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## **EXPLORING REALMS OF FLOOD FORECASTING**

LAHORE: Scientists, hydrological modelers, meteorologists and decision makers from home and abroad met here on Wednesday to discuss how to help Pakistan properly forecast floods and adopt preventive measures.

They gathered at a seminar organised jointly by the Pakistan Meteorological Department, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) and UNESCO here at a local hotel. The seminar's topic was "Reliable flood forecasting -- a challenge for data, models or forecaster skills."

Unesco and Jica are guiding and financially assisting Pakistan to improve its flood forecasting system after the super floods in the Indus in 2010. The seminar was held to review the achievements so far and suggest further improvements.

National Disaster Management Authority chairman Maj Gen Muhammad Saeed Aleem said the project had started giving results. The new model of forecasting adopted by the Met Department greatly helped in monitoring floods and reducing losses to human life and property in monsoon this year.

He said his organisation had made a 10-year \$1,040 million long-term plan comprising 118 projects to prevent and manage disasters, and develop an accurate flood warning system. Out of this, \$700 million would be spent on a modernised and effective national flood programme. This included installation of new weather radars, new Met offices and new weather and flood forecasting models.

He said the country had so far been monitoring river floods. There was a need to develop a system to forecast hill torrents and urban flooding so as to minimise damage to human life or property and avoid inconvenience to urban population. There should be small radars for all cities for accurate weather forecasting for them.

He said disaster management in the earthquake-hit Awaran was quick and better despite its remoteness and absence of any local support system. It was much better than the work during earthquake disaster in 2005 because "we were not prepared for it at that time."

In his welcome address, PMD Director General Arif Mahmood said the seminar related \$3.2 million project was made by UNESCO to develop a latest forecasting model, to establish media centres in Islamabad and Lahore to timely convey extreme weather reports to people and to develop human resource of his department.

He said the project was being funded by Jica and the new forecasting model greatly helped the PMD accurately forecast monsoon rains and monitor the river flood flows this year. Five officials had obtained one-year flood-related degrees from Japan and more were going there for the same purpose.

Mr Mahmood, who has been elected as the World Meteorological Organization's vice president, said the seminar was held to suggest further improvements in the system.

Unesco's Deputy Director of its Regional Science Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, Indonesia, Dr Shahbaz Khan, who is also the project leader, introduced its various aspects.

Punjab Irrigation Secretary Zahid Saeed, Flood Forecasting Division chief Riaz Khan and Japanese experts Mr Iwami, Ms Rio Tanabe and Mr Azegami also spoke.

Later, a number of experts from Pakistan and Japan read papers on different challenges to flood forecasting and early warning system.

**Source:** <http://www.dawn.com/news/1074966/exploring-realms-of-flood-forecasting>

## **SEMINAR CONCLUDES**

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LAHORE: The two-day international seminar on developing a reliable flood forecasting system in Pakistan concluded here on Thursday.

Experts from Pakistan and abroad narrated their experiences and made suggestions regarding the improvement of the forecasting system so as to minimize loss to human life and property especially during the monsoons.

Speakers included Dr Ibnu Sofwan Lukito of Indonesia, Dr Dev Raj Sikka of India and Abdul Majid of Pakistan.

UNESCO's Deputy Director and Project Leader Dr Shahbaz Khan, who is helping Pakistan in developing an authentic weather forecasting system with the financial assistance of Jica, also spoke on the occasion.

**Source:** <http://www.dawn.com/news/1075258/seminar-concludes>