

5-7. International Symposium

“Living with Risk – disaster reduction for future generations –”

1) Purpose:

Despite the efforts made by countries and relevant organizations, natural disasters continue to be a great threat to people and their social lives, hampering the achievement of sustainable development, especially in developing countries. Being held on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, the Symposium aims to provide an opportunity to enhance the understanding of the importance of disaster risk reduction and of the need to further strengthen capacities by promoting cooperation and collaboration for reducing risks at various stakeholders, such as local and central governments, UN agencies, international organizations, academia, NGOs, and communities.

2) Date/Time:

January 17, 2005 (Mon) 15:30-17:40

3) Venue

Kobe Portopia Hall (Minatojima-nakamachi, Chuo-ku, Kobe, Japan)

4) Organized by:

Cabinet Office (Government of Japan), United Nations Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR), United Nations University (UNU), Hyogo Prefectural Government, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN/OCHA) Kobe, and Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC)

5) In cooperation with:

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) Kobe Broadcasting Center, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

6) Programme

1. Opening remarks

- H.E. Mr. Yoshitaka Murata, Minister of State for Disaster Management, Japan
- Mr. Tatsuo Yada, Mayor of Kobe City

2. Keynote Speech

- H.E. Mr. Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, MP, Minister for Food and Disaster Management, People's Republic of Bangladesh

Challenges for Disaster Management in Bangladesh

“Due to its peculiar and unique geographical location and topography, Bangladesh is prone to natural disasters such as floods, cyclones and other natural disasters, every year causing serious damage on people and economy. Relief has been given for years to the people in Bangladesh and as a result they have become relief-oriented. There are millions of poor people in disaster-prone areas in Bangladesh. No amount of relief and response would help, because they are trapped in a vicious circle of poverty and disaster. In order to break this circle, it is necessary to reduce vulnerabilities to disaster risks and enhance capacities of the poor for establishing sustainable livelihood. In this regard, Bangladesh has initiated a project called “Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Programme”, which includes public awareness programme, training for community leaders, management of livelihood

outcomes in a planned way, resulting in a great reduction of disaster risks and contributing to poverty eradication. The future tasks will be the changing of the mindset of the key policymakers, empowerment of the poor to cope with disasters, and mainstreaming of disaster risk management into development planning and institutions.”

- Ms. Sadako Ogata, President of JICA

Integration of disaster risk reduction in broader context of 'governance' issues

“Governance has two meaning: top-down governance (governance by governments) and self-governance of people. Having both of them, you can truly have the governance. In case of developing nations, administrative organizations are rather vulnerable and there are too many of them involved in disaster reduction without any cooperation and coordination among them. In addition, people who are often affected by disasters are disadvantageous people such as the poor, and they fall into a vicious circle, failing to rebuild their livelihood and deteriorating poverty conditions. And information and knowledge on disaster risks and disaster reduction are not fully communicated to local people, who often have a low awareness of disaster reduction at the same time.

In order to confront these current conditions, it is crucial to be aware of disaster risks by use of hazard maps and early warning systems, establish overall rules for information sharing at the time of disasters, reduce disaster risks, and educate people on how to respond to disasters utilizing the information obtained, from the standpoint of human security. Furthermore, it is important to reaffirm that disaster risks are one of the major impediments to poverty programmes and should be integrated into socio-economic development.”

3. Special report

Report on the Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami

- Ms. Sumedha Ghunawathie Jayasena, Minister of Women Empowerment and Social Welfare, Sri Lanka

“Sri Lanka has experienced few natural calamities in the past, however, landslides and droughts have inflicted heavy damage on the country in this couple of years. The devastating tsunami disaster brought the worst damage on the country in its history, with 90% of the coastal buildings destroyed, 30,833 dead, 192,920 families affected, and 482,531 people displaced (as of January 10th). I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the international community for their kind assistance extended to us.”

