Chapter 1

Outline of the RADIUS Initiative

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1. Objective and Scheme

The United Nations General Assembly designated the 1990s as the "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)" to reduce loss of life, property damage, and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters. The IDNDR secretariat launched the **RADIUS** (**R**isk **A**ssessment Tools for **Di**agnosis of **U**rban Areas against **S**eismic Disasters) initiative in 1996, with financial and technical assistance from the Government of Japan. It aimed to promote worldwide activities for the reduction of urban seismic risk, which is growing rapidly, particularly in developing countries. The primary goal of the initiative is to help people understand their seismic risk and raise public awareness as the first step towards seismic risk reduction.

The direct objectives of RADIUS were:

A) To develop earthquake damage scenarios and action plans in nine case-study cities selected worldwide;
B) To develop practical tools for seismic risk management, which could be applied to any earthquake-prone city in the world;
C) To conduct a comparative study to understand urban seismic risk around the world; and
D) To promote information exchange for seismic risk mitigation at city level.

The results of applying the tools will be useful to decision makers and government officials who are responsible for disaster prevention and disaster:

- To decide priorities for urban planning, land-use planning, and building regulations;
- To prepare an improvement plan for existing urban structures such as reinforcement (retrofitting) of vulnerable buildings and infrastructure, securing of open spaces and emergency roads; and
- To prepare for emergency activities such as life saving, fire fighting, and emergency transportation.

The results will also be useful to communities, NGOs, and citizens:

- To understand the vulnerability of the area where they live;
- To understand how to behave in case of an earthquake; and
- To participate in preparing plans for disaster prevention.

The results will be useful to semi-public companies that maintain urban infrastructure to understand the necessity of prevention and preparedness. The results will also be useful to business leaders, building owners, developers, real estate agents, and insurance/reinsurance companies so that they may minimize the damage on their human resources as well as properties for their business.

Time table

Year 1996

- Planning of the initiative

Year 1997

- Invitation for the case-study cities
- Pre-selection of the 20 cities
- Establishment of the STC subcommittee for RADIUS
- Selection of the three international institutes

Year 1998

- Selection of the nine case-study cities (January)
- Implementation of the case studies (1.5 years from February)
- Kick-off meetings and earthquake damage scenario workshops
- Training seminars in Japan (May/June)
- Comparative study on "understanding urban seismic risk in the world" (1 year from April)
- RADIUS Workshop at the International Conference in Yerevan, Armenia (September)