



ADRC Highlights

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● Promoting Cooperation with Member Countries

Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2022 (ACDR2022): Opening & Special Sessions

The Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2022 (ACDR2022) was held on 10-12 March 2023 at Sendai International Center, Miyagi Prefecture. This conference was held in a hybrid format to ease the attendance of a broader range of participants from member countries and relative organizations through online participation. As the result, the conference was attended by a total of 205 participants, 84 on-site and 121 online, including representatives from member countries, international organizations, private sectors, and academic/ research institutes.



On-site Participants of ACDR2022

This year's theme of ACDR was "WHAT IS NEXT? –Learning from the Past, Preparing for the Future–." ACDR2022 highlighted the importance of applying past lessons towards efforts for risk-informed preparedness to further strengthen the national-level DRM systems. It also emphasized how ADRC member countries and partner organizations could leverage each other's DRR programmes to better prevent, prepare, respond to, and recover from concurrent crises and future disasters. ACDR2022 aimed to specifically highlight: i) the progress made in strengthening DRM systems by showcasing the experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake, ii) the experience and lessons from recent major disasters in member countries; and iii) the new initiatives and approaches of member countries and partner organizations in preparing for complex and overlapping disasters.

Furthermore, 2023 marks the 100th year of the Great Kanto Earthquake that struck Japan's capital, Tokyo. ACDR2022 organized a special session to commemorate and discuss on the lessons learned from this earthquake and other major earthquakes that occurred in Japan.

Under the basic theme, we provided a platform for member countries to share updates and to discuss future actions focusing on three session themes: (1) Large-Scale Disasters and Countermeasures, (2) Broaden Our Horizons for Disaster Data Linkage in SFDRR Implementation: Application of GLIDE (GLobal IDentifier Number), and (3) The Provision of Information via Satellite for Disaster and Crisis Management.

In this month's issue, we will report on the opening session of the conference and special session relating to the "Centenary of the Great Kanto Earthquake."

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Opening Session

In the opening remarks, Mr TANI Kouichi, Minister of State for Disaster Management, Government of Japan first expressed his condolences for the Great East Japan Earthquake and the massive earthquake in Turkey and Syria. He emphasized the importance of ACDR which has been held annually since 2003. Next, Dr HAMADA Masanori, Chairman of ADRC said that ADRC has been promoting multilateral cooperation and support for disaster risk reduction since its establishment in 1998, and that he strongly believes that member countries can contribute to the creation of a safe and secure society by deepening cooperation and collaboration. Finally, Ms KORI Kazuko, Mayor of Sendai City also expressed her condolences for the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. And she expressed her gratitude for the ACDR2022 being held in Sendai City for the second time since the Great East Japan Earthquake. She also emphasized, base on her experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake, the importance of participants sharing their thoughts and knowledge and connecting with each other in order to appropriate preparedness for risks such as frequent disasters in Asian countries.

Mr SASAHARA Akio, Executive Director of ADRC, read a message on behalf of the Head of the Disaster and Disaster Management Authority (AFAD) under the Ministry of Interior in Turkey who was unable to participate in ACDR2022.



Opening Session (from left, Mr TANI Kouichi, Ms KORI Kazuko, and Dr HAMADA Masanori)

Special Session on the Centenary of the Great Kanto Earthquake –What can we learn from past disasters and how can we apply the lessons learned? –

This session comprised three topics of discussions: 1) lessons learned from the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake and subsequent countermeasures; 2) new findings and remaining challenges from the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake; and 3) what lessons and technologies from past disasters can be utilized to mitigate future risk in disaster-prone Asia.

Dr ITOH Shigeru, President of ADRC introduced the fact that safe city planning and modern urban design were inspired by the reconstruction of the Great Kanto Earthquake. It was the catalyst for a great leap forward in architecture and urbanism. He noted about the increasing use of concrete in public housings, whereas the apartment buildings with clapboard exteriors made of bare wood were replaced by concrete structures.

Dr HAMADA Masanori, Chairman of ADRC, said that the Great Kanto Earthquake marked the beginning of earthquake engineering in Japan. He introduced that the Great Kanto Earthquake damaged not only wooden houses, but also modern buildings constructed with technology imported from overseas since the Meiji Restoration, which led to the development of earthquake-resistant design of buildings and structures.

Dr HASEMI Yuji, Professor Emeritus of Science and Engineering at Waseda University, explained that the rapid increase in population during the First World War led to the expansion of areas densely populated with wooden buildings in urban regions. These areas caused simultaneous fires during the earthquake, and that because of this experience, fire prevention measures were introduced into these areas.

Prof. SHIGEKAWA Kishie, Professor at the Faculty of Social and Environmental Studies, Tokoha University, mentioned the importance of “people’s development” by promoting disaster education and improving disaster literacy. Japan has accumulated a variety of experiences and lessons that may be applicable and useful in the Asian region.

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In conclusion, the moderator, Mr YOSHIMURA Hidemi, Former Chief Commentator, NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) said that through the discussions of the panelists, it became clear that, since the Great Kanto Earthquake, structural and non-structural disaster prevention measures have been developed, studied and improved to cope with various types of damage, and that Japan has started to promote pre-disaster investment based on the assumption of worst-case scenario.



