

Outline of ICHARM activities for preventing and mitigating flood related disasters in the world

Akira Terakawa[1]

[1] Deputy Director, ICHARM, Public Works Research Institute

Based on the analysis of the data from EMDAT, the widely known database published by Ruben Catholic University in Belgium, the number of occurrences of water related disasters account for nearly 80% of all natural disasters and shows increasing trend, one third of which are in Asian continent. The rapidly increasing outbreaks of flood disasters can be partly explained by the explosive augmentation of population and concentration in urban areas, which is remarkable especially in developing countries mainly in Asia, Africa, and South America. Effective countermeasures are behind the population pressure in these region, so people living in urban areas, poor people especially, have no choice but to live in areas such as flood plains that are vulnerable to flood disasters, consequently increasing damage potential of the region. In addition, global warming caused by greenhouse effect might change the regional distribution of precipitation as well as the frequency and intensity of severe storms, which would worsen the situation.

International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICARM) was established in March 2006 under the auspices of UNESCO hosted by the Public Works Research Institute, in order to promote international collaborative effort to cope with the situation. ICHARM conducts research, training and information networking activities in a combined manner so as to prevent and mitigate water related disasters in the world, focusing, at the initial stage, on flood related disasters, which is to be briefly outlined in the presentation.