

# ADPC's Reflections on the Main and Cross-cutting Themes of APMCDRR

*Presented by*

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On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), I extend my gratitude to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for inviting ADPC to share its reflections on the main and cross-cutting themes of the upcoming Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR).

As many of you already know, ADPC is an autonomous international organization that works to build the resilience of people and institutions to disasters and climate change impacts in Asia and the Pacific. We are governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees comprising of Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. ADPC works at the national and local level in partnership with governments, development partners, UN agencies, civil society, and the private sector to put resilience at the core of development.

ADPC supports with conviction the three thematic pillars validated by the APP-DRR Forum. The main themes of **investing in resilience and preparedness**; strengthening **shock-proofed infrastructure and systems**; and supporting the **resilience of communities** against disasters and climate change are at the core of our strategies, underpinned by some of the major ongoing projects. Similarly, the cross-cutting themes of **localization**; **inclusion**; and **science, technology and knowledge** are an integral part of ADPC's overall approach to disaster risk reduction and climate resilience in the region.

The relevance and significance of these areas for an action-oriented discussion at the APMCDRR can't be stressed enough in view of the fact that of the 432 disaster events related to natural hazards worldwide last year, Asia was the most severely impacted continent, suffering 40% of all disaster events and half of the total number of deaths.

With less than eight years left to implement the commitments of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we must address the challenges that hinder our progress and build resilient and healthy societies. ADPC aims to support this agenda by promoting regional cooperation and country-level partnerships ensuring a diverse set of expertise to address the overarching needs of different stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific region.

ADPC is supporting the thematic pillars of **“Investing in Resilience and Preparedness”**, **“Shock-proofed Infrastructure and Systems”** and **“Resilient Communities”** through a number of ongoing regional initiatives. For example, under a unique partnership between ADPC, NASA and USAID, SERVIR-Mekong project is helping Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam in using information provided by Earth observing satellites and geospatial technologies to manage climate risk. Some of the key achievements include the development and operationalization of Air Quality Explorer, Rainstorm Tracker, and Crop Yield Information module.

Another flagship initiative of ADPC is a 5-year project on **Climate Adaptation and Resilience or CARE for South Asia**, which supports the region in building resilience to climate change by improving the availability of regional data and knowledge, developing guidelines, tools and capacities, and promoting climate-resilient decisions, policies and investments across key sectors such as agriculture, transport infrastructure, and finance, policy and planning. Supported by the World Bank Group, the project is initially focusing on Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan and directly working with more than 25 Ministries and Departments.

Likewise, the project funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development (Norad) on **“Urban Resilience to Climate Extremes (URCE) in Southeast Asia”** is being implemented in Myanmar and Viet Nam with the goal of strengthening the urban systems and communities to current and emerging climate extremes, disasters, and emergencies.

Two other key initiatives of ADPC supporting the thematic pillars include Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response in South Asia or **PEER** and Strengthening Earthquake Resilience in Bangladesh is known as **SERB**. A major achievement of the PEER is the integration and institutionalization of training courses in the public-sector emergency preparedness and response training systems, annual programs and the budget-making processes. SERB, on the other hand, is assisting the Government of

Bangladesh in enhancing earthquake response skills by building the capacity of emergency response agencies. A number of capacity-building interventions under the project have led to scaling up and institutionalization of hospital-safety interventions in highly vulnerable districts in Bangladesh.

The goal of building **Resilient Communities** through Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Resilience is the Vision of ADPC, and through the Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) mechanism, we strive to promote peer advocacy and the exchange of expertise in disaster and climate risk management. The RCC engages with more than 20 member countries for showcasing good practices and discussing ways to transform policies and frameworks into action. It facilitates the exchange of experiences through networking and collaboration between national, and regional disaster management organizations, academicians, researchers, the media, planners, policymakers, implementers, and the private sector.

As we look closely at the cross-cutting themes, ADPC's Asian Preparedness Partnership or **APP** has been supporting countries in South and South East Asia in a bid to promote localization for preparedness and response through multi-stakeholder partnerships and dialogue between governments, local humanitarian organization networks, and the private sector. Supported by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, APP provides a platform to all the key actors to plan and implement priority actions in disaster preparedness, humanitarian response, and recovery through mobilizing internal resources and external humanitarian funding. With a regional scope, APP is providing country-specific capacity building support to Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

In the area of inclusion, gender equality and human rights, the program on "Building Inclusive and Climate-adaptive Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia-Pacific (**BRDR**)", supported by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), has developed a tool called "Framework for Integrating Rights and Equality (**FIRE**)" which is being tested with the relevant government agencies and civil society organizations in Nepal and the Philippines. Similarly, ADPC has developed a Gender Equality Monitoring Platform or **GEM** under SERVIR-Mekong project, to help address the gender data gap at sub-national level, and ensure accessibility to gender statistics which is critical to examining and tracking changes in gender inequality.

ADPC's efforts to strengthen disaster and climate risk management systems in Asia and the Pacific are anchored in three fundamental principles - **Science, Systems and Applications**. These principles encompass the utilization of scientific knowledge and

technology to better understand risk, the institutionalization of systems to build resilience, as well as the application of risk reduction measures across a range of sectors and different national contexts.

In this backdrop, ADPC is supporting and promoting innovative and disruptive technologies solutions for DRR and climate resilience in the region. For example, under the CARE for South Asia project, the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has provided funds for a component that is pilot-testing innovations to reduce disaster and climate risk and build communities resilience in South Asia. Of the two streams, the **TechEmerge Resilience India Challenge** is offering solutions that leverage disruptive technologies such as AI, IoT, drones, 3D printing, and digital platforms, etc. Currently, seven solutions are being deployed by the Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) for preparedness and response amidst challenges posed by COVID-19. The other stream of **Climate Innovation Challenge (CIC)** has crowdsourced innovative and disruptive technology solutions from around the world for resilience in South Asia. Altogether, 16 needs-based solutions are being developed for the different sectors in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The **APP Social Innovation Grand Challenge** of ADPC seeks to identify and support innovations from local actors in the APP countries. The solutions concentrate on addressing disaster risk management challenges focused on risk communications, early warning, and emergency response.

And last but not the least, ADPC's South Asia Regional or **SAR-Climate Knowledge Hub** will host information and knowledge on a range of climate change topics and sectors of South Asia and it will serve as a dependable information resource for interested stakeholders. SAR-Climate will be a comprehensive, accessible, and intelligible knowledge hub covering all the South Asian countries, where users will be able to easily access information and data using effective and fast-searching functions.

In supporting and endorsing each of the thematic pillars and the cross-cutting themes validated by the APP-DRR Forum, ADPC is committed to playing its role for the safety and well-being of communities through regional cooperation, policy engagement and the delivery of practical solutions for disaster risk reduction and climate resilience in Asia and the Pacific region.