Panelists of the Special Session

(from left, Dr ITOH Shigeru, Dr HAMADA Masanori, Dr HASEMI Yuji, Prof. SHIGEKAWA Kishie, and Mr YOSHIMURA Hidemi)

In the next issue, we will provide more details about the three main sessions of the ACDR2022.

● Promoting Cooperation with Affiliated Institutions

JICA Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP): "LEP2.0 Enhancement of the Disaster Risk Management Capacity of the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA)"

From 6 to 10 March 2023, ADRC conducted the JICA Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP) "LEP2.0 Enhancement of the Disaster Risk Management Capacity of Malaysia's National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA)" aimed at the realization of disaster-resilient society in Malaysia by improving the technology and coordination capacity of NADMA, Malaysian National Disaster Management Agency. A total of 15 people from NADMA and related organizations participated in the first training of this program which ADRC has been cooperating with.

The first day of the training consisted of training orientation, presentations by the participants from each organization to introduce about their country and point out their current issues, and discussions to confirm the training objectives and points to see at each site they will be visiting. From the second day onwards, they energetically visited several flood and sediment affected sites to see their disaster countermeasures. The participants enthusiastically observed the countermeasures put in actual use, and exchanged opinions. On the final day, the course was concluded with the reports on what they learned in the training.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the related organizations who gave lectures and allowed us to visit them during this training. We appreciate your continued support and cooperation.

● ADRC Visiting Researcher Report

Ms Ani Gevorgyan (Armenia)

My name is Ani Gevorgyan and I am from the Republic of Armenia. I am the Head of the Complex Department of Seismic Hazard Assessment of the Regional Seismic Protection Survey of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Armenia. The Department implements the following main objectives: provision of seismic hazard monitoring on the territory of the Republic of Armenia; assessment of seismic hazard and seismic risk of territories; seismic risk reduction; assessment of levels of induced seismicity and assessment of other secondary hazards related to seismic hazard.

Armenia is considered a developing country. We collect and maintain specialised scientific knowledge from all over the world to contribute to our sustainable development. All the theoretical and practical knowledge acquired during my work as a Visiting Researcher in the ADRC program will be applied in my practical work, thus serving as an asset to the Millennium Development



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Goals. The opportunity to participate in the Visiting Researcher Program at ADRC is of great value for me to gain theoretical knowledge and practical expertise in this field. The Japanese methodology I am learning here will make my work more practical and allow me to focus more on problem solving based on data analysis. I am sure that this program is a great opportunity to acquire sound knowledge, tools and techniques for disaster prevention and preparedness, disaster emergency response, disaster recovery and reconstruction, and earthquake disaster mitigation. I am confident that whatever I gain during the research will be of great importance not only to my organization but also to my country.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the entire staff of the ADRC for their kindness, hospitality and willingness to provide any assistance I may have needed during my stay in Japan.

Ms Ariuntungalag Batjargal (Mongolia)

My name is Ariuntungalag Batjargal. I'm from Mongolia. I'm very happy to be a visiting researcher at the ADRC.

I graduated from the National University of Mongolia in 2003. I have earned a Master's degree from the Mongolian National Defense University. Now, I am studying for a Ph.D at the Mongolian National Defense University.

I work at the National Institute for Disaster Research (NIDR) under the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) of Mongolia as a chemist-researcher.

NIDR's main goal is that by developing disaster science and introducing research, analysis, technology and innovation in the field of disaster protection, we will make a real contribution to reducing disaster risk affecting the sustainable development of Mongolia.

Therefore, I am studying issues such as disaster risk reduction and the implementation of disaster prevention laws and their challenges. Based on the results of the research, the measures to be taken in the future will be scientifically determined, and the research will be published for the community.

Also, joint and independent research is conducted in the field of producing new products aimed at reducing the damage caused by disasters. In addition, I teach citizens and university students about disaster management and disaster risk reduction.

Let me briefly introduce you about Mongolia. Located in Central Asia, Mongolia is a landlocked country bordered by the Russian Federation to the north and China to the south. My country, Mongolia, is a country with a tradition of maintaining its nomadic civilization, herding 5 types of livestock across its vast plains. The population of Mongolia is 3,409,939. Mongolia is a country with the lowest average population density in the world. It has a little over 2 people per km² (about 5 people per square mile) and 34% of the population is nomadic.

The main disasters and hazards in Mongolia are snow damage (dzud), floods, snow and dust storms, forest and steppe fires, animal diseases and earthquakes. Livestock play a very important role in the lives of the Mongolian people, society, and economy, and the disasters that commonly occur in Mongolia cause significant damages to livestock.

In addition, in recent years, new earthquake fault lines have been registered in our country and in Ulaanbaatar, which has a large population, and has caused us great concern, and made it necessary to improve our research in this field.

Mongolia and Japan have been friendly countries for a long time. So, Japan is a very dear country to me. I am very happy to have participated in ADRC's Visiting Researcher Program, and I will apply the knowledge I have learned and acquired here to my research.

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