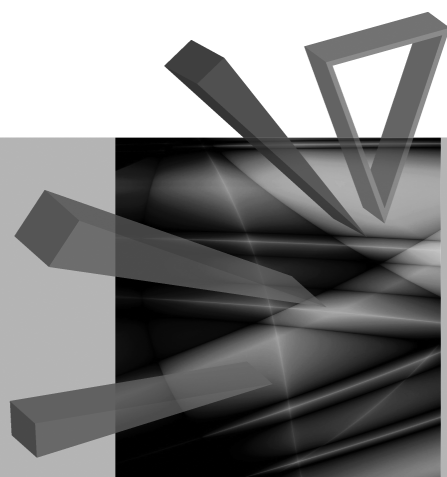


Faces of Competitiveness in Asia Pacific



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THE REGIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE FIELD OF COUNTERACTING THE RESULTS OF NATURAL DISASTERS AS THE FACTOR OF INCREASING THE COMPETITIVENESS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Summary: This article describes a concept of the international co-operation and its meaning in the counteracting the effects of natural catastrophes. The results of these phenomena are often death or injuries of many people, destroying the public and private property. The regional co-operation in the field of preventing the negative consequences of the natural disasters contributes (indirectly) to the increase in the competitiveness of the Asia-Pacific Region.

Keywords: natural disaster, Asia-Pacific, competitiveness.

1. Introduction

The International Institute for Management Development (IMD) prepares every year the IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook. IMD distinguishes four main competitiveness factors: the economic performance, the infrastructure, the government efficiency, and the business efficiency. Each factor has five sub-factors. One of them in the group “infrastructure” is “health and environment”. In this group there are criteria such as: sustainable development, healthy life expectancy, human development index.

The group “infrastructure” concerns the natural disasters which gained in significance in the last years. According to various sources the number of these phenomena in the world increases. The natural catastrophes may cause damages such as loss of life, injury, disease, and other negative impacts on people’s physical, mental, and social well-being, including the damage of property, the destruction of estates, services, social and economic disruption and environmental degradation. The hazards that are potentially caused by the natural disasters are: biological, geological, and hydrometeorological.

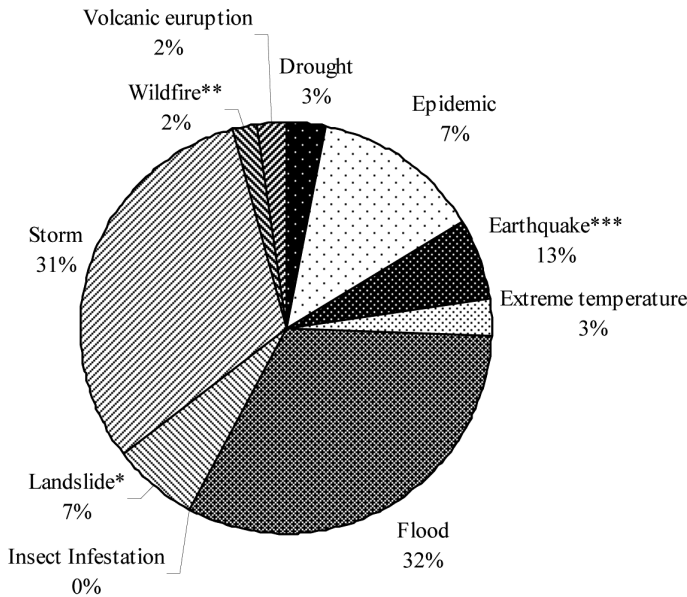
One of the most vulnerable to the natural disasters region in the world is Asia-Pacific. The Asia-Pacific region is enclosed by the “Ring of Fire”, where there often

occur tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcano eruptions. The other natural disasters that mostly affect the states of the region are storms, floods, and mass movements.

The aim of the article is to describe the concept of international co-operation and its meaning in counteracting the effects of natural catastrophes. The results of these phenomena often are death or injuries of many people, destroying the public, and private property. The regional co-operation in the field of preventing the negative consequences of natural disasters leads (indirectly) to the increasing of the competitiveness of the Asia-Pacific region.

2. Exposure to natural disasters in the region

The occurrence of the natural disasters in the area of Asia-Pacific in years 1900-2011 is presented in Figure 1. As we can see in Figure 1, the natural disasters that occurred most often are floods, storms, and earthquakes. The floods and storms are hydrometeorological disasters. The earthquakes are geological disasters.

