

CDNL Annual Meeting, 12 August 2010, Gothenburg (Sweden)

Agenda item 7: Panel discussion on recovering from natural disasters.

Recovering from Natural Disasters: Experience and Lessons from China's

Library Community

National Library of China

Abstract

Recent years have witnessed several natural disasters in China, which caused serious damage to libraries. For instance, the 8-magnitude earthquake hit Wenchuan County, Sichuan on May 12, 2008; another earthquake measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale struck Yushu County, Qinghai on April 14, 2010. Libraries in earthquake-affected areas suffered serious damage.

In the face of these natural disasters, China's library community takes active measures to protect the document heritage in the earthquake-affected areas. The National Library of China, along with the Library Society of China and library societies at the provincial level offered aid through various means, which effectively facilitated the restoration and reconstruction of libraries in these areas. The international library community, particularly IFLA, also provided valuable assistance in disaster relief.

Drawing on the experience and lessons learned from disaster relief measures during the two earthquakes, as well as considering the wide use of ICT in libraries and the rapid development of digital libraries, it is concluded that the following three areas shall be further enhanced to improve libraries' capabilities in addressing natural disasters: namely, establish a backup center for documents; plan and build a national strategic repository for documents; and third, better coordinate disaster relief measures in China's library community.