



Swiss Re supports India's Delhi Earthquake Safety Initiative for Lifeline Buildings on earthquake risk mitigation awareness

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India, 5 March 2008 – More than 150 hospital and healthcare sector stakeholders from medical institutions in and around Delhi today attended a workshop to promote earthquake risk management, held as part of a campaign to reduce earthquake risk in hospital facilities in Delhi. The workshop, "Integrating Earthquake Risk Mitigation into Hospital Facilities Planning," was supported by Swiss Re, a leading reinsurer, and organised by US-based NGO GeoHazards International and the Delhi Disaster Management Authority of the Government of NCT of Delhi.

As part of the Earthquake Safety Initiative for Lifeline Buildings in Delhi, top Indian and international experts conducted sessions on non-structural mitigation measures in hospital buildings, reviewed best-practice and looked at ways to ensure minimal disruption post-disaster, as well as seismic retrofitting in existing buildings.

Delhi is located in the second-highest zone of earthquake hazard in India. The 2001 Bhuj earthquake in Gujarat, a recent event in India, recorded* over 20,000 fatalities, 166,000 injured, approximately 348,000 buildings destroyed and 844,000 damaged in the Bhuj-Ahmadabad-Rajkot area, leaving 600,000 homeless. The Indian State Department estimated that the earthquake affected, directly or indirectly, 15.9 million people and estimated direct economic losses at \$1.3 billion. These statistics reveal that casualties, damage and disruption caused by an earthquake affecting an urban centre are vast when no risk mitigation measures are in place.

"Proactive risk mitigation is a key factor in preparing for and providing possible relief against the human, social and economic consequences of natural disasters," stated Dhananjay Date, Managing Director of Swiss Re Services India Private Limited. He added, "Swiss Re is delighted to be part of this community, focused on helping earthquake-prone areas better protect themselves before disaster strikes, and not wait until after a disaster to channel aid and funding."

*Source: US Geological Society, Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences

L. Thomas Tobin, Chief Operating Officer, GeoHazards International said, "We have worked for years with scientists and engineers from India and other countries, helping communities threatened by earthquakes reduce death and suffering, so that they are able to develop and prosper." Mr Tobin added, "Today, we welcome Swiss Re, a major international risk management company to our campaign. Today's workshop is a good example of government agencies, private companies and an NGO working together to address earthquake risk."

While a number of efforts to improve earthquake safety are being implemented, the needs are significant and much work remains to ensure Delhi's hospitals are prepared to handle a major earthquake disaster.

"Today's workshop represents an excellent undertaking in supporting a critical need in India and we are very pleased to be able to share Swiss Re's expertise on natural perils that have been developed over three decades," commented Alok Kumar, Natural Hazard Expert at Swiss Re who spoke about the role of insurance at the workshop. "Insurance is key piece in mitigating major disasters. By understanding and managing earthquake risks, hospitals and other lifeline buildings can continue to operate for the community."

Mr Date of Swiss Re added, "Supporting social progress is among the core of Swiss Re's guiding principles. We have been active all around the world in managing and researching natural catastrophe risks, including earthquake, and in communicating information and insight about these risks."

Among those attending the workshop were:

- Smt. Nutan Guha Biswas, Secretary, Delhi Disaster Management Authority
- The Honourable Chief Minister Smt. Sheila Dikshit
- Sri.Vivek Rae, Principal Secretary (Health), Govt. of Delhi
- Prof. A.S. Arya, National Seismic Advisor, Ministry of Home Affairs

Notes to editors

Swiss Re is a leader in natural catastrophe reinsurance. Using probabilistic models to price earthquake and other natural hazard risks globally and regionally, the company is involved in several facets of natural hazards including the design and pricing of catastrophe reinsurance programmes, structuring innovative catastrophe products, conducting studies on natural catastrophes independently as well as with academic institutions and government bodies, running seminars and workshops relating to natural perils for the insurance industry.

Swiss Re

Swiss Re is a leading and highly diversified global reinsurer. The company operates through offices in more than 25 countries. Founded in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1863, Swiss Re offers financial services products that enable risk-taking essential to enterprise and progress. The company's traditional reinsurance products and related services for property and casualty, as well as the life and health business are complemented by insurance-based corporate finance solutions and supplementary services for comprehensive risk management. Swiss Re is rated "AA-" by Standard & Poor's, "Aa2" by Moody's and "A+" by A.M. Best.

Swiss Re has been associated with Asia since 1913 and now has more than 900 staff in Asia Pacific. The company's Asian headquarters are in Hong Kong. In 2006, Swiss Re celebrated 50 years since opening its first offices in Asia Pacific.

The company has been present in India since 1998. It established Swiss Re Shared Services Pvt Ltd in Bangalore in 2000, and opened a Service Company in Mumbai in 2002 to provide service to Swiss Re Zurich in its reinsurance activities. In 2007, Swiss Re entered into a joint venture with India's TTK Group by acquiring 26% of TTK Healthcare Services Pvt Ltd, India's leading Third Party Administrator. It also established a healthcare services advisory company, Swiss Re Healthcare Services Pvt. Ltd.

GeoHazards International

Established in 1991 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing death and injury caused by natural hazards in the world's most vulnerable communities, GeoHazards International (GHI) is a global network of people alarmed by the world's growing earthquake risk, aware of methods that could reduce human suffering, and determined to help. Through the members of the Board of Trustees, Board of Advisors and staff, GHI has centuries of experience in seismology, earthquake engineering, risk management, and advocacy outreach.

Earthquake Safety Initiative for Lifeline Buildings initiative in Delhi

A United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded project, managed by GeoHazards International, aimed to strengthen the capacity of the Delhi Public Works Department through the retrofit of five key buildings: the Delhi Secretariat, the Delhi Police Headquarters, the Guru Tegh Bahadur Hospital, the Ludlow Castle School, and the Office of the Divisional Commissioner.

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