



ADRC Highlights

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TOPICS

Promoting Cooperation with Member Countries

📄 Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2020

📄 Report from GeoThings

Participation in International Conferences

International Disaster Charter (IDC) Board Meeting

Announcement

Online Tsunami Seminar

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● Promoting Cooperation with Member Countries

Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2020

The Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction (ACDR) 2020 was held for the first time in an online format on 20-22 October 2020. An annually organized event, ACDR aims to promote the sharing of information and practices for implementing SFDRR and the SDGs, and to further enhance partnerships among ADRC member countries and various international and regional DRR organizations. ACDR2020 was organized jointly by the government of Japan and ADRC. The virtual ACDR2020 was attended by 244 people from 22 member countries, representing DRR organizations, research institutes, universities, and the private sector. The agenda consisted of an opening ceremony, special presentation, keynote speeches, and two thematic sessions.



20 October: Opening Ceremony and Special Presentation

In his opening remarks, **H.E. Mr. OKONOGI Hachiro, Minister of State for Disaster Management for the government of Japan**, highlighted the importance of public assistance, self-help, and mutual aid, and introduced the government's collective efforts to eliminate vertical divisions and to share Japan's disaster response to COVID-19, touching on ADRC's visiting researcher program and the public-private partnership program. Next, **H.E. Mr. Rustam Mazarzoda, Chairman of the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense of Tajikistan**, the country which was originally scheduled to host the ACDR this year, expressed his hope that Tajikistan would be able to host an ACDR in the near future. He also noted the need to discuss new approaches to disaster response and DRR strategies for many disasters in Tajikistan based on the lessons presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, **Prof. HAMADA Masanori, Chairman of ADRC**, explained the rationale for holding the conference online, and outlined the themes of ACDR2020.

In the special presentation, **Mr. NAKAO Akifumi, Director of the International Cooperation Division of the Disaster Management Bureau of the Cabinet Office of Japan**, reported on the current status of the disaster response to COVID-19, and on "Climate Action and Disaster Risk Reduction" strategies in the era of climate crisis. He also mentioned new initiatives that have emerged, noting how the current crisis presents an opportunity to analyze issues from multiple angles.

The keynote speeches were given by four experts. First, **Mr. Sanny Ramos Jegillos, Senior Adviser of the Disaster Risk Reduction Bangkok Regional Hub of the UNDP**, reported on the multifaceted impacts of COVID-19 in the Asia-Pacific region, and outlined 10 lessons and best practices for recovery, including international and regional cooperation, effective governance, social

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protection, green economy, digital disruption and innovation, and funding to reduce multiple risks. Finally, he ended his presentation with the hopeful comment, "Our future is not as bad as we think."

Next, **Prof. ISOBE Masahiko, President of the Kochi University of Technology**, gave a presentation entitled "Two-level Framework of Coastal Disaster Reduction." He suggested that better coastal disaster reduction measures can be taken based on the characteristics of the huge tsunami resulting from the Great East Japan Earthquake. For the maximum level tsunami (Level 2), which has an extremely low probability of occurrence (once every 1,000 years), and causes enormous destruction, the goal should be to save lives through evacuation and to maintain minimum daily living and economic activity while tolerating some damage. For the type and size of tsunami that occurs more frequently, perhaps around once every 100 to 150 years, and causes less destruction than the Level 2 tsunami (Level 1), the goal should be to prevent inundation and protect the economy and people's livelihoods using tsunami wall structures. It is likewise possible to protect lives and property against the kind of storm surge damage that occurs frequently in Asian countries by developing and operating a two-tier DRR system.

Prof. Arnold M. Howitt, Faculty Co-Director of the Program on Crisis Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School, gave a video presentation due to the time difference, entitled "The Challenge of Concurrent Crises." Due to the tendency of disasters to become more severe, frequent, and simultaneous, he pointed to the need for a critical incident management team that has two operational modes: responding to specific crises that have been experienced before, and responding to multiple, concurrent crises.

