

Thai Professional Conference 2012

Disaster Risk Management: Lessons Learned from USA, Japan, and Europe

By Anne Kocheon and Chuleeporn Changchit

The annual Thai Professional Conference 2012 (TPC 2012) was held July 3-6 at the Miracle Grand Hotel in Bangkok. The conference theme was “**Disaster Risk Management: Lessons Learned from USA, Japan, and Europe**” co-organized by the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), the Minister of Science and Technology (MOST), the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC), the Office of Science and Technology in Washington D.C., and the Associations of Thai Professionals in North America and Canada, Japan, and Europe (ATPAC, ATPIJ, and ATPER). A total of 27 Thai professionals from ATPAC joined the conference.

As part of the conference, ATPAC professionals organized the pre-conference seminar on July 3, facilitated the conference sessions throughout the 3-day conference period, and participated in a brainstorming session to identify topics for future collaboration with Thai professional partners. On the morning of July 4, Dr. Plodprasop Suraswadi, Minister of Science and Technology opened and delivered a special lecture related to the Great Flood in Thailand that occurred last year.



As part of the organizing committee, ATPAC invited Karen Durham-Aguilera, Director of Contingency Operations and Office of Homeland Security, Headquarters, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, USA to give a talk on "**Katrina and Missouri River Flooding Experiences.**" Prof. Narita Yoshihiro, Hokkaido University, Japan gave a lecture on "**Natural Disasters in Japan and How We Face Them: The Past, Present and Future.**"



The first two days of the TPC 2012 conference yielded a comprehensive list of **topics of concern regarding disaster risk reduction management** as follows:

1. Early warning
 - River forecast
 - Integration/Reliability
2. Land subsidence and sea level rising
3. Logistics
4. Social network for flooding information
5. Satellite
 - Inundation map
 - Remote sensing
6. Sensor for flood warning and flood monitoring
 - Network/Location optimization
7. Modeling-HEC-RAS
 - River forecast
8. Risk assessment
 - 100 year flood map
 - Flood insurance
9. Public participation
 - Raising awareness
 - Risk communication
10. Rehabilitation including waste management
11. Siting for nuclear facilities
12. Flood water quality (sampling, monitoring, and control)
13. Decentralized water treatment (due to water source affected by flood water)



Dr. Piniti Ratananukul, Deputy Secretary-General of the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC)

ATPAC was also instrumental on the third day of the conference that focused on **Raising Higher Education Standards**. The conference was opened by Dr. Piniti Ratananukul, Deputy Secretary-General of the OHEC. Dr. Piniti also gave a keynote address on **Thai Government Policy on Higher Education**. In his talk, Dr. Piniti provided his viewpoint on higher education policy, discussed the roles of both the OHEC and the challenges they are facing as well as the role of the Reverse Brain Drain (RBD) project, and concluded by providing some recommendations for future direction.

After the keynote address session, the Presidents of ATPAC, ATPER, and ATPIJ provided a brief introduction to new members of the Associations. The remaining programs for the morning session consisted of two presentations including:

- Recent Developments and Emerging Challenges in Engineering Education: A Canadian Perspective by Dr. Paitoon Tontiwachwuthikul, Dean of Engineering, University of Regina, Canada.
- Human Resource Development, Research Quality Improvement and Competitiveness in Thailand by Dr. Vichai Boonsaeng, Director of Higher Education Research Promotion-National Research Universities (HERP-NRU) Office.

During the afternoon session, two panel discussions were arranged as follows:

❖ Do All of Us Need to Become Research Universities?

➤ Panel Members:

- Dr. Chuleeporn Changchit-Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, USA
- Dr. Wanchai De-Eknamkul, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand
- Dr. Nongnit Laytragoon-Lewin, Jonkoping Hospital, Sweden
- Dr. Kannika Leelapanyaalert, University of London, UK

➤ Facilitator: Dr. Wanpracha Chaovalitwongse, University of Washington, USA

❖ Program Assessment: How to Ensure the Quality of the Program (Accreditation, Evaluation Matrix) by:

- Dr. Thomas Cary, City University of Seattle
- Dr. Somwung Pitiyanuwat, Former Director, Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
- Dr. Methi Wecharatana, New Jersey Institute of Technology



(from left) Dr. Methi Wecharatana, Dr. Somwung Pitiyanuwat, Dr. Thomas Cary

The last session provided an opportunity for audiences to brainstorm on opportunities for ATPAC contribution to Thai Higher Education. This session was facilitated by Dr. Rattikorn Hewett, Texas Tech University.

TPC 2012 attracts over 200 participants including overseas Thai professionals, researchers, academia, government officers, and the general public. ATPAC members who participated in this conference include: Chuleeporn Changchit, Vira Chankong, Vorakarn Chanyavanich, Wanpracha Chaovalitwongse, Pisanu Ganthavorn, Rattikorn Hewett, Eakalak Khan, Anne Kochaon, Gaviphath Lekutai, Wison Luengdilok, Mongkol Mahavongtrakul, Sirikanda Nuansaeng, Witoon Prinyawiwatkul, Sangjan Rungruangkonkit, Malisa Sarnthiranont, Supapan Seraphin, Sirivatch Shimpalee, Pattama Shimpalee, Ongard Sirisaengtaksin, Praprut Songchitrukka, Artnarong Thansandote, Paitoon Tontiwachwuthikul, Vichate Ungvichian, Dave Vongchan, Nisai Wanakule, Methi Wecharatana.

Financial support (accommodation and air fare) to ATPAC's participants was provided partly by OSTC/DC, OHEC and NSTDA/RBD. The funds received by ATPAC from MOST for the development of the Science and Technology Strategic Plan assignment last year was well used

to support the travelling of several ATPAC's members who contributed to the plan development to participate in this TPC 2012.