

1 Brief Description of the Asian Disaster Reduction Center

1-1 The background of the Establishment

The Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) was established in Chuo-ku, Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan on July 30, 1998. The summarized particulars how the ADRC came to existence are as follows:

1) International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)

In 1987, a resolution was adopted at the United Nations General Assembly to substantially reduce damage from natural disasters by designating the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

2) World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction

Held in Yokohama, Japan in 1994. Adopted the "Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World," which underscores the importance of cooperation in disaster-reduction among regions which share similar types of disasters and disaster-reduction measures.

3) The ministerial-level Asian Natural Disaster Reduction Conference

Held in Kobe, Japan in 1995 with 28 countries from Asia and other regions attending. Adopted the Kobe Declaration on Natural Disaster Reduction, which includes an agreement to consider the creation of a system which has the functions of a disaster-reduction center for the Asian region.

4) Asian Natural Disaster Reduction Experts Meeting

Held in Tokyo, Japan in 1996 with 30 countries attending to discuss the creation of the system advocated in the Kobe Declaration. The countries agreed to give consideration to the establishment of an "Asian Region Disaster-Reduction Center (provisional name)."

5) Asian Disaster Reduction Cooperation Promotion Meeting

Held in Tokyo, Japan in 1997 with 23 countries attending. It was proposed that the Asian Disaster Reduction Center be located in Japan, that the Center should be an organization established with the agreement of participating countries, and that the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) be allowed to participate at the Center as an observer.

6) The Establishment of ADRC

After a series of deliberations between the Japanese Government and countries involved concerning the organization of the Center and the financial issues in relation to setting up and running such a center, the Center was established in Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan in July 1998, with generous support of the prefectural government.

1-2 Organization and Status

The Asian Disaster Reduction Center consists of 22 member countries, four advisory countries and one observer. (See Table 2-1-1, 2-1-2 and 2-1-3 for details)

The Center is affiliated to the Urban Disaster Research Institute, which is supervised by the National Land Agency of Japan.

1-3 Activities and Policy

For the purpose of sharing information on natural disasters and disaster reduction in the Asian region, activities in the following five categories were agreed upon at past international conferences:

- * Accumulation and provision of information on natural disasters and disaster reduction;
- * Studies on the promotion of disaster reduction cooperation;
- * Gathering of information on emergency relief during times of disaster;
- * Developing of materials for dissemination of knowledge and raising disaster reduction awareness; and
- * Promoting projects for collecting and disseminating information on disaster reduction in the Asian region.

After the Center was set up, the basic operational policies for the first three years were laid down as follows:

(1) To systematically accumulate, put into a database and disseminate information on the following:

- * Disasters themselves;
- * Disaster management;
- * Disaster awareness, education and training;
- * Disaster management technology; and
- * Disaster management experts.

(2) To develop a disaster information network and to accumulate and disseminate information through the Internet

(3) To meet with counterparts of member and advisory countries and an observer on a regular basis to foster friendly relations

(4) To invite researchers from member countries every year

(5) To adopt English as its official language

In developing information gathering, priority will be given to those concerning information on disasters themselves, disaster management and human resources, while making continued efforts to develop those for gathering information on disaster awareness, education, training and management technology.

1-4 Past Activities

It is the most important to publicize the existence of ADRC on a broad scale, and to establish a cooperative relationship with concerned countries and organizations, in order to gain extensive and precise disaster reduction information as an information center on disaster in the Asian region.

With this in mind, we have actively attended related international conferences and research tours in concerned countries. We have also welcomed requests from related organizations to visit or train at the ADRC. During this fiscal year, we held the Second ADRC International Meeting in Kobe (mentioned later) in December 1999, following the first meeting and a symposium in February 1999.

In addition, we have improved an information service system on disasters that have occurred in the world since its launch in the previous year. At the same time, we have also constructed databases on the disaster management system for each country, based on the information obtained from member countries at the first international meeting, in order to promote the data service step by step (attached separately).

Through such activities, we have gradually become more and more known in the disaster reduction field. At the IDNDR Programme Forum held in July 1999 in Geneva as the conclusion of a 10-year international disaster reduction effort, we were selected as one of the success stories and given the opportunity to introduce our activities to 700 participants from 130 countries.

Furthermore, in February 2000, we launched a joint project of international disaster prevention with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to strengthen disaster response capability in the Asian region by collaborating in disaster reduction as well as by developing a management system. As a result, OCHA Asian Disaster Response Unit was established on the premise of ADRC staffed with a regional disaster response advisor.

Table 1-4-1 <Major activities>

Jul. 30, '98	Opening of the Center
	Venue: 3F, IHD Centre Bldg. Attendance: approx. 150

Sep. 1, '98	Launch the worldwide Latest Disaster Information service <107 cases of disaster information will be distributed by March 10, 2000.>
Oct. '98-	Investigation on the member countries (Korea, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Bangladesh, Viet Nam, Thailand, Russia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, China)
Nov. 7, '98	Have a visit of the Bangladeshi Foreign Affairs Minister Mr. Abdus Samad Azad
Nov. 9-13, '98	Attendance at WHO Workshop on Strengthening Emergency Preparedness, Manila <Presentation on the establishment of the Center>
Dec. 1, '98	Human resource database for disaster reduction become available <Approx. 1,400 persons of 51 nationalities registered>
Feb. 15, '99	ADRC International Symposium Venue: Hyogo Prefectural Hall <Attendance: approx. 250 persons from 21 countries (including non-experts)>
Feb. 16-18, '99	First ADRC International Meeting Venue: IHD Centre Bldg. <Attendance: approx. 30 persons from 21 countries and 1 organization>
Feb. 23-26, '99	Attendance at the ESCAP-IDNDR Regional Meeting for Asia, Bangkok <Presentation on the establishment of ADRC>
Mar. 18, '99	Have a visit of the Director of the IDNDR Secretariat Mr. Philippe L. Boullé
May.-Jul., '99	Databases of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, disaster management training, and disaster-management system and the general information of disaster reduction by countries become successively available on the Internet
Jul. 5-9, '99	Attendance at the IDNDR Programme Forum, Geneva <Presentation on ADRC's establishment and activities as one of the Success Stories; coordination of the session on "Information Technology for Assessment and Simulation Capacities.">
Jul. 12-16, '99	Research tour to the Governments of Switzerland and France, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Louvain Catholic University, Brussels, etc.
Jul. 23, '99-	Successively accept researchers from the member countries <Korea, Viet Nam, Nepal, Indonesia>
Sep. 23, '99	Launch joint project with the Government of Papua New Guinea <Education for raising widespread awareness of damage from tsunamis>
Sep. 29-Oct. 4, '99	Join a disaster relief team in Taiwan
Nov. 5, '99	MOA between CRED and ADRC on collaboration on information and data on disasters
Dec. 6-8, '99	Second ADRC International Meeting Venue: IHD Centre Bldg. <Attendance: approx. 36 persons from 24 countries and 4 organizations>
Jan. 13, '00	Attendance at the World Bank meeting, Paris
Feb. 7, '00	Opening of the Asian unit of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

