

**APN/SURVAS/LOICZ Joint Conference on Coastal Impacts
of Climate Change and Adaptation (APN2000-09)**

Project Leader:

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APN Funding

US \$75,000

Participating countries

Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nauru, the Philippines, Samoa, Thailand, the UK, USA, Vanuatu, Vietnam

Introduction/Background

APN/SURVAS/LOICZ Joint Conference on Coastal Impacts of Climate Change and Adaptation in the Asia-Pacific Region was held on 14-16 November 2000, at the APN Centre in Kobe, Japan, under the auspices of the APN, the Organizing Committee of the Conference, and the Science Council of Japan. The Asia and Pacific region has been recognized as a focus of the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise. However, the linkage between global climate change and societal impacts, and the feasibility of adaptation are poorly understood. It is also questioned how the present environmental problems and development practices are related to future threats. To answer such questions, the conference aimed at bringing relevant researchers and policy-makers in this field to develop a comprehensive understanding on the present knowledge of the national and regional vulnerability and possible adaptation strategies. More than 60 participants attended the conference from 20 countries and 5 international organizations.

Outline of activities conducted

The conference consisted of three different themes.

The first one was synthesis of the coastal impacts of climate change and sea-level rise. Country representatives presented summaries of the assessment studies on the possible impacts and vulnerability of individual countries. Many countries in the region revealed to be significantly vulnerable to sea-level rise and changes in cyclones and storm surges. Large cities in the low-lying coastal plains, such as Shanghai, Bangkok, Jakarta, Tokyo, Osaka will face future threats of inundation and flooding. Adverse effects of coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion on the land use, agriculture, and water resources are another problems for the deltaic areas. Small islands in the South Pacific are threatened by all these factors. Though the stage of the vulnerability study differs from country to country, and therefore systematic and comprehensive studies are still needed to fully identify the vulnerable areas and sectors in each country.

The second theme was the present status and results of the IGBP/LOICZ studies. In this session, 23 presentations were made, including 15 poster presentations. Subjects presented include the biogeomorphological effects of global warming, the Bay of Thailand Project, SEAWATCH Project in Indonesia, long-term sea level change during the Holocene in the Philippines, global mapping, salt water intrusion into rivers, and modelling of coastal erosion. A wide range of presentations stimulated discussions among different disciplines.

The third theme was vulnerability and adaptation overview. Discussions in a plenary session pointed out the importance to perform accurate and comprehensive vulnerability assessment to set a firm basis for the adaptation planning. It was also emphasized that development of the integrated coastal management plan was important as a measure for the adaptation. International network and mutual exchange of information were recognized to be essential, and some countries like Japan were requested to take initiatives to develop and maintain such activities.

On the next day of the Joint Conference, 17 November, an open symposium for the public was held to introduce the results of the conference and the latest knowledge on global warming and climate change. Policy-makers, researchers, and the general public attended the symposium. Foreign participants pointed out the importance of such open symposiums that follow conferences, as they raise the profile of the issue amongst the local community.

Outcomes/Products

Proceedings of the Joint Conference, which includes papers presented in the conference, will be published. Synthesis and Upscaling of Sea-Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment Studies (SURVAS) was proposed to synthesize and aggregate national vulnerability assessments and other pertinent studies through networking and workshop activities in Europe, Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific. It also plans to organize the Global Synthesis Workshop of SURVAS to summarize the results of these conferences and workshops. The results of the present Joint Conference and its proceedings will be submitted to the Global Synthesis Workshop to contribute to drawing a global picture of the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise.

Future directions/Follow-up work

The regional and global synthesis achieved in this project is an important step to understand the vulnerability to climate change and sea-level rise. As a next step, more site-specific analysis of vulnerability is needed to develop the response strategies to future threats, i.e. adaptation to global warming. To this end, mutual exchange of experience and results of such advanced vulnerability analysis through a network established by this project and SURVAS is a necessary future direction. This workshop also revealed that the stage of the vulnerability assessment is different among the countries in the region. Therefore, development of technical methods and its guidelines for the vulnerability and adaptation studies is another important task to help less advanced groups of countries.

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