic aspects, infrastructure liability, hazards, institutional aspects, vulnerability, programmes and projects. In particular, he commended the comprehensive range of hazards that was identified in the presentation and encouraged the RCC participants to refer to the country paper that was distributed as it would enrich their experience.

THAILAND URBAN DISASTER MITIGATION PROJECT

Mr. Suporn Ratananakin, Chief of Foreign Relations (Sub-Bureau), Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM), Ministry of Interior, Thailand presented a paper on the Thailand Urban Disaster Mitigation Project (TUDMP) implemented by the Department in partnership with ADPC. 30% of Thailand's population live in urban areas with close to 2 million people resident in the area covered by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. The major natural hazards faced by the urban population are tropical storms, typhoon and floods, and to a lesser extent drought, landslides and earthquakes. Man-made disasters

include collapse of buildings, explosions, release of radioactive substances, chemical leaks and fires. Institutional arrangements, structural interventions, programmes and projects are in place in Bangkok to manage disaster risks and these are administered by the Bangkok include the Bangkok and the Municipal Civil Defence Committees. Non-structural measures to reduce urban disaster risks are being undertaken by the Thailand Urban Disaster Mitigation Project. Factors contributing to vulnerability are identified as poverty, environmental degradation, expansion of urban infrastructure, and the lack of stringent law enforcement.

MANAGING DISASTER RISK IN LAO CITIES

The disaster risk faced by cities in Lao and its management was presented by Mr. Phetsavang Sounnalath, Director, National Disaster Management Office, Lao PDR. The four major cities of Lao, namely Luangprabang, Vientiane, Savannakhet and Pakse are situated along the banks of the Mekong River. The 2-3% rate of population growth in Laos places pressures on the poor condition of its urban infrastructure. Factors that increased the vulnerability of the urban population were the high concentration of industry within the urban centres, unplanned settlements, traffic congestions. Major hazards faced within the cities are fires, floods, and health hazards caused by insufficient garbage removal services. Government policy and urban development plan as well as the Lao Urban Disaster Mitigation Project (LUDMP) are in place to deal with these issues. Future challenges were listed as the need for financial resources for project implementation, training for technical staff, increased public awareness and early warning programmes.

Mr Phetsavang presented the work done by his department and ADPC under the LUDMP dealing with Fire Hazards in Vientiane where one of the objectives was to reduce fire incidents in the capital city. Activities under this programme included fire hazard mapping, needs assessment and data collection, meetings, workshops, training, public campaigns, school programmes, community awareness and the training of volunteers. The implementation of the activities was carried out jointly by the Urban Research Institute (URI), the fire and prevention and Protection Department, the Traffic Police Department and the Vientiane Municipality. Stakeholders of the project comprised 8 target villages of 4 districts of Vientiane including school teachers and over 2000 school students. The third phase of the programme to replicate the activities in Luangprabang is scheduled to commence in the near future.

The co-chair, Mr. A.H.M Shamsul Islam thanked Mr Phetsavang for his presentation and brought to the attention that Mr. Phetsavang had used the word problem throughout his presentation. P stands for priority, r stands for regulation, o stands for ordain, b stands for bottle-necks both institutional and technical, l stands for lingering on issues that should be addressed, e stands for equity which needs to be maintained between urban and rural population and m stands for manifold, one or two measure may not be sufficiently to reduce disaster risks.

URBAN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN SRI LANKA

Ms. Manel Kuruppu, Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Sri Lanka gave a presentation on urban disaster risk reduction in Sri Lanka. Natural hazards such as floods, landslides, drought and cyclones impact the livelihood, health, social systems and culture of the urban population, factors that are often ignored when analysing the cost and benefit assessment

due to their intangible nature. These impacts should also take into consideration costs, hardship and constraints during the period of replacement and should not merely be reduced to monetary figures that are not recorded in human terms. Lessons learnt from recent disaster events in Sri Lanka demonstrate that disaster impacts in urban areas are exponential compared to rural areas, mobilisation of and contributions for relief assistance from numerous stakeholders are needed at short notice, the highest commitment from all authorities in relief assistance was necessary, as is media support for information dissemination, ability of local institutions to provide rapid and accurate assessment of disaster affected areas and the creation of public awareness.

The Government of Sri Lanka is currently reviewing a study by ADPC that highlights areas of special attention that are needed for defining a long-term risk reduction strategy. These include enhanced capacity for long-term forecasting, early warning systems and dissemination of data, improved emergency management and response capacity, facilities for rapid assessment of emergency needs, information presentation and dissemination and enhancement of capacity to reduce social impacts.

NATURAL DISASTERS IN CAMBODIA

Mr. Ros Sovann, Advisor, National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), Royal Government of Cambodia provided insights into the mission, composition, organisational structure, functions and responsibilities of NCDM. The areas of cooperation with other institutions included capacity building, and damage and needs assessment (where effective coordination by the NCDM was the establishment of a policy framework and formal institutional partnerships) participatory NGO representation, open and consultative information sharing, dynamic and creative leadership and strong political support. The results of effective coordination included the formation of effective risk reduction strategies, the maximisation of limited resources, focused beneficiary targeting, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, effective and efficient utilisation and dissemination of information and the identification of the different actors involved in disaster management. The challenges faced by NCDM were given and it was highlighted although political commitment was present, actions were needed on policy development and community based disaster risk management.

