

**NEAT Working Group on
Disaster Risk Reduction for a Sustainable Society**

Final Report

**Tokyo
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1. Background

The East Asia region is one of the most disaster-affected areas in the world, with approximately 950 thousand deaths from disasters since 1970, accounting for 24% of global fatalities. Additionally, the economic losses from disasters are substantial, with the region's disaster-related losses representing about 62% of global disaster losses. The region frequently experiences a wide range of natural disasters, including storms, tornadoes, heavy rain, heavy snow, floods, landslides, storm surges, tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

In recent years, climate change has exacerbated new risks, such as extreme weather events and rising sea levels, and it is predicted that the frequency and scale of disasters will continue to increase. For example, large-scale disasters like the 2020 Typhoon in the Philippines and Vietnam have demonstrated the devastating impact of such events.

However, these disasters are not solely caused by external forces; social vulnerabilities such as rapid urbanization, changes in population structures, and land use transformation have compounded and diversified disaster risks. Overcrowding in urban areas and increasing poverty levels have become significant factors that not only increase vulnerability but also heighten exposure, placing unprepared communities and individuals in harm's way.

In addition to these social vulnerabilities, governance-related issues such as the mismanagement or misuse of disaster-related public funds can also undermine disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts. These challenges highlight the importance of institutional integrity and transparency across all stages of DRR planning and execution.

Given this background, disaster prevention is no longer merely about disaster response but is intrinsically linked to global issues concerning environmental, social, and economic sustainability. There is a need to build a disaster-resilient society that is in harmony with the environment and leaves no one behind. An integrated and inclusive approach, aligned with the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), is essential.

Japan, drawing from its experiences in past disasters, has been advancing the construction of disaster-resilient societies. Notably, Japan has played a leading role in

establishing international frameworks to strengthen disaster prevention policies, such as the 1994 World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Hyogo, and the 2015 UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai. These frameworks provided specific action plans and guidelines for disaster risk reduction and helped deepen international disaster prevention cooperation.

In the ASEAN region, the "ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER)" was enforced in 2009, and in 2011, the "ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre)" was established to serve as the operation engine of AADMER. Since its enforcement, three AADMER Work Programmes (AWP) have been developed: AWP 2010-2015, AWP 2016-2020, and AWP 2021-2025. The AWP 2026-2030 is underway. The AHA Centre plays a critical role in strengthening ASEAN countries' disaster prevention capabilities by coordinating disaster responses, providing training, and facilitating support during disasters.

However, the region still faces high levels of disaster risk, which are compounded by increased exposure and vulnerability resulting from climate change and rapid urbanization. Therefore, strengthening disaster risk reduction measures and regional cooperation in East Asia remains a crucial challenge in achieving a sustainable society.

2. Discussion Points

Based on the aforementioned background, there are three key areas to focus on for future efforts in the East Asia region:

- (1) Strengthening existing regional frameworks and cooperation systems related to disaster prevention.

It is essential to further strengthen the existing disaster prevention cooperation frameworks within ASEAN Plus Three, including through the implementation of AADMER Work Programme 2026-2030 (respectively through another round of ASEAN+Japan Work Plan on Disaster Management 2026-2030, ASEAN+China Work Plan on Disaster Management 2026-2030, and ASEAN+Korea Work Plan on

Disaster Management 2026-2030 as well as enhancing collaboration with the AHA Centre in achieving the AWP2026-2030 outputs) to enhance effective disaster response and information sharing. In particular, establishing a system for rapid support and resource coordination during disasters is crucial.

(2) Enhancing disaster prevention education.

Strengthening disaster prevention education in schools and communities plays a vital role in reducing disaster risks. It is important to improve disaster preparedness and awareness through educational programs in schools and training programs for citizens.

(3) Promoting disaster prevention measures in alignment with the SDGs to achieve a sustainable society.

Strengthening the integration of disaster prevention measures with the SDGs, particularly SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 13 (Climate Action), is essential. Specifically, there is a need to reduce disaster risks associated with urbanization and build a resilient society through adaptation to climate change.

3. Discussions at the Working Group meeting

16 experts from APT countries and the sponsoring organization, the Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR), took part in a working group meeting in Tokyo on 30 July 2025, which was organized in a keynote address.

4. Policy Recommendations provided

Based on the discussions above, the Working Group on “Disaster Risk Reduction for a Sustainable Society” summarized the policy recommendations. Specifically, key Priorities for Sustainable Disaster Risk Reduction in ASEAN Plus Three based on the evolving risk landscape and the imperative for resilient and sustainable societies, the

following five strategic areas are proposed as key priorities for regional cooperation and action in ASEAN Plus Three;

(1) Strengthening Regional Disaster Cooperation Frameworks

Support the implementation of the AADMER Work Programme 2026–2030, alongside ASEAN+Japan, ASEAN+China, and ASEAN+Korea Disaster Management Work Plans.

