

Opening Speech

Mr. Satoru Nishikawa

Executive Director, Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), Japan

Distinguished Guests, Participants, Ladies and Gentleman,

It is my honour to welcome you to Kobe for the Regional Workshop on Total Disaster Risk Management.

On this occasion of the Opening Ceremony, on behalf of the organizers of this workshop, I would like to thank the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foundation, the Cabinet Office and the Tsutomu Nakauchi Foundation for providing resources and also the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Memorial Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI) for enabling us to utilize this excellent facility.

I would also like to thank all the participants who joined us here today to discuss effective approaches and methods for better disaster reduction in our region.

Allow me to share with you some background information on the Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM). Events of natural disasters are on the rise, and Asia is the most affected region. These disaster events, not only disrupt people's lives and directly affect the disaster hit areas but also jeopardizes the entire society and economy of the country. In fact, one single disaster event can overwhelm the GNP of the country which may even threaten the social security of the state.

It is clear that disaster reduction is a must for sustainable development. Many of us know that for effective disaster reduction, it is indispensable to share the experiences and knowledge of disaster cases and networking of various expertise.

Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) was established in July 1998 to promote multilateral cooperation for disaster reduction and to network the

various players in the region. We have just marked our 4th anniversary. We have held our annual meetings to network the focal points in governments of our member countries. Our activities focus on three pillars of activities, information sharing, capacity building and cooperation. We have developed several successful capacity building programs with our member countries mainly focused on local governments.

Since January 2000, we have enjoyed working closely together with the Asian Disaster Response Unit of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Kobe office (ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe) and we have been jointly pursuing better ways to address the needs of our region.

We are aware of the existence of numerous efforts based on the wealth of experiences to cope with natural disasters in Asian countries. Remarkable advances and successes in individual sectors have been also seen. However the toll of natural disasters remains still large. I believe that if these successes were combined and the efforts were linked closely, the adverse effects of natural disasters could be reduced tremendously. This is how we organizers came to pursue the TDRM Approach. Thanks to the support from the ASEAN Foundation and the Cabinet Office, ADRC and ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe have been able to realize this workshop.

The participants who have agreed to gather here today are the key players in Asia and can play the crucial role to save people's lives in our region. Let's hope that through our discussions in the coming three days we can identify another step forward.

Opening Speech

Dr. Ruben C. Umaly

Executive Director, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
Foundation, Indonesia

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure to be here this morning and take part in the opening ceremony of the *Regional Workshop on Total Disaster Risk Management*.

I would like to express our gratitude to the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre (ADRC) and the Asian Disaster Response Unit of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Kobe office (ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe) for their efforts in initiating such an important event in the area of Disaster Management. I also would like to acknowledge all the participants for their significant contribution to the workshop.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foundation acknowledges with much gratitude the generous help that the Government of Japan has imparted to the Foundation in the form of the ASEAN–Japan Solidarity Fund. This cooperation has been with us for the last three years and has borne concrete and beneficial results. This course has been made possible through the funding support from the Solidarity Fund.

The ASEAN Foundation was founded in 1967 to promote inter-governmental cooperation in economic, scientific, social and cultural fields as well as other transnational issues of common concern. Among its main purposes is to hasten economic growth, social progress and cultural development in Southeast Asia so the region will be more prosperous and peaceful. By working together, ASEAN countries hope to improve the living standards of the peoples of the region and to increase their awareness of their common history, legacy and destiny.

The ASEAN Foundation was established primarily to contribute to the elevation or acceleration of functional cooperation, an area that has always been important part of the mission of the ASEAN. The Framework for Elevating Functional Cooperation adopted by the 29th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta on 20 July 1996 provided that the theme for Functional Cooperation shall be shared prosperity through Human Development, Technological Competitiveness, and Social Cohesiveness.

As an arm of the ASEAN, the ASEAN Foundation has been mandated to promote greater awareness of ASEAN, greater interaction among the ASEAN peoples and their increased participation in ASEAN activities. The ASEAN Foundation also undertakes development cooperation activities for the alleviation of poverty and socio-economic development.

Furthermore, we all acknowledge the critical importance of the development of the region's human resources. An important role for the ASEAN Foundation is to implement human resources development programmes to promote the growth of a productive and technologically competent ASEAN regional work force so vital to the progress of ASEAN.

ASEAN Foundation support for this undertaking is in line with its mandate and role. This event is part of a series of regional workshops under the project of *Human Resources Development for the Coordination in the Field of Natural Disasters*, which is supported by The ASEAN Foundation. This project aims *to enhance the awareness of the ASEAN People on various kinds of natural disasters and promote regional coordination and competence among ASEAN Governments, NGOs and UN Agencies in the field of natural disaster management through research, workshops and conferences.*

You are here for the next three days to attend the regional workshop of the Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM). This course aims: *to enhance the understanding of government officials regarding the TDRM; to provide a forum to share views and experiences on how to apply TDRM approach in disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and development; as well as to*

discuss and identify the common elements that required for the implementation of the TDRM in disaster prone countries in Asia.

This workshop will, no doubt, enhance the competencies of the national participants on TDRM and increase public awareness of natural disaster in the ASEAN countries. Furthermore, the event will also enhance cooperation and solidarity of the peoples in the region, including between ASEAN other Asian countries

Natural disasters and human-made hazards through their the multi-dimensional impact cause significant setbacks to economic and social development in the effected location. This is why the ASEAN Foundation has made Disaster Management one of its focus key areas for support under its social development priority area.

