

NEAT WORKING GROUP
on
“East Asian Disaster Management”

Final Report

Beijing, China

19 July 2011

Introduction

The NEAT Working Group Meeting on East Asian Disaster Management sponsored by NEAT China was held in Beijing on 19 July 2011. Twenty scholars from 10 of the ASEAN Plus Three countries and the ASEAN secretariat participated in the meeting. Brunei, Indonesia and Myanmar were absent.

The theme of this working group meeting is “Enhancing East Asian regional coordination of disaster management.” The research of the Working Group is oriented towards three specific goals. First, share information and expertise. Second, examine existing regional coordination and cooperation mechanisms and practices. The purpose is to build on the achievements of the past and find out the dilemmas, obstacles, opportunities and challenges we are likely to face in advancing the agenda. Third, produce practical and specific policy recommendations with the view of not only improving the coherence, functionality and accountability of the region in disaster management, but also building a people-oriented region by improving trust, deepening friendship and nurturing we-feeling.

The meeting consists an opening session, 3 discussion sessions and a wrap-up session. Professor Qin Yaqing, Country Coordinator for NEAT China, addressed the participants at the opening session. Dr. Wang Zhenyao, Dean of One Foundation Philanthropy Research Institute of Beijing Normal University, then gave a keynote speech on disaster management of China with the case of the Sichuan earthquake, and answered questions from the floor. The three discussion sessions focus on the following topics:

1. Disaster management in East Asia: experiences and lessons
2. Regional coordination of disaster management: mechanisms and practices
3. Policy recommendations: disaster management and community building

Dr. Danilo C. Israel from the Philippines, Professor Kenji Okazaki from Japan and Dr. Wan Portia from Malaysia chaired the three discussion sessions respectively, where fifteen presentations in total were given. At the wrap-up session, Professor Zhu Liqun, the leading expert of the Chinese team for this working group, summarized the discussions of the day and concluded the meeting.

The following parts attempt to summarize the presentations and discussions of all sessions with a highlight on policy recommendations.

I. Country- and region-specific experiences and lessons

East Asia is one of the regions suffering most from natural disasters. In recent years, natural disasters such as tsunamis, floods, droughts and earthquakes have hit the region frequently, causing huge economic losses and human casualties. According to the 2010 Asia-Pacific Disaster Report by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, though the Asia-Pacific accounted for a quarter of the world’s GDP, it

suffered 85% of deaths and 42% economic losses caused by natural disasters worldwide.

At the meeting, participants from China, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan, Laos, Thailand and the ASEAN secretariat shared country-specific or ASEAN-specific experiences and lessons in disaster relief and management.

China has witnessed tremendous achievements in disaster relief and management in establishing and improving important national plans and mechanisms, such as emergency response and disaster management plan, a national coordination entity, and mechanisms for emergency response, disaster relief, recovery and reconstruction, expert participation, international cooperation and so on. The management of the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake is a showcase of these mechanisms. However, as natural disasters have increased in both frequency and severity, problems and challenges also loom large in China's disaster management, for instance, the lack of catastrophe management plan, and the inadequacy of capacity in terms of organization, expertise, technology and equipment, etc. Besides, Chinese participants also identified another serious disaster—urban floods, and emphasized the balance between urbanization and sustainable development.

In the Philippines, typhoons, floods, landslides, droughts and weather and climate-related natural disasters occur on a regular basis. Among Southeast Asian nations, the Philippines has the highest multiple climate hazard index. The number of persons affected by natural disasters has increased in the last two decades, with value of damages totaling \$ 4,813 million. The issues and challenges for disaster risk assessment and preparedness in the Philippines include weak coordination, limited logistics and resources, inadequate human resources development, limited communication network, poor performance at the levels, and limited national meteorological and hydrological services (NMHS).

In Cambodia, disaster management is headed by the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM). The NCDM collaborates with partners both multilaterally and bilaterally on human resources and institutional development, disaster risk reduction, emergency response and rehabilitation. An example of such collaboration is the Ketsana rehabilitation and reconstruction and the contingency planning, which aims to increase capacities of national, sub-national, communities and stakeholders to mitigate risks and improve preparedness measures.

