

Section D: EVALUATION

1. Overall evaluation of national disaster mitigation programmes including, but not limited to, those initiated after IDNDR and achievements up to now

Japan has been placed under extremely delicate land conditions with respect to its ability to withstand damage from meteorological, geographical, and topological characteristics, and the nation has suffered many times from the occurrence of heavy rains, blizzards, earthquakes, tsunami, volcanic eruptions and other natural disasters, and these disasters have wrought tremendous damage to lives and property. These experiences have led the government, regional government enterprises and public corporations to act as a focus for the planned promotion of a great many measures to counter this threat even before the beginning of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and they have made steady progress in achieving results.

The Japanese government has for some time now been creating and improving upon a series of five-year plans through its Basic Plan for Research and Development Related to the Prevention of Natural Disasters, its Basic Plan for the Prevention of Natural Disasters, and the Project Plan for Measures Against the Structuralization of Urban Disasters, together with coastal projects, organizations for the creation of urban parks and other amenities, organizations for the building of sewers, flood control projects, the steep terrain landslide measures project, and the mountain control project, and in conjunction with these measures the government has steadily continued its efforts to establish and implement all sorts of procedures by which to promote projects related to the prevention of damage from natural disasters. Also, in relation to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the Government Headquarters for IDNDR decided in November of 1989 on a Basic Policy for Promoting Activities for IDNDR, thus indicating the vitality with which the government is proceeding with activities related to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

Furthermore, regional government enterprises and public corporations have created regional disaster prevention plans and other measures and other specified public organizations have created natural disaster work plans, with individual organizations working to proceed with all sorts of projects related to the prevention of damage from natural disasters.

However, one can also see many aspects in which modern society has become increasingly susceptible to damage from natural disasters and its influences with uni-polar concentration of activities and advanced social structures, particularly so in regions with increasing levels of urbanization where, reflecting changes in land use and urban structure, damage to the lifestyle of residents or business activity occurs as a result of the severing of lifeline or network systems that comes with landslides occurring in residential areas located on steep terrain near urban centers, water damage resulting from the flooding of rivers in small to mid-sized cities, and

fires in the upper stories of highrise buildings. While on the other hand there also exist a number of regions in Japan where one may see drastically decreasing levels of population and business activity, the effect of increases in the average age of the population of these areas helps to contribute to make these regions highly susceptible to damage as well. And finally, there are also areas which, although not subjected to direct damage, are subject to the secondary and tertiary damage that spreads in a chain reaction from damage centers and which now shows a clear tendency of ever growing effects.

It is for these reasons that an effort to promote measures to guard against natural disasters remains as an issue important for Japan as it ever was before, and it is necessary that we continue to consider the changes in the economic life of our society to increase our efforts to promote the creation of comprehensive natural disaster measures while reviewing the appropriate plans and systems needed for their implementation.

2. Review of the IDNDR

In Japan, the Government Headquarters for IDNDR, headed by the Prime Minister, was established as part of the National Land Agency in April of 1989. At its first conference in November of the same year, the headquarters decided upon the Basic Policy for Promoting Activities for IDNDR, which held as its main objectives (1) the promotion of international cooperation and international exchange, (2) the promotion of measures to guard against natural disasters in Japan, and (3) the promotion of activities to proselytize the mission and to educate the people of Japan and the world of its nature.

In conjunction with this basic policy, the Government Headquarters and all of the ministries and agencies of which it is composed have energetically implemented activities related to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and with the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction as a triggering incentive, they have continued to work on activities to proselytize the mission and to educate the people of Japan and the world of its nature through international cooperation such as official development assistance in the field of natural disaster prevention, international exchange through the holding of international conferences and symposiums, and the production of educational materials for use in public relations and training activities.

Japanese aid in the field of natural disaster prevention is growing significantly, as evidenced by its rise from a level of 42,796 million yen in the fiscal year 1990 to 53,802 million yen in the fiscal year 1991. The Promotion Headquarters has sponsored the International Conference on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction in 1990, the International Earthquake Summit in 1991, the 1992 Chiba International Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, and the 1993 Aichi/Nagoya International Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, all serving as evidence of the extent to which they have worked to promote international exchange and the exchange of information such as knowledge related to natural disaster prevention and experiences of the same, and Japan has also cooperated as the host country for the 1994 World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction.

Japan is one of the major contributors to the proposal for the declaration of this decade, and as an advanced nation in the field of natural disaster prevention and as a nation capable of contributing to the world, an allout effort to promote this decade is expected of the nation. In the latter five years of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction the nation must continue to work along the lines of the Basic Policy to both spread the awareness of the importance of this decade throughout the world and to utilize the experience it has gained from a variety of damage from natural disasters in the past so that it may, based on the knowhow it has accumulated in the field of disaster prevention, both continue to further proceed with international cooperation and international exchange and to promote the creation of

measures to guard against natural disasters in Japan so as the creation an environment in which all the citizens of the nation may live in safety and free of fear.