

1. Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC)

1-1. History of the Establishment of ADRC

Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) opened its office in Kobe, Japan, on 30 July 1998. The major steps leading up to formation of ADRC are described below.

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)

At its 42nd General Assembly in December 1987, the United Nations designated the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), and adopted a resolution aiming to sharply reduce the damage caused by natural disasters around the world, particularly in developing countries, through joint international action.

World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction

In May 1994, the UN held the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, Japan, to conduct an interim review of the decade-long IDNDR initiative and to propose an action plan for the future. At the meeting, the “Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World” was adopted, highlighting the importance of international cooperation in regions that share common types of disasters and disaster reduction measures. Disaster reduction activities have since been promoted throughout the world based on this strategy.

Ministerial-level Asian Natural Disaster Reduction Conference

As the first step toward regional cooperation under the Yokohama Strategy, the IDNDR Secretariat organized a meeting in Kobe in December 1995 to formulate a policy on disaster reduction cooperation in Asia. Cabinet members in charge of disaster reduction from 28 countries attended the meeting, which concluded with the adoption of the Kobe Disaster Reduction Declaration. This declaration consists of ideas for promoting international cooperation in disaster reduction, including a Japanese proposal to launch a feasibility study on a system for coordinating disaster reduction efforts in the Asian region.

Asian Natural Disaster Reduction Experts Meeting

The government of Japan and the IDNDR Secretariat jointly organized an expert meeting in October 1996 to hash out how a central disaster reduction system, as stated in the Kobe Disaster Reduction Declaration, might be created for the Asian region. The meeting was attended by key personnel in the disaster reduction bureaus of 30 countries, and they agreed to study the creation of the tentatively named “Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC)” to serve as a secretariat for promoting activities under the proposed system.

Asian Disaster Reduction Cooperation Promotion Meeting

The government of Japan and the IDNDR Secretariat jointly organized a meeting in Tokyo

in June 1997 to discuss activities to be undertaken by the proposed center for disaster reduction system. Once again, key personnel from the disaster reduction bureaus of 23 countries attended the meeting, whose overall goal was to promote cooperation in disaster reduction efforts through specific actions. A proposal was made at the meeting to establish a center in Japan to serve as the secretariat for the proposed system.

Establishment of ADRC

With momentum gathering from this series of meetings, the government of Japan discussed the organization, budget, and other aspects of the proposed office with the other countries involved. With the cooperation of Hyogo Prefecture, ADRC was officially established in Kobe on 30 July 1998.

1-2. Composition

ADRC was established in Kobe, Hyogo prefecture, in 1998, with mission to enhance disaster resilience of the member countries, to build safe communities, and to create a society where sustainable development is possible. ADRC works to build disaster resilient communities and to establish networks among countries through many programs including personnel exchanges in this field.

The Center addresses this issue from a global perspective in cooperation with a variety of UN agencies and international organizations/initiatives, such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

At the outset, ADRC was comprised of 22 member countries, four advisor countries, and an observer organization. Armenia joined later, in August 2000, followed by the Kyrgyz Republic in July 2002, Pakistan in July 2005, and Yemen and Bhutan in December 2007, Azerbaijan in 2009, the Maldives in 2010, the Republic of Iran in 2012, and Turkey in 2018 bringing the number of member countries to 31. In March 2004, the US joined as the fifth advisor country to ADRC.

Reference: Corporate Status

20 years have passed since the establishment of ADRC in 1998. As its member countries have increased from 22 to 31 countries, as well as ADRC and its activities have been well-acknowledged in the DRR field, ADRC has decided to be apart from the umbrella of Urban Disaster Research Institute and reconfigure the domestic organizational structure. On 12 November 2019, ADRC was incorporated as Asian Disaster Reduction Center Foundation and will further accelerate its activities from the fiscal year 2020.