

Chairperson's Summary

Introduction

The International Conference on Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM) was held in Hyogo, Japan on 2 –4 December 2003, with the participation of government officials from 24 countries and representatives from international/local NGOs, international/regional/governmental organizations, UN agencies (ISDR, UNDP, UNESCO, WHO), the private sectors, media, and educational sector including scientific and academic institutions. The aims of the Conference were:

- a) to promote the TDRM approach among non-traditional yet critical stakeholders and exponents of disaster reduction through developing a strategic understanding of the TDRM approach and how to integrate TDRM into the national planning process and disaster reduction and response systems of the participating countries towards sustainable development,
- b) to confirm the importance and relevance of TDRM in the pursuit of sustainable development through examples of best practice and current initiatives in the Asian region, including effective disaster risk communication among stakeholders,
- c) to discuss how to promote TDRM approach effectively and also the constraints and challenges ahead in disaster reduction.

A constructive discussion was conducted by the participants and resource persons throughout the conference and the following has been adopted as the Chairperson's summary.

1. Concept of TDRM

The concept of the TDRM comprises the following components.

a) Risk Management Flow:

The systematic steps involved here are policies on national and local levels to deal with risk, risk identification, risk analysis and evaluation, and implementation of countermeasures.

b) Four Phases of Disaster Reduction:

The identified four phases of disaster reduction cycle are prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and rehabilitation & reconstruction.

c) Implementation Strategies

The implementation strategies include mechanisms for coordination, information sharing, investment for disaster reduction, public awareness and support, and collaboration among stakeholders

Although the general concept has been outlined, the present challenge is how to implement the TDRM in each country. A practical approach would be to learn from past experiences and adopt the TDRM approach specific to the conditions in each country.

In Asia, the following issues are pertinent for the implementation of a comprehensive disaster reduction strategy.

2. Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management into the National Planning Process

In an integrated disaster risk management approach, activities from structural interventions to community based disaster management (CBDM), which reduces hazard and vulnerability respectively, should be coordinated. The challenge we face now is how to orient development agencies of the need to integrate disaster risk management into the national & local planning process, thus mainstreaming disaster reduction into development.

3. Collaboration Among Stakeholders

Collaboration among stakeholders is a critical strategy of the TDRM Approach. It enhances and complements the respective capacities of concerned sectors and organizations in the pursuit of development objectives. The significant involvement of the private sector, business corporations, media, education, and the academia, among others, and their partnership with

governments and international organizations, facilitates the promotion of disaster risk reduction initiatives across all sectors of the society and the enhancement of public awareness and understanding of disaster risks.

4. Best Practices Towards Total Disaster Risk Management

In order to ensure the effective application of the TDRM approach, it is essential to learn lessons from the best practices around us both nationally as well as internationally.

Highlighting such practices are vital for making decisions that involve prime decision makers including politicians, financial administrators, planners in the national coordinating body in every country to emphasize the "culture of prevention" for disaster reduction and sustainable development of the society.

5. Transform Current Disaster Reduction Initiatives into Best Practices

It is important to incorporate the current initiatives on disaster reduction in implementing the TDRM approach. Current important initiatives include:

- Socio-economic impact methodology for disaster impact evaluation,
- Climate forecast and climate risk management approaches,
- GLIDE - Global disaster IDentifier number initiative for the sharing of methodological information on disasters,
- SUMA - SUPply MANagement system for strengthening and effectively coordinating the emergency supply management system in every country,
- Sharing region specific disaster reduction experiences.

These initiatives should be integrated into the elements of the TDRM approach to disaster reduction as a tool to strengthen the process of sustainable development.

6. Challenges Ahead: Towards the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005

The challenge now is to reduce the negative impact from disasters and to transform disaster reduction into a vital tool for sustainable development and for achieving Millennium Development Goals. The international conference on TDRM contributed to the preparatory process towards the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in 2005, which will aim to enhance the political commitment and investment for all who are involved in the task of reducing risk and vulnerability.

The major challenge ahead is to recognize the TDRM approach as an effective tool of disaster reduction and integrate this approach in each country keeping in view of specific context, needs, and conditions. This will hopefully help in achieving the transition from a phase of commitment to one of implementation in a paradigm of dealing with total risk.

If we can mobilize the power of humanity to protect its hard earned development gains surely and confidently we will move towards sustainable development and a better and safer FUTURE.