

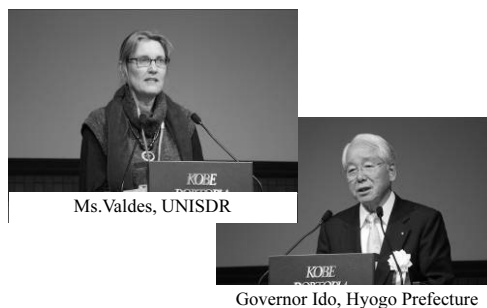
5-3. IRP Activities in FY 2008

5-3-1. The International Recovery Forum 2009

“Building Back Better and Greener”

The International Recovery Forum 2009, whose theme was “Building Back Better and Greener” was held on 26-27 January in Kobe, Japan. The Forum was hosted by the International Recovery Platform (IRP) Secretariat, the Cabinet Office of Japan, Hyogo Prefecture, and ADRC in partnership with UNISDR, ILO, UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank. The event attracted approximately 300 participants from 28 countries and 10 international organizations, comprised of dignitaries, national and local officials, experts on disaster reduction and recovery, and other stakeholders. The gathering facilitated the compilation of findings, reviews, country experiences, and suggested measures for effective recovery operations that take into account environmental concerns and climate change.

Opening remarks on the first day were delivered by Mr. Naofumi Taguchi, Deputy Director General for Disaster Management of the Cabinet Office of Japan, Ms. Helena Molin Valdes, Deputy Director of UNISDR, and Mr. Toshizo Ido, Governor of Hyogo Prefecture. The remarks conveyed a common message that gaps in the knowledge management aspect of recovery operations have to be addressed immediately. Considering the environmental impacts of disasters, the need to integrate environmental and climate change concerns into the recovery processes was emphasized. In his keynote speech, Professor Toshihiko Hayashi, Director of Research of the Hyogo Memorial 21st Century Research Institute, identified three immediate needs to be addressed for the achievement of environmentally sound recovery. These are (1) the need to develop methodologies and tools to assess the environmental impacts of disasters, (2) the need to improve recovery planning by taking into account aspects of environmental restoration, and (3) the need to create stable recovery funding, such as through the establishment of an International Disaster Recovery Fund.



Following the keynote speech, a presentation was given by H.E. Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe from Myanmar on the current state of recovery efforts following cyclone Nargis. The afternoon session included country presentations on Haiti by H.E. Jean Max Bellerive, the Maldives by H.E. Amin Faisal, Kazakhstan by H.E. Vladimir Bozhko, Ecuador by H.E. Maria Lorena Cajas, and Pakistan by Mr. Shaukat Tahir. After the country presentations, a report was given on the current state of recovery efforts following the Wenchuan earthquake in China by Ms. Constance Thomas of ILO, which highlighted the UN's China recovery efforts. The reports and country presentations illustrated the challenges faced and lessons learned from the presenters' respective recovery operations.

Mr. Koji Suzuki of ADRC did the wrap up on the first day by highlighting three major points based on the reports and country presentations. He noted that (1) there are still several gaps and needs in current recovery processes, (2) there are many lessons that can be drawn from the reports presented, and (3) mechanisms exist that can facilitate the dissemination and application of those lessons. Mr. Suzuki further pointed out that one of those mechanisms is the redesigned IRP website, which was launched and demonstrated during his presentation. The improved website is more user-friendly, participatory, and interactive. It facilitates the IRP's advocacy, networking, and partnership functions, and also promotes knowledge management for better recovery.



Mr. Alfredo Lazarte Hoyle, Director of ILO/CRISIS and current chair of the IRP Steering Committee, opened the second day of the Forum. After his opening remarks, country reports on recovery experiences were given by Col. Mamy Razakanaivo from Madagascar and Mr. Anucha Mokkhavesa from Thailand. These were followed by the sharing of expert opinions on the baseline requirements for the effective integration of environmental issues in recovery by Mr. Muralee Thummarukudy of UNEP and Mr. David Salter of SEACAP.

