

# MANAGING DISASTERS

## IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC :

A Review of  
Lessons Learned  
During  
the International Decade for  
Natural Disaster Reduction  
( IDNDR )

Natural disasters cost lives and money. Over the past twenty years, it has been estimated that over 80% of fatalities occurred in Asia and the Pacific. Major earthquakes in Iran, India, the Philippines and Japan, have claimed



Before 1987, one disaster was registered with losses in excess of US \$1 billion. By 1998, that figure has increased at least tenfold. In 1998,

property damage from floods alone amounted to over US \$27 billion in Bangladesh, China and Vietnam.



Natural disasters can not be prevented, but their devastating effects can be minimized. In Bangladesh, timely action to a cyclone limited the number



of deaths to about 100 persons ; while a cyclone similar intensity in 1991 claimed 140,000 lives. In the Philippines, lives were saved with the timely prediction of the



Pinatubo volcanic eruption and a warning and communications system that allowed 80,000 people to be evacuated.

In Japan, lava flow channels have helped to reduce damage to property. Hong Kong reduced losses to landslides also through monitoring hazard-prone areas. To face prevailing and emerging risk in the future, the challenge is to disseminate these experiences as widely as possible.