Co-chair Mr. A.H.M Shamsul Islam noted that to live free from disasters was not an empty dream and invited Director C. Aldea, Civil Defence Deputy Administrator, Philippines and Mr. Supporn Ratananakin, Chief of Foreign Relations (Sub-Bureau), Thailand to chair the next sub-session, facilitated by Mr. Rajesh Sharma. Mr N.M.S.I Arambepola concluded the session by presenting the lessons learnt from the AUDMP and by outlining the future directions of the UDRM team.

UN-HABITAT REPORT ON RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT IN BAM, IRAN

Mr. Esteban Leon, Disaster Management Specialist of the DM unit of UN-Habitat, Nairobi, provided an account of the UN-Habitat experience in Bam, Iran following the earthquake on the morning of the 26th December 2003 during which there were 43,000 fatalities and 90% of buildings were either heavy damaged or completely destroyed. Reconstruction efforts by UNDP, UN-Habitat, the Housing Federation of the Islamic Revolution and the Municipality of Bam are being undertaken through a joint project “Community-Based shelter Reconstruction Project in Bam”. The objective of the project is to translate the concept of

community empowerment into a set of implementation guidelines whilst assisting 140 families in the rebuilding of permanent shelters and to promote coherent assistance to disaster victims for the sustainable reconstruction of their communities.

Lessons learnt indicated that disaster risk reduction starts at the local level, that long term strategies are needed, that relief, humanitarian and development issues are linked, and that they should be linked through resource mobilisation. The common challenges faced in Bam that must be addressed simultaneously are the rebuilding of physical and social infrastructure, the reintegration of returning populations, the strengthening of governing authority and civil society and the maintenance of security whilst developing a fair system.

Director Aldea briefly commented that Mr. Leon's presentation provided an indication on the importance of international NGO's and humanitarian organisations in assisting beleaguered communities particularly communities that have undergone massive calamities in Bam. The experiences in Gujarat and Kobe were recalled in particular the role of the communities and the self-help that was forthcoming in helping to rebuild the community.

PLENARY DISCUSSION: LINKING ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND REDUCING DISASTER RISK

Ms Mellgren brought to the attention an example of a humble and a non-ambitious illustration of the cooperation between humanitarian and development organisations. In some of the presentations on Urban Risk Management, the disconnect between the relief and development organisations, and the interdependence between the environment measures and risk reduction has been mentioned. This is a theme championed by ISDR's publication *Living with Risk* (2002) where it is recognised that there are inherent links between disaster risk reduction and environmental management. The use of environmental tools for disaster reduction has not yet been widely applied by many practitioners. In an effort to address this issue, SIDA commissioned ADPC to seek empirical evidence within an Asian context to better understand these linkages and to identify potential synergies between environmental projects and efforts to reduce disasters. She shared a copy of the study entitled "Environment Degradation and Disaster Risk" produced by SIDA and ADPC, with further copies made available to the delegates. Areas addressed in this publication examines how investments in environmental management and sustainable development also reduced disaster risks; the creation of the prevention dividend that accrues from appropriate land use and development planning; and the extent to which this prevention dividend can be measured and how the ability to estimate these value added might enhance policy and programme planning.

With reference to the intangible socio and human benefits accruing from investment in prevention by Mrs. Kuruppu, the definition for prevention dividend which would assist in quantifying these benefits is, the value of foregone losses that accrue from well designed and implemented disaster risk reduction measures including environmental management and sustainable development initiatives. Ms Mellgren hoped that the publication which reviews the literature on environmental aspects of disaster risks in particular flood risks and examines the possibility of finding the prevention dividend would stimulate further interest in these issues. The publication also contains suggestions from the consultant that local models are desirable for further development that may form an important component of environmental impact assessments. In the meantime, prevention dividends may be achieved by emphasising the role environmental management in poverty alleviation and enhanced community resilience. These are in line with the issues that have arisen during the

presentations relating to coping mechanisms and local conditions of community and participation by communities.

THE PRIMER ON DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT FOR ASIA

Dr. Buddi Weerasinghe, ADPC presented the Policy Chapter of Volume One of the Primer on Disaster Risk Management for Asia to be produced by ADPC through a visual presentation of the chapter on Policy and Legal and Institutional Arrangements and its features. The Primer is designed to be a practical, user-friendly, hands-on, updated resource guide for disaster management practitioners that currently consists of three volumes on generic aspects, slow onset flood and earthquakes, with the former two volumes are funded by USAID/OFDA and UNDP respectively. The rationale of the Primer is to provide simple, comprehensive guidelines on procedures, mechanisms and good practices from AUDMP and other past and present initiatives through a case-studies based and lessons learnt approach. The Primer is unique in that sections of the publication are targeted specifically at decision makers, policy developers, planning implementers, and implementing support groups, such that it allows for selective reading of sections relevant to the different target groups and includes cross-references describing mechanisms for successful disaster risk management. The process, progress, content, layout and navigational features and directional tools of the Primer were explained. Reactions to the contents and presentation of, additional features and improvements to the chapter were solicited and comments were presented during the Discussion Group Presentation.

