

## The Headquarters for Earthquake Research Promotion (HERP), to Promote Research on Earthquake in Japan

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The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Disaster on January 17, 1995 killed 6,434 people and destroyed over 100,000 buildings, and brought to light a number of problems in our national earthquake disaster prevention measures.

Following on the lessons learned from this disaster, the Special Measure Law on Earthquake Disaster Prevention sponsored by legislators was enacted in July 1995 to promote a comprehensive national policy on earthquake disaster prevention.

The failure to sufficiently communicate and apply earthquake research results to the general public and disaster prevention organizations highlighted the need for a direct system of accountability in government policy regarding earthquakes, and the Headquarters for Earthquake Research Promotion (HERP), a special governmental organization attached to the Prime Minister's office (now belongs to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)), was established in accordance with this law.

The Basic objective of HERP is to promote research into earthquakes with the goal of strengthening disaster prevention measures, particularly for the reduction of damage and casualties from earthquakes. To achieve it, the HERP plays the role as follows:

(1) Planning of comprehensive and basic policies, (2) Coordination of budgets and other administrative works with related governmental organizations, (3) Establishment of comprehensive survey and observation plans, (4) Collection, arrangement, analysis and comprehensive evaluation of survey results by related governmental organizations, universities, etc., and (5) Public announcements based on the comprehensive evaluations.

Based on the role, the HERP drew up the Fundamental Plans for Survey and Observation in 1997. In accordance with these plans, each participating organization set up high-sensitive seismographs, broadband seismographs, strong motion seismographs and GPS continuous observation facilities. Surveys of inland active faults are also being conducted for the entire nation. In addition, based on the National Seismic Hazard Maps for Japan, the Focused Survey and Observation is promoted to the areas that have been identified as having a high probability for strong ground shaking occurrence. (The Future Focused Survey and Observation was made in August 2005.)

In March 2009, the HERP drew up the next Promotion of Earthquake Research -Comprehensive Basic Policies for the Promotion of Earthquake Research through the Observation, Survey, and Research-, and officially determined it based on the Special Measure Law on Earthquake Disaster Prevention through the decision of Central Disaster Management Council on April 21, 2009.

The objectives of the earthquake research which should be promoted in the coming 10 years are as follows:

(1) Improving the accuracy of the prediction of earthquake occurrence and seismic motion - tsunami based on the observation and research for the subduction-zone earthquake, (2) Systematic accumulation and maintenance of the information for the research related to active faults, etc. and advanced evaluation, and (3) Strengthening of mediation function to promote the study on engineering and social science for disaster prevention and disaster reduction.

The important matters which should be performed cross-sectionally are as follows:

(1) Maintenance of observation network, (2) Human resource training and reservation, (3) Public announcement of result of research, (4) Reinforcement of international communication, and (5) Budget preparation and operation of evaluation.

The HERP promotes the survey and research for the objectives mentioned above.

In this lecture, the above matches and these measures in the future are introduced in detail.

Keywords: HERP, Fundamental Plans for Survey and Observation, Surveys of active faults, Next Promotion