

Opening Speech
Mr. Jamie McGoldrick

Chief, Asia & Pacific Section, RCB, OCHA Geneva

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is indeed an honor for me to be here and welcome you to "*The International Training on Total Disaster Risk Management*" jointly organized by OCHA Kobe and ADRC. I am also very pleased to have the opportunity to meet people from 14 countries in Asia, all dealing with disaster management in one way or the other.

In the last decade, we have witnessed a steady increase in the number and magnitude of natural disasters. Only by May this year, a number of disasters such as the earthquakes in China, Turkey and Algeria, the floods in Argentina and Sri Lanka, landslides in Kyrgyzstan and cyclones in the Pacific caused tremendous economy damages and with losses of thousands of human lives. The present health wave in Southern part of India has already claimed more than 1,200 lives. Impact of disasters upon our societies has greatly increased, becoming a major obstacle to achieve sustainable socio-economic development. That is why it is important that we are here today to collaborate and to be partners on disaster risk management.

At the same time, the increase in both the frequency and magnitude of natural disasters has challenged the adequacy and efficiency of existing disaster management and response tools and capacities. DHA, later changed into OCHA, was established through the UN resolution of 46/182 in 1991 to meet the growing challenge of international coordination in humanitarian crisis response.

OCHA is responsible for the coordination of both natural disasters and complex emergencies. In disaster response, OCHA has developed a comprehensive system. This system includes a 24-hour duty system, deployment of UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team, issuing situation reports, launching of international appeals for relief assistance and providing emergency cash grant for immediate relief.

For example, three weeks ago, OCHA dispatched an UNDAC team to respond to the severe floods in Sri Lanka. Mr. Skavdal, our Regional Disaster Response Advisor for Asia, based here in Kobe was as a member of this team. The UNDAC team issued 6 field situation reports and assisted the Government in preparing a request for support to emergency and rehabilitation. The team also worked closely with the Government of Sri Lanka advising how to coordinate the international response to the crisis.

Another example is that OCHA organized an UNDAC induction training course for Asia, here in Kobe in March this year with support from ADRC and the Government of Japan. I believe that it will not only enhance the UN response capacity in Asia but also lead to a better sharing of experience between disaster management experts in the region. I will explain the details of OCHA response functions in my presentation scheduled this afternoon.

Response to emergencies and disasters is one of the mandates of OCHA. However, response activities cannot be done effectively unless proper disaster reduction measures have been taken in advance. For example, in a lessons learned workshop in China, which OCHA funded, participants stressed that a complete disaster reduction plan was the most important element of

the efficient disaster response system for the last year's severe floods. This is why OCHA Kobe has been promoting the Total Disaster Risk Management approach in cooperation with the ADRC whose activities are focused on disaster reduction.

Among our efforts are "Regional workshop on Networking and Collaboration among NGOs of Asian Countries in Disaster Reduction and Response" in February 2002, and "Regional Workshop on TDRM" in August 2002, both took place in Kobe which seems to be the center for this type of networking and collaborative approach. In addition, OCHA Kobe together with ADRC assisted the governments of Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia and Nepal in organizing training on TDRM.

Through these activities, OCHA has advocated and promoted the concept of the TDRM approach in the region. The next step is how to implement the TDRM approach and apply it into the existent policies and strategies in each country. In this TDRM training course, the importance of hazard mapping and vulnerability assessment will be underlined as a fundamental tool for generating reliable disaster risk information, which serves as basis for making decisions on disaster reduction and response work, including the best use of limited resource.

I am convinced that this training course provides the participants with an opportunity to learn the country experiences and best practices in Asia, the fundamentals of hazard mapping, the basic concepts and methodologies of disaster assessment, and current practices in human resource development. I hope that the similar type of trainings on disaster management will be conducted in the participating countries in the near future based on what you learn through this training.

To conclude, I would like to thank Cabinet Office, the Government of Japan, USAID/OFDA, the ASEAN Foundation, and the Nakauchi Foundation for their kind support. I would also like to underline how important the cooperation and collaboration with ADRC has been in preparation for this training course.

I wish you every success for the training course.

Thank you.

Opening Speech
Ms. Lauren Fredman
Bilateral Policy Analyst
Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination
United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Good morning!

I am delighted to be here this week and honored to attend this international training on Total Disaster Risk Management. On behalf of the United States Agency for International Development, I join in welcoming all the participants to this important and timely seminar.

USAID appreciates our close collaboration and shared commitment with the Asian Disaster Reduction Center in the TRDM approach to disaster preparedness and mitigation. We thank the ADRC and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for organizing this seminar.

With nearly half of the major natural disasters of the past 30 years having occurred in Asia, the region suffers the bulk of the harmful effects of the world's natural disasters. Recent events such as the floods and landslides in Sri Lanka clearly show the devastating effects of natural disasters on communities in terms of both lives and livelihoods. These events demonstrate not only the great challenges we face, but also the great opportunities we have to address disaster assistance and mitigation issues in a holistic fashion.

Disaster preparedness and mitigation initiatives are not simply isolated events. Rather, they are integrated, multi-level, multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary process of focus and prioritization. The TDRM approach is an integral and important part of these efforts.

USAID supports a variety of preparedness and mitigation programs in Asia that emphasize the importance of community participation and the TDRM approach. From training and preparedness to using hazard mapping and the many other technologies available, we can reduce the effects of natural disasters.

I look forward to learning more about the TDRM approach from this gathering's knowledgeable presenters, who represent UN organizations, governments and the academic world. I also look forward to meeting, and participating with, all of you.

Thank you.