



Summary Report

Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2014

March 4-6, 2014

Shinagawa Prince Hotel, Tokyo, Japan

The Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction (ACDR) 2014 was held from March 4-6, 2014 in Tokyo, Japan. The conference had brought 119 participants from 26 countries with representation from national and local governments, inter-governmental organizations, and representatives of NGOs, academia, and private sectors. This event had built on the recent experiences and lessons on disaster risk reduction (DRR) in Asia, including lessons from super typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines (November 8, 2013), the Great East Japan Earthquake (March 11, 2011), and the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake (January 17, 1995). Participants recognized that the sharing of experiences and lessons on DRR was essential for the following reasons: (1) to further improve disaster risk management systems; (2) to consciously apply the lessons in the similar contexts; and (3) to integrate the lessons into the post 2015 Framework for DRR or HFA2. As highlighted in the keynote speeches, there were so much to learn from Japan's experiences, specifically the constant improvement, the constant expansion of scope, and the constant widening of stakeholders' participation in DRR efforts. Against this backdrop, the conference expected that the discussions, leading to the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) on March 14-18, 2015 in Sendai, shall incorporate the greater efforts in "saving lives and livelihoods" to be supported with national mechanisms, appropriate budget and investments, proper assessments and measures, and with every stakeholder on board.

The messages from the four thematic sessions are summarized below.

Session 1: HFA Progress and Challenges towards Post-HFA

Supporters and allies are still needed to further promote DRR. The reports from UNISDR and ADRC showed that while HFA priorities 1 and 5 have demonstrated highest progress, less progress was indicated in priorities 3 and 4. These challenging areas need greater institutional and funding support along with new ideas and initiatives that will make it more attractive. The participants agreed that effective strategies to adequately address these challenges must be incorporated in HFA2. The conference noted that while response and coordination are demonstrating definitive progress, its emphasis should not be forgotten in HFA2.

Multi-stakeholder participation in DRR offers greater value: Based on the past experiences and lessons, the conference recognized that multi-stakeholder engagement offers several advantages in implementing and sustaining DRR efforts. In the case of Kazakhstan, the conference recognized that the initiative to establish an "Emergency and Disaster Risk Reduction Centre" offers additional value in promoting regional cooperation in Central Asia. In the case of the Maldives, the conference also recognized the value of multi-stakeholder actions in DRR as associated in tourism and supported the idea that regional and international cooperation bodies must have a clear role to achieve these goals.

Advocacy for more local actions. To facilitate greater resilience at the local level, more advocacy efforts are needed to transform awareness into actions. The presentation from Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institute (DRI) showed some examples how to achieve this – such as putting a reconstruction fund after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, mobilizing the Union of Kansai Local Governments to support the impacted municipalities from the Great East Japan Earthquake, and effective dissemination of information down to the grassroots level.

Revitalizing safe school initiatives. Reflecting on the presentations by the panelists as well as the keynote presentations in the Opening session, the panel discussion highlighted the importance of safe schools including both soft (DRR education) and hard (safer school buildings) perspectives. As the High-Level Dialogue Communique adopted at the Global Platform for DRR 2013 pointed out, safe school initiatives need to be revitalized globally towards WCDRR 2015. Participating member countries were encouraged to share their achievements in this area within their countries in WCDRR 2015, as relevant.

Session 2: Strengthening Local Capacity for DRR

Engaging local people in the full cycle of DRR. The conference validated the importance of engaging local people

in the full cycle of DRR in affirmation of the cases showing “local helping local”. This called for scaling up and sustaining local initiatives and for governments to be involved in the community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) efforts.

Localization of DRR initiatives. The conference, in affirmation of the presentations from Kobe City Fire Bureau, NPO Plus Arts, and National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) of the Republic of Indonesia, had emphasized the value of localizing DRR initiatives such as the “BOKOMI”, “Iza! Kaeru Caravan!”, and “Disaster-Resilient Villages”. The common factors of all these initiatives were the inclusion of community and volunteer networks for local actions. Hence, in addition to the three common types of help in DRR (i.e. self-help, mutual help, and public help), the conference recognized the “network-help”, which corresponds to the support from different volunteer networks.

