Foreword

We live in a fast changing global environment where peril and risk to human society abound. Disasters maim and kill people. They destroy property and the environment. Yet, disasters occur and recur with lasting detrimental consequences, thereby exacerbating poverty and impeding sustainable development. With many countries and local communities, especially in Asia, becoming more vulnerable as technological, environmental, political and economic change combine to increase disaster risks, the effectiveness of existing approaches, strategies and mechanisms for disaster reduction and response is challenged inevitably.

While contemporary disaster management promotes the comprehensive approach that embraces all the phases of the disaster management cycle, the enormity of the disaster problem today and in the foreseeable future calls for a more proactive approach that ensures effective disaster reduction at all levels towards sustainable development. Particularly in Asia, the current situation has presented the critical need for a holistic and integrated approach to disaster reduction, which focuses on disaster risks and vulnerabilities, and emphasizes multi-level, multi-dimensional, and multi-disciplinary coordination and collaboration among all stakeholders. This approach has now evolved to be called the Total Disaster Risk Management Approach or TDRM.

Asian Disaster Responce Unit of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Kobe Office (ADRU/UN OCHA Kobe) and the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) jointly developed TDRM through a series of consultative forum and workshops in the region. Since its inception as a course of action at the First Consultative Meeting on Regional Cooperation in Disasters held in Katmandu, Nepal, in July 2001, the initial concept of TDRM had been presented to various organizations, academicians and disaster management practitioners, and further refined through the myriad comments received. Moreover, TDRM was introduced and appreciated during the conferences of representatives of Asian governments held in January 2002 in New Delhi, India, and by non-government organizations from Asian countries held in February 2002 in Kobe, Japan. It was also shared with and deliberated by important regional organizations in June 2002 in Bangkok, Thailand. In advocating for the adoption of TDRM at the country level, a regional workshop participated in by government delegates, was held in August 2002 in Kobe, Japan. Exemplified by best practices in Asia, TDRM was discussed extensively in the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction: Contribution to the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action held in January 2003 in Kobe, Japan. Through strengthened cooperation and collaboration among governments, international and regional organizations, and NGOs, TDRM is expected to become an important strategy for effective disaster reduction and response in the region.

TDRM builds on the gains of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), subsequently, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and other relevant endeavors. It integrates and complements existing knowledge and techniques on disaster reduction and response, and risk management. Essentially, the TDRM Approach is a purposive viewpoint that addresses holistically and comprehensively the various concerns and gaps in the disaster management cycle. In this regard, it necessarily focuses on the underlying causes of disasters, the conditions of disaster risks and the vulnerability of the community. It also emphasizes multi-level, multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary cooperation and collaboration, in achieving effective disaster reduction and response.

Consequently, TDRM promotes effective integration of stakeholders' action and facilitates broad-based participation in policy and program development in disaster reduction and response as

they relate with other development concerns, such as poverty reduction, land use planning, environmental protection, and social security, among others. In TDRM, accurate and reliable information on hazard, vulnerability and disaster risk is vital. Thus, the approach attaches great importance to hazard mapping and vulnerability and risk assessments as a fundamental tool for good decision-making and effective communication of disaster risk information.

Considering the immediate and long-term benefits of human resource development in disaster reduction, the ADRU/UN OCHA Kobe and ADRC had collaborated to conduct the International Training Programme on Total Disaster Risk Management on 10-13 June 2003 in Kobe, Japan. With 35 participants from 16 countries in Asia, the programme endeavored to enhance their capacity and proficiency in the TDRM Approach. In particular, the training emphasized the importance of disaster reduction to the pursuit of sustainable development through examples of best practices in Asian countries. It also demonstrated the importance of hazard mapping, vulnerability and risk assessments, and disaster damage and needs assessment, as fundamental tools for disaster reduction and response. Finally, the training had initiated important discussions on human resource development and collaborative networking towards the formulation and implementation of country strategies for TDRM.

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