Finally, **Prof. Ian Robert Davis, Visiting Professor at Kyoto, Lund, and Oxford Brookes Universities**, gave a presentation on "Countermeasures to Tackle Risk Reduction and Climate Change from Intensifying Hazards." His 12 countermeasures were developed in consultation with eight experts from six countries. He noted that the achievement of effective countermeasures requires integrity and consistency, courage, foresight, long-term perspectives, planning, humility, education, knowledge, authority, resources, local approaches, teamwork, creativity, alternative strategies, and faith.

The next issue of ADRC Highlights features articles on Session 1 and Session 2 held on 21 and 22 October 2020.



20 October: Keynote Speeches

Report from GeoThings

In this issue, we would like to take the opportunity to highlight a report from GeoThings, which kindly contributed to our ACDR2020 website. It focuses on issues and challenges for disaster risk management in the "New Normal."

[GeoThings: Utilizing modern mobile and web applications for resource request matching and contact tracing in the face of global COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Many challenges arose from the early days. How to distribute supplies and properly register human interactions were among the earliest ones.

Due to the huge surge in medical masks' consumption in the first months of 2020, the government had to enforce very strict limitations and pre-registered distributions based on people's IDs. That's when the public-private partnership (PPP) was crucial. Many developers collaborated with the government in order to provide timely updates on the mask availability, and the Mask map made by GeoThings helped to guide

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people and facilitate information exchange when the government-provided data was insufficient or outdated. Easy to use UI allowed users to find basic information about nearby pharmacies and their current supply level. Thanks to the popular messenger (Line) bot integration, the solution was able to spread to higher amount of people already familiar with the mobile app and using it on a day-to-day basis.

Another area where the ICT tools were able to help, was the collection of the contact information from visitors. Many companies, government offices and other organizations asked their visitors to fill in paper forms in order to keep track of people and their recent travel history.

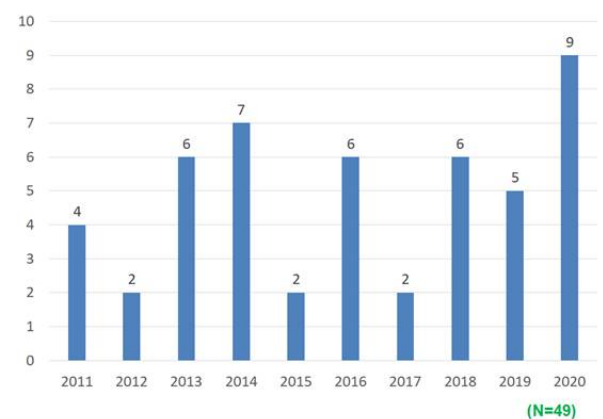
Alternative approach proposed by GeoThings included basic questionnaire to be filled inside a chat with a designated Bot in the messenger of choice, allowing to confirm their filled phone number in the process.

GeoThings is a Taiwan-based software company that works for the development of ICT tools and platforms in various fields, including disaster risk management.

You can see the full report on the ACDR2020 website: <https://acdr.adrc.asia/>.

● Participation in International Conferences**International Disaster Charter (IDC) Board Meeting**

ADRC participated in the International Disaster Charter (IDC) Board Meeting on 11 November 2020, which was held in an online format. Space agencies from the IDC member countries participated and gave updates on the latest DRR activity in this virtual meeting. ADRC functions as a Regional Support Office (RSO) in the IDC framework. When ADRC receives an emergency observation request for Sentinel Asia, ADRC escalates that request to IDC if asked to do so by the agency making the request. Sentinel Asia targets Asian countries, but the IDC provides worldwide support in case of a more catastrophic disaster. ADRC has escalated 49 cases to IDC since 2011. At this conference, ADRC proposed that a more robust network be developed. ADRC would like to be a strong bridge between the space agencies and disaster management organizations.



Number of cases escalated to IDC (as of 5 November 2020)

● Announcement**Online Tsunami Seminar**

ADRC held its first Online Tsunami Seminar on 24 November 2020. It began with a special speech by Prof. Imamura Fumihiko, Director of the International Research Institute of Disaster Science (IRIDeS) at Tohoku University, and was followed by a presentation by Dr. Anawat Suppasri, Associate Professor. More information about the seminar will be included in the next issue of ADRC Highlights.

The next seminar is planned on 22 December 2020. Please visit the following link (<https://bit.ly/ADRCTsunamiSeminar>) for more information and registration details. We look forward to your participation.

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