

Panel Discussion in Contribution to the Ten-Year Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action

Friday, 17 January 9:00—11:00 Venue: Room 301 (English and Japanese)

On the occasion of the 1994 mid-term review of the IDNDR (International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction), the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction was held in Yokohama. Since then, the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action, unanimously adopted by the participants of the Conference, has served as the international blueprint for disaster reduction. Since 1994 the human and economic losses due to natural disasters have continued to increase despite efforts undertaken during the IDNDR and, later, under the umbrella of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the United Nations programme established in 2000 to follow on the IDNDR achievements.

The review of the Yokohama Strategy was endorsed by the General Assembly in December 2001 (resolution 56/195). The 2002 report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the ISDR (57/190) recommends in its paragraph 61 that: “The Secretariat for the Strategy should begin, in collaboration with Governments, agencies and other entities concerned, a full review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action. This review process will help identify gaps and means of implementation in a way that will chart the course of action for the forthcoming decade, while taking into account the outcome of the World summit on Sustainable Development”.

The purpose of the panel discussion was to examine and assess progress in the field of disaster risk reduction, focusing on Asia and using the Yokohama Strategy as a threshold. There are many initiatives already underway in the region with the aim to assess and improve capacities to manage and reduce disaster risk at different levels and themes, which all are valuable and need to be articulated. This particular conference represents an opportunity to jointly discuss ways forward to consolidate the regional review and the partnerships to do it.

The discussion will contribute to shaping a comprehensive and coordinated approach to an assessment process in Asia to fulfil this purpose. The publication of “Living with Risk- A global review of disaster reduction initiatives” prepared by the ISDR Secretariat, with support from many Governments, experts, and regional agencies, constitutes a tool for orientating a substantive process to monitor disaster reduction, based on agreed targets that need to be developed, and a very first step to initiate the review of the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and to suggest further action.

Coordinators: Mr. Salvano Briceno, ISDR Secretariat and Mr. Katsuhiko Hara, Cabinet Office

Rapporteurs: Dr. Feng Min Kan and Ms. Helena Molin Valdes, ISDR Secretariat

Panelists:

- Dr. Patrick Safran, Planning and Policy Officer, Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Mr. Loy Rego, Director, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)
- Mr. Satoru Nishikawa, Executive Director, Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC)
- Dr. Hiroyuki Kameda, Director, Earthquake Disaster Mitigation Research Center (EDM)/National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Prevention (NIED),

Japan

- Mr. Thomas Brennan, Regional Disaster Reduction Advisor, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Dr. Badaoui Rouhban, Chief, Section of Engineering and Technology, UNESCO
- Mr. Toshiyasu Noda, Director for Asia & the Pacific, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
- Dr. Jerry Velasquez, Coordinator, United Nations University (UNU)

Conclusion

The meeting offered a first opportunity to discuss ways forward in Asia on the issues and modalities for the review of the implementation of disaster reduction since the adoption of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action. It will build on the progress made since the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. It provided for launch of ideas and exchange information on achievements and challenges, as well as needs and ways forward.

Achievements

Panelists agreed that some progress have been made at national and regional, in particular in the last three years. The following areas were highlighted:

- Increased general awareness about the need to integrate disaster risk reduction as part of sustainable development (examples: results of WSSD, Millennium Development Goals)
- Establishment of national disaster management institutions, including arrangements from national to village level, in each of the Asian countries, with special institutes for disaster reduction in some cases (examples: China, Thailand, India), as well as international institutions (examples: UNDP, IBRD and ADB)
- Development of national disaster reduction or preparedness plans; in some cases disaster reduction is integrated in national development plans (example: Vietnam)
- Increased cooperation and collaboration among regional and international organizations, and increased number of organization involved, in particular with development scope (examples: ICIMOD, ASEAN, ESCAP)
- Growing sub-regional initiatives for both political and technical cooperation including river basin management.
- Increased awareness of urban risks and implementation of urban risk assessment programmes (Examples: AUDMP, GESI, RADIUS, EDM)
- ADB starts shifting its focus from only hardware assistance to social aspects
- Enhanced information exchange among NGOs, governments and regional organizations (example: ADRRN)
- Development of multi-donor coordinated programmes, such as NDM partnership in Viet Nam and CDMP by World Bank
- A holistic approach (linking disaster reduction to response) recognized in the region (TDRM), emphasizing multi-sectoral and multi-level coordination.

Challenges

The complexity of the risk scenario and the understanding of disaster risk reduction as imperative for sustainable development remain a challenge, in particular regarding implementation.

- Development patterns need to ensure risk reduction and sustainability.

- A massive change of attitudes, values and behavior that lead to a culture of prevention and sustainability remains a daunting task
- Development networks among all stakeholders and foster true multi-level and multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration – accepting differences
- Sustainability of national disaster reduction structures, currently often under resourced both financially and technically
- Donor, bank and national government investment continue to focus on post disaster relief and reconstruction, and limited investment in disaster reduction.
- Little investments in safer housing, infrastructure and retrofitting
- building capacities at all levels in the region
- Improving lending and grants facilities of Banks to facilitate risk assessments and prevention in development programmes
- Factoring disaster risk reduction into climate change adaptation.

The challenges identified in disaster risk reduction entail the urgency to address the following needs.

- Establishing a regional forum for information exchange and networking
- Sensitizing other sectors about disaster reduction
- Enhancing implementations of national policies
- Establishing mechanisms to monitor the policy implementation
- Educating and sensitizing the legislators and people in private sectors
- Strengthening disaster reduction in rural areas to enhance capacity by supporting community participation
- Linking climate vulnerability and change to disaster reduction
- Integrating disaster into sustainable development process, including urban planning, river basin management, strategies and programmes.
- Assessing risks, tracking the risk areas, launching public awareness on risks,
- Enhancing education and training on disaster risk reduction
- Shifting disaster reduction approach – focus on human security – people ,

A way forward:

- Prepare a road map and programme of action for a safer world with national and international targets for 2015, to coincide with WSSD and Millennium Development Goals
- Advocate disaster reduction as a pillar of sustainable development.
- Consolidate and expand innovations for implementation of disaster risk reduction measures
- Mainstream disaster risk reduction into development and environmental management, through the joint efforts of NGOs, Governments and donors, as well as promote stronger cooperation among all actors
- Encourage dialogue at political level with ministers, especially ministers in charge of finance, planning, administration, environment, social development, education, agriculture, etc.
- Facilitate and support formulation of national disaster reduction plans
- Focus more awareness raising and advocacy on disaster reduction for legislators in all countries.
- Focus on socio-economic impact studies and use the result to demonstrate needs and benefits of disaster reduction to policy makers

Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2003
15-17 January 2003, Kobe, Japan

- Develop and introduce tools and guidelines to pursue a holistic approach to disaster risk management
- Develop better framework for assessing and reducing earthquakes in cities
- Facilitate communication between professional and other stakeholders in disaster reduction
- Establish a target percentage (for example 20 %) of both disaster related and sectoral development budgets specifically ear-marked for disaster reduction.
- Continue dialogues and enhance coordination within the UN system
- Link disaster risk reduction to formal education systems and to environmental educational programmes (as for the proposed “decade for environmental education”)