- Mr. Nimal Hettiarachchi, Director of National Disaster Management Centre, Sri Lanka

“The Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster caused a great catastrophe to Sri Lanka. About 131,700 houses were destroyed by the tsunami, about 90,000 houses completely collapsed and 40,000 houses partially collapsed. There were great impacts on educational facilities.

Sri Lanka needs further international assistance, or an estimated amount of US\$ 853 million, for recovery.”

4. Panel Discussion

- Mr. Katsuji Ebisawa, President of NHK

“We learned from this devastating tsunami disaster that broadcasters have a great responsibility for the minimization of the impact of disasters, even at their

earliest stage. It is important to have bird's eye view of disasters.

In Japan, there is the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act, which stipulates that governmental organizations for disaster reduction and designated public organizations, such as NHK, should work in close cooperation to protect the lives and assets of the general public. NHK has been closely working with the River Bureau of the Ministry for Land, Infrastructure, and Transport, as well as with the Japan Meteorological Agency. In addition, it is crucial to conduct field exercises a few times a year.”

- Mr. Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

“It is crucial to prepare for disasters, establish early warning systems, and implement development programmes, in order to build a disaster-resilient society, as well as to respond to disasters. One dollar or one yen spent on prevention can generate a ten-fold yield in terms of money not having to be spent on recovery works later.

We cannot prevent natural hazards from occurring, but we can make societies more resistant to face these natural hazards. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, local authorities, local schools, local hospitals, local churches or local mosque will be the first line of defense. Then, countries should have national platforms, where the organizations cooperate to meet future challenges. In addition, it is important to invest in local communities and early warning systems.”

- Mr. Michel Jarraud, Secretary General of WMO

“About 80-90% of all natural disaster events are of meteorological/hydrological origin, or are aggravated by such phenomena. In addition, over 85% of people killed are through such disasters. This explains why the WMO is involved in disaster prevention activities, and at the same time, it can be said that damage could be reduced since these prevention activities have been conducted.

A wide variety of actors are involved in disaster management, such as the providers of services for monitoring assets and providing early warnings, various disaster preparedness coalition groups, civil defence authorities, risk managers, decision makers, governments, etc. Moreover, it is important to transmit information to, raise awareness of, and educate people who respond to disasters. It is not a matter of meteorology alone, but climatology, hydrology, oceanography, every other earth science you can think of. In this regards, we cannot treat the problem in isolation.”

- Mr. Markku Niskala, Secretary-General of IFRC

“We know from experiences that there cannot be an effective risk reduction programme based heavily on external resources. The base must be local, for that is where the people at risk live and where preparedness must be active. Our member national Red Cross Societies are all constitutionally required to be community-based and to have a diverse membership, which respects and protects the most vulnerable without any form of discrimination. This is why we are so determined to underline, at every opportunity, our belief that effective programs aimed at preparing for and responding to disasters, must be designed, implemented and monitored by the communities themselves. As another part of preparedness, we plan to establish an international disaster response law, rule or principle.”

- Mr. Shigeru Ito, Chairman of ADRC

“It is important to think about how we transfer our experiences of disasters to

the future generation, and also convey what kind of actions to take at the time of a disaster, in order to transmit a set of valuable messages. I think it is important to incorporate disaster reduction into the education curriculum for school children. Children usually talk about what they learnt at school to their parents at home. If disaster reduction education lasts in the next long history, it would be possible for next generations after them to cope with disasters that would occur in the next 100 years.

Another point I would like to stress is that Japan has accumulated a considerable amount of knowledge and resources for coping with natural disasters. Such great expertise of Japan should be utilized for further contribution to the world.”

- Moderator: Mr. Lyuji Miyamoto, Executive Broadcaster of NHK

5. Closing remarks

- Mr. Salvano Briceño, Director of UN/ISDR
- Mr. Toshizo Ido, Governor of Hyogo Prefecture



Fig. 5-7-1 Kenote speech



Fig. 5-7-2 Panel discussion