



ADRC Highlights

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● Announcements

ADRC Welcomes New Executive Director

ADRC Chairman Prof. Shigeru Itoh appointed Mr. Atsushi Koresawa to serve as the new Executive Director of ADRC as of 14 July 2009. Former Executive Director Mr. Koji Suzuki was asked by the Japanese government to assume a post in the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. Mr. Suzuki wishes to take this opportunity to express his sincere appreciation for the kind support you extended to ADRC during his tenure there, and hopes you will continue to cooperate with ADRC in its work on disaster risk reduction.

Personnel Change

ADRC Senior Researcher Dr. Kenpei Kojika was transferred to TEPSCO on 30 June 2009 while Mr. Makoto Fujieda from TEPSCO was appointed to serve as a Senior Researcher for ADRC on 1 July 2009.

● Participation in International Conferences

The Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction Held 15-19 June 2009

The Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Geneva, Switzerland on 15-19 June 2009. With participants attending from approximately 300 regional/national organizations and governments, the session urged political leaders to implement measures to reduce by half the number of deaths caused by natural disasters by 2015.

1. ADRC's Participation in the Session

ADRC organized/co-organized and participated in several pre-sessions and special events coordinated during the session. These included a pre-session event on Central Asian cooperation, and special events on the UN Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) program, on the launch of a group on wind-related disasters, and on the importance of indigenous knowledge for disaster risk reduction.

On the morning of 15 June, a meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) was held as a pre-session event. The ACDM secretariat gave a progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) in the ASEAN countries. The ACDM statement for the Global Platform was also discussed during the meeting. ADRC, as a partner organization of ACDM, introduced the planning projects supported by the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund. These consist of feasibility studies on the establishment of an ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), the establishment of ASEAN Disaster Management Communications Networking System, and ASEAN stockpiling of humanitarian relief goods.

On the afternoon of 16 June, ADRC, the UN Office for Outer Space

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Affairs (UNOOSA), the Group on Earth Observation, and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) held a special event entitled “Accessing Space-Based Information to Support Disaster Risk Reduction” to promote synergies aimed at enhancing the use of space-based information for disaster risk reduction. On 4 June, just prior to the Session of Global Platform, ADRC and UNOOSA signed an agreement to cooperate on the establishment of a Regional Support Office (RSO) for UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER at ADRC. At this special event, ADRC gave a presentation on its potential contributions as an RSO for UN-SPIDER.

On the morning of 17 June, ADRC co-organized a special event on the “Launch of an International Group for Wind-Related Disaster Risk Reduction” with the International Association for Wind Engineering, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR), United Nations University (UNU), World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and other international organizations. Despite the recognition of the critical need for cooperative action in wind-related disaster risk reduction (W-DRR) activities among various professional organizations, there have been no notable collaborative efforts among the various groups. Given this, the International Group for W-DRR was launched by the relevant organizations based on discussions held at this event. ADRC will contribute to this effort by working to raise awareness and to conduct disaster education on W-DRR.

On the afternoon of 17 June, ADRC served as one of six panelists in the Global Risk Identification Programme (GRIP), a side event organized by the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The objective of GRIP is to establish National Disaster Observatories which promote the systematic collection of data on natural disaster losses so that it can be input into disaster databases for analysis and use. ADRC gave a presentation on the GLIDE (Global Unique Disaster Identifier) initiative, since GLIDE numbers, which serve as identifiers of disasters, are essential to GRIP, and also discussed future plans for enhancing the GLIDE system.

Further, ADRC, together with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Disaster Management Center, Kyoto University, and UN/ISDR, held a special event on indigenous knowledge (IK) for disaster risk reduction on 17 June. IK is defined as methods and practices developed by a group of people based on an advanced understanding of the local environment, which has formed over numerous generations of inhabitation. Given the importance of IK in promoting a culture of resilience, ADRC gave an introductory speech on IK for disaster risk reduction in the South Asian region.

On the afternoon of 18 June, the Disaster Management Bureau of the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Center (BDPC), and UN/ISDR organized a special event on the “Incorporation of Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction into Climate Change Adaptation: The Story of Bangladesh.” Dr. Ian Davis, recipient of the 1996 UN-Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction, chaired the session. H.E. Dr. Abdur Razzaque, Minister for Food and Disaster Management for the government of Bangladesh delivered the inaugural statement. This was followed by presentations by BDPC and ADRC. The ADRC presentation focused on critical issues related to the effectiveness and sustainability of community-based disaster risk reduction efforts.

In the late afternoon of 18 June, ADRC issued an official statement during the plenary session. The statement expressed ADRC's ongoing commitment to promoting the implementation of the HFA in Asia, introducing recent projects and initiatives it has undertaken in collaboration with ADRC member countries and sub-regional organizations.

ADRC also took advantage of the Market Place area to highlight several recent projects, services, and networks that support the implementation of the HFA.



[GRIP side event (above), H.E. Mr. Namiki and Mr. Suzuki visit the Market Place (below)]

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2. IRP's Participation in the Session

International Recovery Platform (IRP) participation included organizing a special event, displaying and distributing information on IRP achievements at a booth in the disaster reduction Market Place, and presenting a video in one of the high level panel discussions.

