



## REPORT

### **ASIA-PACIFIC MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (APMCDRR) 2022** Brisbane, Australia

Asia Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management (A-PAD)

#### **OVERVIEW**

APMCDRR was held in Brisbane, Australia from the 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. The conference theme was; ***From Crisis to Resilience: Transforming the Asia-Pacific Region's future through Disaster Risk Reduction***. 3500+ delegates from over 40 countries discussed ways to reduce disaster, save lives, minimize economic losses and ensure that no one was left behind. An option to connect virtually was available. The APMCDRR is held after four years since the last AMCDRR.

Whilst this is Ministerial level conference those linked to DRR such as the civil society, academia, private sector and local communities.

The APMCDRR's key core pillars were;

- Investing in Resilience and Preparedness
- Shock-proofed Infra-structure and Systems
- Resilient Communities

Three 75 minute plenary in respect of the core pillars were featured. 11 moderated panel discussions as working sessions were curated on key challenges and lessons learned. 10 spotlight events highlighting a series of cross cutting themes focused on solutions-oriented case studies and best practice examples were discussed. 19 partner events running parallel to the main conference sessions were held.

An "ignite stage", a platform designed to inspire and engage for 15 minutes each (Ted Talk model) was set up. 45 such ignite sessions were held. Seven 'learning labs' of 90 minutes duration each, to share good practices and innovative approaches for implementing the Sendai Framework were held.

A 'Market Place' was set-up which was the heart of the conference to meet, connect and collaborate. Over 60 exhibitors with meeting hubs, ignite stage and displays enabled the delegates to continuously engage with each other.

#### **A-PAD REPRESENTATION**

A-PAD was represented by Mr. Hashim Firzan Chief Operating Officer at A-PAD. Arrangement facilitated by Ms HyunSook Yun for logistical support was excellent and timely. A word of appreciation to her.

COO's stay in Brisbane was from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 due to the flight schedule available. As such he was unable to attend the concluding day (22<sup>nd</sup> September) of the event. However, required, plenary, workshops sessions, panel discussions and meetings were selectively attended to maximize coordination, networking and knowledge sharing.

The opportunity allowed for the first time to attend an Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference which brought a very diverse knowledge in line with best practices of developed nations. The previous ministerial conference was limited to Asia only.

## SESSIONS ATTENDED

The event had many parallel sessions and a selective number of events were attended in line with A-PAD objectives. Events attended were;

### Day 1 – Monday September 19

- Registration
- **Partner Event** – Sendai Framework Midterm Review – Challenges and way Forward
- **UN Stakeholder Group** – Private Sector; Business and Industry
- **Partner Event** – Disaster Displacement in Asia and Pacific
- **Partner Event** – From Science to Action: Risk Informing DRR and Development in Asia Pacific using displacement data.
- Meeting with CBI Colleagues.

### Day 2 – Tuesday September 20

- **Welcome Ceremony** – Speeches by Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk – Premier of Queensland; Ms Mami Mizutori – Special Representative of the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction; and Hon Murray Watt – Australian Minister for Emergency Management and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- **Plenary 1** – Risk Informed Investments and Scaling Up Financing for DRR.
- **Working Session** – Governance and Stakeholder Engagement for resilient Infrastructure Services (half a session)
- **Spotlight** – Scaling Up DRR in fragile and Conflict Contexts (half a session).
- **Learning Lab** – School Safety program towards Culture of Disaster Prevention in Korea (1/3 session).
- **Partner Event** – Mainstream Innovation: Empower Youth Leadership for DRR (half a session)
- **Learning Lab** – Gender Considerations in DRR
- **Working Session** – Early warning, Early Action – Reducing Disaster Deaths and Losses.
- **Partner Event** – The Asian Local Leaders Forum for Disaster Resilience.

### Day 3 – Wednesday September 21

- **Ignite Session** – CBI Vanuatu (A-PAD SL Featured with other CBI Platforms)
- **Working Session** – Resilience Building for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and the private Sector.
- **Partner Event** – Technology and Innovation for Disaster Resilience through PPP and multi-sectoral and Regional partnerships.
- **Working Session** - Building Resilience through Food Security.
- **Partner Event** - Climate Risks and early Warning Systems (CREWS) for Pacific Island Nations: Droughts, Tropical Cyclones and Floods.
- **SAARC Disaster Management Centre** – Fostering Dialogue for Accelerated Action in the SAARC Region

## NETWORKING

The event which had over 3500 delegates in varied sectors was a hub for networking, especially with the inclusion of Pacific Region. Being a Ministerial Conference, presence of governmental officials far exceeded the other sectors. Civil society, private sector and the academia were well represented which allowed for effective networking and understanding.

