

1. Session No. 2.6

2. Session Name: Effective and successful risk communication – as an integral part of disaster risk management

3. Summary of the session's presentations and discussions

The chair, Dr. Gerald Vollmer, introduced the session with an insight that effective risk communications could save lives. He cited the importance of considering the diversity in culture for communicating risks more effectively.

Presented in the session were three cases of good practices:

- RANET, a cooperative effort in Australia, which provides the people access to weather and environment-related information for their daily resource decision-making and preparing them for any expected natural hazards.
- Community-based hazard mapping method in Japan, which facilitates communication and understanding of risk by the local community as well as the roles of the national and local governments and the community.
- Communicating inherent risks in local community practices in India through the education of vulnerable groups using model demonstration and simulation of risks

The panel discussion cited the following additional examples of good practices in risk communication:

- multi-level and multi-agency cooperative approach
- methodology for comparing alternative options in decision making
- promotion of risk understanding through hazard and vulnerability atlas
- disaster management structure established from the national to the local community level
- risk reduction through empowering the poor and establishing sustainable livelihood programs

The discussions highlighted some challenges in risk communications:

- communicating risks through demonstrations in countries with large populations
- communicating technology, risk concepts and terminologies to the local community vis-à-vis local language or dialect
- involvement of the local media in risk communication
- harnessing indigenous knowledge and methods for risk communication at local community level
- dynamic nature of risk perception and its variability with personal experiences of hazards and timeliness of forecast
- sustaining people's concern for risk reduction

- training disaster management professionals to better communicate risks to the public

4. Primary issues

- The session conveyed the following key elements for successful risk communication:
 - addressing the diversity of cultures to which risk is communicated
 - cooperation and networking among stakeholders at all levels
 - application of good practices and lessons learnt from past experiences
 - hazard mapping as a means for enhancing local understanding of risk
 - indicators of effectiveness of risk communication at community level

5. a) Suggested targets and indicators to measure accomplishments

The following are possible target activities for effective risk communication, particularly in the countries affected by the recent disasters:

- framework for ensuring effective communication of risks and early warning to the local community
- capacity building in risk assessment and early warning at various levels, including sharing of good practices, experiences and expertise
- skills development of technical experts and disaster management practitioners in communicating risks more effectively to the public
- information-education-and-communication on basic knowledge of hazards and risks

b) Existing indicators with reference

- conduct of community-based hazard mapping and evacuation drills on a regular basis in communities at risk (Reference: Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology, Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC))

6. Partnerships

Collaboration in early warning systems development and capacity building for countries affected by the recent earthquake and tsunami – ISDR/PPEW, UNESCO, ITIC, WMO, UNEP, UNDP, ADRC, UN/OCHA, JMA, US/NOAA, USGS, and other relevant partners.

7. Any other relevant and brief comments

8. a) Name, affiliation and contacts of presenters and titles of presentation

- Dr. Gerald Vollmer, European Commission/Joint Research Centre (EC/JRC), Chairperson
- Prof. Dr. Yujiro Ogawa, visiting researcher, ADRC; Professor, Fuji-Tokoha University: “Town Watching for Disaster Reduction for Effective and Successful Risk Communication”
- Mr. Manu Gupta, Program Director, Sustainable Environment & Ecological Development Society (SEEDS): “Learning from Experiences in Communicating Risks”
- Dr. Linda Anderson-Berry, Manager, Disaster Mitigation Planning Services, Bureau of Meteorology, Australia: “RANET: Radion and Internet - Dissemination and Communication of Environmental Information for Rural and Remote Community Development” and “Risk Communication - An Australian Government Perspective”
- Prof. Dr. Slobodan P. Simonovic, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, the University of Western Ontario, Canada: “A Model for Risk Communication in Sustainable Floodplain Management”
- Dr. Dusan Sakulski, Scientific Advisor, UNU/EHS: “South African Hazard and Vulnerability Atlas”
- Dr. Colin Depradine, Principal, Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology, Bridgetown, Barbados: “Disaster Emergency Agency in Caribbean Islands”
- Mr. Muhammad Saidur Rahman, Director, Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC), Dhaka, Bangladesh: “Effective and Successful Risk Communication”

b) Name, affiliation and contacts of person filling in the form

- Mr. Emmanuel M. de Guzman, consultant, ADRC