In Vietnam, 90% of the total deaths from natural disasters were claimed by storms and floods in the last three decades. Vietnamese experiences from disaster relief and management include enhanced preparedness, prevention and adaptation, active participation of communities, close coordination of government agencies and increased international cooperation. A National Strategy for Natural Disaster Prevention, Response and Mitigation to 2020 has been developed. However, problems and challenges remain significant, for instance, poor infrastructure, limited expertise, inadequate awareness, limited capacity in forecasting and warning, etc. Moreover, rapid

urbanization and industrialization, and the increased occurrence of multi-hazards will pose further challenges for disaster management in the future.

Lao PDR suffers from multiple natural and man-made disasters and hazards. Disaster management is coordinated by National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC) directly under the Prime Minister's Office. In recent years, a lot of efforts have been made in improving preparedness and enhancing local capacity in mitigation and emergency response, especially in cases of floods. Experiences in the Lao context show that it is particularly important to develop a comprehensive national strategy for disaster management, and to increase capacity of institutions and communities.

At the meeting, the participants were also briefed of the Great East Japan Earthquake on 11 March 2011, which was recorded at magnitude 9.0, claimed over 20,000 lives (missing included) and ruined more than 100,000 houses. In the presentation, the Japanese participant laid special emphasis on the impact of the tsunami and the mitigation of tsunami-related risks, and pointed out that a challenging issue was how to construct safer buildings and communities against tsunamis. It was stressed that motivation of local governments and communities was essential with the elaboration of the case of the RADIUS Project.

The representative from ASEAN Secretariat made a presentation on ASEAN's disaster response mechanisms, which were shaped by two mega disasters, namely, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and the 2008 Cyclone Nargis. The major mechanisms and tools of ASEAN in disaster management include ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), AADMER Work Programme (2010-2015), ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre), and an operational document of AADMER—SASOP (Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Standby Arrangements and Coordination of Joint Disaster Relief and Emergency Response Operations). A brief introduction was also given for some of ASEAN's flagship projects, ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Exercises (ARDEX) and ASEAN's coordination and interface with other humanitarian players.

The Thai presentation focused on the air pollution in Thailand and its neighboring countries caused by particulate matter.

II. Regional cooperation mechanisms: progress and challenges

Participants from Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, China and the ASEAN Secretariat reviewed regional cooperation mechanisms on disaster management. All participants joined in the discussion, assessing the progress and achievements of these mechanisms and identifying existing problems and future challenges.

1. Cooperation mechanisms at different levels

The ongoing cooperation on disaster management in East Asia falls roughly into four categories, namely, global cooperation under the UN framework, regional cooperation

under APEC, regional cooperation with ASEAN as the core, and regional cooperation initiated by individual member states.

A. Global cooperation under the UN framework

In 1994, the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) adopted the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World, which marks the beginning of institutionalized international cooperation on disaster relief and management. In 2005, the 2nd WCDR adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015). The Framework identifies three strategic goals and five priority areas for action, and hence provides guidelines for international cooperation on disaster management. In addition, the UN has also formulated the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), and set it up as a global framework for action so that all societies could be resilient to the impact of disasters, and human, economic and social losses could be reduced. This Strategy marked a concept change from stressing disaster responses to risk management through integrating disaster reduction into sustainable development.

