

**Closing Speech**  
**Mr. Thomas Brennan**

Regional Disaster Reduction Advisor, UNDP Bangkok

I do want to extend my compliments and my gratitude to the organizers and sponsors of this workshop. It really has been successful, and much better than routine. Indeed, it was one of the best workshops/conferences I have attended in the last eight to ten years – truly a very high level workshop. I also would like to complement and extend my gratitude to the participants—very good dialogue, very good presentations, very good ideas put forward, good sharing, just excellent all around. I am very impressed by what variously has been said, asked and examined. It was very rewarding.

We have entered really a new era – unlike anything that we have experienced in the past. We have mentioned climate change and climate variability. We are not talking merely about what is going to happen in fifty to one hundred years from now, but about what happens as we get from here to there. The future really is now. Even if climate change is only going to be one degree between now and the year of 2050, it is going to cause enormous changes in storms – in the frequency and the severity of those storms – and in rainfall patterns between now and then. This year, in fact, already we have seen evidence of this, more serious than we have seen in the past ten years. What is happening now is going to get a lot worse. Even the countries that have been so far been immune to disasters are not going to continue to be immune to disasters anymore.

We have water scarcity. India, perhaps, suffers the most: water tables are decreasing one to three meters per a year all over India. In China, they are decreasing one and half to two meters in northern China, which is a major grain producing area. Changing rainfall patterns are going to cause some water shortages in Malaysia that impact on Singapore.

We have urbanization, very rapid urbanization. The patterns here have been changing. We have had a lot of urbanizations in the past - in Bangkok, Jakarta, Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur. But, now the patterns are changing somewhat. Between the years of 2000-2015, the world population will grow by about 1.1 billion people. Almost all of those – about 1 billion of them – are going to be in the cities. But, if we look at the hundred largest cities in the world, they will absorb only about 140 million of those. And cities that are between 1 and 5 million population now will only absorb 300 million. About 460 million will go into the small cities, the cities that are now just one million or less. That's a grave danger, but that's also hope. They haven't made their mistakes yet. They are going to gain population very rapidly—not Kuala Lumpur, but Penang; not Bangkok, but Chengmai. They are also the cities that have least capacity in terms of urban planning, health services, fire services and so on. But, they haven't experienced massive growth yet. So, they can have urban planning. They can make sure that indeed population is going to be absorbed in an orderly way and that they are not going to increase disaster risk.

We have an environmental degradation. Too much logging, too much cutting down the mangrove swamps, this is going to increase our vulnerability as well as increase hazards. It is not just the fact that we are building on flood plains, but it is the fact that our construction in Bogor causes flooding in Jakarta. We are endangering others, as well as ourselves, by some of the activities that we are engaged in. The logging causes greater hazards and floods downstream. Cutting down the mangrove swamps causes greater storms that destroy our fishponds and our neighbors' houses. So, we put these things together and we see both a cause and effect – increased hazards and increased vulnerability. We have to have two approaches. We must reduce our vulnerability by adapting, but we must also reduce the hazard by better planning. It

requires involvement of all of the stakeholders. We can do it.

Disaster risk reduction is definitely the single-most important development activity that one can undertake in Asia. More important than any industrial development programme, family planning programme, and any other single thing you can do, is simply to reduce the impact of disasters upon your societies. If you can do that, you can do more than any other developmental programme is likely to do in your country.

I am very encouraged by what has been accomplished here in four days. I think that the programme was well put together and that the participants were excellent. But, now you have to go home, in some cases to convince your governments. You have to convince them to do the right thing, to try to get this important issue into the development planning process. It is not always going to be easy. You are not always going to have statistics and information available to convince them. In those situations, I strongly advise that you should go to the UNDP office and say that you have got a problem here and you want UNDP to help determine how to convince your government to adopt a policy of TDRM. Let UNDP help you; shift some of the burden onto them.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to work with you these four days, to get to know some of you, and to be encouraged by the things that you have said. I go away feeling very happy and hopeful. Thanks again.

**Closing Speech**  
**Mr. Satoru Nishikawa**

Executive Director, Asian Disaster Reduction Center, Japan

Dear participants, Mr. Thomas Brennan, Mr. Terje Skavdal, Mr. Emmanuel de Guzman, and all the resource persons:

On behalf of the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), I would like to express my sincere gratitude to each of you for your active participation and contribution to the International Training Program on Total Disaster Risk Management.

I understand that we all recognize the importance of the entire disaster reduction cycle. Immediate relief response in situation of disaster occurrence can only be well done with good preparedness and furthermore with good prevention and mitigation. Lessons learnt in response and relief must be reflected in prevention and mitigation activities. Rehabilitation and reconstruction must be done with a view to contribute to future prevention and mitigation. Valuable information and guidance on hazard mapping and disaster assessment as a decisive approach for disaster prevention and mitigation, preparedness and response, relief and rehabilitation, and experiences as disaster responders were well shared and deliberated in these four days.

I would like to ask the participants three favors: First, I would like to ask all of you to reflect on the concept of TDRM, and translate it into your own language so that the TDRM approach would be well accepted in your country. The English wording of TDRM or Total Disaster Risk Management does not have to be used as it is. It can be re-worded as 'holistic', 'integrated', or 'comprehensive'. It does not have to be 'total' because the most important aspect is the concept behind it. Second, I would like to encourage you to seek ways to adapt the TDRM concept to conform to your national policies so that it would contribute to reduce remarkably the losses from disasters in the future. No matter how you name it, as long as its approach accomplish the same end of decreasing the adverse effect of natural disasters and assuredly reaching the people at risk, the aim of this training program will be considered successfully achieved. Third, through this training program, I would like to ask you to test some of the tools that you have found relevant to the disaster condition in your respective countries.

Moreover, sharing information between the neighboring countries that may have the same climatic conditions is another important issue in disaster reduction, because the difficulties in the work of disaster reduction or disaster response come from the fact that you cannot easily teach in the universities since nobody can think and elaborate about the disasters in theory. It is a disaster because it is unexpected. But I am sure that you agree with that we do not have to wait for all the countries to experience all the tragedies. Also, we can learn from other successes. Thus, I would like to encourage you to share the information of disaster preparedness, response, and management with your neighboring countries.

Together with UN-OCHA Kobe Office, ADRC will continue to serve as the focal point for our multi-lateral network of experiences and expertise for disaster reduction in Asia.

Once again, I would like to thank all of you for your active participation, and I look forward to seeing you on several occasions in the pursuit of a safer life for the peoples of Asia. Thank you very much.