

## Conference Summary

Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2011  
Colombo, Sri Lanka, 13-15 June 2011

### ***ACDR2011***

1. The Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction (ACDR) 2011 met in Colombo, 13-15 June 2011. At the opening, Honorable Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Disaster Management Government of Sri Lanka and Honorable Shozo Azuma, Vice Minister of the Cabinet Office for Disaster Management Government of Japan set the tone of the Conference by emphasizing the importance of strengthening the region's commitment to disaster risk reduction as priority agenda of national and local governments with clear vision and policy.
2. The Conference, jointly organized by the Government of Sri Lanka, the Government of Japan, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), brought together over 120 delegates, including high level officials from 27 Governments, 26 international and regional organizations, academic community, private sector, and civil society organizations who committed to further support the integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA), heighten the investment in DRR, and engage discussions on how to strengthen local capacity in DRR.

### ***Disaster Exposure in Asia***

3. The Conference recognized that in Asia, the number, scale, and impact of natural disasters in recent years are alarming. It also recognized that climate change is dramatically magnifying the risks and threatening many developing nations. It further recognized the significant role of regional inter-governmental organization in sharing information, knowledge, and lessons on DRR and coordinating the implementation of Incheon REMAP - the Regional Roadmap and Action Plan on DRR and CCA in Asia and the Pacific adopted at the 4AMCDRR in 2010.
4. The discussions demonstrated that countries in the region are recently exposed to various hazards with different characteristics. Flooding, observed to be more severe than past experiences, were reported in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Thailand with clear indication that these countries have different levels of vulnerability and preparedness. The scale of damage from flood in Pakistan was much bigger than other disasters combined. Forest fires associated with high temperature and dry weather were reported in Russia, and expected to intensify with climate change. Earthquake followed by tsunami were reported in Indonesia and Japan raising challenges on how to organize response and recovery in coastal areas. The cyclone as well as the earthquake in Myanmar resulted in unique lessons and reforms in disaster management. Landslides, aggravated by bad land use practices, was also reported in Sri Lanka.
5. The Conference recognized that the recent disasters highlighted: the need for amending existing mechanisms and improving current tools for damage and needs assessment; the need for strengthening capacity and adopting innovative mechanisms to ensure protection of vulnerable communities; the need for legal and institutional frameworks recognizing community based efforts in DRR; and the need to prepare for new patterns of vulnerability manifested by growing complexity and interdependency of technological systems.

### ***Current Disaster Risk Reduction Efforts***

6. Sound practices and initiatives on DRR were reported by some ADRC member countries and international organizations. India is implementing the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project that exemplifies good practices in early warning dissemination systems and capacity building of coastal communities. Sri Lanka participates in the development of the tsunami risk assessment guidelines. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) demonstrates good practice of community based disaster management activities in Sri Lanka and presents the documentation of lesson learned from recent flood experiences. To further strengthen sub-regional cooperation, countries of Central Asia through the leadership of Kazakhstan are now in the final stage of establishing the Central Asian Centre for Disaster Response and Risk Reduction.
7. International organizations, with focus in the region, reported new initiatives and state-of-the-art technologies to adapt and mitigate disaster impacts. International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) promotes the use of advanced remote sensing tools to improve forecasting of floods, monitoring of droughts, and improving estimation of rainfall. Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) takes the lead in Sentinel Asia which supports disaster management activities through space technology for countries in Asia-Pacific region, where ADRC focal points organizations and Joint Project Team (JPT) members are entitled to submit emergency

observation requests through ADRC. International Centre for Water Hazard and risk Management (ICHARM) develops the Integrated Flood Analysis System (IFAS) as a concise flood-runoff analysis system for effective and efficient flood forecasting in developing countries. The Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) enhances an integrated information and communication and information system for disaster management to address major obstacles such as communication blackout due to damaged or destroyed networks. The World Bank introduces the use of probabilistic risk modeling to guide vulnerability reduction, wherein one risk model can be used for a large number of applications with limited cost. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) establishes the global framework for climate services aimed at providing information suitable for risk analysis. The Japan Science and technology Agency (JST) provides fund for projects that develop science and technology particularly on various issues including natural disaster prevention and mitigation.

### ***Gaps and Challenges***

8. The Conference identified remaining gaps on current DRR efforts along preparedness, response and recovery. The most notable gaps include one between effective use of modern technologies and indigenous practices, hence appropriate blending should be explored. Lack of expertise, gaps in financing, and lack of resources still remain as a huge challenge in disaster response and recovery. The limited capacity in assessment and planning are reported as a challenge as well.
9. Coordinated DRR efforts in the region should be further enhanced and fruits of the current cooperation frameworks should be trickled down to the local and community levels.

