

**Opening Speech**  
**Mr. Katsuhiko Hara**

Director for Disaster Preparedness, Cabinet Office  
The Government of Japan

Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to Kobe.

It is a great pleasure for me to address an Opening Remarks on the International Training Program on Total Disaster Risk Management 2003 in front of the distinguished participants from the Asian countries and other part of the world on behalf of the Government of Japan.

Asia is an engine or locomotive of the world economy, however, as you might be aware that this region is also prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods sediment disasters and droughts in the world. According to the recent statistics of natural disasters impact, there are about 90% of the affected people and 50% of economic loss caused by natural disasters in the world comes from this region. I believe that to overcome the negative phase by natural disasters in Asia would be beneficial not only for the region itself but also for the entire world where economies and businesses are closely interlinked. Therefore, it is needless to say that in order to achieve the substantial development in Asia, strengthening the disaster countermeasure activities and developing the international cooperation ties in the view of disaster management in Asia are the crucial concerns to accomplish for all of us here today.

One of the most important spheres of disaster management and mitigation would be making an accurate hazard map and disaster assessment, the key theme of this training program. I hope the methodology and knowledge of making a hazard map and correct disaster assessment lectured in the program will be applied and enhance a capacity building and efficiency of disaster management, preparedness, and mitigation in all of the participants' countries in the future. Furthermore, I encourage all of you here to make the most use of this opportunity to exchange and share your experiences, analysis, skills and lessons as well through this training.

Lastly, I am grateful to OCHA Kobe and ADRC for co-hosting this splendid workshop. In September, 2002, OCHA Kobe and ADRC signed the MOU, memorandum of understanding, is based on OCHA and ADRC's collaboration on enhancing the disaster controlling capacity in the Asian region. The Government of Japan is supporting this partnership and their consolidated activities.

I am also grateful to the ASEAN Fund, USAID, UNU and Kakogawa city for their great contribution and supporting this workshop.

To conclude my opening remarks, I wish all of you great success in this training program and please enjoy your stay in this beautiful city of Kobe.

Thank you very much.