



Ten Years of ICHARM and Expectations for the Future

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I would like to offer my congratulations to ICHARM on its 10th anniversary.

Positive evaluations that ICHARM has earned for its international contributions as a global center in water disaster risk management over the past ten years are surely the fruits of the enormous effort exerted by those involved in its activities, and are also indicative of the high level of water-related disaster research conducted in Japan, which of course makes us very proud.

There are, however, issues that must be resolved in order to ensure further progress. The first issue has to do with disaster prevention infrastructures in developing nations, which are undergoing improvements. Taking this into consideration, those nations need to study investigative research that involves extensive examinations regarding the main issues of water-related disaster risk management. The main issues include how disaster prevention infrastructures should be established and improved, how their effectiveness should be assessed in terms of hardware, and the like, in addition to analysis and forecasting of floods and inundations that were conducted in the past. In Japan, the probability of river embankments being destroyed by floods has been taken into consideration in inundation analysis as well as flood and inundation risk management at a practical level. Additional consideration has also been taken on appropriate water balance and distribution that encompasses the amount of water stored at river channels and dams located in river basin areas, as well as flood inundation amounts during heavy rainstorms, from the perspective of flood control over river basins. These viewpoints represent inundation risk management technologies that must be understood at a fundamental level in order to proceed with the establishment and improvement of disaster prevention infrastructures and constitute key points for consideration that cannot be avoided. ICHARM should be active in providing assistance for developing nations to put such knowledge into practice.

The second issue involves the establishment of a framework for sustaining activities at ICHARM and the development of ways in which they should be executed. The reduction of water-related disaster risk is a crucial issue for every country to protect its social and economic systems from serious interruptions due to water-related disasters. ICHARM has expertise to support countries in this area and should be able to provide it in a sustainable way. To this end, I would also like to stress that it is very important for ICHARM to continue strengthening its network with other public and private organizations, both at home and abroad, for closer cooperation to reduce water-related disaster risk.

I am looking forward to seeing further advancement that ICHARM will make in the future.