GROUP DISCUSSION: URBAN RISK REDUCTION AND REVIEW OF THE DRM PRIMER

Co-chair Director Aldea thanked Ms Mellgren for the information and directed the RCC participants to address four questions in their respective working groups. The four items for discussion were:

1. What are the main issues that ADPC should concentrate on in the context of Urban Disaster Reduction?
2. What are the needs of city governments to deal with disaster risks, both for policy and its implementation?
3. What are the major capacity building needs and constraints in terms of Urban Disaster Risk Management?
4. Comment on the Policy Chapter of the Primer and general comments.

PRESENTATION OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Upon the request of co-chair Mr. Supporn Ratananakin, Mr Sovann presented the discussion of **Group One**. The main issues that ADPC should address with regards to Urban Risk Reduction was to enhance and continue the CBDRM initiatives; share information and lessons learnt between RCC Member countries; seek to set-up follow up mechanisms for programmes implemented; define the probability of urban risk for each Member Country and inform them of this probability; and to ensure that there are mechanism for project sustainability and replication. The needs of city governments include coordination amongst agencies concerned, the consideration of all urban risk factors in all development projects and the empowerment of local government. In terms of Capacity Building, the needs identified were raising the awareness of problems to seek the involvement of all relevant sectors; the exchange of skill and capacity especially through the use of electronic medium; enhancement of skill of risk assessment; and realistic, holistic, participatory planning. The

group suggested that the Primer should list existing policy and in the absence of a policy, include the procedure and guidelines for policy development and implementation.

The discussions for **Group Two** was presented by Mr. Phetsavang. In the context of Urban Risk Reduction, ADPC should concentrate on the advocacy amongst community members, implementers and policy makers as this was required in the development of a legal framework and the enforcement of legislation such as building codes; provide technical assistance and transfer was needed for the development of a framework for urban projects as expertise at city level was lacking; provide support for the enforcement of legislation, regulation and codes. The needs of city governments were listed as technical assistance for the implementation of certain activities, funding and mobilisation of resources, the strengthening of linkages and coordination amongst the different agencies involved in development work in cities. An example in Laos, road construction and traffic management come under the jurisdiction of a unit under the Ministry of Transport, however, traffic is controlled by the traffic police. The needs for Capacity Building were identified as technical expertise, training and the upgrading of skills particularly in the area of hazard mapping; money, manpower, materials, machines and methods; public information campaigns to build capacity of the wider audience, the development of additional teaching materials for schools programmes and curricula; and the focussing on specific hazards using a holistic approach. The Policy Chapter of the Primer generated much interest and was extremely useful and the group urged the Primer team to continue its good work.

Mr. Kessler presented the discussion of **Group Three** ADPC should encourage and facilitate of effective South-South sharing of experiences and the application of the experience in different contexts and monitoring and evaluation to ensure that programmes are implemented effectively. The needs faced by City Governments included the ability to govern better though the delegation of authority and the empowerment of local government through the provision of resource allocation, tools and prerogative; the articulation of requirements for the development of action plans and the integration of mitigation into the development planning process; tools for risk assessment and the creation of awareness scenarios to test ideas; the allocation of resource to provide finances as a part of the development of sustainable, domestic capital markets and local financial systems that can support reconstruction and negate donor dependency; the promotion of participatory approach and the involvement and development of role of the community; and the identification of a legitimate role for the partnership with private sector.

The Capacity Building needs in terms of Urban Risk Management identified were specialised, cross-sectoral disaster training; the provision of technical information and institutional and human resources development as part of long-term, targeted and effective training of specialised interest groups such as architects, engineers, health professionals and social workers; monitoring and evaluation; to assist in the effective delegation of authority; to enhance sensitivities to gender issues and equity; the training of NGOs to enable them to carry out functions that they are comfortable with; and the training of disadvantaged groups to accommodate their requirement; and the standardisation of terminology and methods to facilitate communication between different countries for comparison and sharing if experiences. Comments on the Primer included the need for the publication to provide the procedural components of policy development; to provide direct or generic principles of interest; the need for bilateral discussions with the RCC participants to discuss the application to a variety of context; and to provide references to other sources and documents on similar issues.

Director Aldea thanked Mr. Kessler for his presentation on behalf of Group Three and opened the floor for further comments.

DISCUSSION

Defining the Role of the Private Sector

Mr. Nambiar commented that the role of the private sector is of great importance as they were involved with the construction of most urban buildings and infrastructure. This is exemplified by the earthquake in Gujarat where there was a lack of enforcement in most of the buildings. Thus a focus on the role of the private sector was crucial and they should also be engaged in awareness creation.

Mr. Kessler agreed that the private sector is an important player but the context needs to be understood and terms of sector engagement developed clearly so that the process becomes more efficient. Risk reduction in the context of the private sector work, as well as that of the legitimate role of government, could and should be code enforcement. On the part of the builders, is awareness that it is their responsibility to be honest, as without enforcement that is sometimes hard to accomplish.

