

Climatic Hazards Programme

SEADPRI Forum 2021: Risk Science for Resilient Cities – From Concept to Action

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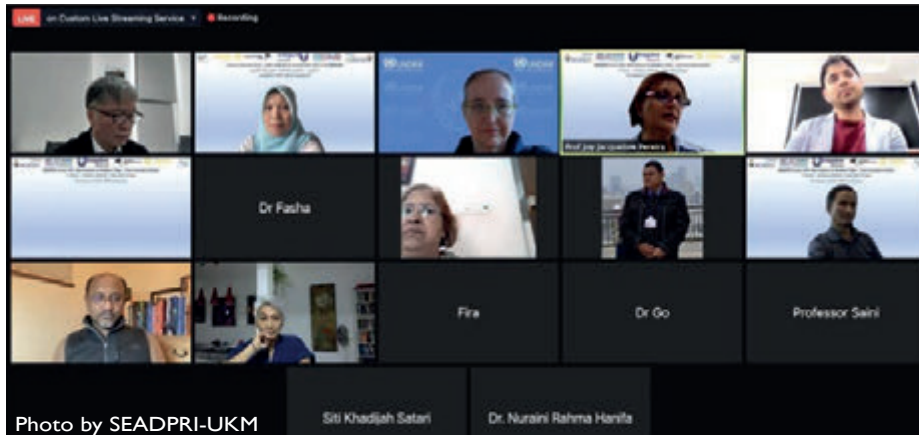


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Panelists during SEADPRI Forum 2021.

The SEADPRI Forum is an annual flagship event of SEADPRI-UKM, an IRDR International Centre of Excellence on Disaster Risks and Climate Extremes (ICoE-SEADPRI-UKM). The Forum aims to foster understanding and strengthen linkages between researchers, practitioners and policymakers in the thematic areas of disaster risk reduction.

The Forum this year, titled “Risk Science for Resilient Cities – From Concept to Action”, saw about 80 participants from the region. Held online from 1700-1900 (GMT+8) on 7 May 2021, it served as a pre-session of the IRDR Conference 2021. The purpose was to gather input for the Global Research Agenda for disaster risk reduction and risk-informed development toward 2030 and beyond.

The Forum was convened by the IRDR ICoE-SEADPRI-UKM, UNDRR Asia Pacific Science Technology Academia Advisory Group (AP-STAG) and Asian Network on Climate Science and Technology (ANCSST), with support from the UNESCO Youth and Young Professionals Group on Disasters, International Science Council – Regional Office for the Asia Pacific (ISC-ROAP) and the Academy of Sciences Malaysia. The objective was to promote understanding of risk science and the regional risk landscape in a changing climate; identify major challenges and research priorities for risk science of cities in the region; and explore means for implementing actions, including drawing on the energy of youth and young professionals. The Forum comprised two scene-setting keynotes followed by interventions from a Panel of Experts, moderated by Prof. Joy Jacqueline Pereira and Dr. Nurfashareena Muhamad of IRDR ICoE-SEADPRI-UKM. Participants were encouraged to provide written input during the session and up to a week after the event. It was officiated by Dr. Riyanti Djalante, Chair of the IRDR Steering Committee while Prof. Rajib Shaw, Chair of AP-STAG delivered the closing remarks.

The first keynote by Dr. Jenty Kirsch-Wood, Head of Global Risk Management and Reporting at the UNDRR, provided an overview of the “Concept and Practice of Risk Science”. She highlighted the need to manage risk systematically, taking into account interdisciplinary input, practitioners’ knowledge and community engagement. Technological solutions have to be considered in tandem with societal behavior, governance and political will.

As risk cannot be eliminated entirely, aspects such as living with uncertainty, perceiving opportunities in all circumstances and enhancing resilience are important. She also emphasized the importance of engaging young scientists in risk sciences.

The second keynote by Prof. Qunli Han, Executive Director of Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) International Programme Office (IPO), focused on “Development of the Global Research Agenda for DRR”. Aspects covered included the need to contextualize the global science and technology road map; promote science and policy dialogue for better data; advance science and technology for DRR and resilience; review of hazard terminology for better communication; and enhance interdisciplinary collaboration. He emphasized that risk-informed sustainable development is one of the key targets of IRDR. He also called for a paradigm shift in disaster risk management by investing in risk prevention, living with uncertainty and managing the uncertainty instead of focusing only on disaster management and disaster response.

A major point of discussion was the potential of youth and young professionals for contributing to risk science in the region. The enthusiastic youth and young scientists of U-INSPIRE collectively pledged to strengthen sub-regional efforts. For example, an intention was expressed to form U-INSPIRE with strong links to ASEAN, and contribute to the changing risk landscape in Southeast Asia. There was also a strong call to make resilient cities a key pillar of the Global Research Agenda to address urban health, risk governance, and the urban-rural partnership. This is to ensure that science-technology advice is channeled to cities and sub-national levels, to meet the aspirations of the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Key findings from the Forum will be conveyed to the 2021 Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) Conference on 8-10 June 2021, to develop the Global Research Agenda on disaster risk reduction. The Forum ended with a note of appreciation to all the convening partners, keynote speakers, panelists and participants. The excellent technical support provided by the team at ICoE-SEADPRI-UKM coordinated by Mr. Mohd Khairul Zain Ismail was applauded.