Again, it is an honor to be present here today and a great a pleasure for me to address you this morning as you embark on a task to support the ASEAN Foundation in strengthening the capacity of ASEAN peoples by increasing their awareness of each other. And I personally believe that each one of you, each one of us is a partaker and contributor in building a better future for the region.

I am truly glad to share with you another accomplishment in the life of the ASEAN Foundation, a life of helping the peoples of ASEAN in making our region more progressive, more developed and more prosperous.

With this, I wish the *Regional Workshop on Total Disaster Risk Management*, and each and every one of you, success!

Opening Speech

Mr. Salvano Briceno

Director, UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Secretariat,
Switzerland

Dear participants,

Good morning. First of all, I wish to thank the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre (ADRC) and the Asian Disaster Response Unit of UN OCHA Kobe office (ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe) for having convened this regional workshop and for having invited me to attend. I am very pleased to be here with you today as these occasions are very valuable for us. They allow for sharing the views and plans of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Secretariat and to receive feedback from those of you who share the same concerns.

The subject that brings us together, risk management related to natural hazards, is becoming an increasingly pressing issue in international debates in particular, in the framework of sustainable development. In order to address risk management effectively it requires, above all, collective and team efforts which can only be achieved by intensive dialogue and development of strong partnerships. I trust this workshop will provide an opportunity for these needs.

In my presentation later in the day, I will expand on these concepts and introduce the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction with more detail. Therefore, I will now make only a few general points.

Firstly, I would like to stress that the ISDR is an initiative that is totally open for discussion and needs all the contributions that each of you can make in terms of knowledge, expertise, information or networking. So please feel free to share with us any view, question or even complaints that you may have about our work. We need to learn from you as much, if not more, as what you can learn from us.

We see the function of the ISDR Secretariat as providing a catalytic role for

mobilising and expanding awareness on the subject, encouraging and supporting synergies and acting as a clearinghouse for the exchange of information and expertise on the reduction of risk and vulnerabilities to natural hazards. The limited resources available to us, allow us to provide these services slowly and gradually.

The slow pace however, is also needed as engaging institutions and experts requires a great deal of discussion and clarification to effectively integrate new concepts and approaches that go against traditional and well installed values, attitudes and behaviors.

It is therefore, essential not to have too idealistic expectations, the issues involved in reducing risk and vulnerabilities can only be solved in a long-term perspective, they are extremely demanding and require careful consideration and research, and above all, they rely on enhancing the leadership and managerial capacities in people, communities and organizations in disaster prone areas. The attitudes that are typical in crisis situations, such as acting quickly and decisively, with a military approach, are not typical of the work required for disaster reduction and can even be counterproductive. Reducing risk and vulnerabilities require a great deal of patience, dialogue, respect, tolerance and solidarity, they aim at long-term objectives that are or must become part of development strategies and programmes in the fields of education, health, agriculture, transportation, tourism, land-use planning, rural and urban planning, environment, etc.

Disaster reduction, as I will explain later, is a long-term mission that aims at developing a culture of prevention and building resilient communities. For this mission, international cooperation based on real partnerships and team effort needs to be given a much higher priority than the promotion of individual or nationalistic protagonism which are still prevailing in current international cooperation.

Asian has certainly some of the best institutions in the world in this field and ADRC is one of them. ADRC has been developing strong partnerships with other relevant organizations such as OCHA, ISDR, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) and a few

others.

I am confident that Asia, in particular, but also the rest of the world have the capacities, knowledge and expertise needed to help this mission move forward. As leaders and experts, we need to make sure however, that the speed in moving disaster reduction objectives forward, is higher than that of the rapidly increasing vulnerabilities.

Many thanks.

Opening Speech

Mr. Tetsuya Shirasaki

Councillor, Disaster Management
Cabinet Office, Government of Japan

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to say a few words at the opening of the Regional Workshop on Total Disaster Risk Management. Despite all our efforts on mitigating damages caused by disasters, there have been a number of disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, sediment disasters and droughts occurring in the world, which cause a great number of losses of life and property. Above all, the Asian region has suffered from numerous disasters that accounts for 90 % of the total affected people and 50 % of the total direct economic losses in the world.

Accordingly, the Asian region is a disaster-prone area that leads to a large number of human suffering and economic losses; thus, it is crucial to strengthen disaster countermeasures for sustainable development in Asian countries. In this regard, I assume that reinforcement of international cooperation in the field of disaster management is requisite for each Asian country, and international and regional organizations, including UN agencies, to collaborate with common spirit.

Among others, the Asian Disaster Response Unit of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Kobe office (ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe) and the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) have been collaborating on the enhancement of disaster capacity building, which is indeed worth giving high praise. Therefore, the Japanese Government will continue to support their activities in an active manner.

Today, the Regional Workshop on Total Disaster Risk Management is co-hosted by the organizations as a part of their cooperative projects, and I believe that it will offer a great opportunity for us to look at disaster management in Asian region.

It is indispensable to consider disaster countermeasures as a cycle which contains disaster prevention in time of peace for restraining and preparing disasters to happen; accurate and prompt emergency response in time of disaster occurrences; immediate recovery and restoration in case of damages caused; and preparation for the coming disasters, reflecting lessons learned from previous disasters. Furthermore, it is essential to cooperate with organizations in wide range of fields such as education, media, medical service and technology.

The Total Disaster Risk Management advocated in this workshop aims to share these ideas in each country. I find it a substantial and useful concept to strengthen disaster capacity building in Asia.

I would be delighted if this workshop would promote further disaster reduction cooperation, not just in Asia, but also in the world.

In conclusion, I wish all of you great success in this workshop and in your career.