

## Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2017

H. E. Mr. Mamoru Maekawa, Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination,  
Cabinet Office of Japan  
Opening Address

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(10 minutes)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair (*tbc*), for your kind introduction.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

I am Mamoru Maekawa, Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination in the Cabinet Office of Japan.

*(Opening)*

It is my great pleasure to participate in the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2017, and make an opening remark on behalf of the Japanese Government.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to His Excellency, Mr. Kamaladdin Heydarov (カラマディン・ヘイダロフ), Minister of Emergency Situations, Azerbaijan for his very kind arrangement for hosting this conference.

I would also like to thank all the distinguished participants from the member countries of Asia Disaster Reduction Centre, international research institutes and international organizations for joining the conference.

*(Significance of the Asian Disaster Reduction Conference 2017)*

Ladies and gentlemen,

Asian Disaster Reduction Conference 2017 is a very important opportunity to discuss and share our experiences on key issues regarding disaster risk reduction, including issues on implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, effective search and rescue, and advanced technologies to facilitate DRR.

Many natural disasters occurred in 2017 alone. Just to name a few, Hurricanes and flooding in the United States, Japan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, and earthquakes in Mexico and China. It is very important to pursue DRR globally by sharing initiatives of each country against natural disasters.

In my opening remark, I would like to focus on two items related to the themes of this conference by sharing Japan's experiences. First, "strategies for disaster risk reduction" and second, "using science technology for DRR".

*(Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy)*

Regarding the first item on "strategies for disaster risk reduction", Japan's Basic Plan on DRR was revised in 2017 based on lessons from recent earthquakes and flooding.

Japan's DRR policy has been developed having a DRR strategy as a starting point which is relevant for all stakeholders in Japan. The Basic DRR Plan in Japan was established by the National Government in 1963 based on the Basic Act on Disaster Management. It has provided the basic concept and major actions for preparation, emergency response, recovery and reconstruction. Based on this National Plan, all local governments in Japan, which are 47 prefectures and over 1,700 municipalities, have formulated their own DRR Plans.

The Basic DRR Plan is reviewed every year based on lessons learned from the past disasters. It also incorporates changes in social and economic circumstances such as ageing and depopulation, and climate change which intensifies the nature of disasters.

The recent revision in April, 2017 integrated lessons learned from the 2016 Kumamoto earthquake and Typhoon No. 10, Lionrock. Local governments also reviewed their plans based on the revision at the national level.

The importance of DRR is stipulated in the basic policy of economic and fiscal management which the Japanese national government decides every year in June, highlighting that DRR and national resilience are main premise of economic and fiscal policy. The long term visions of other policy areas, including the infrastructure development plan and the national land use plan, are also required to be consistent with the Basic DRR Plan.

Such coordination mechanism among diverse policy plans and different levels of governments illustrates how DRR is mainstreamed in all policy areas in Japan. The importance of DRR strategies and their role is mentioned in the "Sendai Framework" as Priority 2. It is also very important to note that Global Target E in the "Sendai Framework" set the goal that the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies is needed to be increased by 2020. It is our honour to say that Japan be playing the leading role as the best practice of DRR plans. I am looking forward to learn practices in many other countries during this conference.

I would also like to highlight that communities are encouraged to develop Community Disaster Risk Reduction Plan through initiative of the residents as a part of the planning scheme of the national and local governments. It aims to increase resilience and develop capacity at the community level.

The role of communities is also mentioned in the Sendai Framework, Priority 3. Planning at community level is highly appreciated in Japan as a complement to planning at the national and local governments, and making synergy effect with them. Japan is promoting to share the planning practices at the community level to other countries through bi-lateral and international policy dialogues.

(Science and Technology)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The second point is on "Science and Technology". We believe that it is possible to reduce disaster risks by utilizing the outcome of scientific research. The "Sendai Framework" also shows in the guiding principle that decision making based on scientific background is necessary for DRR.

I would like to show one example on recent contributions of science and technology on earthquake prediction in Japan. Since the 1970s, we have designed countermeasures against large-scale earthquakes considering that it is possible to predict the occurrence of an earthquake a few days before with a certain degree of accuracy for some cases.

Last week, a report was prepared by experts group and was submitted to the Cabinet Office Minister. It suggested a new way forward for the

prediction of earthquakes. According to this report, subsequent development of science discovered that it is difficult to predict the occurrence of earthquakes with high accuracy. On the other hand, the report said that it became possible to capture unusual phenomena related to earthquakes due to data collected through the improved seismograph network. There are more than 10,000 seismographs all over in Japan. The report assessed several types of such unusual phenomena, which are highly likely to occur, and suggested that response measures have to be considered according to each type.

Academic communities are also very active for research on natural disasters. Japan Academic Network for Disaster Reduction was launched in January 2016, in cooperation with 55 academic societies to promote information sharing and encourage cross-disciplinary research with different fields on disaster risk reduction. It works together with the Cabinet Office for analysis of mechanisms on disasters and for making policy recommendations to reduce damage.

(Closing)

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Asian Disaster Reduction Center will celebrate its 20th anniversary next year. It is my sincere wish that the ADRC's functions of human resources development and information gathering could be well used among member countries of the ADRC, so as to contribute to reducing disaster risk.

I would like to conclude my remark by highlighting that the outcome of this conference will contribute to disaster risk reduction in the world. I wish great success of this conference.

Thank you very much.