Standards of Success and Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation at ADPC

Director Aldea sought clarification on what standards of success and measurement tools are available at ADPC as indicators for monitoring and evaluation of projects undertaken and support afforded to the various RCC Members.

Mr. Rego replied by noting that the document circulated, AUDMP Achievements and Lessons Learnt, contains a section that details the goals of the project at the outset, the indicators of success and how far the AUDMP programme have been able to meet them. Similar indicators are developed for other project carries out by ADPC of targets and an evaluation of how well they are meet. In addition to setting project targets and goals, ADPC has set itself five goals for the whole organisation to which we aspire. Progress towards achieving these goals is currently being monitored.

The Primer has three volumes with 10-15 Chapter each. The whole effort of the Primer is to define certain key ingredients and guidelines for how to implement a particular area, the contents of institutional arrangements, and provide examples of good practise that has worked in a particular context, that must be taken and adapted to other contexts.

Mr. Sovann expressed his hope that the Primer would be available soon.

IMPLEMENTATION OF URBAN RISK REDUCTION PROGRAMMES IN ASIA: LESSONS LEARNT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The last presentation of the session on the Implementation of Urban Risk Reduction Programmes in Asia: Lessons Learnt and Future Directions. was given by Mr N.M.S.I Arambepola, He highlighted that a significant lesson was that programmes involving municipality and local government was most effective as they are close to the problem, control aspects of solutions, have resources and they issue building permits and land use permits which allow for development control and regulation of construction in cities. Other lessons learnt included:

- A large percentage of vulnerability in urban areas is a direct result of urban development patterns.
- Mitigation measures are hazard specific.
- Decentralised responsibility attracts resources.

- Training and Capacity Building strengthens expertise and political will
- Mitigation is most effective when fully integrated in the development process.
- Small enthusiastic, field-oriented groups make the most successful institutional partners.
- Cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary partnership is essential to success.
- Mitigation measures are unique to the national cultural, social, economic and local context.
- The impact of present hazards on future development needs to be anticipated.
- Mitigation is a long-term objective, whilst emergency response planning is the intermediate objective to address current risks in cities.

Much more work has to be done to reduce urban risk reduction and vulnerability throughout the Asian cities. The UDRM team has developed a strategy for 2020 which is focused along four thrust areas, namely a multi-sectoral approach to Emergency Planning in Cities; a partnership approach to Awareness Creation; a holistic approach to Capacity Building and most importantly, A comprehensive approach to Building Safer Cities which incorporates risk assessment, risk insurance, risk management and risk transfer activities. Mr Aramepolo concluded by thanking all the RCC participants for their useful inputs.

Director Aldea concluded that the session on Urban Risk Reduction had been interesting especially as the RCC Member Countries had shared their experiences and lessons learnt. In addition, areas for improvement had also been highlighted.

VII. SESSION V: DISASTER MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCES OF BANGLADESH

This session was co-chaired by Mr. Faruq Ahmed, Secretary in charge, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Bangladesh and Mr. A.H.M. Shamsul Islam, Director-General, Disaster Management Bureau, MDMR, Bangladesh and facilitated by Mr. Earl Kessler. The session presented and analysed recent institutional arrangements and initiatives for disaster management in Bangladesh by the Government of Bangladesh and NGO's, and shared lessons learnt for broader application.

NATURAL DISASTER RISK REDUCTION PROGRAMME

Mr. Faruq Ahmed, MDMR gave a presentation on the new Natural Disaster Risk Reduction programme of Bangladesh. The objectives of the programme are to minimise the loss of lives and properties through the implementation of risk reduction strategies, the strengthening of national institutions, the enhancement of professional skills and capacities and the undertaking of structural mitigation measures. Strategies for the programme included an emphasis on mitigation and preparedness, focus on the community and developing the capacity of vulnerable people to cope with disasters. These are in addition to the strategies of the draft national policy which are to manage risks and the consequences of risk, to involve communities and local government institutions and implements non-structural mitigation measures such as training, public awareness and advocacy.

Floods, cyclones, river-bank erosion and drought were cited as major natural hazards affecting Bangladesh. Specific objectives of the programme are to reduce risk through

enhancing capacities, alleviate poverty through improved socio-economic conditions, to integrate risk management into development planning, provide access of the poor to public resources and service providers and to break the cycle of the poverty disaster continuum. The programme aims to benefit 50,000 families in the first year and 100, 00 families in the second year at a cost of 8.5 million USD. The programme is funded by the Government of Bangladesh from national resources.

The activities planned include a massive public awareness campaign, intra-governmental advocacy, training of teachers, religious leaders, folk artistes, the selection of the 50, 000 beneficiaries and the development of their skill, the development of household business and risk management plans, the provision of cash credit, enhance support towards livelihood management, establishing links with support services and mainstreaming risk reduction into development planning and development. The unique qualities of the programme were listed as the involvement of local level communities during planning, the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, the use of relief resources for capacity building, the involvement of community leaders as volunteers and the integration of risk management into rehabilitation and development support.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Mr. AHM Shamsul Islam, Director General DMB, gave a presentation on the institutional arrangements and disaster management plans for Bangladesh. The main initiatives of the Government of Bangladesh are the renaming of the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and the establishment of the Disaster Management Bureau, as a successor to the Disaster Coordination and Monitoring Unit, the Emergency Operations Centre and Disaster Management Councils and Committees from national to union, upazilla and district levels. Established in June 1992, the mandate of the Disaster Management Bureau is to act as a facilitator and depository of all disaster management related information, to maintain an inventory of skilled disaster management personnel, to promote awareness building activities, to facilitate the preparation of local disaster management action plans at union, upzila and district levels, to monitor disaster preparedness activities throughout district administrations and to maintain coordination with line departments, agencies, NGOs, social organisations and other disaster management players in Bangladesh.

