
Foreword

Natural disasters are undeniably increasing due to such factors as urbanization, population growth, destruction of the natural environment and climate change, and the Asian region accounts for nearly 90% of the world's affected population.

Catastrophic natural disasters not only cause huge losses of human life, but also can result in enormous economic losses that exceed the GDP of the affected countries and inhibit the achievement of sustainable development. Human suffering is more acute in developing countries, especially those that are severely impoverished. Moreover, disasters often stem from the most unexpected and highly vulnerable elements of a society, that is, from vulnerabilities that societies tend to overlook. To address the risks that arise from these often misunderstood vulnerabilities, it is essential to conduct comprehensive, holistic and integrated disaster reduction activities in an efficient and effective manner.

The Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) Kobe, in consultation with stakeholders in Asia, have formulated a holistic approach to disaster risk reduction known as Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM).

“Total Disaster Risk Management: Good Practices” is a user-friendly handbook on TDRM that has been published for the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held on 18-22 January 2005 in Kobe, Japan. It describes the TDRM concept and related good practices, and is intended to facilitate an enhanced understanding of the TDRM approach and its applications. The publication will also be available on our website shortly after the conference.

We would like to further invite relevant stakeholders to join in collecting examples of good practices for contributing to global disaster risk reduction. It would be our great pleasure to continue receiving a broad range of good practices from you. I hope this publication will stimulate the promotion of the TDRM approach and contribute to efforts to build a safer world.

January 2005



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