

Foreword

Disasters in Asia not only set back future local and national socio-economic development, but also slow down social and economic development underway. Billions of dollars, which could have been used for sustainable economic development or poverty alleviation, have been allocated to providing emergency relief assistance to disaster-affected people, by both national authorities and international government.

The unprecedented disasters in Asia often challenge disaster response capacity, and emergency relief assistance has sometimes proved insufficient to address even the urgent needs of the most vulnerable groups in disaster-affected countries. Statistics also indicate that the vulnerability of Asian people to disasters will increase, and the impact of disasters will likely intensify due to Asia's economic growth and disparities, depletion of water resources, urbanization trends, global climate change and environmental degradation, among others.

In the search for a more effective approach in managing the different phases of the disaster cycle, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) and the Asian Disaster Response Unit of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Kobe office (ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe) have initiated and pursued the conceptualization and development of the Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM) Approach. This was the direct outcome of the *First Consultative Meeting on Regional Cooperation in Disasters* jointly organized and conducted by ADRC and ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe in Kathmandu, Nepal in June 2001. The participants in this meeting agreed on the need to promote the TDRM Approach in Asia. Moreover, during its fourth annual meeting in January 2002 held in New Delhi, India, ADRC, together with ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe, first introduced the TDRM concept, and subsequently at the *Regional Workshop on Networking and Collaboration among Non-governmental Organizations of Asian Countries in Disaster Reduction and Response* held on 20–22 February 2002 in Kobe, Japan. The initial response of the country delegates was very positive and encouraging. Thereafter, the TDRM concept was further refined based on a number of written comments and inputs from

national government officials, NGO executives and the participants from the Kathmandu meeting. Furthermore, in June 2002, ADRC and ADRU/UN–OCHA Kobe, in cooperation with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), jointly organized the *Second Regional Consultative Meeting on TDRM* held in Bangkok, Thailand.

As a holistic approach to disaster reduction and response, TDRM not only focuses on the underlying conditions of risks generated by unsustainable development, which could lead to disasters, but also emphasizes the significance of multi-level and multi-dimensional coordination and collaboration among all stakeholders, from disaster management to development. Moreover, it inevitably emphasizes the gaps in disaster management and the importance of hazard mapping and vulnerability assessment as well as the implementation of disaster risk management process in all levels as a critical undertaking to reduce risks.

The ADRC and ADRU/UN–OCHA Kobe, in carrying out its function as facilitator and its role as catalyst in advocating best practices, is resolved to assist in promoting the TDRM approach in Asian countries. We believe that sustainable progress with disaster risk management could be achieved efficiently and effectively when government officials at national and local levels have a better understanding of the TDRM approach and would assume active leadership roles towards its adoption in Asian countries.

It is in this regard that the ADRC and ADRU/UN–OCHA Kobe, together with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foundation, jointly organized the Regional Workshop on Total Disaster Risk Management held on 7–9 August 2002 in Kobe, Japan. The workshop was attended by more than fifty participants from governments and international/regional organizations. Overall, the forum had effectively introduced the TDRM Approach, had facilitated its understanding, and had provided an invaluable opportunity to share experiences and information on disaster reduction and response towards possible implementation of TDRM as a pilot initiative in disaster prone countries in Asia. Furthermore, the workshop has fostered friendship and solidarity among the participating governments of Asian countries.

Acknowledgement

The Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) and the Asian Disaster Response Unit of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Kobe office (ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe) wish to express their sincere appreciation and profound gratitude to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foundation, the Cabinet Office of Japan, the Tsutomu Nakauchi Foundation and the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI) for extending their generous support for the successful conduct of the Regional Workshop on Total Disaster Risk Management 7-9 August 2002 in Kobe, Japan.