Promoting business continuity planning (BCP) for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Apart from localizing DRR efforts, the conference also stressed on the important role of private sectors in securing and sustaining livelihoods and employments after a disaster. It is essential that the concerted efforts to disseminate and apply BCP are facilitated, especially in the SMEs.

Session 3: Human Resource Development and Training

Upgrading capacity development programs on DRR. Noting the presentations made by representatives of ADRC member countries namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, and Iran, the conference had further affirmed the need to upgrade the capacity development programs to address the growing complexities relevant to DRR. Regional and international training institutions (such as ADRC and International Recovery Platform (IRP)) shall be aware of this need and correspondingly revise their existing modules, if applicable, to tailor to this need.

Building on innovative learning opportunities. The conference highlighted that human resource is the most valuable resource in DRR. To effectively tap this, innovative learning opportunities that capacitate communities shall be further promoted. As presented by WHO, the “City Leadership on Health Innovations and Technologies in Emergencies” is one of the examples applied in the health sector.

Taking recovery as opportunity to strengthen capacity development guided by “build back better” principle. As presented by IRP, the conference can take advantage of various options to build capacity based on global experiences that are compiled into Guidance Notes on Recovery along various sectors. Having organized in over 25 countries, the workshop on disaster recovery planning can further be expanded to cover other governments that need technical assistance.

Session 4: Utilization of Space Technology for DRR

Enhancing utilization of satellite images for DRR. The presentations from Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS), ADRC, and Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief of Bangladesh showed how space technologies have contributed to strengthening DRR efforts in the region and becoming integral part of the national DRM systems. The utilization of satellite images enhances early warning systems and useful in identifying, assessing, and monitoring risks, by providing unique capabilities. The conference recommended that prospects for wider utilization of these technologies must be explored to benefit more ADRC member countries, specifically through Sentinel Asia. It is also recommended that the use of space technology is integrated in HFA2.

Ensuring effective utilization of space technologies. The conference recognized that satellite images are complementary to other data and information sources and need to be integrated to existing DRM systems. The conference also noted that satellite imagery need to be easily accessible in timely manner and readily usable by the DRM organizations and end users covering all aspects of disaster cycle; early warning, risk reduction, emergency response and recovery. Additionally, the conference called for active support of ADRC member countries in Sentinel Asia through Emergency Observation Request (EOR) and using satellite maps for more improved planning, implementation, and monitoring of DRR activities.

Way Forward

Utilization of outcomes in the events of leading to the adoption of HFA2. The outcomes of ACDR 2014 shall be fed into the final regional deliberation of inputs into HFA2 at the 6th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) to be held in Bangkok, Thailand in June 2014 and discussions at the International

Recovery Forum 2015, leading to the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) in Sendai in March 2015 where the HFA2 will be adopted. In the ongoing processes, ADRC member countries were encouraged to actively participate in the HFA2 consultations.

Further strengthening ADRC programs. The constant review of ADRC activities shall be maintained to ensure that these continually address the needs of member countries. All existing programs, such as knowledge sharing, value adding to DRR efforts, shall be strengthened. ADRC shall also look into the recommendations concerning the following: promoting regional cooperation for human resource development; establishing the linkage between DRR and CCA for the efficient countermeasures; promoting networks/partnerships among local governments for the effective DRR activities; improving risk assessment in the local context and involvement of community; and strengthening the national-local governments collaboration.

The ADRC member countries had committed to invest greater efforts to reduce the underlying risk factors, particularly the developing countries that show some level of weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

In closing the conference, the participants had expressed their profound appreciation to the Government of Japan as the host country and to the UNISDR and ADRC as organizers, and reaffirmed their continued commitment to save lives and livelihoods from disasters.