

# United Nations Development Programme, India



with technical assistance from:  
**Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery**  
*Disaster Reduction Unit (DRU)*

**Project title:**  
Urban earthquake vulnerability reduction project – India  
**Project number:**  
XXXXX

**Estimated start date:** 01/04/2003  
**Estimated end date:** 31/12/2006  
**Implementing agency:** Ministry of Home Affairs  
**Partners:** State governments,  
State nodal agencies  
**Locations** 38 cities with more than  
500,000 people  
**Project site:** India

## General background:

The Indian sub-continent is highly prone to natural disasters such as floods, droughts, cyclones and earthquakes. According to the latest seismic zoning map brought out by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), over 57% of the country is prone to earthquakes of intensity MSK VII or more. Some of the most intense earthquakes of the world have occurred in India, but fortunately none of these were in any of its major cities. India's cities are highly populated, including the capital New Delhi, and are located in zones of high seismic risk. Typically, the majority of the constructions in these cities are not earthquake resistant; therefore in the event of an earthquake, one of these cities would become a major disaster.

It is most important in the medium and long term to formulate strategies to reduce the vulnerability to and losses arising from a possible earthquake striking India's cities. Six major earthquakes have affected different parts of India over the last 15 years and the damage caused reflects the scale of vulnerability. However, if any of these earthquakes had struck populous urban centres, the damage in terms of human lives and property would have been colossal.

Frequent disasters lead to an erosion of development gains and restricted options for the disaster victims. Physical safety - especially that of the vulnerable groups - is routinely threatened by hazards. Disasters such as the Gujarat earthquake have very clearly illustrated the need for mitigation, preparedness and response plans so that the threat to human life and property is minimized.

## Project summary:

This project aims to strengthen the disaster mitigation,

preparedness and response capacities of communities, urban local bodies and administrations in 38 Indian cities across the country. Each location has been chosen as it is in Seismic Zones III, IV or V with more than half a million population. The project will provide a suitable model for mainstreaming earthquake risk management initiatives at all levels and help to reduce earthquake risk in the most earthquake-prone urban areas in India. Urban planning institutions and agencies in the selected cities would be directly involved in the planning process to ensure sustainability of these initiatives. The project will work closely with relevant government departments and institutions at the national and state levels. Lessons learned from this initiative will be incorporated into the national government's capacity building programmes, and will help to mainstream training in disaster management in all regular government training programmes.

## Overall and specific objectives:

- Sustainable reduction in earthquake risk in the most earthquake-prone urban areas across the country;
- Create awareness among government civil servants, technical institutions, NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs) and communities about earthquake vulnerability and possible preventive actions;
- Develop and institutionalise earthquake preparedness and response plans, and practise these through mock drills;
- Develop a technical-legal regulatory framework to promote safe construction and systems to ensure compliance;
- Provide capacity building for certification by government civil servants and professionals (engineers and architects);
- Promote information-sharing on best practices and tools for effective earthquake risk management, including the creation of information systems containing inventory of resources for emergency operations.

## Expected results:

- Enhanced knowledge of earthquake vulnerability and possible preventive actions at all levels, in particular

- among government civil servants, technical institutions, NGOs, CBOs and communities;
- Preparedness and response plans at community and administrative levels so that each of the 38 cities knows the consequences of an earthquake and has prepared an emergency planning and preparedness action plan;
- A technical-legal regulatory framework for the states to promote safe construction and systems to ensure compliance;
- Knowledge networking on international and national best practices among all the cities and urban centres involved in the programme.

#### **Activities:**

- Consult with national and state governments, city development authorities, urban local bodies, NGOs, training institutions, engineers, architects, real estate firms, builders, contractors, etc. on city-specific earthquake risk management and mitigation strategies;
- Design city-specific awareness campaign strategies and awareness programmes for specific target audiences;
- Develop earthquake information materials;
- Identify and liaise with nodal agencies and partners at different levels for the implementation of the programme;
- Create city- and ward-level Disaster Management Teams [DMT];
- Develop city- and ward-level earthquake preparedness and response plans;
- Develop an inventory of resources at all levels for speedy response during emergencies and establishing linkages with the India Disaster Resources Network (IDRN) portal, commissioned by MHA;
- Develop a response structure from ward to city level;
- Provide specialized training for DMTs at ward and city levels on basic life saving skills;
- Organise mock drills to assess the level of preparedness at city and ward level;
- Support the city nodal agency as well as the relevant state level department in the development of a technical-legal regulatory framework to promote safe construction and systems to ensure compliance;
- Enhance the capacities of government civil servants, professionals (engineers and architects), resident welfare groups by organizing training on earthquake risk management, disaster preparedness and response;
- Enhance the capacities of professionals such as engineers, architects and construction workers by providing training on disaster safe technology;
- Create various information management tools (i.e. website, national database, etc.) to improve information-sharing on best practices and tools for effective earthquake risk management.

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