

Plenary Session

Date: 12 May 2005, 9:30-12:30

Venue: Conference Hall, Hyogo House, Kobe

Theme: Challenges in incorporating disaster risk reduction in recovery

Coordinator: Dr. Allan Lavell, Coordinator of the Social Study of Risk and Disaster
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(FLACSO)

Rapporteur: Mr. Mihir Bhatt, Honorary Director, Disaster Mitigation Institute (DMI), India

Outline

The speakers introduced the challenges in incorporating disaster risk reduction in recovery through their countries' experiences in recovery from the great impact caused by disasters, such as the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, Algeria Earthquake, Bam Earthquake in Iran, and water-related disaster in Bangladesh. Ensuring effective and sustainable collaboration among various stakeholders is essential for integrating risk reduction into recovery plans. The following report summarizes proceedings of the Plenary Session, Challenges in Incorporating Disaster Risk Reduction in Recovery. The session aimed at identifying the efforts and challenges in promoting recovery that reduces risks.

Summary of discussion

1) Presentations:

The session included a wide variety of issues and challenges pertaining to risk reduction in recovery. The presentations made during the Plenary Session included,

Urban-Reconstruction and Housing-Restoration at Post-Disaster

Dr. Yoshiteru Murosaki, President, National Research Institute of Fire and Disaster

The presentation focused on essential conditions for sustainable recovery and principles of community based reconstruction. Issues of urban safety and building safer cities were addressed. Community level activities were addressed and need for city level measures were highlighted. *See CD 3.1.

Community Empowerment after Disasters

Ms. Fukiko Ishii, Director, Collabonet, Japan

The presentation emphasized upon the need for supporting community units/initiatives and supporting solidarity between disaster victims, experts, and NGOs for recovery. Inclusion

of risk reduction in recovery can start early on but is often left out or left to last stages.

*See CD 3.2.

Challenges in Incorporating Disaster Risk Reduction in Recovery

Dr. Carlos A. Villacis, Consultant, ADRC

The presentation analyzed three representative disasters in LA and provided a comprehensive set of challenges and recommendations for overcoming problems, which included, (a) Paradigm shift from emergency response and relief to disaster prevention and risk reduction; (b) moving from project to long-term processes; (c) decentralizing procedures; (d) transferring technology and capacities as the first priority of cooperation; (e) integrating disaster reduction into public policy and development planning; f) measuring progress and impact. *See CD 3.3.

Integrated Disaster Recovery of the Algiers-Boumerdes (Algeria) Earthquake of 21 May 2003

Prof. Djillali Benouar, Professor, University of Bab Ezzouar (USTHB), Algeria

The presentation included a wide variety of damage and loss assessment related challenges faced after the 21 May, 2003 earthquake in Algeria. The presentation also provided a comprehensive overview of earthquake reconstruction in Algeria and included various issues faced during the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases. This included challenges of moving ahead from seismic risk reduction to multi-hazard risk reduction. *See CD 3.4.

Risk Reduction and Recovery in Bangladesh

Ms. Dilruba Haider, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP, Bangladesh

The presentation provided a brief overview on the impact of disaster in Bangladesh and explained Disaster Relief and Recovery Facility (DRRF) with its key features, constraints and recommendations for improvement, which included, a) focusing donor support on recovery, to ensure maximum utilization of the funds; b) Changing mindset of all (Govt. NGOs) to incorporate risk reduction in response program for ensuring sustainability; and c) better and 'standard' understanding of risk reduction issues among various stakeholders. These challenges are spread across South Asia. *See CD 3.5.

A Brief Review of Bam Reconstruction Programme

Mr. Mohammad Hossein Havaei Tarshizi, Vice President for Reconstruction and Rural Housing Affairs, Housing Foundation, Iran

The presentation raised fundamental questions about reconstruction after earthquakes and explained the process of reconstruction after the Bam earthquake in Iran, such as quality control, technical supervision, types of structures and use of material with technical

services. The role of strong state without suitable private sector risk reducers was a challenge. *See CD 3.6.

2) Discussion: The discussion held after the Presentations was exciting, useful and right to the point. The discussion raised varied types of challenges related to incorporating disaster risk reduction in recovery, which included, a) avoiding re-construction at pre-disaster risk levels and minimizing new risks; b) minimizing perpetual poverty in recovery; c) integrating disaster risk reduction into public policy, development planning and actual practices; d) supporting community based initiatives and institutionalizing projects and programmes for disaster recovery; e) striking the suitable balance between structural engineering measures and non-structural measures for vulnerability reduction and disaster recovery; and f) capitalization of resources (human, technical, financial) during the recovery phase to include risk reduction.

3) Key approaches: The presentations followed by discussion also gave an opportunity for analyzing a whole range of disaster recovery approaches adopted by civil society, public/government, and markets. It helped all participants understand advantages and disadvantages of various disaster recovery approaches such as, top-down, bottom-up (community based), market recovery, and supply and demand driven approaches. It became clear that there is a need to pilot many more initiatives across Asia to create a critical mass of experience in incorporating risk reduction in recovery.

4) Conclusion: The session ended with following key pointers:

- Experience of incorporating risk reduction in recovery is thin and scattered;
- Focus on risk reduction increases towards the later stages of recovery. However, opportunities are often available towards the early stages of recovery;
- Financial incentives, instruments, and investments are not available either at macro level or at micro level to include risk reduction in recovery;
- Risks facing the community may not be the risks identified by insurers and other risk reducers;
- Techno-legal regime of risk reduction and management around disasters is under observed and studied.