B. Regional cooperation under the APEC framework

In 2005, in response to Indian Ocean tsunami, APEC Senior Officials' Meeting set up the APEC Task Force of Emergency Preparedness (TFEP) to coordinate and promote responses to emergencies and disasters. In 2008, TFEP produced "Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Preparedness and Response in the Asia Pacific Region: 2009-2015". The Strategy draws on the strengths and uniqueness of the APEC process to complement multilateral, bilateral and national efforts to strengthen disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response in the Asia-Pacific, and identifies potential areas for increased cooperation and the development of joint initiatives with other APEC fora and with stakeholders in the regional community. In 2010, TFEP was upgraded to EPWG (Emergency Preparedness Working Group)

C. Regional cooperation with ASEAN at the core

Disaster management is one of the oldest and most typical areas for functional cooperation among ASEAN members. As early as 1976, ASEAN adopted a Declaration of Mutual Assistance on Natural Disasters. In early 2003, ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) was set up. It consists of heads of national agencies responsible for disaster management of ASEAN member countries. The ACDM assumes overall responsibility for coordinating and implementing the regional activities in disaster management. It developed an ASEAN Regional Programme on Disaster Management (ARPD), which provided a framework for cooperation from 2004 to 2010, and outlined ASEAN's regional strategy on disaster management, as well as priority areas and activities for disaster reduction. The ARPD has also been used as a platform for cooperation and collaboration with ASEAN dialogue partners and relevant international organizations. Following the ARPD, ASEAN has developed a series of frameworks, mechanisms, agencies and programs on disaster management and

emergency response with a view of building a resilient community, such as the afore-mentioned ADDMER, AHA, SASOP, and ARDEX.

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has set up an Inter-sessional Meeting on Disaster Relief, which convenes annually. ARF has also formulated the ARF Strategic Guidance for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, and ARF Disaster Relief Work Plan, both of which are undergoing constant improvement. In recent years, participation of armed forces in disaster relief has become a new spotlight in ARF cooperation.

Since the 2004 tsunami in Indonesia, disaster prevention and reduction has become a priority area for cooperation among ASEAN+3 countries. References were made in the Second Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation and ASEAN+3 Work Plan for 2007-2017. In June 2007, the first ASEAN +3 Workshop on Armed Forces' Participation in International Disaster Relief Operations was held in China. In June 2008, the second workshop on this theme was held with even more specific and practical orientations. In May 2010, the ASEAN+3 Workshop on City Disaster Emergency Response Management was held, which produced a series of recommendations on ASEAN+3 urban disaster prevention and reduction.

Disaster management has also become an important cooperation agenda in the China-Japan-ROK Trilateral mechanism. The Trilateral Joint Announcement on Disaster Management Cooperation adopted in 2008 specified three areas for cooperation. The 4th Trilateral Summit in May 2011 further identified seven principles and four measures for trilateral cooperation on disaster management, emphasizing technology and information sharing, smooth communication, coordination in providing and receiving assistance, joint exercises, capacity building and so on.

D. Regional cooperation initiated by member countries

Besides cooperation under multilateral frameworks at global and regional levels, there are also important regional cooperation initiatives and activities sponsored by member countries. As early as 1986, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) was set up in Thailand. As a regional resource center, it plays a significant role in enhancing disaster awareness and local governments' capabilities in institutionalized disaster management. In 1998, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) was established in Kobe, Hyogo prefecture, and its members include 26 countries in the Asia Pacific and one organization. The ADRC aims to enhance disaster resilience of the member countries, to build safe communities, and to create a society where sustainable development is possible. In 2005, the first Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction was held in Beijing. It was the first ministerial meeting on disaster reduction in Asia. The conference adopted the Beijing Action for Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia, and identified the priority areas for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th conferences were held respectively in India (2007), Malaysia (2008) and Republic of Korea (2010).

2. Problems and challenges

East Asia has put in place multi-tiered, multi-area disaster prevention mechanisms. Effective cooperation and substantive progress have been realized in disaster prevention, emergence responses, disaster relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and institution and capability building. However, there are still problems and challenges in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of disaster management and regional cooperation in this area.

First, there is lack of coordination among various cooperation frameworks and mechanisms. There is neither universally recognized protocol nor regular coordination among existing frameworks and mechanisms, which leads to a waste of resources and poor efficiency in disaster management. Since the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the awareness of regional cooperation in combating disaster has been heightened by a large margin and the early warning mechanism for tsunami has witnessed big strides in its construction. But an integrated and regular regional disaster-prevention mechanism has yet to be put on the agenda. It is in the common interests of all parties to put in place a regional disaster prevention and relief mechanism.

