

# **Disaster Broadcasts and International Cooperation**

## **- Asia's Cross-border Efforts to Enhance the Roles of Broadcasters in Disaster Prevention and Mitigation -**

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(Summary)

The Indian Ocean Tsunami that occurred in December 2004 caused enormous damage; nearly 230,000 people in 12 countries lost their lives while the authorities failed to give residents prompt evacuation orders. This experience prompted Asian nations to build up international cooperation for the “enhancement of disaster prevention capacity of each community” based on the “early-warning system.”

Eight years have passed since the Indian Ocean Tsunami. In order to see the fruit of those international efforts, the author visited Indonesia and Thailand as well as the headquarters of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) in Malaysia that promotes international cooperation among broadcasters in the Asian-Pacific region. In Indonesia national-level disaster prevention system was put in place and the operation of the early-warning system that issues “tsunami warnings” for the Indian Ocean coastal states started in October 2011. However when the first Indian Ocean tsunami warning was issued in April 2012, the warning was not delivered to the residents smoothly, which revealed various problems. Thailand has also been developing the disaster prevention system at a national level, represented by the establishment of the National Disaster Warning Center in 2005. However, as those efforts were mainly aimed at tsunami disasters, there was mixed disaster information at the massive flood in 2011, and as a result the insufficiency of the government disaster prevention system was highlighted. Regarding broadcasters, which are expected to play a role in the early-warning system, staff-training opportunities are continuously provided mainly by ABU and NHK, but many issues are yet to be addressed on facilities, equipment, and capability building of the human resources.

Since disasters have regional characteristics, disaster prevention systems are also required to reflect the culture of each society. Therefore it is important to promote continuous international cooperation, focusing on the enhancement of disaster prevention capacity that suits the needs of each country.