

Japan's Engagement in HA/DR in the Asia Pacific
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The Asia-Pacific is the region that has been greatly affected by natural disasters. According to the International Disaster Database EM-DAT, the risk of natural disasters including earthquake, tsunami, typhoon/cyclone in the Asia-Pacific is much higher than other regions.

The countries of the Asia-Pacific have been struggling to cope with the risks caused by natural disasters: strengthening self-help response capabilities and through bilateral and/or multilateral cooperation.

Japan has been developing a new regional role to deal with HADR especially since the 1990s. Japan has engaged in relief missions in Asia-Pacific, provided training programs to cultivate self-reliant capabilities of the countries of the region and conducted joint exercises to promote capacity-building efforts bilaterally and multilaterally through regional institutions such as ASEAN Regional Forum.

The Self-Defense Forces(SDF) have been actively engaged in the HADR missions overseas recently. Responding to the 2004-2005 Asia tsunami, Japan dispatched more than 1,000 SDF(Self-Defense Forces) personnel. This was the first experience for the three wings(Land, Air and Naval Forces) of the SDF to be engaged in the relief operation overseas in a coordinated way. Japan was engaged in the relief operation to respond to the Haiyan cyclone disaster in the Philippines in 2013, by dispatching a large number of SDF personnel.

The Great East Japan Earthquake disaster hit Japan on March 11 2011 played the catalyst role for the Japanese decision-makers and people to further recognize the importance of HADR, especially the importance to enhance regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. The current Abe administration is pursuing a "Proactive Contribution to Peace" policy. Under the policy, Japan's contribution to HADR is one of the priority areas for regional cooperation. Indeed, PM Abe announced the "Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction" at the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction in March this year. Japan pledged to provide \$4 billion for disaster risk reduction and train 40,000 government officials and others over the next 4 years.

The presentation will address the evolving Japan's engagement in regional HADR in the Asia-Pacific, challenges and new tasks. New tasks will include Japan's contribution to nuclear reactors safety, given Asia's growing interest in nuclear power and Japan's tragedy in Fukushima.