

Opening Address of the 6th ADRC International Meeting

Date: Feb 4 (Tue), 2004

Time: 10:00-10:10

Place: Hotel City Angkor

Name: Mr. Masaaki Nakagawa

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,
Good morning.

On behalf of the Cabinet Office, Japan, I would like to address a few words at the opening of the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2004.

First of all, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Cambodia for its generous offer to host the 6th ADRC International Meeting, organized in the context of the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2004, in this magnificent City of Siem Reap where the world-famous temples of Angkor reside.

Asia is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world and has suffered numerous disasters that account for 90% of the total affected people in the world. Last year many Asian countries were again hit by large-scale natural disasters, which induced serious damages. This shows that there is a need to strengthen disaster management capacity of the region drastically.

Economic growth in Asian countries has been remarkable. However, it needs to be further enhanced in order to achieve sustainable development of the region. I would like to stress that disaster reduction is crucial in the pursuit of stable and sustainable economic development. Disasters and poverty tend to get caught in a vicious circle, especially in developing countries, and we need to break it for the development of the region.

Many Asian countries have experienced various natural disasters, such as earthquakes and typhoons, and have accumulated lessons and expertise in disasters with a sacrifice of many people's lives.

It is very important to learn from each other by sharing these experiences and valuable lessons at this meeting with a view to promote effective disaster reduction measures in Asia. We,

Japanese, who have experienced the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, would be more than happy to contribute to strengthening disaster reduction capabilities in the Asian region.

In 1994 a world conference in the field of disaster reduction was organized by the United Nations for the first time in Yokohama and the “Yokohama Strategy” and a Plan of Action was devised to guide disaster reduction activities. The United Nations has initiated a process for the formulation of a new framework for disaster reduction to fill the remaining gaps and to respond to emerging trends in disasters. Japan appreciates this initiative and would like to actively contribute toward this process.

Today, it is our pleasure to have many experts such as policy-makers and academics in the field of disaster reduction not only from the Asian region but also other parts of the world. We would sincerely hope that the discussion at this conference brings forth fruitful results to reinforce disaster reduction capabilities in the Asian region.

Last but not least, I wish all of you continued good health and great success in your career.

Thank you for your attention.