

6. The International Recovery Platform (IRP): History and Current Activities

6-1. The Establishment of the IRP

While the capacity of the UN system for disaster response and humanitarian assistance are widely recognized, there is currently a vacuum in terms of the UN's capacity and system-wide mechanisms for post-disaster recovery efforts, particularly those with a risk reduction focus.

Experience increasingly affirms that the post-disaster recovery phase provides a critical opportunity to shift the focus from saving lives to restoring livelihoods, and is an important time for introducing measures to reduce future disaster risk. Recovery can help close the gap between relief and development, and can transform disasters into opportunities for sustainable development. This occurs when efforts are made to support local and national recovery processes at an early stage, when risk reduction considerations are factored into all recovery activities, and when the synergies between development, humanitarian, and other actors involved in the response phases are properly channeled. A successful recovery effort, then, is predicated on having advance agreements and mechanisms in place so that the recovery process is effectively conceived and managed, and is initiated in a timely manner. This includes such measures as appropriate assessment methodologies, pre-established resource mobilization mechanisms, surge capacity to support UN Country Teams, and standing coordination mechanisms.

Shared concerns related to the UN approach and processes for post-disaster recovery have resulted in the formulation of a joint initiative, the International Recovery Platform, by the UN system, ADRC, and other partners, with the encouragement and support of Japan as well as other donors and key program countries. This initiative was discussed at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) during session 4.9 on Post Disaster Recovery. Representatives from the UNDP, UN-HABITAT, ADRC, ADPC, ILO, and other concerned UN agencies expressed their respective agency commitments and support for the proposed international platform for recovery. The meeting resulted in a recommendation for the establishment of the International Recovery Platform (IRP)

Only four months after the WCDR, the International Seminar on Post Disaster Recovery, in support of the IRP, was held at the JICA Centre in Kobe and at Hyogo House on 11-13 May 2005. The IRP was officially launched in Kobe, Hyogo.

6-2. The Governance Structure of the IRP

The IRP currently consists of 15 governments, UN agencies, and international organizations including ADRC (as of March 2013).^{*} The IRP focuses on the following three priority activities for recovery, respectively based in Kobe, Turin, and Geneva: (a) Knowledge Management and Advocacy, Kobe, (b) Training and Capacity Building, Turin, and (c) Enhancing Recovery Operations, Geneva.

As described in the Terms of Reference, the IRP Kobe functions as the IRP secretariat and is responsible for convening IRP steering committee meetings and disseminating information on IRP activities and outcomes.

* IRP members: Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), Hyogo Prefectural Government, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Labour Organization (ILO), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Cabinet Office of Japan, Swiss Agency for Development and Coordination (SDC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), United Nations Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN/OCHA), the World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), and Asian Development Bank (ADB).

6-3. IRP Activities in FY 2012

6-3-1. International Recovery Forum 2013

The International Recovery Forum 2013, “Resilient Recovery in Cities and Municipalities: Lessons on Integrating DRR into Recovery and Development Planning – Tohoku and Global Experiences and the Post 2015 Framework for DRR”, was held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan on 22 January 2013. The forum aimed to 1) further reflect on applying the lessons on recovery from mega-disasters to inform Post-2015 Global Framework for



Fig. 6-3-1 International Recovery Forum 2013

DRR and recovery, 2) share knowledge and exchange experience on disaster recovery planning and recovery operations, 3) present recent experiences on recovery operations and the emerging challenges in cities. 184 participants from 39 countries and 14 international organizations comprised of national and local officials, experts on disaster reduction and recovery, and representatives of various stakeholders, attended the forum.

Following the keynote speech on the current state of reconstruction in Sendai City by Ms. Emiko Okuyama, 6 representatives from cities and a country including Mr. Rico Rentuza, Mayor of St. Bernard, Philippines, Mr. Kimiaki Toda, Mayor of Ofunato City, Japan, Mr. Francisco Gaitan Aguerro, Mayor of Cantarranas, Honduras and Mr. Hisan Hassan, Project Director of National Disaster Management Center, Maldives, etc. made presentations on the experiences and lessons on recovery from recent natural disasters. There were also special reports from Dr. Arturo Pesigan, Technical Officer, WHO, Mr. Victor Poyarkov, Executive Director of European Center of Technical Safety, Ukraine, and Mr. Yoichi Nozaki, Director General of Fukushima Prefectural