The institutional arrangements for disaster management in Bangladesh consists of the National Disaster Management Council headed by the Prime Minister that formulates and review disaster management policies and issues directives to all concerned; the In-Ministerial Disaster Management Coordination Committee headed by the Minister for Disaster Management and Relief that implements the decisions and policies set by the National Disaster Management Council; the National Disaster Management Advisory Committee; and a host of other disaster management agencies headed by the Disaster Management Bureau. The disaster management agencies headed by the Disaster Management Bureau are the Disaster Management Training and Public Awareness Building Task Force, the Focal Point Operational Co-ordination Group on Disaster Management, the NGO Coordination Committee on Disaster Management and the Committee for Speedy Dissemination of Disaster Related Warning Signals.

The operationalisation of the disaster management mechanism in Bangladesh is facilitated by the published framework “Standing Orders on Disaster”, which outlines the activities of each Ministry, major agencies, departments, and the Disaster Action Plans for local level committees. A draft National Policy on Disaster Management is being designed to provide a clearer and comprehensive understanding of these mechanisms and overall guidance and policy direction to all ministries. Advocacy and awareness raising programmes have resulted in trained personnel, the production a number of publications and the inclusion of disaster management into the educational curricula.

RISK REDUCTION INITIATIVES WITHIN THE COMPREHENSIVE DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Dr. Earl James Goodyear, Chief Technical Advisor to the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme presented a paper on this new five year, 14 million USD initiative between the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, the United Nations Development Programme and the Department for International Development (UK). The rationale behind the initiative is the introduction of new and innovative approaches to disaster management in Bangladesh and the activities under the programme are Capacity Building, Partnership Development, Community Empowerment, Research and Information Management and Response Management.

The Capacity Building component seeks to develop a risk management skills development programme to raise the level of staff expertise whilst the Partnership Development component seeks to involve government, non-government organisations and private sector in a broader and more encompassing risk management strategy through advocacy targeting decision makers and though the building of knowledge and understanding of risk management to all stakeholders including the community level. Under the Community Empowerment component, a gap analysis will be undertaken to create a holistic profile of effective strategies, identify policy issues that affect vulnerability, and the Local Disaster Risk Reduction Fund will be established to fund mitigation initiatives at the community level.

The Research and Information Management component will focus on gathering information of risks to rural and urban populations posed by road, air and water accidents, fire, riverbank erosion, chemical and biological accidents, air and marine pollution, communicable epidemics, communal violence, climate change issues and earthquakes, with a particular focus on the last two issues. The establishment of a modern Disaster Management Information Centre that would serve as an Emergency Operations Centre during major disaster and emergency operations is the focus of the Response Management component.

Dr. Goodyear’s presentation concluded with the screening of a short audio-visual clip on the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme.

RURAL AND URBAN FLOOD PROOFING

Mr. Monzu Morshed, Disaster Management Programme Coordinator, Care-Bangladesh gave a presentation of on-going rural and urban flood proofing projects in Bangladesh. The unique qualities of the projects were that they had both structural and non-structural components, that participatory approaches were applied to incorporate community

perspective, gender issues and ownership, that the project activities were jointly implemented in collaboration with the elected people's representatives, government officials and local NGO's from the project sites, and community contribution to various activities.

Structural flood proofing activities include raising homesteads and tube wells above flood level and the construction of safe shower places and latrines. In rural areas, structural measures also focus on slope protection and extension of villages, the building of multi-purpose flood shelters and market development. The construction of drains, footpaths, pillar houses and culverts are relevant in the urban setting. Non-structural flood proofing activities include encouraging the use of plant-based erosion protection, homestead gardening, and the establishment of nurseries. In rural areas, the activities include the provision of boats for evacuation and the use of schools as shelters, the formation of health groups for mothers and children and health education sessions emphasizing behavioural change. The reactivation of municipal disaster committees, the development of contingency plans, the training of civil society at ward level and volunteers on flood issues and the raising of public awareness are activities specific to the urban flood mitigation project in Bangladesh.

