

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR EARTHQUAKE RISK MANAGEMENT IN BHUTAN



Bhutan recently hosted a workshop designed to build partnerships for earthquake risk management on 19 August 2005, which was co-organised under the 'Thimphu Valley Earthquake Risk Management Project' (TVERMP) by the Standards and Quality Control Authority of the Bhutanese Ministry of Work and Human Settlements and UNDP/BCPR.

The workshop had three main objectives: to take stock of the activities carried out and outputs accomplished by the TVERMP since its launch in April 2005; to design a work plan for the TVERMP in light of the review of outputs achieved and feedback received; and to invite participants from the relevant ministries, donor agencies and other stakeholders to consider a 'follow up' strategy with regard to the TVERMP initiative and recognise links with the Integrated Disaster Risk Management (IDRM) programme. It is hoped that this follow-up strategy will also seek to chart a course of action for securing funds for sustained activities in this regard.

Panellists were invited to share their experiences and technical expertise on earthquake risk management in four workshop sessions. The plenary session discussed the experiences from Asia and lessons learned for urban earthquake vulnerability reduction in Bhutan. The KVERMP from Nepal and the UVERP from India were also briefly discussed as case studies. The second session reviewed the outputs achieved by the TVERMP so far and any appropriate corrections to the project's design. The third session detailed the links to be explored between the IDRM and the TVERMP to achieve a sustainable disaster risk management strategy in Bhutan. Open discussions were held in the working group session centred on how higher standards of earthquake safety could be achieved in Bhutan. This also implied developing an action plan for completion of the TVERMP, discussing the scope for sustainability and duplication of follow-up action with linkages to a holistic disaster risk management agenda for Bhutan.

Participants in this daylong exercise included representatives from various Bhutan ministries and departments, as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies in the region. The workshop was inaugurated by the Minister for Works and Human Settlement Kinzang Dorji, and the Resident Representative of UNDP Bhutan Renata Dessallien was the guest of honour. Secretary for the Ministry of Works and Human Settlement Tshering Dorji, Auditor General of the Royal Audit Authority Kunzang Dorji, BCPR/UNDP Regional Advisor Kamal Kishore, NSET – Nepal representative Jitendra K Bothara and Gol - UNDP representatives Prof. Sinha and Anup Karanth made presentations on their respective subjects of expertise and took part in the workshop.

For more information:

Angelika Planitz – UNDP/BCPR Disaster Programme Specialist - [+41 \(022\) -9178703](tel:+41229178703)