

1. Asian Disaster Reduction Center

1-1. Background for the Establishment of the ADRC

The Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) opened offices in Kobe, Japan, on July 30, 1998. The major steps leading up to ADRC's creation are outlined as follows:

1) **International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR)**

At its 42nd General Assembly in December 1987, the United Nations designated the 90's as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and adopted a resolution aiming to sharply reduce damage caused by natural disasters around the world, particularly in developing countries, through joint international actions.

2) **World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction**

In May 1994, the UN hosted the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, Japan, to conduct an interim review of the 10-year initiative and propose a plan of action for the future. At the meeting, the "Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World", which pointed out the importance of international cooperation in regions that share common types of disasters and disaster reduction measures, was adopted. Disaster Reduction activities have since been promoted throughout the world based on this strategy.

3) **Ministerial-level Asian Natural Disaster Reduction Conference**

As the first step in regional level cooperation as per the Yokohama Strategy, the IDNDR Secretariat co-organized a meeting in Kobe in December, 1995 to formulate a policy on disaster reduction cooperation in Asia. Cabinet members involved in disaster reduction from 28 countries attended the meeting, who adopted the "Kobe Disaster Reduction Declaration" that contained ideas for promoting international cooperation in disasters including a proposal by Japan to launch studies into a possible creation of a system that could act as the disaster reduction coordinator in the Asian region.

4) **Asian Natural Disaster Reduction Experts Meeting**

The Government of Japan and the IDNDR Secretariat co-organized a meeting of experts in October 1996 to hash out how a central disaster reduction system, as written in the Kobe Disaster Reduction Declaration, might be created for the Asian region. Key personnel from disaster reduction bureaus of 30 countries attended. Parties agreed to study the creation of an "Asian Disaster Reduction Center" (tentative name) that would serve as secretariat for promoting activities of the conceptualized system.

5) **Asian Disaster Reduction Cooperation Promotion Meeting**

The Government of Japan and the IDNDR Secretariat co-organized a meeting in Tokyo in June 1997 to discuss specific activities of the conceptualized central disaster reduction system. Once again attended by key personnel from disaster reduction bureaus of 23 countries, the overall goal was to promote cooperation in disaster reduction efforts through concrete action. It was proposed at the meeting to create an office in Japan as the secretariat for the conceptualized system.

6) **ADRC's Official Start**

With momentum gathering on this series of meetings, the Japanese government discussed organization, budget and other aspects of the proposed office with other countries involved. Then, with the cooperation of Hyogo Prefecture, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center was officially established in Kobe on July 30, 1998.