

Closing Speech

Mr. Nhim Vanda

First Vice President, The National Committee for Disaster Management
(NCDM), Cambodia

Today, I am privileged and honored to speak before you in this workshop. But first of all I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to express my deep thanks to the Government of Japan, the ASEAN Foundation, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), and the Asian Disaster Response Unit of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Kobe office (ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe) for funding and organizing this important Regional Workshop on Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM). This workshop provides us with a very useful platform to exchange information, ideas, experiences and lessons learned in our own disaster management work in our respective countries.

Now, I come here to speak on behalf of the two working groups. The opening speeches of the chairpersons and the keynote speech on disaster risk reduction and response by Mr. Kenzo Oshima, Under Secretary-General, UN-OCHA paved the way towards a successful workshop. Through the many presentations made by the representatives from the various Asian countries here today, we all understand that disaster happens very often in the world and it will continue to happen without end. Once it occurs, it can have severe consequences on human life and property, with damages that can reach billions of dollars. Moreover, disasters can also have significant adverse effects on the economy of the affected country, to the extent of affecting GDP and sustainable development.

During these past three days, we have generated a wealth of information and experience in this workshop. We have been able to discuss ways and methods for implementing the TDRM approach in disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. We have also been able to identify the competence and skills required for piloting the TDRM approach in our respective countries. Now, that we have gained new and

useful knowledge from the workshop, we are now able to bring this to our country and seek government endorsement in applying the TDRM approach. In fact, I called the Prime Minister yesterday and reported to him on the proceedings of this workshop. I am very happy to inform you that he was very pleased and that he made a strong commitment to be more deeply involved in the application of the TDRM process in Cambodia.

With the useful and relevant information and knowledge I have gained, I plan to disseminate them whenever the NCDM will conduct training courses for local officials who work in the provincial and district Disaster Management Committees. With the presentation and explanation of the key elements of the TDRM by Mr Tom Brennan, Senior Regional Advisor, USAID/OFDA, and by Mr Mike Tarrant, Assistant Director, Research Management, EMA, Australia, I have much confidence that we can surely apply the new approach and process for disaster reduction. Nevertheless, we must remember that sometimes the impact of a disaster is beyond the capacities and capabilities of a county to deal with. So I think that the strengthening of cooperation and good coordination among Asian countries are indeed important and necessary.

Once again, I would like to extend our deep gratitude to the Government of Japan, The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foundation, ADRC, ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe for their support to this successful and fruitful workshop. Thank you.

Closing Speech

Ms. Crispine B. Abat

Civil Defense Officer, Office of Civil Defense, the Philippines

First of all, let me thank you for giving me this role of speaking on behalf of the participants in this closing ceremony of our Regional Workshop on Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM). It is indeed an honor for me.

I had time constraint to get every participant's statement but just looking at the list and the agencies and organizations that are represented here, I am sure that we had the same feeling for the workshop. I know that we had very strong interest and were very eager to participate because of the relevance of the TDRM workshop to our respective line of work, being very much involved, if not directly involved, in disaster management.

The speeches delivered by none other than the authorities of the organizing and sponsoring agencies emphasized and gave us the importance of discussing effective approaches and methods on disaster and risk reduction. This is considering the fact that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries suffer the most from disasters. The presentations from some participants gave us a clear picture on their respective early warning systems and we got good ideas from them.

We appreciate very much the knowledge showed to us by the disaster managers, resource persons and guest speakers. All the information showed are very relevant and we thank all of you.

It is, therefore, not enough that we have our respective national disaster management committee and are already implementing related programs. There is a lot more to do and this workshop on TDRM is just to enhance and to improve the existing systems and programs. TDRM is the need of the times in the ASEAN region.

This is our closing ceremony but I hope this closing will not be the end but the beginning of our concerted efforts on TDRM in our countries.

Let us not put the resources of our sponsors to nowhere but let us be instrumental in our little way in realizing the objectives of this workshop.

Again, on behalf of the participants, thank you to everyone particularly the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), the Asian Disaster Response Unit of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Kobe office (ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe), the Government of Japan and the ASEAN Foundation.

Thank you also my co-participants. Good luck, goodbye and see you all in the Philippines. Mabuhay!

Closing Speech

Mr. Yoshinobu Fukasawa

Deputy Executive Director, Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation
Institution (DRI), Japan

On behalf of the Executive Director and his whole staff of Great Hanshin–Awaji Earthquake Memorial Disaster Reduction and Human Resources Center, and my own behalf, I should like to deliver a brief closing remarks. It has been indeed our great honor and privilege that the Center has been able to serve as a good venue of the third session of Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM) Approach. The pleasure is therefore threefold.

Firstly, we have happily taken advantage of this occasion as the excellent opportunity through which to disseminate the experience and lessons learnt of the Great Hanshin–Awaji Earthquake. This is the very primary mission of this Centre. I would be grateful if you would convey this information on the Centre to your colleagues, family and media once you are back in your country.

Secondly, I was given an opportunity of briefing you on our forthcoming training courses targeted to Japanese local officials. As I mentioned in my presentation, human resources development in this area is one of the most pressing needs in upgrading Japan's TDRM capacity. I hope that our input has been of considerable use to your discussion during the meeting.

Thirdly, as has already been stated by many other speakers, we have been able to establish relationships with all the participants in many ways. We consider this extremely significant because this network will be of great help when we are in an emergency situation. We may be counting on each other at such a time for acquiring information, providing and receiving assistance, etc. Within the framework of built up by the Asian Disaster

Reduction Center (ADRC), the Centre would like to dispatch our researchers to disaster sites to collect the valuable information we need so that it can be shared across Asia. I thank you in advance for your cooperation in assisting our staff in this most important task.