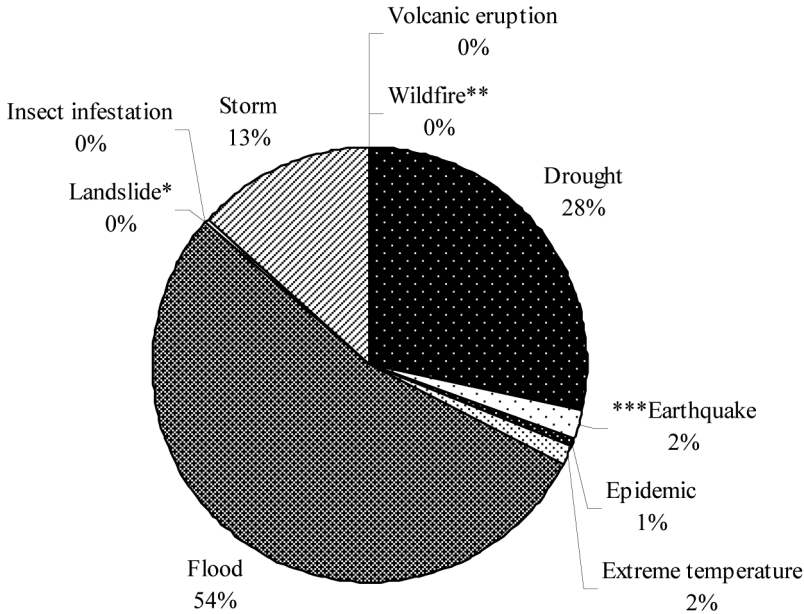


* Landslides and other mass movements; ** Fires caused by the natural factors (e.g. the lightning strike); *** Earthquakes and the seismic activity.

Figure 1. The occurrence of natural disasters in the Asia-Pacific region in years 1900-2011, according to the type of natural disaster

Source: Emergency Events Database: The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance/Centre of Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (EM-DAT: OFDA/CRED), Catholic University of Leuven, Brussels, <http://www.emdat.be> (date of access: 30.04.2011).

The percentage share of the natural disasters in the affecting of people in the examined region in years 1900-2011 is presented in Figure 2. As we can see, the highest number of persons were affected by floods and droughts causing deaths, injuries, depriving people of their properties.



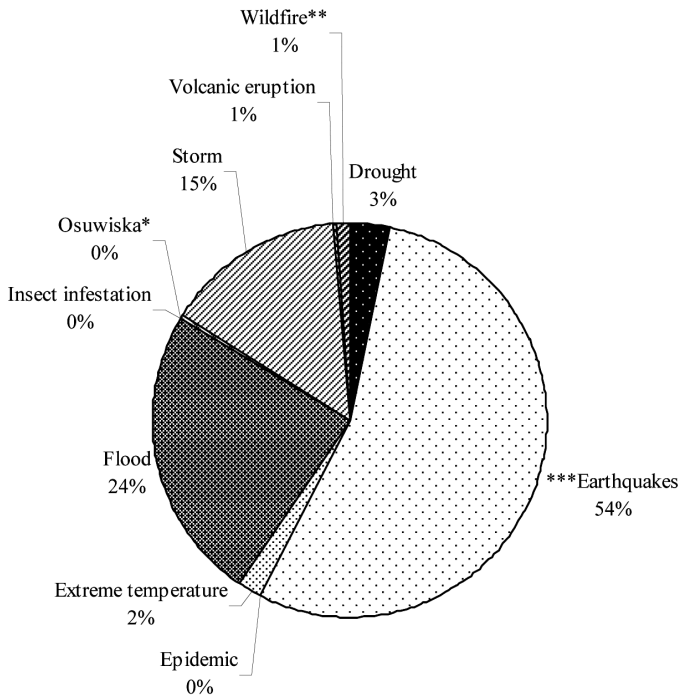
* Landslides and the other mass movements; ** Fires caused by the natural factors (e.g. the lightning strike); *** Earthquakes and the seismic activity.

Figure 2. The percentage share of the natural disasters in affecting people in the Asia Pacific region in years 1900-2011, according to the type of natural disaster

Source: Emergency Events Database: The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance/Centre of Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (EM-DAT: OFDA/CRED), Catholic University of Leuven, Brussels, <http://www.emdat.be> (date of access: 30.04.2011).

