

# Abstract

## SESSION 1:

A Decade of Partnerships in Sustainable Development of the Seas of East Asia: Synergies and Achievements

## WORKSHOP 1.1:

Managing Risks in Climate Change and Disasters in the Seas of East Asia

## Towards Urban Risk Reduction: Experience from EAS Region

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Asia is home to half of the world's urban population, with nearly 50 per cent of the region's total population currently residing in cities. Much of the urbanization that occurs is unplanned and continues to be a prime issue in many countries, as this trend will continue throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Among the urban areas, there is significant growth recorded in and around the coastal zone of Asia, a considerable amount of which occurs in areas prone to natural hazards. As this growth occurs at a rapid rate and despite the fact that cities are highly vulnerable to hazards, there remains little consideration of taking efforts in mitigating the impact of coastal hazards, in particular those influenced by a changing climate.

Coastal cities in developing countries across the region have been experiencing an influx of rural-urban migration due to economic opportunities and affordable land present in and around these urban areas. In most cases, such locations are highly prone to coastal hazards. Spatial growth is taking place in coastal areas that are not suitable for urban development, resulting in haphazard development. In most cases, local authorities are struggling to cope with this influx of urban growth, leading to increased disaster risk. This has resulted in cities that have experienced huge physical and monetary damages from disaster events; a trend that is projected to continue into the future if current urbanization patterns persist. Prime examples are experienced from the coastal cities of the South Asian countries such as Vietnam, Philippines, and Thailand etc.

Sustainable development of the coastal cities requires that disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures are integrated in the physical and economic development planning process. Coastal zone development authorities should be in a constructive dialogue with institutions mandated to carry out disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in order to find suitable solutions to cope with the current, and projected future situation. With a goal to enhance the capacity of cities in disaster preparedness and climate change adaption, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), Thailand has been instrumental in undertaking pilot initiatives in several coastal cities in the region. This planned discussion focuses on the anticipated results from coastal cities in Vietnam and Myanmar and proposed actions to be undertaken which aim to reduce disaster and climate risk. It describes how the spatial expansion gradually increases disaster risk in these cities and provides recommendations on how cities can better prepare and plan for sustaining the efforts of urban development.

**Key Words:**Development, Spatial Growth, Coastal Cities, Disaster Risk



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## Global Targets Local Benefits

Setting the Sustainable Development Agenda for the Seas of East Asia beyond 2015

### **About N.M.S.I. Arambepola:**

Mr. Arambepola's expertise in disaster preparedness, risk reduction, and management is built upon his experiences in working previously as director and team leader of the Urban Disaster Risk Management team at ADPC, in which he was responsible for the management of several regional flagship programs. These programs include the Asian Urban Disaster Management Program (AUDMP), Asian Program for Regional Capacity Enhancement for Landslide Impact Mitigation (RECLAIM), Capacity Building in Asia Using Information Technology Applications (CASITA), Program for Hydro-Meteorological Disaster Mitigation in Secondary Cities in Asia (PROMISE), and an earthquake preparedness program under the Comprehensive Disaster Management Program (CDMP) in Bangladesh.

Mr. Arambepola's extensive knowledge in disaster management and geotechnical engineering, particularly in relation to landslide studies and flood mitigation, as well as his hands-on experience in program management, contributes to effective guidance in implementation of ADPC's regional programs.

He is currently involved in the Coastal Hazard Resilience Program being implemented in Vietnam, with funding support from the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **About Anisur Rahman:**

Mr. Anisur Rahman is working at Asian Disaster Preparedness Center since 2007. He has expertise in the field of Disaster Risk Assessment, Urban Land Use Planning, Urban Environmental Management, Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness. Prior to his assumption of the Center, he was involved as Town Planner at Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA) and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) of the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh. He also served as Urban Planner of the Development Design Consultants Limited, a Consulting firm for research and development. Mr. Rahman studied at Khulna University, Bangladesh for his Graduation in Urban and Rural Planning, followed by his post graduate studies at Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Thailand where he obtained MSc. in Urban Environmental Management.