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## **4-4. Establishing a Regional Network in Asia**

### **4-4-1. Establishing Institutional and Personal Networks**

ADRC places high priority on the development of institutional and personal network to share disaster information in the Asian region. Developing personal networks between professionals and their counterparts in member countries, advisor countries, and observer organizations is vital to promoting cooperation on disaster reduction efforts in Asia. Therefore, ADRC invites management level officials, including deputy directors, directors, and managers, to its annual ADRC International Meeting to encourage interpersonal exchanges.

### **4-4-2. Collaboration with the ADRRN**

#### **(1) Establishment of the ADRRN**

Today, NGOs as well as governments and international organizations play active roles in disaster response and risk reduction in Asia. In addition to conducting rescue activities immediately after a disaster, NGOs work in close cooperation with local communities to provide support for reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts, and to promote disaster preparedness activities, such as disaster education and disaster awareness efforts during non-critical times. However, the limited resources that individual NGOs have for dealing with disasters require them to further enhance their capabilities and strengthen their ties with relevant authorities.

The Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) co-organized the “Regional Workshop on Networking and Collaboration among Non-Governmental Organizations of Asian Countries in Disaster Risk Reduction and Responses” with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Kobe, in February 2002. The workshop, which was held in Kobe, aimed to facilitate international networking and collaboration among NGOs involved in disaster prevention and rescue operations in the Asian region, and attracted 35 participants from disaster-related NGOs in 16 Asian countries. A consensus was reached among the workshop participants regarding the establishment of the Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN) to promote cooperation among related NGOs. ADRC as well as OCHA Kobe were granted observer status for supporting the network's activities.

Especially since the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 26 December 2004, the ADRRN has been increasing its presence in Asia and actively conducting various disaster response, recovery, and mitigation activities in tsunami-affected countries.

#### **(2) ADRRN Annual Meeting**

On 3-5 November 2008, the ADRRN Annual Meeting and Regional Workshop was held in Kathmandu, Nepal. It was attended by about 40 people from 25 ADRRN member organizations, including representatives from the government of Nepal, OCHA, ADRC, and other organizations. During the meeting, new member organizations from Bangladesh, Myanmar, and the Philippines were introduced and reports were given on the ADRRN's projects and financial situation. The number of members was reported to have grown from fewer than 20 at its inception, to 31, indicating the expanded reach of the ADRRN.

In a segment highlighting ongoing projects, a presentation was given on the SELAMAT project in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, which was launched in 2007. This project, which is a cooperative effort being undertaken by several ADRRN member groups, the research institutes of the target countries and Japan, and supported by the EU, ISDR and the governments the local governments aims to promote the disaster resilience of communities and schools, including the enhancement of community disaster awareness. The ADRRN network has been found to be an effective tool for promoting networking across diverse sectors.

ADRC also reported on a project that was conducted in Malaysia in 2008, which targeted ADRRN-member NGOs (see 3-1-1 for details). The participants of the annual meeting showed interest in the project and indicated their hopes that it would continue to be implemented and supported by ADRC.

There was also a discussion of the HFA Progress Report prepared by the ADRRN for the Third Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in December 2008. Opinions were expressed regarding the importance of incorporating community-based public-private partnerships into national disaster management planning and policy, and of empowering the NGOs that play critical roles in

disaster risk reduction at the community level.

The meeting provided a great opportunity for the participants to learn from one another, allowing professionals with a wide range of experience to share information and actively discuss various issues.