

Environment, UNCRD, UNDP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNDRR, UNOPS, and WHO (Figure 6.1. Logos of IRP SC members)



Figure 6.1. Logos of IRP SC Members

## 6.2. Activities

In 2020 and early 2021, IRP/ADRC implemented a range of activities to advance its goals in the fields of resilient recovery and build-back-better.

### 6.2.1. International Recovery Forum 2021

Annually, in January, IRP organizes the International Recovery Forum (Forum) to exchange experiences and facilitate discussion on challenges to resilient recovery, and opportunities for building back better. The online Forum was held in a hybrid modality on 22 January 2021, on the theme, “Building Back Better from Compound Disasters: Practical Cases and Lessons for Recovery from Natural Hazards and COVID-19”. Attended by 340 participants from 49 countries, the Forum featured keynote presentations and panel discussions on early lessons learned in recovery, and opportunities to build back better, greener, more equitable and resilient from COVID-19 and compound disasters.

As a global health crisis, COVID-19 has undoubtedly impacted many aspects of society and the economy. The unprecedented socioeconomic impacts that it has caused have undermined development progress and threatened the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Simultaneously, countries are confronted by the challenges of managing compound risks from the COVID-19 pandemic and natural hazards. In view of this, the Forum organized two panel discussions that aim to achieve two objectives:

The first objective is to examine priorities and opportunities to build back better, greener, and more resilient from COVID-19 and compound disasters. Panelists discussed strategies for building back better, greener, and more resilient from the COVID-19 pandemic and natural hazards. Discussions included consideration for institutional, financial, and implementation support for launching a green and resilient recovery while balancing immediate recovery

needs and goals with priorities for longer-term resilience. Speakers reflected on lessons from recent and past recovery experiences that can inform priorities and opportunities to build back better.

The second objective is to assess social and economic impacts and identify early lessons learned for sustainable recovery from pandemics and compound disasters. Panelists delved into cases and early lessons learned for recovery from disasters in countries most affected by the pandemic and natural hazards. It provided insights from assessing social and economic impacts, as well as planning and financing a sustainable recovery. It addressed key issues for vulnerable groups, and consider measures for managing compound risks from the pandemic and natural hazards.

Speakers at the opening session included Mr. Jared MERCADANTE, Chair of the IRP Steering Committee (World Bank), Mr. OKONOGI Hachirou Minister of State for Disaster Management, Government of Japan, and Mr. IDO Toshizo, Governor of Hyogo Prefecture. The keynote speakers were Mr. KAWATA Yoshiaki, Executive Director of the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI) and Mr. Stéphane HALLEGATTE, Lead Economist, Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), World Bank. Ms. Yuki MATSUOKA, Head, UNDRR Office in Japan moderated this keynote session.

Members of the first panel discussions were Ms. Maria Alejandra MUÑOZ SEMINARIO, Vice President, Government of the Republic of Ecuador; Ms. Bambi KRAUS, National Tribal Affairs Advisor, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Government of the United States of America; Mr. Vijay PADMANABHAN, Director, Urban Infrastructure, Southeast Asia Department, Asian Development Bank; and Mr. Joy ELAMON, Director General, Kerala Institute of Local Administration. Ms. Rita MISSAL, Recovery Advisor, Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery for Building Resilience Team, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) moderated this panel. Members of the second panel discussions were Mr. Malcolm DALESA, PDNA and Recovery Strategy Coordinator, Department of Strategic Policy, Planning and Aid Coordination, Office of the Prime Minister, Government of Vanuatu; Mr. Ronald JACKSON, Head, Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery for Building Resilience Team, UNDP; Mr. Mark JOVEN, Undersecretary, Department of Finance, Government of the Philippines; and Ms. Bernadia Irawati TJANDRADEWI, Secretary General, Asia-Pacific, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). Ms. Paola ALBRITO, Chief of Branch, Intergovernmental processes, Interagency Co-operation and Partnerships, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) moderated this panel.



Figure 6.2. Speakers of the International Recovery Forum 2021

Finally, the Speakers at the closing session were Ms. Mami MIZUTORI, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Disaster Risk Reduction, Head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and Mr. MURAKAWA Soshi, Director, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, on behalf of Co-Chair of the IRP Steering Committee.

