

# **NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY**

Government of India  
NDMA Bhawan  
A-1 Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi – 110029

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **“INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Earthquake Response Exercise” At Agra, Uttar Pradesh on 04 May 2011**

#### **Address by Shri M. Shashidhar Reddy, Vice Chairman, NDMA**

Presiding over the inaugural session of first ever “INSARAG Asia-Pacific Regional Earthquake Response Exercise” in India, Shri M Shashidhar Reddy, Hon’ble Vice Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority, highlighted the importance of preparedness and awareness generation to tackle any situation arising from natural and man-made disasters. “Japan has been widely recognized as having the most robust disaster planning of any country in the world, particularly when it comes to earthquakes. In 2010, about 670,000 residents participated in preparedness drills as part of Japan’s Disaster Preparedness Day; held annually since the damaging earthquake of 1923, when tremors measuring 7.9 left Tokyo and its suburbs in ruins and killed 140,000 people”, he said.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is hosting the Regional Group Earthquake Response Exercise at Agra in association with International Search and Advisory Group (INSARAG) and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). This exercise will provide opportunity to all the participants at the national and international levels to learn the best practices of urban search and rescue from various participating national/ international responders.

NDMA has been conducting mock exercises on various disasters on regular basis in different parts of the country to facilitate the State Governments and District Administration to review the effectiveness of their Disaster Management Plans and create public awareness. So far NDMA has conducted about 260 mock exercises on various natural and man-made disasters including nearly 90 such exercises for school and college students. NDMA had conducted one such exercise on 17 June 2007 in coastal districts of Odisha and it is heartening that they are conducting this exercise every year on the same day.

He said that the American Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has established a National Exercise Programme (NEP) in 2007 which provides a framework for prioritizing and coordinating Federal, Regional and State exercise activities. The

NEP enables Federal, State and local departments and agencies to align their exercise programs by issuing annual NEP exercise planning guidance on the basis of a strategic review of risks (threats, hazards, vulnerabilities and operational risks).

Shri Reddy further informed that NDMA is, for the first time, planning a Multi-State Preparedness Exercise for a large scale disaster towards the end of the year to assess the disaster preparedness and response at District, State and National levels and also to operationalize the Incident Response System. The Scenario Building exercise for a major earthquake of about 8.0 on Richter Scale has been initiated involving different IITs and Scientific & Technical Institutions in the country. This exercise will cover Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Uttarakhand and Delhi, and involve State Governments, different Ministries, institutions and all other stakeholders. It will review the preparedness for response and the assessment of the gaps in coordination mechanism at all levels. "This is only the first step, we will try to institutionalize this system fully taking into account India's vulnerability & various administrative and institutional arrangements and make a National Exercise Programme calendar", he said.

He listed out some of the S&T initiatives of the NDMA like Building Typology, Micro-zonation, Probabilistic Seismic Hazard Analysis, Geo-Technical Investigations etc. Shri Reddy stated that NDMA is also in the process of finalization of the National Earthquake Risk Mitigation Project (NERMP). NERMP has been conceptualized as a comprehensive project aimed at improving earthquake preparedness in India, creating an enabling environment for the preparation and implementation of earthquake risk management plans and for working towards improved seismic safety of built environment in India.

Shri Reddy informed that Agra, which is also famous for Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonder of the World, falls in seismic zone IV, and we thought it would be appropriate to organize this exercise in this historic city. As per the National Register of Monuments, there are over 70,000 monuments in public domain and around 350,000 monuments in private domain in India. NDMA is working to prepare the National Guidelines for Protection of Cultural Heritage in Disasters. It has formed a Core Group with representatives from INTACH, conservation architects and representatives from UNESCO.

Shri Subodh Kant Sahay, Hon'ble Union Minister of Tourism was the Chief Guest of the Inaugural Session. This session was also attended by Shri J K Sinha, Hon'ble Member, National Disaster Management Authority, Mr. Patrice Coeur Bizot, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Mr. Terje Skavdal, Chief FCSS, OCHA Geneva, delegates from the participating countries and officials from National Disaster Management Authority and National Disaster Response Force.