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## 2-3 Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction (ACDR)

The Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction (ACDR) 2011 was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 13-15 June 2011. Jointly organized by the governments of Sri Lanka and Japan, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), ACDR 2011 brought together over 120 delegates, including high level officials from 27 governments, 26 international and regional organizations, the academic community, the private sector, and civil society organizations. These delegates affirmed their commitment to further support the integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) efforts, to increase investments in DRR, and to engage in discussions on how to strengthen local DRR capacity.



At the opening session, the Honorable Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Disaster Management for the government of Sri Lanka, set the tone for the conference by emphasizing the importance of strengthening the region's commitment to DRR and encouraging national and local governments to establish DRR as a priority agenda item with a clear vision and policy goals. The Honorable Shozo Azuma, Vice Minister of the Cabinet Office for Disaster Management of the government of Japan also gave a special presentation on 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. He explained the various measures that were taken after the earthquake and tsunami, outlined Japan's reconstruction policy, and acknowledged the support received by Japan from around the world.

ACDR 2011 offered a valuable opportunity for policymakers and practitioners from ADRC-member countries and international/regional organizations to meet together and share their experiences and lessons learned.

The key topics addressed at ACDR 2011 were as follows:

1. Integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)
  - (1) Lessons learned from recent climate hazards in Asia
  - (2) Showcase of sound practices/technologies

2. Lessons learned from recent disasters in Asia
3. Recent developments among international/regional organizations
4. Evaluation of ADRC activities

On the first day, a special session was held on the “Integration of DRR and CCA.” Given the alarming number, scale, and impact of the natural disasters that have struck Asia in recent years, and given that climate change is dramatically magnifying the risks and threatening many developing nations, this session highlighted the significant role of regional and inter-governmental organizations in sharing information, knowledge, and DRR lessons. It also highlighted their role in coordinating the implementation of the Incheon Regional Roadmap (REMAP) and Action Plan on DRR and CCA in Asia and the Pacific adopted at 4AMCDRR in 2010. Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, and Russia gave reports on their recent climate hazards and experiences, and then the WMO, ICIMOD, JAXA, ICHARM, AIT, WB, and JICA reported on their current status and their technical developments for addressing climate hazards. After these presentations, the participants discussed the needs and problems that exist in three areas: preparedness, response, and recovery. Afterward, the participants formulated a series of recommendations.



#### Recommendations

- Develop a comprehensive climate-related data collection system
- Systematize early warnings
- Develop tools that are both highly reliable and convenient
- Strengthen relationships and networks in member countries
- Raise public awareness and promote disaster education
- Promote linkages with multiple stakeholders, especially with local communities
- Strengthen existing communication and coordination mechanisms
- Adopt an inclusive, participatory process to enhance self-ownership

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On the second day of the conference, Pakistan, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Japan reported on their recent major disasters and response measures. Participants then heard presentations on global/regional activities (3rd GFDRR, 4th AMCDRR, 5th AMCDRR), and presentations on the activities of ESCAP, ABU, IFRC, and JST. These sessions featured active discussions about the information presented on recent disasters and DRR measures.

In the afternoon, ADRC outlined its main activities. The DRR policy peer review project, initiated in 2010, was recognized as an effective tool which will continue to be used to reach out to more countries. Programs promoting technology transfers from Japan to other countries in Asia will also be enhanced, along with capacity-building programs, to supplement member countries' investment in DRR. Likewise, ADRC's partnership with the International Recovery Platform (IRP) will be strengthened to further reduce disaster risks through building back better.

On the third day, participants went on a field visit to a flood mitigation project area in a suburb of Colombo. Local government representatives began by describing the area's flood vulnerability and outlining the project. In the project area, local residents gave additional project details, especially the benefits of the project in terms of living environment improvements and enhanced safety from floods. This project is a good example of how DRR, public health, and local development can be linked, and thus attracted the interest of many participants.

ACDR 2011 was a great success thanks to the substantial contributions of all the speakers and the active involvement of all participants. ADRC will continue to discuss the issues raised at the conference, treating them as priorities to be addressed in Asia in cooperation with its partners.

\*For more information, please visit the ACDR 2011 website at [http://www.adrc.asia/acdr/2011\\_index.html](http://www.adrc.asia/acdr/2011_index.html).