



ADRC Highlights

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Message for 2026

Happy New Year.

Last year marked the 30th anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, which struck southern Hyogo Prefecture, Japan on 17 January 1995. To commemorate this milestone, Tokyo, Japan was selected the venue for Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2025 (ACDR2025).

The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, as a direct-hit earthquake that occurred in a heavily populated urban area, caused unprecedented damage and became a catalyst for fundamentally re-examining the nature of urban structures, building standards, and public infrastructures. Furthermore, as many volunteers from across Japan rushed to the disaster areas, 1995 is also referred to as the 'first year of disaster-prevention volunteering.' This experience became a crucial turning point, shifting Japan's disaster risk management policy from an 'administration-centred response' towards 'mutual support and collaborative disaster risk reduction.'

The Great East Japan Earthquake of 11 March 2011 unleashed a colossal tsunami that struck the eastern Japanese coastline over an extensive area, claiming countless lives and destroying communities. This disaster demonstrated that satellite remote sensing, observing the Earth from space, proved an exceptionally effective means of grasping the scale of the damage when ground-based information was entirely unavailable.

Furthermore, 2025 was a year marked by a succession of severe disasters across Asia. In March, a magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck Myanmar. From June to September, monsoon downpours afflicted northern India. In October, Typhoon Matmo (No. 21) caused devastating damage to coastal areas of Viet Nam. In November, Typhoon Kalmaegi (No. 25) struck the Philippines, claiming a very large number of precious lives. What is required to save lives? This was among the topics discussed at ACDR2025.

ACDR2026 is scheduled to be held in Singapore on 28, 29 and 30 October this year. We hope the conference will serve as a platform for sharing new science, technology, know-how and systems related to disaster prevention and mitigation among Asian countries, thereby helping to save as many lives as possible and to minimise material damage.

Asian Disaster Reduction Centre (ADRC) will continue its efforts to mitigate disaster risks across Asia. We will advance various disaster risk reduction efforts—including sharing technical and informational resources on both hard and soft infrastructure, supporting the enhancement of disaster resilience within local communities, and fostering human resource development—with the cooperation of our staff and numerous stakeholders. We look forward to your continued support this year.



MIURA Fusanori
Chairman
Asian Disaster Reduction Center

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● Promoting Cooperation with Member Countries

Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2025

The Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2025 (ACDR2025) was held in Tokyo from 17 to 19 December 2025 under the theme 'Forging Resilience Together: Toward a Sustainable Society Prepared for Mega-Disasters.' The conference was organised by the Cabinet Office of Japan. A total of 131 participants attended onsite, including representatives from 18 member countries, international organisations, research institutions, and NGOs. In addition, 82 participants from 13 countries joined the conference online. This issue of the newsletter provides an overview of the conference highlights.

To deepen shared understanding on how to forge resilience together, ACDR2025 featured four sessions:

1. a panel discussion on building resilience to mega-disasters;
2. a roundtable on national progress and challenges in disaster risk reduction;
3. a session on technological innovation; and
4. a session on inclusive disaster risk reduction.

Opening Session

H.E. AKAMA Jiro, Minister of State for Disaster Management, mentioned that disasters are becoming more frequent and more severe around the world, and stressed the importance of strengthening disaster risk reduction capacity in Asia as well. He added that, through the disaster management agency scheduled to be newly established in FY2026, Japan will further promote international cooperation in DRR, and that continue to actively support the activities of the ADRC, in addition to strengthening its domestic disaster management system. He also stated that strengthening disaster response capabilities requires collaboration with the private sector and the use of advanced technologies, and expressed confidence that Japan's technologies such as disaster prevention infrastructure such as dams and levees, earthquake-resistant construction of buildings, and technologies utilizing satellites and AI can contribute to enhancing disaster prevention capabilities in Asian countries. In his concluding remarks, he expressed his hope that this conference will strengthen solidarity and cooperation across Asia not only in disaster prevention but in broader fields as well.

Prof. MIURA Fusanori, Chairman of the ADRC, explained that 'forging resilience together' lies at the core of cooperation among ADRC's 33 member countries through evidence-based policymaking, interoperable disaster data systems, and cross-border early warning collaboration. As concrete examples, he highlighted the further enhancement of Sentinel Asia for rapid disaster assessment using satellite imagery and the continuous strengthening of GLIDE (Global Disaster IDentifier) to standardise and link disaster information worldwide.



