

'Include disaster management in text books'

A five-day workshop on "integrated approach to disaster management and regional development planning with people's participation" began here yesterday under the joint auspices of United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) and the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP).

Planning Minister A.K. Khandker inaugurated the workshop with a call for taking appropriate measures to tackle natural disasters by the countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

The inaugural function was also addressed by Prof. Hidehiko Sazanami, Director of UNCRD and Mr. A.T.M. Shamsul Haque, Director of CIRDAP.

Prof Sazanami also presented a keynote paper on the occasion.

Mr. Khandker said natural disasters push back the efforts of planned development and retard progress by rerouting essential and scarce resources from development to rehabilitation activities.

He said growth was retarded by the periodic natural disasters which hit the countries of the region.

Prof Sazanami said that 11-member countries of CIRDAP are inhabited by over a quarter of global population and most of these countries are severely affected by disasters caused by hazards such as flood, windstorm, earthquake, volcanic eruptions, landslides, droughts etc.

He said since vast majority of the population of CIRDAP member countries live in rural areas it was not possible for the government to reach every people spread over wider span of country sides. During the time of disaster and emergence it becomes more difficult to approach the rural areas due to disruption of transportation and other facilities, he said. It is of utmost importance that organisational set up for disaster management should be primarily based on local community participation.

Prof. Sazanami said repeated disasters break the moral of the people, generate frustration and discourage people in making investment and economic recovery.

He suggested that basic disaster management procedure might be included in the educational texts from primary to high school level in disaster prone countries.

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