A LITTLE HELP FROM BEYOND (FILM)

A short audio-visual presentation by Dr. Buddi Weerasinghe, ADPC was screened recounting the AUDMP Achievements in Bangladesh under the Bangladesh Urban Disaster Mitigation Programme.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CYCLONE PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMME

Mr. Fazlur Wahab, Director of the Cyclone Preparedness Programme, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society gave a short overview of the background, goals and objectives, the main activities and the impact of the Cyclone Preparedness Programme. Established in 1970 following a devastating cyclone that caused 500,000 fatalities, it aims to minimise the loss of life and damage to property and to better prepare high-risk coastal communities and women at the household level in 11 districts vulnerable to cyclones. Essentially a grassroots organisation of more than 33,000 volunteers from 11 districts, 31-sub-districts and 261 unions in high-risk areas, the programme is linked to the government's early warning system and directed by the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

The main activities include increasing public preparedness of the threat and consequences of cyclonic disasters, to reinforce local disaster management and community involvement through conducting training for volunteers at community level and the strengthening of early warning systems to ensure effective action and response in the event of disaster. The programme has resulted in the reduction of significant number of human and material damage during and post disaster periods in comparison to previous years.

VIII. SESSION VI: LESSONS LEARNED FROM RECENT DISASTERS AND OTHER EXPERIENCES

This session was co-chaired by and Mr. Oo Than U, Director General, Relief and Resettlement Department, Myanmar and facilitated by Mr. N.M.S.I Arambepola. Country presentations on lessons learnt from recent disasters formed the theme for this session as well as a presentation on UNESCAP Activities in Disaster Management.

INTEGRATED NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN, IRAN

Mr. Hasan Azadeh, Senior Expert, National Disaster Task Force, Ministry of Interior, Iran presented a paper on the integrated national disaster management plan for Iran. The presentation highlighted that amongst the 40 different types of natural disasters that have been classified, 31 are observed in the Republic of Iran, particularly earthquakes, floods, drought, landslides, desertification, deforestation and storms. The impact of earthquakes has exerted a heavy toll on the socio-economic development of Iran, affecting a large number of cities throughout the country. The severity of the impacts on the historical city of Bam has led to concerns of the impact of an earthquake on the capital, Tehran. The financial losses resulting from floods as also an area of concern.

Iran has recently embarked on an Integrated National Disaster Management Plan which consist of 18 volumes of report, based principally on the provision of an Emergency Operations Centre, the organisation of an emergency communication and information system, enhancing public awareness, encouraging the participation of the community and the creation of safety criteria for development projects. The objectives, activities and proposed structure of the plans were presented.

URBAN RISK MANAGEMENT, JORDAN

Colonel Mohammad Izziddeen, General Inspector, Jordanian Civil Defence gave a presentation on Urban Risk Management with a brief overview of natural hazards and urban concerns in Jordan. Urban disaster risk in Jordan posed by earthquakes, landslides and floods is heightened by the location of densely built and populated cities on seismically active zones; the building of houses on or below steep slopes and cliff which fail to follow prescribed building codes and the failure of the city drainage systems to adequately respond to the pressure of rapid urbanisation, respectively. Other hazards encountered in Jordan are wild fire and drought. Adequate infrastructure, proper land use planning and urban management and poverty were cited as means to reducing these risks.

Considerations for earthquake disaster reduction were also shared and included measures to prevent new developments from increasing vulnerability, the need for hazards and vulnerability assessments to provide a basis for the reduction of unacceptable risk and guide future development, the setting of attainable goals to maximise benefit to at risk, low income groups, the use of low cost solutions, and the strengthening of critical facilities and infrastructure as well as institutional governance to improve the operational capacity to reduce risk and to respond to emergency situations.

MANAGING DISASTER RISK IN PAKISTAN, CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE NEEDS

Mr. Faiz-ur Rahman, Deputy Secretary, Emergency Relief Cell, Pakistan presented a paper on the current status and future needs of managing disaster risk in Pakistan. Floods, earthquakes, landslides, fires, drought and cyclones are the main natural hazards faced by Pakistan and factors that contributed to the vulnerability of the cities were their locations, unplanned urbanisation and poverty, the lack of a comprehensive disaster management system, the lack of awareness and training of the community, the lack of building codes and enforcement where they exist and the lack of an efficient drainage system.

Disaster management is primarily the responsibility of the provincial government relief commissions with support from the federal government agencies such as the Emergency

Relief Cell, the Federal Flood Commission, Pakistan Meteorological Department, the Civil Defence Department, the Crisis Management Cell and national and international NGOs. Future needs listed included effective legislation, proactive approaches, relevant training, comprehensive disaster management plans, public awareness, financial resources and an adequate response facility. The Pakistan Cabinet Division is in the midst of establishing a National Disaster Management Agency.

UNESCAP ACTIVITIES IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Dr. Pak Sum Low, Regional Advisor, Environment and Sustainable Development, gave a presentation on the UNESCAP Activities in Disaster Management. UNESCAP provides technical support to 53 members and 9 associated members in the Asia –Pacific region in the areas of poverty reduction, managing globalisation and address emerging social issues. Disaster management falls under the Environment and Sustainable Development and Information, Communication and Space Technology divisions.

One of the disaster management focus of UNESCAP is drought which is wide spread in Asia and the Pacific and contributes the forest and land fires and their associated health hazards, land degradation and desertification, dust and sand storms and famine. The goals, objectives, participating countries, planned activities, the possible linkages with the UN Committee to Combat Desertification. Other UNESCAP disaster management initiatives include Capacity Building on Strategic Planning and Management of Environment, Energy and Water Resources, Building Regional Cooperative Mechanisms in Space Technology Applications for Disaster Management and the Implementation of Regional Cooperation Programme on Flood Control. A hard copy of presentation on the ESCAP Activities in Flood Mitigation and Preparedness for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development, by Dr. Le-Huu Ti was distributed to the participants.