(Left) H.E. AKAMA Jiro, Minister of State for Disaster Management of Japan, (right) Prof. MIURA Fusanori, Chairman of ADRC

Panel Discussion

The panel discussion, themed 'Building Resilience to Mega-Disasters for Sustainable Growth,' brought together five experts who shared the view that preparedness for mega-disasters requires not only short-term measures but also long-term and sustained efforts. The discussion emphasised the importance of viewing post-disaster recovery as a turning point to enhance overall societal safety and sustainability.

Dr ITO Shigeru, President of ADRC and Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo, drew on the

Continued

experience of Kobe following the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, stressing that disaster risk reduction should be pursued in an integrated manner with urban regeneration and community development. He noted that collaboration between government, the private sector, and local communities, and embedding disaster risk reduction into urban development, are essential for strengthening societal resilience.

Dr MURATA Masahiko, Professor at Kansai University of International Studies, introduced Hyogo Prefecture's 'creative reconstruction' as an example, highlighting the recovery phase as a critical opportunity to prepare for future disasters. He explained that land readjustment and the creation of open spaces contributed to improved safety and resilience.

Dr Muzailin Affan, Associate Professor at Syiah Kuala University, Indonesia, shared lessons from Aceh following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, noting that religion and faith served as important sources of psychological support for survivors and helped strengthen community cohesion. He emphasised that respecting local culture and values can play a key role in building resilience.

Dr Netra Prakash Bhandary, Professor at Ehime University, referred to post-earthquake recovery in Nepal and underscored the importance of 'Build Back Better' approaches that respect cultural heritage and traditional housing.

Ms ISHIGAKI Kazuko, Regional Director of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), highlighted the significance of the 'People's Process,' noting that resident-led participation in recovery efforts enhances community-based resilience.

Concluding the session, Mr OGAWA Yujiro, Executive Secretary of ADRC and moderator of the discussion, stated that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to building resilience, and emphasised the need for plans and policies that reflect local realities, including cultural, geographic, and demographic factors.



Speakers of Panel Discussion

Roundtable Session

Roundtable sessions 1 & 2 were held on 17–18 December 2025. A total of 19 statements and presentations were delivered on national DRR progress and challenges. Of these, 16 were from member countries (Armenia, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Fiji, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Türkiye, and Viet Nam) and 3 from partner organisations (ASEAN Secretariat, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)).



Roundtable session

Continued

Activity areas that showed concrete progress include development and enforcement of National DRR Strategies and Plans; implementation of Disaster Risk Governance initiatives; community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM), and pre-disaster response planning and positioning.

The challenges that members and partners commonly face include the following: many communities and infrastructure remain vulnerable; most of the Multi-Hazards Early Warning Systems (MHEWS) are not yet fully in place; and disaster risk management agencies still need further strengthening of technical capacity for disaster risk reduction planning and operations.

Programmatic actions that were recommended are directed towards strengthening knowledge exchange and information sharing; embracing technological innovations; and enhancing partnerships with the private sector.

Mr KITA Katsuhiko, Director, International Cooperation Division, Disaster Management Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, who moderated the roundtable sessions, suggested taking the following actions to address the common challenges: adopt new ideas and assumptions to tackle changing nature of risks; stronger international cooperation; continued capacity improvement; wider application of effective mechanisms and technologies; adopt a long-term perspective of disaster risk reduction; and speed up the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

In the next issue, we will report on Session 1 and Session 2.

● Participation in International Conferences

IWS-20/High Level Forum

On behalf of the Cabinet Office Government of Japan, ADRC participated in the ESCAP/ World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Typhoon Committee's 20th Integrated Workshop (IWS-20)/High Level Forum, 2-5 December 2025 in Macao, China. This event highlighted the Typhoon Committee's milestones in the utilisation of satellites, artificial intelligence (AI), and a combination of new technologies to further reduce the impacts of typhoon disasters. In this workshop, ADRC presented 'Japan's Member Report,' including the contributions of space-based technologies to the disaster risk reduction efforts in the Asia-Pacific region.

At the High-Level Forum, seven of the permanent representatives to the Typhoon Committee (Cambodia; Hong Kong, China; Lao PDR; Macao, China; Malaysia; Philippines; and Thailand) affirmed that the use of satellites and AI has greatly improved monitoring, forecasting, and early warning systems for typhoons. The Forum formulated a 'Joint Statement of the Participants' stressing four actions for moving forward:

1. Enhance cooperation in the implementation of the initiative, 'Early Warnings for All'
2. Promote sharing of data, knowledge, and technology
3. Advance the application of monitoring and forecasting technologies
4. Promote the socio-economic benefit of tropical cyclone-related services



Participants of the IWS-20/High Level Forum

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