A few important networking is as shown below;

- **Hon Murray Watt – Australian Minister for Emergency Management and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry** – The opportunity to have a brief discussion with the Minister and discussing he economic emergency (Sri Lanka) relating to the conference was a highlight.



*With the Australian Minister for Emergency Management and Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry*

- **Private Sector Stakeholder Meeting** – In discussion with ARISE Japan / India / Philippines representatives. DRI is a consultancy agency who offer in-depth courses from introductory to Masters Level and other certifications. 93 percent of all 2016 Fortune 100 companies employ DRI certified professionals.



With Mr Masato Takamatsu – President Tourism Resilience Japan

Rod Crowder – DRI Australia and New Zealand

- **Government Representative of Kiribati and World Bank** - Discussion on the private sector model in DM with government of Kiribati (Pacific Island), Petero Manufolau, the CEO Tourism Authority of Kiribati and Mr Ming Zhang, Practice Manager, Urban Development, Disaster Risk Management and Lanka – World Bank.



Mr Petero Manufolau-CEO, Tourism Authority of Kiribati



Mr Ming Zhang of World Bank – Indonesia

- **Civil Society Representatives** – Civil Society representatives were met and issues related to disaster resilience and economic emergencies were discussed. The need to incorporate economic emergencies caused due to disasters, mismanagement and conflicts for inclusion in the DRR agenda was agreed upon.



Manu Gupta – ADRRN and SEEDS India



With SPHERE India Team

- **Resilience, Search and Rescue** – The Australian Government has a recovery unit following disasters which is called Recovery and Resilience. A very agile unit which works with communities not only to recover following a disaster but most importantly to be resilient in the face of disasters. It's a continual community engagement program led by the government. The unique feature was the community resilience incorporated with recovery. Best practices were shared and many learnings from the multiple disasters in Queensland.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Unit has teams trained in multi-disciplinary activities. Firefighters with swift water search and rescue proficiency with continual training in Swiftwater rescue were many. These units are trained in level I and II. Level one training adaptable to communities are carried out by the fire fighters in empowering first responders. Sharing knowledge and curriculum of trainings were discussed.



*Louise Robertson and Jade Mckennariey*



*With the Rescue Team of Queensland*

- **SAARC Disaster Management Unit** – On the request of the Government of Sri Lanka A-PAD represented Sri Lanka at the SAARC DM meeting titled ‘Fostering Dialogue for Accelerated Action in the SAARC Region’. Government representatives of SAARC countries were present. Outcome of meeting was shared with the Ministry of Defence, Disaster Management Unit Sri Lanka.



- **CBI – Connecting Business Initiative** – Five country representatives from the CBI attended the conference from Philippines, Fiji, Vanuatu and Indonesia. A-PAD Sri Lanka being the fifth representative. A-PAD was highlighted in the discussions and events of CBI of its strength in the Asia Pacific with special reference to the Tonga response.

## LEARNINGS

Having attended AMCDRR’s previously, the Brisbane APMCDRR which was inclusive of the Pacific Region had many learnings;

- The theme and the settings of the event was very convenient which provided better networking, connect, collaborate and share best practices.
- A more effective and constructive engagements in being better prepared for disasters – the understanding of being proactive.
- The huge potential for collective engagement with the 15 Independent Pacific Island nations (Northern Mariana Islands, Federate States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna). In addition, there are tens of thousands of islands, islets and atolls in the Pacific.

- Though the conference was government heavy representation, the private sector engagement could be very effectively introduced for a better understanding. The need for a well-planned engagement targeting the actual needs of the governments.
- Private Sector engagements in the plenary and many working sessions had examples narrated by speakers. However, the capacity and the engagement of A-PAD Platforms and the many stories A-PAD would have had a better impact.
- Understanding the challenges and the potential of developed countries in Disaster Management. The Australian Government showcased their strength in the perspective of a developed country. The investment for DRR by the Government and engagement with the community. The level of commitment preparedness.
- There is more room for Private sector and Government coordination in Disaster Management. The reluctance of governments to engage with private sector still prevails. This is an opportunity for A-PAD.
- Climate Change is real and its impacts are devastating.
- Investment by Governments towards DRR is not sufficient at all. Governments are not prioritizing DRR investments as mentioned by UNDRR.

## CONCLUSION

APMCDRR hosted by the Government of Australia was timely wakeup call for those in the Asia Pacific region. The pandemic slowed down engagements and development but gave rise to unplanned development easing of COVID-19 restrictions. The impact of economic losses due to the pandemic, especially for the governments and private sector further neglects investments on DRR whilst other priorities take precedence. The engagement potential with the island countries in the Pacific is an opportunity. A win-win situation for A-PAD in establishing its footprint in the Pacific and for those islands to benefit from A-PAD experiences and networking.

October 2022

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