Second, there is lack of expertise or coherent intellectual support from experts/scientists. Disasters are of various kinds and hence shall be managed in different ways. Moreover, the causes for disasters tend to become complex and hence produce new challenges. Therefore, science and technology plays an increasingly important role in disaster management. Effective and efficient management calls for scientists and experts from different areas. East Asia has yet to build up a relatively stable team or pool of scientists and experts so as to guarantee sustained intellectual support in the whole process of disaster management.

Third, incompatible technical specifications between countries have impeded the efficiency of international disaster relief efforts. Confusing technical protocol would give rise to poor management, which would create hurdles for the relief efforts of international forces. When disasters strike, technical protocol applicable to the whole region can be of essential importance in dealing effectively with the emergencies.

Fourth, the reserves of disaster relief items are insufficient. The disaster relief supply reserves play a key role in emergency response, disaster relief and reconstruction. A regional disaster relief supply system has yet to be established. Failure to effectively integrate the regional resources for responsible use has serious impact on disaster management.

Fifth, capacity for catastrophe management is far from adequate. Catastrophes feature huge casualties, heavy property losses and extensive damage. Once inflicted, catastrophes can tear down the defensive mechanism of the area they strike and assistance from the outside has to be called for. The Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011 is a catastrophe. It not only claimed over 20,000 lives and caused property losses of 16.9 trillion Yen, but also spilled over to another disaster—nuclear leakage. Under such circumstances, Japan's disaster relief mechanism alone is no longer

sufficient. East Asia countries offered a good variety of aids, but the lack of systemic arrangement has betrayed the poor preparedness and capacity in managing catastrophes.

Sixth, awareness, preparedness and capacity of local communities have to be elevated. During the whole process of disaster management, local communities are the first to come and the last to leave, and those who suffer most. Therefore, the awareness, preparedness and capacity of local communities is key to the success of disaster prevention, risk mitigation, relief and reconstruction. Therefore, measures should be taken to enhance greater people to people arrangements for disaster management, particularly for citizens from East Asia's more developed countries to contribute to developing countries. However, research has found that communities from neither developed countries nor developing countries are well prepared or equipped. For example, a challenging issue is how to reconstruct safer buildings and communities against tsunamis.

III. Policy recommendations: integrity, sustainability and community

After reviewing past achievements, lessons and experiences, and identifying existing problems and future challenges, we are confronted with puzzles as to how best to build on existing efforts, achieve more integrated and sustainable disaster management in the region, and build more resilient communities. Policy recommendations produced by this working group are as follows:

- 1. Integrate and institutionalize cooperation frameworks, mechanisms and efforts.** Full play shall be given to existing frameworks and mechanisms in the region, with multilateral and bilateral cooperation complementing each other. A regional institution on disaster management shall be established. A possible pattern can be reinforcing the AADMER and expanding it into AADMER+3 as the main vehicle of East Asian disaster management cooperation. Institutionalization of regional mechanisms and efforts shall proceed in a gradual manner and at a pace that every member feels comfortable about.
- 2. Build resilient communities against disasters.** The top-down approach of disaster management shall be complemented with a bottom-up approach. Efforts should be made to build resilient communities because local conditions, local knowledge, local agency and local capacity are critical. Therefore, community based disaster management (CBDM) shall be adopted. It is proposed that a regional pilot CBDM project for disaster reduction be conducted. The objective of this project is to raise the awareness of local governments and communities of disaster risks, and to increase their motivation and capacity to build safer and more resilient communities. Several cities in the region can be selected for the pilot project. They will develop disaster scenarios and action plans by themselves with floods, tsunamis, typhoons and earthquakes as targeted disasters. Technical and financial assistance can be provided by developed countries or international organizations.