The percentage share of natural disasters in the damages caused in Asia-Pacific in the examined period is presented in Figure 3. As we can see, the highest damages were caused by earthquakes and floods.

In the area of Asia-Pacific in years 1900-2011 the occurrence of natural disasters and their effects is presented in Table 1. In the mentioned period there were registered 1723 floods, which affected over 3 billion people and caused almost 300 million USD damages. Total number of the natural disasters in years 1900-2011 in the examined area exceeded 5000 events, affected nearly 6 billion people and caused over 1.2 billion USD damages.



* Landslides and the other mass movements; ** Fires caused by the natural factors (e.g. the lightning strike); *** Earthquakes and the seismic activity.

Figure 3. The percentage share of the natural disasters in the damages caused in the Asia-Pacific region in years 1900-2011, according to the type of natural disaster

Source: Emergency Events Database: The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance/Centre of Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (EM-DAT: OFDA/CRED), Catholic University of Leuven, Brussels, <http://www.emdat.be> (date of access: 30.04.2011).

Table 1. The occurrence of natural disasters in the Asia-Pacific region and their effects in years 1900-2011, according to the type of natural disaster

Type of natural disaster	Number of events	Total affected	Damages in '000 USD (indexed to 2011)
1	2	3	4
Drought	167	1 679 313 664	42 442 865
Earthquake*	708	132 341 849	662 521 793
Epidemic	350	26 090 160	0
Extreme temperature	135	89 644 176	23 930 627
Flood	1723	3 176 897 920	295 604 519
Insect infestation	0	200	120 925

1	2	3	4
Landslide**	357	8 052 817	3 243 382
Storm	1678	788 717 362	181 272 834
Volcanic eruption	114	3 261 139	818 351
Wildfire***	115	3 372 985	14 526 344
Total	5347	5 907 692 272	1 224 481 640

* Landslides and the other mass movements ;** Fires caused by the natural factors (e.g. the lightning strike); *** Earthquakes and the seismic activity

Source: Emergency Events Database: The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance/Centre of Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (EM-DAT: OFDA/CRED), Catholic University of Leuven, Brussels, <http://www.emdat.be> (date of access: 30.04.2011).

3. International co-operation in the region in the field of counteracting natural disasters

In order to counteract the results of natural disasters, the countries of the Asia-Pacific region co-operate at the international level. The particular states are members of the regional international organizations, such as:

- Asian Development Bank (ADB);
- Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC);
- Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC);
- Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC);
- South Asian Association For Regional Cooperation Disaster Management Centre (SAARC);
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP).

The first of the aforementioned institutions has approved the Disaster and Emergency Assistance Policy (DEAP) on 1 June 2004. The DEAP is a comprehensive policy encompassing natural, technological, and environmental hazards; health emergencies; and various conflicts on the national level. The Policy establishes a series of objectives focusing on:¹

- supporting ADB's activities by developing partnerships;
- providing rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance after a disaster took place;
- strengthening the support for reducing disaster risk in developing countries (members of ADB).

This policy is realized by accepting the Action Plan by ADB, which develops an approach that will embed disaster risk management (DRM) within ADB's

¹ *ADB and Disaster Risk Management*, <http://www.adb.org/Disaster/glance.asp> (date of access: 30.04.2011).

operational practices. A practical way for ADB to execute the Action Plan is an investment in sustainable development.

The second organization is the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC). It was created in 1999 and it is a non-profit organization supporting the development of safe communities and sustainable development, through implementing programs and projects that reduce the impact of disasters upon countries and communities in Asia-Pacific; this is done by means of:²

- developing and enhancing sustainable institutional disaster risk management and supporting the development and implementation of government policies;
- facilitating the dissemination and exchange of disaster risk management expertise, experience and information;
- raising awareness and enhancing disaster risk management knowledge and skills.

An example of the implementation of government policy is establishing, in 2005, the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia in the co-operation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).³

The next institution is the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC). It was set up in 1998. Its mission and goals are:⁴

- building safe communities,
- creating a society where sustainable development is possible,
- enhancing disaster resilience of the member countries.

Executing its mission and aims, ADRC is co-operating with global organizations such as the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) or the World Meteorological Organization.