I only regret that I was not able to participate in the discussion throughout the meeting due to my other commitments.

Lastly, I should once again like to congratulate Ms. Feng Min Kan, the Asian Disaster Response Unit of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Kobe office (ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe), Mr. Satoru Nishikawa, ADRC, and all the participants for the success of the meeting. I wish you all the best in the course of further development of TDRM.

Thank you.

Closing Speech

Mr. Thomas Brennan

Senior Regional Advisor, the Office of United States Disaster Assistance,
United States Agency for International Development (USAID/OFDA), the
Philippines

I would like to extend my deep appreciation to the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), to the Asian Disaster Response Unit of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Kobe office (ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe), to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foundation and to the Government of Japan for hosting this workshop and, particularly, for the outstanding selection of participants to attend this workshop. You are the people who really can accomplish something very important in your home countries.

Most of you come from a disaster response background, and many of you represent standing committees or agencies that are responsible for meeting the immediate emergency needs of the victims of disasters. I think we have learned here the last two days, however, that meeting the immediate needs of victims is no longer enough.

Asia has made extraordinary progress in the past decade in saving lives and in providing emergency shelter and food for people seriously affected by floods, storms and earthquakes. Nevertheless, the economic impact of disasters on our nations has been tremendous, and is increasing. Many countries in Asia are struggling at this time to achieve a three to four percent annual increase in GDP. At the same time, as was made clear to us yesterday, many of those same countries are losing two or three percent of their GDP annually to natural disasters. Unless we can

reduce those losses the task of governments to achieve economic growth targets becomes extremely difficult.

Equally important, the natural disasters we experience most often—particularly floods, typhoons, and droughts—affect the same communities over and over. Those communities are invariably among the poorest in their respective countries, and recurring disasters keep them poor. Floods and storms literally wash or blow away the productive assets (tools, seeds, livestock, or a hard-earned bicycle, for example), the homes, and the household items (cooking and eating utensils, sleeping mats, a small radio, and so on) of small farmers and landless laborers who spend years accumulating such items. They then go into debt to replace these items, spend years working themselves out of debt, and then are devastated once again by the next flood or tropical storm.

That situation can no longer be acceptable to us. We must find ways of breaking that cycle. We must not only to meet the immediate needs of disaster victims but, more importantly, we must reduce the number of number of victims and reduce the impact of disasters. To do this we must deal with disasters more holistically, more comprehensively, to reduce the vulnerability of communities. If we can accomplish that our economies will grow more rapidly, and people who are now trapped below the poverty line will be able to work themselves out of poverty and contribute more fully to the growth of the nation. A government that reduces disaster vulnerability will have the gratitude of the nation, and in particular the gratitude of those communities that now suffer disasters much more often than is necessary and much more severely than is necessary.

I think this workshop has been a very good step in moving forward toward that goal. So, again, I would like to thank you, the participants, who are the best possible participants to be here; Mr. Nishikawa and Feng Min Kan, who did so much to make sure that this workshop took place and achieved success; and the Government of Japan and the ASEAN Foundation for providing the critical support necessary to make the workshop possible.

Thank you all very much.

Closing Speech

Mr. Satoru Nishikawa

Executive Director, Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), Japan

Distinguished guests, participants, ladies and gentleman, on behalf of the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) and the co-organizer, the Asian Disaster Response Unit of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Kobe office (ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe), I would like to sincerely thank each one of you for your active participation and significant contribution to this regional workshop on Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM). We would also like to thank the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foundation, the Cabinet Office of Japan, and the Tsutomu Nakauchi Foundation for their support, and also the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI) for offering the venue in the building.

I am very pleased with the outcome of this forum, which provided us with an invaluable opportunity to share experiences and information on disaster reduction and response among the participants. We appreciate very much your active exchange of ideas and views on how we could effectively address and fill in the gaps in disaster reduction and response through the TDRM.

All the presentations and discussions made during the workshop were very informative and enlightening. The common concerns on addressing the disaster problems holistically and on mainstreaming disaster risk management into development strategies and undertakings were pointed. In addition, the necessity of hazard mapping and vulnerability assessment, and the adoption of the disaster risk management process at all levels as a critical undertaking to reduce risks and vulnerabilities, were emphasized.

While the importance and relevance of TDRM in strengthening local capacity-building is acknowledged, the greater challenge lies in each

government to translate the concept into concrete benefits for the people.

In this regard, we would like to encourage you to transform TDRM into your government's strategy as it suits the context and needs of your country. Moreover, we, enjoin you, as the "key agents", to fully convey and discuss the findings of this workshop with your key partners, or the "champions", in your country.

Furthermore, the workshop discussions had cited specific activities, actions and requirements to pilot TDRM locally. Committed to the promotion of TDRM in the region, ADRC, together with the ADRU/UN-OCHA Kobe, shall make itself available to provide inputs, whenever possible, to achieve national development objectives.

We shall always endeavor to assist governments and peoples in the region and facilitate among them the exchange of disaster experiences, information and best practices more effectively and efficiently. ADRC holds its annual meeting every winter and the next meeting will take place on 14 and 15 January in 2003. In this opportunity, we shall discuss further with our member countries how we can proceed to the next step. We shall also expect and welcome feedbacks on how the TDRM approach can be applied according to the contexts and needs of the countries.

We would like to remind you that this workshop is only one of the starting points towards implementation of the TDRM approach. The efforts must be sustained and we count on you.

I believe that we have achieved the objectives of the workshop in introducing and understanding the TDRM approach. In addition to it, friendship and solidarity in the region have been fostered through the workshop.

I would like to thank you all, once again, for your active participation and wish you a safe trip back home.