Abstract

Asia and the Pacific is the most disaster prone region in the world. A person living in the region is almost twice as likely to be affected by a disaster as a person living in Africa, almost six times as likely compared with Latin America and the Caribbean, and 30 times more likely than a person living in North America or Europe. In 2013 alone, natural disasters in Asia and the Pacific affected more than 57 million people and caused US $128 billion in damages. Rapid economic growth and population expansion over the coming decades, along with the impacts of climate change, will increase the exposure and vulnerability of the region to disasters. As all sectors of the economy are disrupted by disasters and the hard-earned development gains are destroyed, it is essential that effective disaster risk reduction measures are integrated into development plans and poverty reduction strategies.

On the other hand, technological innovations in the modern world provide unique opportunities to build resilience and deepen connectivity amongst each other. Experiences from the surrounding region and around the world have proven that disaster prevention and preparedness, enabled by communication and spatial data infrastructure (SDI), can be far more effective and less costly than ever before. Spatial infrastructures have proven highly effective in disaster monitoring, early warning and emergency response efforts.

Despite the enormous advancement in expanding regional connection through information and communication technologies, Asia and the Pacific is still the most divided region in the world. Hence our efforts should be focused on strengthening regional cooperation for sustainable development and our approach has to be based on multidisciplinary analysis and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

The intergovernmental platform of the spatial data infrastructure has to be provided for member states to address natural disaster challenges, discuss and take up regional disaster risk reduction strategies that are integrated with an inclusive, sustainable development agenda for the region. Technical assistance, capacity building, developing frameworks of regional cooperation and regional advisory services, facilitation on regional cooperation towards disaster risk reduction is a must to strengthen co-operation mechanism in order to facilitate the expansion of benefits to other countries in the region, predominantly countries with special requirements.

Keywords: space technology, disaster risk reduction, coordination mechanism