PART II

DEFINING SEISMIC SAFETY PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOLS

Introduction

In order to improve earthquake safety in schools, the fundamental concepts and principles that lead to building earthquake-resilient school must be identified. The aim of this part of the experts' meeting was not only to define these concepts and principles, taking into account cost/benefit and resource implications, but also to use them as a starting point from which to develop a programme for school seismic safety in countries.

California's 1933 Field Act illustrates how effective legislation can lead to developing and implementing a successful programme. The general principles that ensure the effective and prolonged enforcement of this legislation can be identified, although the extent to which these general principles are transferable to other countries and cultures requires further discussion.

Based on the experience of California and other successful programmes throughout the world, the *ad hoc* experts' group identified a number of broad seismic safety principles for schools.

Defining principles

- *Champions of seismic safety.* These "champions" are community members and parents, earthquake engineers, academics and politicians who are striving to promote a risk-averse society and to communicate the risks involved in the event of an earthquake.
- *Understanding of the critical role of schools in the community and as post-disaster shelters.*
- *System for assigning risk ownership and a legal or regulatory basis for action.* Legislation and enforcement mechanisms should establish clear lines of accountability and achievable performance goals with an incremental implementation strategy. An assessment of national regulations may also be useful.
- *Established financial responsibility and cost.* Economic support should be established based on the assessment and prioritisation for retrofit of new and existing school buildings.
- *Detailed and up-to-date hazard maps and building codes.*
- *Well-monitored and independent plan review, checking and approval, and construction inspection, testing and final reporting by certified professionals.*