### Key Messages from the Forum

- **Risks** cannot be treated in isolation. A multisectoral, multi-dimensional, and systems approach is needed to better understand risk interactions, considering present and future risks.
- **Recovering** countries and communities will need to consider how they can build back better, greener, more resilient and equitable.
- **A long-term vision** for recovery should align with sustainable development, climate change, and risk reduction agendas. Recovery strategies should prioritize programmes that can meet both immediate recovery needs and long-term resilience objectives.
- **Social protections** need to be expanded, strengthened, and sustained to mitigate the longer-term impacts of the crisis, and build resilience against future shocks.
- **Partnership** is key to undertaking an integrated and transdisciplinary approach to maximize co-benefits to society.
- **Needs assessments** underpin timely, appropriately targeted recovery programmes. Multiple rounds of assessment will be needed to understand long-term impacts and evolving needs. Data and information systems need to be strengthened to enable evidence informed decision-making.
- **Local actions** have provided innovative and effective solutions and will be key to building resilient and sustainable cities.

#### 6.2.2. Bosai Kokutai 2020

On 3 October 2020, IRP participated in the 5th National Convention for the Promotion of Disaster Reduction, which was organized by the National Convention for the Promotion of Disaster Reduction 2020 Steering Committee led by the Cabinet Office. This event has been held since FY2016 and is now in its fifth year. The purpose of this event is to raise awareness of disaster prevention among the people and to share knowledge and experiences about disasters in order to enhance disaster preparedness, and to serve as an opportunity to raise awareness of disaster prevention at the individual and community levels. This year, the event was held online in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection.



Figure 6.3. IRP Guidance Notes Online Display

Through the online photo exhibition, IRP introduced its activities to the international community to promote "Build Back Better" by introducing the sectoral recovery guidance notes, leaflets outlining its activities, the IRP Herald and knowledge products related to COVID-19, and side events at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

### 6.2.3. Sendai Disaster Reduction and Future Forum 2021

On 7 March 2021, IRP participated in the Sendai Disaster Reduction and Future Forum 2021 held in Sendai City. The forum was held under the theme, "10 years after the Great East Japan Earthquake for a better future" as an event where citizens could learn about disaster prevention and disseminate their daily activities through sessions, booths, and hands-on events in order to connect the experiences and lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake to future disaster prevention.

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Figure 6.4. IRP Booth at the Sendai Future Forum 2021

IRP set up its own exhibition booth and distributed leaflets outlining its activities, USB memory sticks containing many of its publications such as guidance notes and recovery status reports, and the IRP Herald.

#### **6.2.4. COVID-19: Opportunities for Resilient Recovery**

IRP co-organised with UNDRR Asia-Pacific and ESCAP a webinar titled 'COVID-19: Opportunities for Resilient Recovery' on 7 May 2020. The webinar was aimed at highlighting the challenges, lessons learned from past disaster recovery events, and recommendations on how countries can start preparing for a recovery that is climate-sensitive, inclusive and contributes to global efforts to build more resilient systems that are better placed to prevent such crises in the future.

The COVID-19 crisis is an opportunity to consider global resilience, not just to COVID-19 but also to an uncertain future, where climate change looms large. Every aspect of society needs to transform, and countries must work together and learn from one another to accelerate action. Even while this crisis is far from over, and the full extent of its impacts has yet to be seen, countries and communities must plan for recovery now, so that when ready, they have a roadmap with processes, people, and resources in place to build back better. The webinar came up with key recommendations to inform resilience pathway.

#### **Key Recommendations**

1. Adopt a phased approach to recovery appropriate to the context.
2. Invest in governance and institutional coordination.
3. Strengthen and expand disaster-responsive and adaptive social protection.
4. Streamline data and information systems.
5. Be innovative in financing mechanisms
6. Fuel resilient infrastructure investments.
7. Promote sustainable consumption and nature-based solutions.
8. Ensure mental wellness and psycho-social care.
9. Promote and strengthen regional integration and solidarity.
10. Capitalize on the UN plans for social and economic recovery