

## Role of Media in Disseminating Information on Disaster Risk

Mr. Yong-Seok Kim

Deputy Chief, Social Division  
Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), Korea

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### The role of KBS in disaster reduction

As Korea's main public broadcasting network, KBS has been designated by the government as the host broadcaster for disaster broadcasting and, thus, swiftly delivers accurate disaster status reports to the general public in accordance with the Natural Disaster Protection Act and the Disaster Management Act in order to minimize human and property damage. In particular, KBS assumes the leading role in i) collecting various information from disaster areas; ii) receiving information and necessary facilities from disaster prevention agencies; and iii) organizing and operating joint press corps.

### The force of typhoon Maemi & damage to the Korean peninsula

#### The force of typhoon Maemi

This season's 14th typhoon, Maemi, made landfall on the Korean peninsula on the evening of September 12th and left the greatest damage since 1904, when weather observations first began in Korea. Before Typhoon Maemi, Koreans had cited the power of Typhoon Sarah, which hit the peninsula in 1959. Now, however, Maemi has supplanted Sarah. The 1959 typhoon struck the peninsula with a central pressure of 952hPa and a maximum instantaneous wind speed of 46.9m/sec, whereas Typhoon Maemi's central pressure reached 950hPa and a maximum instantaneous wind speed of a staggering 60m/sec.

#### Damage to the Korean Peninsula

Now, let us look at the power of Typhoon Maemi through news reports at the time.  
(Screen: 9 o'clock News of Sept. 13th)

Damage of the typhoon as seen from the skies (Hee-sung Cheon).

■Typhoon Maemi inflicted enormous human and property damage. As of now, 117 are dead, and 13 are missing. 10,975 persons from 4,089 households were directly affected, and 21,015 houses and 37,986 hectares of farmland are now under water.

■Destruction of public infrastructure such as roads and streams and of private property such as buildings and ships has now amassed property losses of USD 3.9 billion 84.16 million.

#### Disaster broadcasting by phase as typhoon Maemi headed north

- Typhoon Maemi developed at around 3 o'clock on the afternoon on September 6th about 400Km northwest of Guam Island. Its central pressure was 996hPa, and maximum wind velocity around its center was 18m/sec. At the time, news reports on the typhoon were announced several times during weather forecasts.

- Maemi became stronger as it pressed north, and its central pressure slid to 915hPa, while the maximum wind velocity around its center reached 54m/sec when it arrived at around 260Km southwest of Naha (Okinawa Island, Japan) at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, on September 11th.

Now, let us view KBS news reports at the time.

\* KBS 1 TV 9 o'clock News of September 11th

- Seung-bok Han (Direct influence of Typhoon Maemi starting tomorrow)
- Seok-hyun Yang (TV news van now on Jeju Island)
- He-re Kim (Typhoon damage on Okinawa)

Typhoon Maemi finally made landfall on the southern coast of the peninsula at 8 o'clock in the evening, on September 12th. At the time, its central pressure was 950hPa and maximum velocity at its center was 41m/sec. In response, KBS dispatched broadcasting vehicles to the major areas through which the typhoon was moving, and constantly sent out news reports. TV news vans were deployed to Jinju, Changwon, Busan and Yeosu.

\* KBS TV 9 o'clock News of Sept. 12th

- TV news van in Jinju (Geon-woo Kim)
- TV news van in Busan (Byeong-oh Bae)

### **Typhoon Maemi inflicts the greatest damage since the beginning of record-keeping**

\* KBS TV 9 o'clock News of September 13th

- Export shipments crippled due to crane accident (Busan, Yeong-poong Lee)
- At least ten people drown in a Masan store (Jae-joon Jeong)

### **Disaster broadcasting by phase & problem areas**

#### **The phases of disaster broadcasts**

Disaster broadcasts are classified as follows: i) Phase 1: damage is relatively light; ii) Phase 2: heavy damage is anticipated and, thus, breaking news is broadcasted; and iii) Phase 3: massive damage is expected and special news reports are broadcasted.