Enhance collaboration with the AHA Centre in operational coordination, resource mobilization, and joint response mechanisms including the accelerating the adoption of unified terminology and equipment standards across borders.

(2) Advancing Integrated Climate-Resilient DRR Strategies

Promote nature-based and green infrastructure solutions (e.g., floodplains, coastal forests) to address multiple and cascading hazards.

Align disaster risk reduction strategies with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and national climate adaptation plans.

Advance inclusive and equitable risk reduction by ensuring access to information and active participation of vulnerable communities.

Support culturally grounded approaches to risk awareness and behaviour change, recognizing that trust often matters more than data.

(3) Leveraging Advanced Technologies and Early Warning Systems

Share and expand the use of satellite-based tools such as QZSS (Quasi-Zenith Satellite System) and SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar) constellations for near-real-time risk detection, wide-area coverage, and dissemination of disaster related information to all areas.

Develop and scale mobile-based and AI-powered early warning dissemination

systems to reach at-risk communities.

Address cybersecurity risks to disaster management systems and critical infrastructure, especially in smart cities, by strengthening digital resilience and secure data governance.

(4) Enhancing Inclusive Education and Capacity Development

Promote systematic disaster education from early childhood through university by mainstreaming DRR perspectives into regular curricula and expanding community-based programs including practical drills.

Establish regional certification systems for DRR professionals and volunteers to standardize training and improve cross-border mobility.

Build an interdisciplinary network of university-based DRR research and education centers to foster academic collaboration across the region.

Strengthen international cooperation through initiatives by JICA, Japanese universities, ADRC (Asian Disaster Reduction Center), and potential ASEAN Plus Three mechanisms such as a Disaster Resilience Academy to provide professional education and training for government officials and DRR experts across the region.

Utilize campus-based living laboratories and participatory models such as child-led drills to connect academic training with real-world disaster response and community resilience.

(5) Promotion of Build Back Better and Build Better Before

Promote not only the “Build Back Better” approach but also the “Build Better Before” concept, emphasizing investment in disaster-resilient infrastructure and institutional design.

Implement collaborative, community-based DRR programs and cross-border workshops to embed resilience principles into local development plans through peer learning and cultural exchange.

Institutionalize proactive, community-driven disaster financing by shifting from

post-disaster relief to advance funding mechanisms co-managed by local stakeholders and governments.

Support the development of disaster risk insurance schemes, regional risk pooling, and financial protection instruments.

Develop and maintain an ASEAN-wide repository of disaster evidence and lessons learned.

Strengthen accountability through transparent planning, and inclusive financial mechanisms at the local level.

This includes preventing corruption or inefficiency in the allocation and use of DRR-related public funds, particularly for infrastructure such as flood control systems. Safeguards and monitoring mechanisms should be integrated to ensure that investments lead to tangible risk reduction outcomes.

Evaluate the effectiveness of proposed policies and introduce systems that contribute to the implementation of reliable disaster prevention measures.

These five thematic areas are mutually reinforcing and essential to achieving a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable ASEAN Plus Three through disaster risk reduction.

[END]

List of Participants

Cambodia

Khen Seaklay,

Chief of Bureau of the ASEAN Plus Three and East Asia Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia

China

Wang Bo,

Associate professor at the School of Earthquake Engineering and Construction Safety, Institute of Disaster Prevention (IDP) , China Earthquake Administration (CEA)

Indonesia

Triarko Nurlambang,

Co-founder of the Disaster Management Study Program at the University of Indonesia and Coordinator of the SDGs Hub at the University of Indonesia

Japan

[WG members]

ENOMOTO Takahisa,

Emeritus Professor, Kanagawa University

ARAKIDA Masaru,

Senior Fellow, Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC)

MIYANO Michio,

Professor Emeritus at Osaka City University and Visiting

Professor at the Urban Resilience Research Center, Osaka Metropolitan University

SHUMUTA Yoshiharu,

Professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Building engineering, Kanagawa University

[The Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR)]

KIKUCHI Yona

Executive Director and Senior Research Fellow, JFIR, Japan

Korea

Sangsup HA,

Research Professor, Institute for Poverty Alleviation and International Development, Yonsei University

Laos

Phimmasone INSENG,

Deputy Director of ASEAN-ISIS and International Cooperation Division of the Institute of Foreign Affairs

Malaysia

Zayana Zaikariah,

Researcher at Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Myanmar

Khin Maung Zaw,

Joint Secretary, Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies

Philippines

Julius P. Relampagos,

Chair of the Department of Economics at the University of San Carlos

Singapore

Lim Tai Wei,

Adjunct Senior Research Fellow of East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore

Thailand

Paskorn Champrasert,

Vice Director of Sustainable Campus Management Center, Chiang Mai University

Vietnam

NGUYEN Thi Nga Phuong,

Research Fellow, the Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies (IFPSS), Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam

In Alphabetical Order of Country Name