



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
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PRESS RELEASE

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Kobe City (Hyogo Prefecture) at center of growing international focus on disaster risk reduction

The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat is opening a new office, the “ISDR Hyogo Office” in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, to work more closely with Japanese institutions that have extensive experience and expertise in disaster risk reduction.

Hyogo is a natural choice as a new location for an ISDR secretariat office, as it is a region at the forefront of research, education and international cooperation on disaster risk reduction.

Hyogo went through a dramatic recovery process after the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake (the Kobe Earthquake) that killed more than 6,400 people in 1995, and which is considered one of the most devastating and costly earthquakes in history.

Hyogo is also now the site of the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution, which includes a world-renowned museum on earthquake education, founded by the new 2007 Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction Laureate Professor Yoshiaki Kawata. The museum receives thousands of Japanese citizens and international visitors every year, who come to witness the lessons learned from the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake.

Hyogo also hosted the January 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction, where more than 168 Governments adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action: a ten-year plan to make nations and communities more resilient to disasters.

The ISDR secretariat hopes that its Hyogo Office will stimulate more collaboration and exchange to further implement the Hyogo Framework for Action, with and among Governments, existing institutions and centres working on disaster risk reduction in Japan and East Asia. The ISDR secretariat currently has an office in Bangkok, Thailand, and in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

The new ISDR Hyogo Office (Address: 5th floor, Hitomiraikan Building, 1-5-2, Wakinohamakaigan-dori, Chuo-ku, Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture, 651-0073) will be inaugurated on Sunday, 14 October, in the presence of Mr. Toshizo Ido, Governor of the Hyogo Prefecture, and representatives from the Japanese Government, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), the

International Recovery Platform Secretariat, United Nations University (UNU), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), International Recovery Platform Secretariat, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Complementing the inauguration, the ISDR secretariat, the Hyogo Prefecture, UNIC, UN/OCHA and ADRC will also organize a public awareness event: “Human Security and Disaster Risk Reduction” at 15:00-17:00 on 14 October at Hyogo House (Address: 4-4-1, Shimo-yamate dori, Chuo-ku, Kobe, Hyogo), featuring a photo exhibition on the theme of Human Security.

“Japan has a lot to offer to the world in the field of disaster risk reduction,” says Salvano Briceño, Director of the ISDR. “As the country is regularly affected by a wide range of natural hazards – earthquakes, cyclones, floods, tornadoes, volcanoes, and avalanches – Japanese technology and policy on disaster risk reduction is highly developed, especially given their persistent historical efforts to tackle those disasters. The Japanese people have learnt how to live with hazards and have acquired valuable expertise on reducing risk and vulnerability that can be beneficial to other countries.”