#### **Phase 1 Disaster Broadcasting**

- Phase 1 disaster broadcasting commences when the typhoon is expected to directly influence the Peninsula in the next 36 hours.
- Phase 1 disaster broadcasting is initiated if the Korea Meteorological Administration and other such agencies announce a storm or flood alert, and disasters in public facilities are anticipated.
- TV frequently broadcasts ways to avoid disasters in the form of scrolls and spots.

#### **Phase 2 Disaster Broadcasting**

- Phase 2 disaster broadcasting commences when the typhoon is expected to strike the Peninsula in the next 18 hours.
- Phase 2 disaster broadcasting is carried out if structures collapse, massive flooding, gas explosions and other large-scale disasters or accidents are foreseen; or when airplane crashes, train derailments and other large-scale traffic accidents have occurred on which news reports should be urgently broadcasted.
- "Breaking news" is organized to swiftly report disaster status.
- Breaking news shall be in the form a special broadcast, lasting around an hour.

#### **Phase 3 Disaster Broadcasting**

- Phase 3 disaster broadcasting commences when the typhoon is expected to hit the Peninsula in the next 9 hours.
- Phase 3 disaster broadcasting commences in the case of typhoons, earthquakes, fire accidents, collapse of public facilities and other massive disasters in some regions or nationwide.
- In response, all regular TV and radio programs are immediately suspended, and "breaking news" is rapidly set up to provide in-depth reporting on the status of the disaster.
- For phase 3, a disaster broadcasting special coverage team is organized without delay. Moreover, disaster broadcasting at this phase is carried out without any restrictions on broadcasting time.
- If it is deemed impossible for KBS to fulfill the role of host broadcaster for disaster broadcasting as set forth in the Broadcasting Act, especially, in field coverage, KBS shall organize and operate a joint press corps with other domestic broadcasting companies.

### **Areas needing improvement in KBS's disaster broadcasting**

- Must pay more attention to preventing disasters before their occurrence. Until now, too much focus has been placed on reporting damage after a disaster has taken place.
- Must educate the general public more on disaster prevention during ordinary times. At present, no systematic disaster prevention programs are broadcasted at normal times.
- Must invest more on research & development in order to provide effective disaster-prevention broadcasting.
- Must prepare broadcasting manuals on each type of disaster. Until now, disaster broadcasts with similar contents and formats have been aired year after year.
- In the wake of the rising number of disasters and calamities, KBS's response leaves much room for improvement. Therefore, a change of perspective toward disaster prevention is required.

### **Disaster reduction measures (At Present)**

1) Standards on structures and facilities are being strengthened to cope with climate and environmental changes.

- According to the present Constructions Act of Korea, the basic standard wind load (resistance against the wind), ranging from 25m/sec to 45m/sec by region, is applied differently to buildings according to their characteristics and nearby surroundings. However, the maximum instantaneous wind speed of Typhoon Maemi exceeded 60m/sec, endangering everything in its path in most areas it passed through. Therefore, the design and safety standards of major structures should be more stringent in consideration of the drastic change in climate around the Korean peninsula.

2) Plans to use reclaimed land for disaster prevention are being established in the process of urban construction.

- Of the widespread damage incurred by Typhoon Maemi, the most devastating was caused by tidal waves. Sufficient preparation against tidal wave damage has not been made thus far. In particular, the city of Masan suffered from massive damage due to tidal waves, and to make matters worse, no measures had been taken against tidal waves, even when the coastal reclaimed land began to sink with the passage of time. And excessively high buildings were recklessly constructed on the reclaimed land.

3) Guidelines are being devised for the general public so that they know what to do in the event of each type of disaster.

- The necessity has been raised to devise systematic guidelines and carry out exercises during normal times so that i) each member of society knows what to do in the event of a disaster; and ii) public officials are fully aware how to evacuate citizens to safe areas.

4) Broadcasting manuals on each type of disaster are being produced.

- KBS has organized a committee in order to produce broadcasting manuals on each disaster type based on the existing disaster broadcasting manual.

5) The Korean government and KBS are introducing the national disaster warning broadcasting (disaster broadcasting) system.

It is necessary to introduce a satellite broadcasting system that automatically turns on TV sets so that a warning broadcast is immediately aired for citizens residing in disaster areas when a typhoon, earthquake and other disasters are anticipated.