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## **6. International Recovery Platform (IRP): History and Current Activities**

### **6-1. The Establishment of IRP**

While the capacity of the UN system for disaster response and humanitarian assistance are widely recognized, there is currently a vacuum in terms of the UN's capacity and system-wide mechanisms for post-disaster recovery efforts, particularly those with a risk reduction focus.

Experience increasingly affirms that the post-disaster recovery phase provides a critical opportunity to shift the focus from saving lives to restoring livelihoods, and is an important time for introducing measures to reduce future disaster risk. Effective recovery can help close the gap between relief and development, and can transform disasters into opportunities for sustainable development. This occurs when efforts are made to support local and national recovery processes at an early stage, when risk reduction considerations are factored into all recovery activities, and when the synergies between development, humanitarian, and other actors involved in the response phases are properly channeled. A successful recovery effort, then, is predicated on having advance agreements and mechanisms in place so that the recovery process is effectively conceived and managed, and is initiated in a timely manner. This includes such measures as appropriate assessment methodologies, pre-established resource mobilization mechanisms, surge capacity to support UN Country Teams, and standing coordination mechanisms.

Shared concerns related to the UN approach and processes for post-disaster recovery have resulted in the formulation of a joint initiative, the International Recovery Platform (IRP), by the UN system, ADRC, and other partners, with the encouragement and support of Japan as well as other donors and key program countries. This initiative was discussed at the 2005 UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) during session 4.9 on Post Disaster Recovery. Representatives from the ADRC, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, ILO, and other concerned UN agencies expressed their respective agency commitments and support for the proposed international platform for recovery. The meeting resulted in a recommendation for the establishment of the International Recovery Platform (IRP).

In four months after the WCDR, the International Seminar on Post Disaster Recovery, in support of IRP, was held at Hyogo House on 11-13 May 2005. IRP was officially established in Kobe.

### **6-2. The Governance Structure of IRP**

IRP currently consists of 17 governments, UN agencies, and international organizations including ADRC (as of March 2014).<sup>\*</sup> IRP focuses on the following three priority activities for recovery: (a) Knowledge Management and Advocacy, (b) Training and Capacity Building and (c) Enhancing Recovery Operations.

As described in the Terms of Reference, IRP at Kobe functions as IRP secretariat and is

responsible for convening IRP Steering Committee meetings and disseminating information on IRP activities and outcomes.

\* IRP members: Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), Hyogo Prefectural Government, International Labour Organization (ILO), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Cabinet Office of Japan, Swiss Agency for Development and Coordination (SDC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), United Nations Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Coordination Center for the Prevention of the natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC)

## 6-3. IRP Activities in FY 2015

### 6-3-1. “IRP’s International Recovery Forum 2016”

“IRP’s International Recovery Forum 2016 ~”Sending the Message of Build Back Better”, jointly organized with ADRC, was held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan on 26 January 2016, with over 180 participants, including government officials, practitioners, experts, policymakers, and students

from 37 countries. Mr. Stefan Kohler of UNOPS opened the Forum, and it was followed by a welcome message delivered by Mr. Kaoru Saito, on behalf of Mr. Toshinori Ogata, Deputy Director-General for Disaster Management

Office of the Cabinet Office of Japan. Like the previous forums, Governor Mr. Toshizo Ido of Hyogo Prefecture addressed the participants regarding the creative reconstruction and the importance of implementing both soft and hard measures in DRR. In between the discussions, two dignitaries delivered special presentations, namely Mr. Tatsushi Nishioka of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan who delivered a message on “World Tsunami Awareness Day” and Mr. Neil McFalane of the UNISDR who made a presentation regarding the outcome of the Third UN World Conference on DRR and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 focusing on Priority Four’s Build Back Better in Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction. In his presentation, he shared expectations to IRP which will play an important role in advising on the progress and challenges in the implementation of the “Build Back Better” priority of the Sendai Framework, along with the New IRP Strategy Framework. Mr. Kaoru Saito of the Cabinet Office of Japan closed the Forum.



Fig. 6-3-1 “IRP’s International Recovery Forum 2016”