



An international workshop on school earthquake safety organised by:

***Ministry of National Education, Republic of Turkey and
Economic Co-operation Organisation (ECO)***

***With the support of the
OECD Programme on Educational Building (PEB) and
GeoHazards International (GHI)***

Polat Renaissance Istanbul Hotel (www.polatrenaissance.com), Istanbul, 1-2 June 2006

Workshop Announcement

Introduction

The recent earthquakes in the ECO region remind us that insufficient progress is being made in the safe construction of schools. One of the most tragic aspects of the October 8, 2005 earthquake in Pakistan was the disastrous performance of schools. Over 8 000 schools were either destroyed or damaged beyond repair. Over 17 000 school-age children perished and over 20 000 suffered serious injuries.

Despite the frequent occurrence of earthquakes and the high human and material cost of these disasters, the international community and national governments have not been able to provide reliably earthquake-resistant design, construction and maintenance of school buildings. In addition, high population growth and rapid urbanisation in ECO countries, many of which are earthquake-threatened, means that new schools will be built and existing schools will continue to be used in earthquake-prone zones.

The OECD Programme on Educational Building (PEB), in co-operation with GeoHazards International (GHI), has initiated a global activity with the aim of improving earthquake safety in schools and approached Turkey to help develop a similar programme for the ECO region.

They advised the organisation of an introductory workshop in Turkey to enable ECO countries to exchange views and determine joint action on school earthquake safety.

The Turkish Ministry of Education, which conducts comprehensive programs in Turkey on this issue, has volunteered to host the workshop, in co-operation with the OECD and GHI.

Objective

The main purpose of this workshop is to help evaluate the risk to life and property and the development and application of safety standards and construction codes for schools in the ECO region against earthquakes. It will identify and describe the scope for national action on earthquake safety in schools.

In this regard, the workshop will aim to develop a programme or system to provide guidance, technical expertise, support and resources for the ECO countries on school safety.

Venue

The workshop will be held at the Polat Renaissance Istanbul Hotel, located near the Attaturk Airport, in Istanbul (see www.polatrenaissance.com).

Participation, accommodation and travel arrangements

Participation in the workshop will be limited to a maximum of 45 on a hospitality basis: two participants from each ECO Member State (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and two participants from ERI-SEE countries (Education Reform Initiation, South-East Europe - Macedonia and Kosovo) will attend the meeting, in addition to representatives of Turkish institutions and centres.

Participants will be accommodated at the meeting venue: Polat Renaissance Istanbul Hotel, located near the Attaturk Airport, in Istanbul (see www.polatrenaissance.com). Board and lodging expenses of the participants for four days will be met by the Turkish Ministry of Education. Return flight tickets of one expert from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan will be funded by the ECO Secretariat upon arrival.

Working language

The working language for the workshop is English. Russian interpretation will be provided by the ECO Secretariat.

Outcomes

The recommendations of the Workshop will be submitted to the ECO Regional Planning Council with a view to establishing an ECO High Level Experts Group (IHEG) on School Earthquake Safety.

Format

The meeting will be divided into a number of sessions, which will be chaired by international experts in the field of seismic safety. In each session, country representatives are encouraged to discuss issues and challenges in their own countries. Discussion in each session will be facilitated by a Chair and a panel of international experts.

Preparation

While representatives are not asked to present a paper, they are requested to consider each item for discussion and be prepared to participate in the discussion.

Items for discussion

The workshop is planned to explore in plenary and group session the following items:

1. Identifying the problem: Assessing the vulnerability and risks to schools

- Performance of school buildings in past earthquakes
- Earthquake vulnerability of school buildings
- Norms for risk assessment and quantification of hazard

2. Addressing the problem: Improving school earthquake safety

- Preparedness and emergency response planning
- Strengthening existing buildings to resist earthquakes
- Safety standards and construction codes for building schools
- Trainings and qualifications
- Risk reduction in new facilities

3. The way forward: Developing strategies and programmes for school earthquake safety

- School earthquake safety programmes in developing countries
- Conducting a review of the school earthquake safety programmes of participating countries
- Recommendations on how to establish and implement programmes
- The next step for ECO countries.