### ***Way Forward***

10. The Conference affirmed to support regional initiatives. ESCAP facilitates the Asia-Pacific gateway on DRR and regional cooperative mechanism for DRM, and the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries. ABU implements the early warning broadcasting for DRR through technical road shows and content development workshops, which enhance linkage between government agencies and broadcasters. IFRC develops both global and regional frameworks for DRR and CCA that are complemented with activities of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in countries. The Conference also affirmed to support regional and international mechanisms, including the implementation of Incheon Roadmap for Incheon Regional Roadmap on DRR through CCA in Asia and the Pacific (Incheon REMAP), where ADRC member countries can link their DRR efforts to climate change adaptation; the localization of the Chair's Summary of the Third Session of the Global Platform by increasing investment in DRR, particularly encouraging ADRC member countries to allocate sufficient budget as well as ensure contingency mechanisms for public finances; the organization of the forthcoming 5AMCDRR with high expectations of "Strengthening Local Capacity in DRR", to be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2012; and the coordination of recommendations on preparedness, response, and recovery drawn from this Conference (Annex 1) to other regional mechanisms for wider partnership and synergy.
11. The Conference further affirmed to support greater ADRC role in the region through improved activities that address the needs of member countries. The DRR policy peer review project, initiated in 2010, was recognized as an effective tool and shall be continued to reach out more countries. Technology transfer from Japan to other countries in Asia will also be enhanced along with the capacity building courses to supplement member countries' investment in DRR. Likewise, partnership with International Recovery Platform (IRP) will be strengthened to further reduce disaster risks through building back better approaches.
12. The Conference expressed particular concern about and interest in capturing the lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake through investigation and expert discussions to benefit the countries in the region as well as anticipating the key DRR issues to be discussed at a high- level meeting to be held in Japan in 2012.
13. The Conference closed with a call to all DRR actors to reflect, review, and analyze lessons from past and recent disasters as well as assess what preventive measures worked and did not. At the same time, to remain cautious not to create new patterns of vulnerability.

***Colombo, Sri Lanka, 14 June 2011***

## Annex 1

### ACDR2011 Recommendations

PHASE	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p><b>PREPAREDNESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Climate change prediction, weather forecast, down-scaling</li> <li>■ Modeling rainfall, flooding, and inundation</li> </ul>	<p><i>Data Availability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framework and strategy for comprehensive climate related data collection system across the region in collaboration with international resource centers;</li> <li>• Model such as IFAS and other proven technology/models to be promoted in the region with adequate sets of in-situ/historic datasets;</li> <li>• Strengthen the network and collective actions using affordable modern technologies;</li> </ul> <p><i>Research Capacity and Forecasting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customize research and forecast models adapted to the specific regions (e.g. coastal, mountain, <i>flood</i> plain etc.);</li> <li>• Foster improved synergy among the member countries (experience, knowledge, lessons including education);</li> <li>• Promote multidisciplinary research and multi-sector inputs for forecast;</li> </ul> <p><i>Linking Science to Policy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transform science based information into policy briefs / recommendations (adopt science to operations approach in DRR/CCA);</li> <li>• Raising awareness / advocacy and education (specific focus on Youth, using indigenous knowledge system);</li> <li>• Demonstration / piloting – mutual learning and sharing among the member countries at multiple levels (scientists, policy makers; institutions; civil society etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>RESPONSE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Early warning and evacuation system, shelter</li> <li>■ Use of technologies, including ICTs and space technologies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early warning systems should be simple.</li> <li>• Early warning should be reliable</li> <li>• Enhanced emphasis on awareness raising and public education.</li> <li>• Hospitals and schools safe from hazards</li> <li>• Use of volunteers will be useful in evacuation</li> <li>• Shelter hazard resistant / in a safe location</li> <li>• Communities should be one of the main stakeholders for early warning systems, linked to the national system, to ensure sustainability</li> <li>• Local knowledge should be incorporated into early warning planning / strategies</li> </ul>
<p><b>RECOVERY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Risk finance, micro finance at community level</li> <li>■ Constraints in recovery</li> <li>■ CBDRM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legally binding framework and mechanisms to disperse funding to grass roots level</li> <li>• Cost benefit analysis to be presented to donors for DRM</li> <li>• Communication and coordination should be enhanced among different actors</li> <li>• Strengthen existing coordination mechanisms</li> <li>• Inclusive, participatory process to enhance self-ownership</li> <li>• Provide legal recognition for CBOs</li> <li>• Harmonize the different approaches by the different agencies</li> </ul>