A panel discussion was held in the afternoon with Ms. Valdes of UNISDR acting as facilitator. The panelists were Mr. Ola Almgren (UNDP), Ms. Thomas (ILO), Mr. Salter (SEACAP), and Mr. Thummarukudy (UNEP). Three government representatives were among the resource persons on the panel. These were Mr. Naoto Tajiri, Director for Disaster Preparedness and International Cooperation of the Cabinet Office of Japan, Mr. Iswar Raj Regmi, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs of Nepal, and Mr. Tshewang Riznin, Governor of Chhukha District in Bhutan. The discussion focused on identifying key considerations for addressing the barriers to integrated recovery operations and facing the challenges in assessing the environmental impacts of disasters.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Koji Suzuki of ADRC emphasized the need to continuously share recovery experiences and lessons and to create synergies to facilitate more coherent action towards achieving the goals of the HFA. To ensure the ability of the outcomes of the Forum to benefit the wider community of practice, they were presented at the Global Recovery Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) meeting in Geneva in June 2009.

5-3-2. Participation in HLWG on Disaster Risk Reduction

A meeting of the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group (HLWG) on Disaster Risk Reduction was held on 16 September 2008 in Geneva, Switzerland. The event attracted approximately 85 participants from various countries and UN organizations.

The IRP gave a presentation on the strategic framework of its activities and knowledge management, and gave a demonstration of the upgraded IRP website.

5-3-3. Conducting a Recovery Status Investigation in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

The IRP Secretariat sent a mission to Indonesia to prepare an immediate situation report and early recovery situation report following the Yogyakarta and Central Java Earthquake that struck on 26 May 2006, claiming nearly 6,000 lives and affecting more than 200,000 people.

In November 2008 and February 2009, more than two years after the earthquake, with recovery having progressed at a constant pace, the IRP conducted another follow-up investigation and prepared another recovery status report.

First, the IRP team revisited the villages in which it conducted on-site investigations right after the earthquake, such as Chandan, Pirin, and Kasongan. Then the team visited villages that provide good examples of livelihood recovery, such as Imogiri and Giriloyo, where team members tried to learn directly from local people about perspectives on good practices and lessons learned from the disaster.

To gain a general understanding of the overall recovery situation, the IRP team also visited the government offices of Yogyakarta State and Bantul Prefecture, where they inquired about the recovery plans and programs that were executed in the region.

The team's investigation showed that the recovery of the housing sector in the region was already complete and that the government is now shifting its attention to the reconstruction and repair of public buildings.

During the visit, the team learned about the spirit of mutual assistance (Gotong Ryong) among the local people, which played an important role in recovery efforts, and also learned a great deal about the current state of the region's disaster prevention strategies and disaster prevention education, which are aimed at achieving a resilient recovery.

In addition to above activities, the IRP team visited Gadjah Mada University to collect information on good recovery practices. The IRP implemented a joint research project with the university, and conducted a field survey on the role of women in post-earthquake livelihood recovery in several villages. The results have been posted on the IRP website.

5-3-4. Progress in the Area of Knowledge Management (Collecting and Disseminating Knowledge)

(1) Compiling and sharing a database of good restoration practices

In the pursuit of recovery from major disasters around the world, various authorities have issued many different reports, research studies, and compilations of lessons learned based on their experiences, and now some of these are being compiled into a database of disaster information.

In most cases, recovery specialists from the UN or other agencies go to the areas affected by the disaster, analyze both current and previous cases, make overall judgments regarding the situation, and provide advice for moving forward.

This project aims to ensure that the people involved in decision making and recovery planning in the central and the local governments of disaster-stricken areas have prompt and adequate access to information on disaster risk reduction and "build back better" information. Efforts have therefore been made to collect and organize past recovery experiences and lessons, create a database of that information, and provide a guidebook that explains the main challenges affecting recovery.

The IRP is collecting recovery related reports on about 30 major disasters that have occurred since 1984, creating a database of good practices and lessons learned, and uploading some of that information on the redesigned IRP website.

While developing this database, the IRP also created a "Case Study Guidebook" to provide guidelines for the systematic and effective organization of information, thereby enabling it to obtain appropriate information from many different sources.

(2) IRP Website

The IRP website was redesigned so it could better inform the world about the IRP's activities, highlight the importance of the "Build Back Better" approach, and promote the participation of parties involved in disaster prevention and the recovery. The beta version of the website was released at the International Recovery Forum on 26 January 2009.

The website provides recovery related information from various countries and disasters, and categorizes information into recovery themes, such as shelter, livelihood, the environment, and public infrastructure. Users can share their own information as well, allowing the site to serve as a more attractive and interactive tool for all users.