

## Call for Abstracts

# Conference on Urban Disaster Reduction

The Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) Committee on Urban Earthquake Hazard Reduction is working collaboratively with the Japan Institute of Social Safety Science (ISSS) to plan and convene the First International Conference on Urban Disaster Reduction (1ICDR), to be held January 18–20, 2005, in Kobe, Japan, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin (Kobe) earthquake.

The 1ICDR is strategically placed between two other major anniversary conferences in Kobe. During the prior week, from January 10–14, 2005, EERI's sister association, JAEE, together with the Japan Society of Civil Engineers (JSCE), the Architectural Institute of Japan (AIJ), the Japan Society for Geotechnical Engineering, and the Seismological Society of Japan, will be holding a five-day seminar series assessing the lessons and technical advances that have been made in fields ranging from seismology to geotechnical engineering, to structural engineering, to risk management. Convening in Tokyo, the session will shift to Kobe for the last three days for an international portion, which will be held in English. The third conference, Yokohama Plus 10, is designed to attract participants from the highest levels of the U.S. and Japanese governments, and is sponsored by the United Nations. It will run concurrently in Kobe with the 1ICDR conference plus an additional two days, and will evaluate the status of recommendations made nearly ten years ago by a congress of international experts in disaster research and management.

EERI is submitting a proposal to the National Science Foundation to underwrite travel and per diem expenses for a U.S. delegation to participate in the 1ICDR. Departing from the exclusive focus on earthquake hazards that characterized previous U.S.-Japan workshops, the 1ICDR will address challenges posed by a range of natural and technological hazards, as well as by agents of mass destruction. Conference organizers hope this first international event will attract participants from all the disciplines involved in disaster preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery throughout the world.

The conference format is a mixture of plenary presentations and small, focused working groups, co-chaired by representatives of both countries. Those interested in participating in the 1ICDR should submit a 200- to 300-word abstract on one of the following topics as it pertains to strategies or lessons that have been stimulated by recent urban disasters:

**Education and risk communication:** information management; geographic information systems; risk assessment; remote sensing; risk communication and education; visualization of disaster communications; real-time damage assessment tools and techniques.

**Information technology:** information technology for disaster reduction; interoperability issues related to technical information tools.

**Toward a comprehensive theory of disaster recovery:** This topic will be covered in both plenary and small group papers, and will form a major theme of the conference.

**Framework for risk management:** generic framework for crisis and risk management (ICS, SEMS, NEMS); government organization for preparedness, mitigation and response; long-term recovery of the physical, social and economic environment; interoperability.

**Tsunami:** tsunami warning, mitigation, preparedness, and public information.

**Business continuity planning and recovery:** business and institutional preparedness; business resumption planning in the private and institutional sectors.

**Multihazard risk assessment:** risk assessment for natural and technological hazards; scenarios; models, impact of new information technologies.

**Urban disaster reduction:** urban disaster reduction through retrofit of existing structures; incentives and market forces; insurance; land use regulation, high-technology countermeasures; smart cities.

**Planning for disaster reduction:** planning for disaster reduction; transferring knowledge to developing countries; scenario planning.

Abstracts are due at EERI by **September 10, 2004**, and should be submitted electronically to **valarie@eeri.org**. Authors will be notified of acceptance by **October 4, 2004**, and final papers (four to six pages) will be due **November 15, 2004**. EERI's provision of travel support is contingent upon NSF funding. Interested participants will be notified of the status of this request as soon as information is available. For more information on the project or the topics, contact Susan Tubbesing at EERI (**eeri@eeri.org**).