(i) The IRP special event, whose theme was “Integrating Social, Economic, and Environmental Concerns in Post-Disaster Recovery,” took place on 17 June at the International Conference Centre Geneva. More than 70 delegates attended the event, where they heard discussions of effective mechanisms for more coherent and holistic approaches to recovery. H.E. Mr. Masayoshi Namiki, Vice Minister for Disaster Management, Cabinet Office of Japan, together with Mr. Alfred Lazarte-Hoyle, current Chair of the IRP Steering Committee, led the opening session. Two special reports on recent disasters were presented. Mr. Guido Bertolaso, Head of Civil Protection for the Italian government discussed “Recovery Status Report on the Italian Earthquake of April 2009.” Prof. Kenji Okazaki of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies of Japan discussed “Current Knowledge and Practices for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.” After these special reports, a technical forum on Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) was held. The forum featured presentations on the concept and practical aspects of PDNA by Mr. Maxx Dilley of UNDP, Mr. Doekle Wielinga of the World Bank, and Hon. Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi, Director-General of the National Planning Commission of Namibia. To highlight environmentally sound recovery, Dr. Nizar Mohamed, UNEP Consultant, presented “Environmental Perspective in Recovery: Experience from Cyclone Nargis.” Mr. Alfredo Lazarte-Hoyle presented “Recommendations from the International Recovery Forum 2009” whose theme was “building back better and greener.” Mr. Praveen Pardeshi of UN/ISDR, who facilitated this special event, presented two major points during his wrap up. First, he identified the need to make recovery tools more adaptive, thereby suggesting that PDNA has to integrate other important elements to make it more holistic. Second, he identified the need to utilize and improve existing mechanisms to address some of the known gaps. For example, stakeholders can access standby funds (e.g. GFDRR of the World Bank) to support recovery processes and initiatives whose goal is to link recovery tools to disaster risk reduction efforts. The event was formally closed by Mr. Naoto Tajiri, Director of the Cabinet Office of Japan and Vice-Chairman of the IRP Steering Committee.

(ii) The IRP booth was open daily from 16-18 June, showcasing IRP informational materials, activities, and services. The IRP booth in the Market Place gave participants an opportunity to connect with one another on technical cooperation and mutual support aimed at advancing the mission of IRP.

(iii) Finally, IRP contributed to the production of a video presentation that was shown during high level panel discussion no. 5 entitled, “Building Back Better: Disaster Reduction and Recovery Opportunities,” which was held on 18 June. The video presentation highlighted the challenges and opportunities that exist in working toward recovery in the context of IRP. Dr. Mukesh Kapila of the World Bank, who moderated the panel, gave suggestions for recovery aimed at accelerating the implementation of the HFA at the national and local levels, and presented challenges for the inter-agency task teams and panelists to address. He particularly highlighted the importance of (1) common and validated assessment methods for holistic recovery, (2) recovery funding, and (3) policy frameworks for recovery operations. The high level panel highlighted the need for “building back better” to extend beyond physical reconstruction and to give greater prominence to social, livelihood, and environmental aspects of reconstruction that get communities involved and enable them to resist or better cope with future disasters.



[IRP special event]

More detailed information on the Second Session of the Global Platform can be found on the PreventionWeb (<http://www.preventionweb.net/globalplatform/2009/>).

●Promoting Cooperation on Disaster Risk Reduction with Relevant Institutions Establishing an Asia-Pacific Regional Support Office of UN-SPIDER at ADRC

UNOOSA and ADRC have agreed to establish an Asia-Pacific RSO of UN-SPIDER at ADRC. The agreement was signed on 4 June 2009.

The signing ceremony was held at the 52nd session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), which was held at the UN Office in Vienna (3-12 June). The agreement was signed by Ms. Mazlan Othman of UNOOSA and Senior Researcher Naoki Yamaguchi of ADRC.

At the same event, an agreement was signed regarding the establishment of RSOs in Romania, Iran, and Nigeria.

ADRC handles requests for emergency measurements by Sentinel Asia, whose development and use is being promoted by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) in cooperation with the space agencies and disaster risk reduction agencies in other Asia-Pacific countries, and also promotes the use of satellite images when disasters strike in accordance with the International Charter on Cooperation to Achieve the Coordinated Use of Space Facilities in the Event of Natural or Technological Disasters. ADRC is also implementing a capacity development project related to the use of satellites in disaster risk reduction through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund.

Based on this, and given its role as a UN-SPIDER RSO, ADRC is developing a personnel training program that provides education regarding the use of satellites in disaster risk reduction and practical training in image processing technologies. We hope this will allow ADRC to make even greater contributions to the international community in the field of disaster risk reduction.



●ADRC Staff Profile No. 37

Mr. Gerald Potutan, Researcher, IRP

In April 2009, I joined ADRC as a researcher for the IRP Secretariat. I am pleased to have been given this assignment because it allows me to further contribute to the work of IRP.

After completing an internship at the UN Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) Hyogo Planning Office in June 2007, I had the opportunity to work as a research assistant at IRP, on a part-time basis, for almost two years. Through this experience, I learned more about the importance of reducing disaster risk in the context of recovery operations. My earlier tasks included compiling lessons and good practices on recovery operations as well as promoting the dissemination of recovery tools and guidelines to a wider community of practice. I gained a deeper understanding of the “build back better” approach for resilient recovery, as IRP gave me several opportunities to participate in International Recovery Forums, IRP Steering Committee meetings, and various learning events aimed at adopting a holistic approach to building resilience.

During my time at IRP, I intend to further assist in the compilation and dissemination of recovery lessons and good practices, thereby helping people learn about recovery planning and appropriate strategies for building back better, smarter, and greener.



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