

Foreword

I have pleasure in presenting the annual report on the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) for FY 1998.

The ADRC was established in July 1998 to promote multinational disaster reduction cooperation with the aim of reducing damage from natural disasters through the sharing of information.

The process of fully equipping the ADRC with the functions it is expected to serve cannot be completed overnight, but needs steady, constant efforts. We are setting up the organization on the assumption that the process will take at least five to seven years.

We kicked off the first year of operation by developing basic systems for promoting the sharing of disaster reduction information, namely, developing a network with representatives from departments and divisions in charge of disaster management of member countries, developing both hardware and software for gathering and disseminating information on natural disasters and disaster reduction, identifying types of disaster-reduction-related information that the member countries need and can provide, and gathering and providing such information.

Although we will need several years before the fundamental systems are complete d , we have begun to see, after nearly 1 year of operation, signs of what their configuration will be. In fiscal 1999, we will start hosting researchers from member countries.

January 17, 2000 will mark the fifth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. The Asian Disaster Reduction Center will be increasingly required to disseminate to Asia and other regions of the world the experiences of and lessons learned from this terrible natural disaster which struck a densely populated urbanized city.

Although still a small organization, the ADRC is beginning to take shape. We at the Center are determined to make continued efforts to promote international disaster reduction cooperation through the sharing of relevant information, toward the goal of reducing damage from natural disasters in the Asian region. Your generous encouragement and cooperation in this regard will be most appreciated.

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Shiger
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Director

Asian Disaster Reduction Center