

2. Highlights of 2018/2019

2-1. Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2018 on the Occasion of ADRC's 20th Anniversary

ADRC convenes an annual international conference for disaster risk management officials from member countries and disaster experts from international organizations to promote the sharing of information and ideas, and to enhance partnerships among participating countries and organizations. The Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction (ACDR) 2018 commemorated two decades of ADRC's contributions to disaster risk reduction (DRR). It brought 118 participants (including representatives of 25 member countries and one advisory country, as well as other observers and partners) to Awaji Island in Hyogo, Japan, from 30 October to 1 November 2018, to take stock of ADRC's achievements and strategize future programs and activities. The conference was organized jointly by the government of Japan.

ACDR2018 began with opening remarks by Mr. Takeshi Yonezawa, Deputy Director General, Cabinet Office of Japan. Prof. Masanori Hamada, ADRC Chairman, reviewed 20 years of ADRC contributions and introduced Turkey as new ADRC member country. Mr. Hamza Taşdelen, Vice President of AFAD, Turkey expressed his hopes for future cooperation. Ms. Setsuko Saya, Director, Cabinet Office of Japan chaired a Special Session on DRR. All member countries identified their respective challenges and current initiatives. Four common preparedness issues identified were: (1) capacity building; (2) data collection, including the role of the private sector, (3) mainstreaming DRR in plans, policies, and programs; and (4) community-based resilience efforts, including the role of local governments. As emphasized in the keynote speech by Prof. Tadashi Yamada of Chuo University, the uncertainty associated with global warming requires a new paradigm for DRR. The new probabilistic model of predicting inundation from floods was more useful. It implies that strategies and programs should take into account how to prepare against the changing nature of hazards.



Fig. 2-1-1 Participants of ACDR2018

The key topics addressed at ACDR2018 were as follows:

1. Regional cooperation in the face of cross-border disasters
2. Enhancement of global disaster data
3. Capacity development programs including the ADRC Visiting Researcher Program
4. Space-based technology and affordable solutions facilitating DRR

Session 1 of the conference acknowledged that since disasters recognize no boundaries, there are many benefits of working together through regional cooperation. These include the sharing of best practices for handling major disasters, responding together on search and rescue efforts, and understanding and improving DRR through early warnings, the mutual exchange of information, joint education and training exercises, and joint assistance on disaster response. Session 2 of the conference addressed issues of disaster data collection. First, to address political challenges, the national disaster management organizations (NDMOs) can take advantage of the power of SDGs teams for monitoring their respective governments, since the SDGs teams reflect the highest level of coordination. Second, to address technical challenges, the UN agencies should come up with a common policy for monitoring SFDRR, SDGs, and the Paris Agreement. Finally, to address capacity gaps, all available tools and guidance should be made accessible, such as GLIDE, Global Centre for Disaster Statistics (GCDS), and e-learning modules related to disaster data in the region. It is recommended that a voluntary network should be developed to assist countries in monitoring the global targets of SFDRR ahead of the Global Platform on DRR be held in May 2019.

Session 3 recommended strengthening the Visiting Researcher Program by ensuring that researchers continue to contribute substantive value in their countries' DRR efforts, monitoring the impacts of their work, and encouraging program participants to continue networking and keeping their knowledge and experiences up to date. The session suggested that regional training providers consider exploring practical ways of delivering training programs depending on the needs and the situation. It was recommended that the capacities of member countries be further enhanced to promote the mainstreaming of DRR, investments in disaster management efforts, and the adoption of a holistic approach to residual risks. Session 4 reaffirmed the contributions of Sentinel Asia to DRR, where near real-time observations from space, delivered online, can be used as early warnings or as information to guide response and post-disaster recovery planning and operations. The conference also showcased affordable solutions to facilitate DRR.

Side events included the Earthquake Technology Expo in Awaji, an event sponsored by JICA on "Promoting the Development of National and Local DRR Strategies/Plans for 2020", an event sponsored by UNESCAP on "Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction International Forum 2018", and the Sentinel-Asia JPTM. These provided additional opportunities for many participants to share information and networks.

ACDR2018 was a great success. ACDR2018 documents are available on the ADRC website at http://www.adrc.asia/acdr/2018_index.html.