IX. CLOSING SESSION

The closing session of the 4th RCC Meeting was chaired by Mr. Earl Kessler and Mr. A.H.M. Shamsul Islam and facilitated by Mr. A.J. Rego.

All the RCC representatives and the observers actively took part in this discussion session for the follow-up and future directions of RCC.

Mr. Rego thanked the participants for the frank, enlightening, insightful, enriching, practical and challenging comments on the MDRM project which will be useful for those who will be involved in steering the project as it develops.

He encouraged the RCC Members to take the time to read the concept paper thoroughly and for the authorised representatives of the RCC members who were not present at the meeting to consult with the RCC Members.

Mr. Rego welcomed further comments and feedback on the paper such that the paper could be revised and shared with the members with the intention that work on the project should commence before the RCC Meeting.

Mr. Kessler thanked the RCC participants for their commitment to the notion of the RCC. He highlighted that for ADPC, the RCC remains a useful tool as it allows invaluable access to feedback and ideas from the individual countries. These could then be reflected upon by

ADPC and be assimilated and presented to the RCC as useful agenda that can be jointly advanced.

Mr. Kessler stressed the need and the importance to move the DRM process along by consolidating the initiatives, priorities, awareness building, technical assistance, training and capacity building, information exchange etc and to being to think of ways in which they can be applied, to make a difference in the ways in which buildings are built, the way that people and cities are managed, how agricultural crops are harvested and marketed and ways in which to develop and sustain economic opportunities for people who need assistance and attention and to minimise the terrible losses that are created by earthquakes, drought and floods.

Mr. Kessler informed the participants that discussions on the venue for the next RCC meeting has commenced and that ADPC will be in communication with the RCC Members on the dates for the meeting which would probably occur in a year's time. The Members would be given advance notice so that their necessary and welcome participation and presence could be programmed.

Gratitude was expressed to AusAID in enabling ADPC to have the opportunity to continue dialogue with the RCC Members about a variety of issues including the MDRM project. Mr. Kessler highlighted the importance of 2-way dialogue and communication and the availability of ADPC through personal communication and e-mail for the fielding of ideas which the RCC members would like to table. RCC members were urged to contact ADPC should any needs and issues arise and as well as to vet and exchange ideas as ADPC is committed to it's role as a resource center, and could respond accordingly.

In addition to comments and observations, Mr. Rego requested feedback on the RCC in general, specific feedback on the meeting and any suggestions about the mechanism and future meetings.

Director Aldea, expressed deepest appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for giving members the opportunity to attend the meeting. She suggested that at the subsequent RCC meetings, at least half a day be allocated to gain an insight to the culture of the country and to return to their countries with good memories and souvenirs, to which the other participants and Mr. Kessler agreed. Director Aldea brought to the RCC members attention the website of the NDCC Philippines.

Ms Mellgren expressed her deep thanks at being invited to represent Sweden at the meeting and to be given the opportunity to participate in the meeting, to get first hand and very relevant information but also to be part of observing a process and the way in which the actual meeting between people can advance issues in very productive manner and provide deeper understanding of issues. She noted that the experience had been very rewarding and she commended the country representative for their excellent country reports and noted that they formed an expose of field visits to different countries.

Some thoughts about disaster management and disaster mitigation in the direction for the future was shared by Professor Li. He noted that the UN has proclaimed the International Decade for Education and Sustainable Development from 2005-2015 and suggested that disaster mitigation should be considered as a part of sustainable development as sustainable development cannot be realised without disaster mitigation as experienced by Bangladesh.

He noted that some elements of disaster programme was been incorporated in educational programme for children during the past years, however, the busy study schedules of school makes it difficult to encourage schools to continue to conduct such programmes. Professor Li suggested that UN-ISDR in cooperation with UNESCO should consider to develop a programme or a part of the curriculum for primary and middle schools and university on concept of disaster mitigation such that school children would be inculcated with the notions of vulnerability to disasters and disaster management.

Mr. Kessler agreed with Professor Li and stressed the need to articulate disaster mitigation in useful ways that youth will be able to assimilate and apply to their lives.

Professor Li also noted that he had learnt a lot over the last few days, in particular the disaster management experiences of Bangladesh and the range of tools that has enabled the progress made in Bangladesh.

Dr. Pak thanked ADPC for inviting him the meeting and noted that he also has learnt a lot from the country reports. These had direct impacts for him as a regional adviser as his main responsibility is to serve the countries, to assist them with the preparation of project proposal and reviewing of any plans, that can be sought on written request. He outlined that UNESCAP is a regional commission that seeks to promote and facilitate regional activities and is staffed by regional advisors on the topics of environment and sustainable development, trade and investment, poverty statistics and ICT.

Ms Kuruppu thanked the ADPC for inviting her to participate in this event. She noted as she had recently taken over her position, that she had learnt a lot and gained much experience from her interactions with the other colleagues.