The fourth institution is Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC). It is the premier forum for facilitating economic growth, co-operation, trade, and investment in the Asia-Pacific region.⁵ The APEC has the human security agenda called Task Force for Emergency Preparedness (TFEP). It plays a constructive role in enabling the region to prepare better for and respond to emergencies and disasters by helping to reduce the risk of disasters and building business and community resilience. The APEC countries strengthen their capacity to mitigate, prepare for, and respond to

² *About ADPC*, <http://www.adpc.net/v2007/About%20Us/Default-Aboutus.asp> (date of access: 30.04.2011).

³ ADPC, *Establishing a Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia*, ADPC, Bangkok 2008, p. 1.

⁴ *About ADRC*, <http://www.adrc.asia/aboutus/index.html> (date of access: 30.04.2011).

⁵ *About APEC*, http://www.apec.org/apec/about_apec.html (date of access: 30.04.2011).

emergencies and disasters by sharing expertise and collaborating on emergency preparedness issues.⁶

The next of the aforementioned organizations is the South Asia Association of Regional Co-operation Disaster Management Centre (SDMC). It was created in October 2006. It provides advice policy connected with strategic learning, research, and training. It also manages the system of development and exchange of information for the effective disaster risk reduction and management in South Asia.⁷ To achieve its own policy, SMDC executes the following strategies:⁸

- assisting the national centers of disaster management of member countries in order to develop appropriate models of network research and training institutions;
- creating the networks of national centers of disaster management along with the concerned regional and international organizations;
- developing a network of institutions to facilitate quick acquisition, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information, data and knowledge on disaster management including links with approved real-time data providers;
- using the information and communication technologies to develop a virtual resource centre for disaster management in South Asia.

The last of described organizations is the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). It is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. It carries out work e.g. in the area of Information and Communications Technology and Disaster Risk Reduction (IDD).⁹

The one of the major pillars in IDD Division is the Disaster Risk Reduction Section. The major objectives of DRR section are:¹⁰

- multi-hazard assessment, preparedness, early warning, and response to disaster risk;
- policy options and strategies on multi-hazard disaster risk reduction and mitigation;
- regional co-operation mechanism for disaster risk management, including space and other technical support systems.

4. Conclusion

Asia-Pacific is one of the regions with the highest probability of occurrence of the natural disasters. It is due to its geographical position and the process of accumulation

⁶ *Emergency Preparedness Working Group*, http://www.apec.org/apec/apec_groups/som_committee_on_economic/working_groups/emergency_preparedness.html (date of access: 30.04.2011).

⁷ *SAARC Disaster Management Center – SDMC*, <http://saarc-sdmc.nic.in/home.asp>, 30.04.2011.

⁸ *SAARC Disaster Management Center – Networking Strategies*, http://saarc-sdmc.nic.in/sdmc_strategies.asp (date of access: 30.04.2011).

⁹ *UN ESCAP. General description*, <http://www.unescap.org/about/index.asp> (date of access: 27.06.2010).

¹⁰ *Disaster Risk Reduction (DDR) Section*, <http://www.unescap.org/idd/drs.asp> (date of access: 27.06.2010).

of risks posed by both levels of vulnerability, and the increasing number of natural disasters. The results of these phenomena are often deaths or injuries of many people, destroying the public and private property.

The states of Asia-Pacific participate in the regional organizations such as: Asian Development Bank (ADB); Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC); Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC); Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC); South Asian Association For Regional Co-operation Disaster Management Centre (SAARC); United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP).

The regional co-operation of the countries in the field of preventing the negative consequences of the natural disasters increases (indirectly) the IMD criteria such as: sustainable development, healthy life expectancy, and human development index. It boosts the IMD sub-factor “infrastructure” and leads to increasing the competitiveness of the Asia-Pacific region.

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WSPÓŁPRACA REGIONALNA W ZAKRESIE PRZECIWDZIAŁANIA SKUTKOM KATASTROF NATURALNYCH JAKO CZYNNIK WZROSTU KONKURENCYJNOŚCI W REGIONIE AZJI I PACYFIKU

Streszczenie: W artykule przedstawiono międzynarodową współpracę i jej znaczenie w przeciwdziałaniu skutkom katastrof naturalnych. Konsekwencjami tych zjawisk są często śmierć i obrażenia wielu ludzi, zniszczenia mienia publicznego i prywatnego. Współpraca regionalna w zakresie przeciwdziałania skutkom katastrof naturalnych prowadzi (pośrednio) do zwiększenia konkurencyjności regionu Azji i Pacyfiku.