- 3. Establish an APT experts group on disaster management.** An APT experts group shall be set up so that sustained participation of a group of experts in the whole process of disaster management, and constant communication and exchanges between scientists and practitioners can be guaranteed. The group can follow the NEAT model, forging a regional network and conducting policy-oriented research. Its functions and activities may also include data-collection, field study, policy consultation, on-the-spot technical and intellectual support, project evaluation, joint research on long-term issues, etc.
- 4. Set up APT emergency stockpiles of disaster relief items.** ASEAN has already developed the plan of ASEAN emergency stockpiles of disaster relief items. The Plus Three countries may consider joining in such cooperation. One option can be setting up a regional network of stockpiles or supply reserves nominated by member states. For example, among China's national emergency stockpiles, the ones in Nanning, Qinghuangdao and Xiamen could join the network due to their geographic proximity to other APT countries and advantages in transportation. Once a disaster strikes, all stockpiles of the network can be activated so that supply of disaster relief items can be provided as needed.
- 5. Increase capacity for catastrophe-relief and management.** Specific measures can include setting up an APT Catastrophe Research Centre, standardizing relevant technology, operation and procedures, establishing information-sharing mechanism, increasing technical assistance and transfer and human resources development, empowering local agency, conducting area-specific drills and exercises, coordinating funding channels and improving management of quick-response funds, etc.
- 6. Institutionalize coherent participation of multiple actors.** Disaster management involves multiple actors, including governments, communities, private corporations, non-governmental organizations, individual volunteers, military forces and so on. There should be some kind of institutionalization so that coherent participation of these actors can be guaranteed. For example, the role of military forces and assets in disaster management should be institutionalized. The local communities should be fully mobilized. And the civil society should be cultivated and its participation in disaster management should be properly channeled.

Conclusion

Natural and man-made disasters tend to increase in both number and severity, as the region's vulnerability to hazards and disasters has increased due to rapid urbanization, lack of planning and preparedness, environmental degradation, climate change, poverty and so on. It is increasingly apparent that we should adopt an integrated approach to disaster management, to integrate management of multiple hazards, to integrate institutions, mechanisms, efforts and resources at different levels, and to integrate disaster management with sustainable development.

As disasters often go beyond national borders and become one of the most serious threats to all in the region, disaster management has become a key component of regional governance and East Asian community building. APT countries should strengthen political will and take practical actions to make East Asia a people-centered community of sustainability and resilience.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ASEAN Secretariat

Wipsar Aswi Dina Tri Andari
Technical Officer
ASEAN Secretariat

CAMBODIA

Ma Norith
Director
Information & International Relations
National Committee for Disaster Management

JAPAN

Kenji Okazaki
Professor
National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies

KOREA, The Republic of

Choi Woon Do
Research Fellow
Northeast Asian History Foundation

LAOS

Thavone Singharaj
Research fellow
Institute of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MALAYSIA

Wan Portia
Senior Fellow
Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

PHILIPPINES

Danilo C. Israel
Senior Research Fellow
Philippine Institute for Development Studies

SINGAPORE

Sofiah Suaad Binte Mohamed Jamil
Associate Research Fellow
Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

THAILAND

Teerachai Amnuaylojaroen
Researcher
Chiang Mai University, Thailand

VIETNAM

Nguyen Minh Ngoc
Research Fellow
Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies
Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam

CHINA

Qin Yaqing
Professor, Executive Vice President
China Foreign Affairs University (CFAU)
Country Coordinator, NEAT China

Zhu Liquan
Professor, Vice President
China Foreign Affairs University

Jiang Ruiping
Professor, Vice President
China Foreign Affairs University

Wang Zhenyao
Dean, One Foundation Philanthropy Research Institute
Beijing Normal University

Cheng Xiaotao
Senior Engineer, Deputy Engineer-in-chief
China Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Research

Su Hao
Professor
Department of Diplomacy, CFAU

Fang Weihua
Associate Professor
School of Disaster Reduction and Emergency Management
Beijing Normal University

Wei Ling
Associate Professor, Director
East Asian Studies Center, CFAU

Ji Ling
Assistant Researcher
East Asian Studies Center, CFAU

Guo Yanjun
Assistant Researcher
East Asian Studies Center, CFAU