Mr. Esteban of UN-Habitat thanked ADPC especially as it was his first visit to Asia and in three days he was able to gain an insight into all the countries from the country reports.

Ms Etusko thanked ADPC for inviting ADRC for the meeting and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for giving her the opportunity to visit Bangladesh for the first time. She thanked everyone for their presentations through which she learnt many useful things and she looked forward to continuing to work together. She noted that there had be many discussion on the WCDR and as ADRC is based in Kobe, she looked forward to meeting all the participants in the year 2005. She hoped to be able to be involved in the preparations for the WCDR and that ADPC and ADRC could work together in preparation for the world conference.

Upon the request of Mr. Kessler to give a vote of thanks, Mr Rego began with a few personal observations. He expressed his privilege at being given the responsibility of facilitating and organising the last four RCC Meetings. Mr. Rego noted that it had been a challenge to see it grow and that the experience is humbling and that at times the responsibility heavy due to the pace of progress falling short compared to the ambitious agenda the RCC had set itself. However, he noted that this meeting had proved a turning point in terms of specific new directions, the fruition of heavily ambitious and concrete projects and directions that were earlier identified for mainstreaming. He stated that the meeting had placed a collective sense of responsibility and challenge on all the participants. In that context, he looked forward to the ISDR, WCDR and the ISDR-Asia Partnership in close collaboration with ADRC, UNESCAP and UNDP who are working with the ISDR

Secretariat and he expressed that it was good that all the parties were present at the meeting. He also looked forward to working with all the RCC Member countries. He thanks the host country for their extreme generosity and their hard work since the invitation had been extended by Mr. Faruq's predecessor, Mr. Haq, in the previous year. Mr. Rego commended the MDMR and the DMB for the smooth transition and that the team lead by Mr. Faruq and Mr. A.H.M. Shamsul Islam and the Embassy in Bangkok for their flexibility, creativity and whose hard work as far exceeded expectation of ADPC and the RCC member countries. He expressed his gratitude to the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh which had set very high standards for future RCC meetings by inviting the head of state to address and formally inaugurate the meeting and extend a lash and warm hospitality and by being extremely flexible in making all these arrangements. He requested that ADPC's greatest appreciation be conveyed to the Honourable Minister, who has been closely associated with ADPC and has participated in some of ADPC previous events. Mr. Rego noted that the Minister had played the part of a warm and generous host and inspiring leader by showing the direction and by setting the tone of the deliberations. Mr. Rego also expressed this thanks to his DMS team for their hard work in making the meeting possible.

On behalf of the Government of the People's of Bangladesh, Mr. Ahmed and his team thanked the participants for their attendance at the meeting. He apologised that these was insufficient time to schedule a field trip in the programme and his inability to set aside time to play a personal host to each of the RCC members and their representatives individually due the many disaster management programmes that were being launched in Bangladesh. However, he enjoyed and learnt many things from the discussions and deliberations and that they would be useful for countries to move into the wider issues of disaster management. He thanked the ADPC for making all the official arrangements and noted that the MDMR and DMB merely played a supporting role. He noted that it was under the leadership of Mr. Rego that the meeting had been a success and he thanked him for his personal efforts and for being a good friend. He invited to participants to visit Bangladesh again.

Mr. Sadraddine extended his appreciation and thanks to the organisers of the meeting, the host country and ADPC staff for arranging the meeting, on behalf of the Iranian delegation. He stated that he was confident that the meeting with its exchange of views and information about the different topics contributed to disaster mitigation and the reduction of the impacts of national disasters. He took the opportunity to express his gratitude to individual countries for extending their generous contributions and attention to the people of Bam and Iran during the Bam earthquake. They were impressed by the kind attention extended by the international and regional community and organisations to Iran. He stated that when the reconstruction of Bam is completed, he hoped that they would be able to host a future RCC meeting there.

Professor Li commented that is was his first participation at an RCC meeting and his first visit to Bangladesh and he thanked ADPC and the host country for a well-organised and well-supported meeting. He stated that good conclusions had resulted from the meeting and that he had made many friends. He informed the participants that China would be hosting an International Conference on Disaster Reduction in Asia during the month of May, organised by the National Committee for Disaster Management, China and invited all the participants to attend the meeting.

Mr. U Than Oo, Director General, Relief and Resettlement Department, Myanmar noted that it was his privilege to attend the meeting on the first occasion that his country had participated at the RCC and thanked ADPC and the Government of Bangladesh for making the visit possible.

On behalf of AusAid, Ms. Vichitrananda thanked the host country for kindly hosting the meeting and the staff from ADPC for the excellent job. She noted that the agenda had been very rich and useful and that she was confident that the next meeting would be just as successful. She stated that AusAid was committed to support RCC 5, 6 and 7. She highlighted that the RCC forum was a platform for discussions for the Member Countries and that she was glad to hear that the participants had found the meeting useful and that AusAid was happy to provide this contribution. She hoped that the participants would be able to partake in the meeting next year. She noted that the discussion has also been useful for the donors and the meeting had provided much thoughts for deliberation as mainstreaming disaster reduction was not only an national agenda but also a donor agenda and that this meeting had made this message loud and clear.