

2-4. Information on Disaster Management Systems

2-4-1. Scope of Information

Included among the major components of a disaster management system are a legal system that prescribes the due process to be followed by the government and organizations that enforce actual measures under the government, and a basic plan for ensuring the establishment of the disaster management system. In addition, disaster management manuals, hazard maps, disaster management trainings and seminars, and disaster reduction education programs are also included.

1) Legal frameworks

Not all countries have national level laws comparable to Japan's "Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act". In some countries, government decrees and rules of specified organizations include disaster management systems. The backgrounds and processes of formulation of laws and regulation vary from country to country, and there is no single "Best way" for all countries. Still, shared information on disaster legislation of different countries will provide a useful reference on countries that are making efforts to establish similar legal frameworks or improve their current frameworks.

2) Organizations

Similarly to the case of legal frameworks, disaster reduction agencies vary from country to country. In addition, these organizations are often restructured while the fundamental legal framework for disaster reduction remains unchanged. Differences among countries in natural environmental conditions and socio-cultural background do not reduce the significance of studying organizational systems of other countries, in that disaster reduction is a purpose common to all countries. Furthermore, knowledge of the roles and command chains of organizations of other countries is important to facilitate international collaboration for disaster reduction.

3) Basic plans

Many of the member countries are yet to strategically strengthen their disaster preparedness according to comprehensive disaster reduction plans. Open and shared information on disaster reduction plans of other countries will provide good reference materials for countries planning to formulate or revise their disaster reduction plans. Feedback and reviews that these countries would give will be useful in promoting multinational disaster reduction collaboration.

4) Disaster manuals

It is considered that most of disaster manuals or hazard maps are compiled based on natural disasters experienced by each country or region, or on the type of natural disaster specific to that country or region. However, inaccessibility to such manuals and hazard maps make it difficult for countries and regions having suffered same kinds of disasters to share experiences and information on countermeasures, and might cause inconveniences in the actual implementation of international, regional-national, or inter-regional cooperation. Therefore, as in the previous year, the ADRC is committed to collecting information in order to enable the sharing of these existing disaster manuals and hazard maps. Waves of urbanization and globalization continue increasing the pace of changes, and the ADRC will continue its effort for the Asian region to share valuable experiences, knowledge, and views of disaster management measures that have been accumulated in different countries and regions.

2-4-2. Levels of Information Sources

It is important to collect information not only at the national government level but also at the local government (city, town and village) and community levels, because the first to cope with a disaster are individuals, and then local communities and municipal governments (cities, towns or villages). Central governments or the international society moves only when the disaster exceeds the capabilities of local governments. Legal and organizational frameworks established by a central government alone do not automatically improve actual disaster reduction capabilities and preparedness down to the municipal and grassroots levels. To build a disaster-resistant society, cross-organizational cooperation is indispensable. Sharing of information at all levels is the first step to this goal.

2-4-3. Methods of Collecting Information

In 2004, as explained in 2-4-2, the ADRC continued its effort to gather information on the disaster reduction systems of member countries through requests to them, field surveys, and international conferences, and by its own unique methods using the Internet.

Table 2-4-3-1 lists reports provided by counterparts in member countries. All these reports are available on the ADRC website. Over recent years, disaster reduction organizations of many countries have been actively promoting information dissemination over the Internet. Therefore, the ADRC website has links to some of these websites, when it is more efficient to have access to them for the latest information than to view the reports on the ADRC website.

Table. 2-4-3-1 List of reports from ADRC member countries

No.	Country	Year prepared
1	Armenia	2001, 2002, 2003
2	Bangladesh	1998, 1999, 2001, 2003
3	Cambodia	1998, 1999, 2002, 2003
4	China	1998, 1999
5	India	1998, 1999, 2002
6	Indonesia	1998, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2004
7	Japan	1998, 1999, 2002
8	Kazakhstan	1998, 1999, 2002
9	Korea	1998, 1999, 2001, 2002
10	Kyrgyzstan	Now Preparing
11	Laos	1998, 1999, 2003
12	Malaysia	1998, 1999, 2003
13	Mongolia	1998, 1999, 2002
14	Myanmar	2002

15	Nepal	1998, 1999
16	Papua New Guinea	1998, 1999
17	The Philippines	1998, 1999, 2002, 2003
18	Russia	1998, 1999, 2003
19	Singapore	1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003
20	Sri Lanka	1998, 1999, 2003
21	Tajikistan	1998, 1999, 2003
22	Thailand	1998, 1999, 2003, 2004
23	Uzbekistan	1998, 1999
24	Vietnam	1998, 1999

2-4-4. Future Tasks

As for future tasks, the ADRC will further reinforce and expand its database, analyze collected information, and identify the needs of the member countries based on such analyses in order to promote multinational disaster reduction cooperation.

1) Reinforcement and expansion of the disaster reduction database

The ADRC constructed a database on its homepage to give free access to disaster reduction system information it collects for member countries to share. The database enables countries and regions to refer to actual examples from other countries to establish and improve their own national or regional disaster reduction systems. The ADRC will continue updating and enhancing the contents of its disaster reduction database in cooperation with member countries to make the database more accessible and user-friendly.

2) Analysis of information and dealing with the needs of countries

Information becomes useful only when referred to for analyses. Analysis of collected information is beginning to help clarify the specific circumstances and needs of various countries. Some countries already have national level disaster reduction systems, while others are currently preparing to establish disaster reduction systems under the initiative of central governments. It is considered that the former group of countries need to add improvements to enhance and reinforce their existing systems, while the latter group should give priority to the establishment of disaster reduction systems as part of intra-regional cooperation.

In order to reduce Asia's vulnerability to natural disasters, it is essential for countries in the region to consider and include disaster reduction measures in their long-term basic national plans. The prerequisite for this to happen is that the central government as well as citizenry must have a higher disaster reduction awareness. For a society to give equal weight to post-disaster emergency assistance and to disaster preventive preparations, it is always necessary for lawmakers, policymakers and planners to properly include and incorporate disaster reduction considerations into basic national and regional plans.

3) Promotion of cooperation

As agreed at the Seventh ADRC International Meeting (Jan. 19, 2005, Kobe), it is important to hold regular meetings of disaster reduction administrators and specialists from member countries to

exchange the latest information on disaster reduction systems and disaster management measures. It is also important for the ADRC to continue making full use of its visiting researcher program launched in July 1999 so that researchers from the member countries working as its staff will help to promote active personnel and information exchanges in the Asian region. In addition, to reduce damages caused by natural disasters in Asia, there is a mounting expectation that the ADRC should serve as a facilitator in the formation of a network for human, technological, and physical resources in Japan and the other Asian countries to further promote exchanges in the region.