



17 January 2025

Reflecting on Three Decades Since the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake

Thirty years ago, on 17 January 1995, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, with a magnitude of 7.3 on the Richter scale, devastated Kobe and the surrounding Hanshin area. The earthquake originated from a shallow hypocentre just 16 km below the surface of the earth, hitting the heart of this vibrant urban area with tremendous force. It tragically claimed 6,434 lives and left behind an indelible mark of immense economic loss.

Driven by the desire to harness the lessons learned from this disaster, the ADRC was established in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture, in 1998, just three years after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake.

Today, Kobe is a large city with a population of 1.5 million. It also has a long history as Japan's leading port city. Ikuta Jinja Shrine, which is one of the oldest Shinto shrines protecting the port of Kobe, dates back to the third century.

At the time of the earthquake, wooden houses were densely built in the older areas of the city. In these neighbourhoods, many houses collapsed, and fires broke out. Additionally, numerous buildings constructed under outdated seismic standards collapsed. The seaside area where the ADRC is now situated was once part of a coastal industrial zone. This area too, was heavily affected by the earthquake. Many facilities were relocated or left vacant, and the area was redeveloped as a result.

Starting with the International Recovery Forum in January 2025 (Visit the link below for more details: <https://recovery.preventionweb.net/event/international-recovery-forum-2025-achieving-resilient-recovery-changing-world>), which marks 30 years of learning since the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, the ADRC will facilitate the exchange of knowledge on recovery experiences and emerging practices.

We will further promote initiatives we have gained from experiencing the earthquake along with other lessons learned from the disasters in Kobe and Hyogo. Please visit the link below for some specific examples of the ADRC activities in each of the four areas, supported by real experiences from the earthquake: https://www.adrc.asia/publications/Poster/ADRC_EQ_DRR.pdf

The ADRC will continue to develop various activities globally to create safer, healthier, more secure and peaceful communities throughout the Asia-Pacific region, in collaboration with its 33 member countries.