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Happy New Year 2015

Happy New Year!

Since assuming the position of chairman of the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) last May, I visited one of our member countries, Indonesia, and discussed the best ways for our nations to cooperate to enhance Indonesia's capacity for disaster reduction. ADRC would like to continue engaging in such efforts, thereby serving as a network hub for international disaster risk reduction (DRR) cooperation in the coming year.

In 2014, Asia suffered a variety of major disasters, including landslides in India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, an earthquake in China, and a typhoon in the Philippines. Japan also experienced a wide range of significant disasters, including a Kanto snowfall in February, a landslide in Hiroshima in August, the eruption of On-take mountain in September, and an earthquake in Nagano in November.

The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA) was adopted in 2005 at the 2nd World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Hyogo. Over the last 10 years, the HFA has guided various disaster management activities that have been conducted, and has helped strengthen the DRR capacity of Asia. More aggressive DRR efforts need to occur to save lives and property from future disasters. The 3rd World Conference on Disaster Reduction will be held in Sendai next March and delegates at that event will adopt a post-HFA framework intended to guide DRR efforts for the next 10-15 years.

The entire staff of ADRC remains committed to ensuring the safety and security of people in Asia and will do their utmost to promote post-HFA strategies throughout this New Year.

Masanori HAMADA
Chairman, ADRC

●Promoting Cooperation with Member Countries

ADRC DRR Policy Peer Review FY2014

Since 2009, ADRC has been conducting DRR Policy Peer Reviews to help develop the DRR capacity of ADRC-member countries through information sharing and the strengthening of relationships among member countries. The target project selected for review this year, the sixth since the Peer Review process was launched, is a project entitled "Integrating Cultural Heritage and Disaster Risk Reduction (Disaster Preparedness and Sensitization Training program on Dzong (Fortress) Safety at Dagana)." After the country report was submitted, a two-

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person reviewer team visited Bhutan to conduct interviews. The reviewers were Ms. Yuko Nakagawa, Executive Director, NPO SEEDS Asia, and Mr. Junji Moriwaki, ADRC Researcher.

The team visited the Ministry of Home & Culture Affairs Department of Disaster Management (DDM), which is involved in DRR activities, to examine DRR development efforts in Bhutan. The team also conducted inspections of Dagana District, where DRR drills have been carried out, and prepared a draft report of its survey results highlighting its specific findings and recommendations. Its findings included the following: "Five days of training increased the fire safety and DRR awareness and knowledge among monks and administrative officials in Dagana Dzong, where they had previously been lacking." Also, "good coordination between relevant agencies, such as the DDM, fire division, and district administration, led to smooth implementation" and "the governor and district office personnel in charge of disasters had a good understanding of the need for DRR and were willing to make ongoing efforts." They also made recommendations, as follows: "Fire is not the only hazard in Dagana. Training and efforts to raise awareness on multiple hazards, especially earthquakes, should be conducted." Also, "collaborations between schools and communities on DRR drills should be pursued." A workshop was also held to gather opinions and comments used in finalizing the report, as well as to highlight among local participants the importance of community involvement and school education for enhancing DRR. This proved to be a very good opportunity for participants to share information and ideas with one another.

After its survey mission ends, the reviewer team compiles a survey report, which it sends to the countries examined as well as to other ADRC member countries, so as to enhance cross-fertilization. ADRC would like to express its sincerest gratitude to all of those who have made such important contributions to this project.

**IRP Workshop for Central America and Intergovernmental Dialogue on Recovery Processes**

ADRC/IRP, in collaboration with Central America's Center for Disaster Prevention (CEPREDENAC), organized an Intergovernmental Dialogue on Recovery Processes on 11-12 November 2014 at the Hilton Princess Hotel in San Salvador, El Salvador. The event was also strongly supported by UNISDR and UNDP. The main objective of the dialogue was to facilitate the exchange of information so that government organizations and cities can improve their programs based on their shared experiences. The discussions focused on several questions: How have recovery processes been institutionalized at the national and local levels? What institutional and policy arrangements are commonly adopted? What types of tools have been adopted for conducting assessments and developing frameworks? How do governments secure the necessary financial, administrative, and political resources for recovery? Are there mechanisms in place to monitor recovery processes? Answers to these questions inform the recommendations for next steps, such as galvanizing national recovery efforts and institutionalizing recovery processes.

More than 40 government officials and heads of development organizations participated in the dialogue. Among the countries represented were Paraguay, Honduras, Japan, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Panama. The cities of Santa Tecla, Bogota, and Curundu were also represented, as were the World Bank, the Swiss Development Council (SDC), and the Global Education and Training Institute

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(GETI) of UNISDR. Dialogue participants were high-level officials, with El Salvador's Vice President Sr. Oscar Ortiz opening the event.

ADRC/IRP shared information on the tools and guidance available regarding recovery processes, as well as global case studies on those processes. The sharing of information adds value to ongoing initiatives in Central America by showing that there is a wide array of options in terms of strategies and actions for "building back better." Mr. Shingo Kochi, senior recovery expert at IRP, shared Japan's experience by highlighting the advances, needs, and requirements for a more effective recovery process.

Several recommended next steps were outlined at the dialogue. These included efforts to (1) further disseminate best practices and lessons on recovery and reconstruction processes implemented in recent years, (2) share the results of the dialogue processes with other regions and countries, and (3) inform the development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction on recovery and reconstruction.

Several specific action items were also mentioned: (1) recovery frameworks/plans shall be prepared, discussed, and approved before a disaster strikes, (2) recovery processes shall incorporate DRR and be integrated into development efforts, and (3) recovery projects shall be evaluated and monitored. The dialogue revealed that there is a great deal of recovery experience in Central America that should be documented, analyzed, and shared with other regions and countries.

For more information, please contact IRP Recovery Expert Mr. Gerald Potutan (gerald@recoveryplatform.org).

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