



Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA)

NEWS

Disaster Risk Reduction Seminar for the South Asia's Civilians and Militaries held in Nepal

KATHMANDU, Nepal (July 22, 2010) – A seminar focused on establishing regular dialogue on civilian and military efforts for disaster risk reduction in the South Asia region was held here July 22-23. The “South Asia Civil Military Synchronization Seminar” was initiated by the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA), based in Hawaii, USA.

The seminar sought to build upon cooperation that came about in the region in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami that adversely impacted parts of the South and Southeast Asia. The content was aimed at identifying ways in which civilian and military stakeholders can collaborate to improve disaster resiliency and response capacity both regionally and globally.

“There are a significant amount of disaster risk reduction efforts underway by civilian and military actors at the national, regional and international levels,” said Elizabeth Kunce-Wagner of COE-DMHA, which reports to the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). “In our work at COE, we understand that there needs to be a venue for these many actors to have a regular dialogue that will facilitate important relationships and synergy of effort prior to a disaster event. This is an initial effort facilitated by COE for what will become an annual effort facilitated in collaboration with others.”

The seminar began with a keynote talk by P.G. Dhar Chakrabarti, Director of the SAARC Disaster Management Center. In addition to Mr. Chakrabarti, the seminar featured a number of subject matter experts from South Asia and the international humanitarian community. US Ambassador to Nepal, Scott H. DeLisi, provided closing remarks.

This year’s seminar focused heavily on logistics, communications and information-sharing, infrastructure and other critical requirements of disaster response. In disasters, civilian governments most often request military support in these areas.

This seminar also provided civilian and military experts the opportunity to discuss how they build this capacity to meet these requirements within their organizations, and how they may support each other’s capacity-building efforts in the future.

“All of the governments participating in this week’s seminar have adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015,” added Kunce-Wagner. “This is an effort to regularize

disaster risk reduction dialogue, share information on promising initiatives and to collaborate in our efforts to improve disaster response both in South Asia and across the globe.”

Approximately 60 regional participants, including key regional stakeholders in training, education, development, planning and response, will be involved. Civilian and military government officials from around South Asia, national disaster management centers, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will be in attendance.

The international humanitarian community, including UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), US military and civilian government representatives, and regional foundations and research institutions will also be involved.

Next year, COE-DMHA hopes to hold a follow-up regional seminar in partnership with South Asian civilian and military disaster risk reduction actors.

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The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (COE-DMHA) was established by the US Congress in 1994 to facilitate civil-military management in international disaster management and humanitarian assistance. It partners with a wide variety of national and international governmental, non-governmental and international organizations to provide relevant education, training, coordination and research.

COE-DMHA, a U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) organization, is a direct reporting unit to the US military's Pacific Command (USPACOM) in Hawaii, USA, and is establishing field offices at global Combatant Commands (COCOMs) to promote global disaster preparedness and resiliency. <http://www.coe-dmha.org>