



# ADRC Highlights

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## ● Announcements

### Observations on Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction Efforts in Kobe City by the Study Team led by Mr. Gu Zhaoxi, Vice Minister, Ministry of Civil Affairs, China

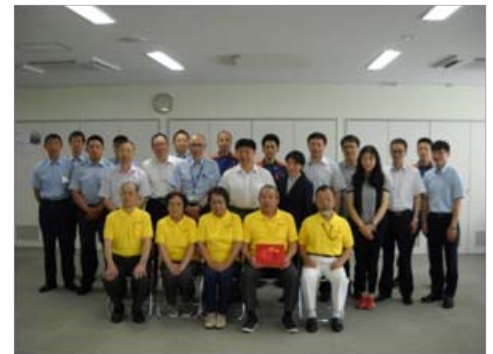
Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) hosted a study team led by Mr. Gu Zhaoxi, Vice Minister in China's Ministry of Civil Affairs and gave a presentation on regional disaster reduction initiatives in Hyogo. We held a discussion meeting with the Tachibana Town Planning Council and the Kobe Central Fire station to highlight the disaster reduction welfare community concept in Kobe, one of the major community-based disaster reduction initiatives in Japan. We also arranged an opportunity for the team to visit the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution to learn about the region's experiences during the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake.

That study team participated in the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2017 held in Cancun, Mexico from 22-26 May. On the return trip home, they asked to stop in Japan to observe efforts in community-based disaster risk reduction. They were especially interested in having meetings with local stakeholders on the topic of disaster risk reduction by local residents and the assistance of local government, and we planned a series of study activities in response.

A "disaster reduction welfare community" refers to a voluntary disaster reduction organization of local residents supported by the City of Kobe based on lessons learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. A key feature of such a community is the implementation of local disaster reduction activities at the elementary school level.

In Japanese municipalities, many such activities are organized by community associations or women's associations. However, communities in Kobe City are able to recruit a wide range of individuals, ages children to adult, to participate in such activities, including parent-teacher associations (PTAs), women's and senior citizen associations, social welfare councils, and chambers of commerce and industry. Moreover, since these activities are conducted at the level of the elementary school neighborhood, community disaster drills may be implemented more effectively, and disaster management activities that incorporate such elements as the acceptance of evacuees from neighboring areas, may also proceed more seamlessly.

The team members were not passive participants, but actively asked questions about such issues as how individual efforts



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to watch over seniors who live alone, implemented by women's or senior citizen associations, play a role in area disaster reduction. Finally Vice Minister Gu summarized the discussion, saying "All countries are same when it comes to confronting natural disasters even if they have differences in their level of development. The Chinese government has a strong mobilization capacity, but the ability of individual organizations in local communities to act independently is still lacking. This visit was so helpful in terms of inspiring us to think about how to leverage the capacity of local residents."

The group was led on a tour of the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation institution by a Chinese-speaking volunteer guide. It was particularly impressive that Vice Minister Gu was already aware that the maintenance of overseas cargo handling volumes played a significant role in the recovery of the Port of Kobe.

ADRC will continue to share the experiences of reconstruction from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and Kobe's efforts in community-based disaster reduction, and to share information with the Asian region and countries all over the world for the development of better disaster reduction initiatives for the next generation.

**● Participation in International Conferences****12th Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction by the UNESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee**

ADRC participated in the 12th annual meeting of the Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction on the "Future Strategic Plan of WGDRR after the Sendai Framework" organized by the UNESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee and the National Disaster Management Research Institute (NDMI) in Ulsan, Republic of Korea on 30-31 May 2017. The main objective of the meeting was to share information on members' typhoon-related public education and training. Some 30 participants from member countries and relevant organizations, including ADRC, reported on their recent public awareness and education activities and gave updates on WMO and NDMI's DRR information system tools. An Advisory Working Group meeting was held after that meeting, on 1-2 June 2017, to discuss a future strategy for the Typhoon Committee's operations.

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