

Public Symposium on Post Disaster Recovery

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Date: 12 May 2005, 14:00-17:00

Venue: Conference Hall, Hyogo House, Kobe, Japan

Theme: What are the challenges and solutions for effective recovery?

Master of Ceremony: Ms. Kayoko Yokoyama, Hyogo Prefectural Government

Rapporteur: Mr. Anil K. Sinha, Senior Technical Advisor, ADRC

Outline

The Symposium was intended to draw the attention of the public to the proposed IRP's efforts. It also contributed to producing an action plan of IRP as output of the Symposium. Following the keynote speech by Dr. Allan Lavell, representatives from Indonesia, the Maldives and MERCY Malaysia/ADRRN made presentations on their experiences in recovery from the recent tsunami in the Indian Ocean. Facilitated by Ms. Helena Molin Valdes of UN/ISDR, a panel discussion was held with five panelists and five commentators to discuss the three main points: a) Reflection on the existing gaps in promoting efficient recovery, b) Proposals for supporting, solutions, mechanisms and frameworks for assisting post disaster recovery, and c) International support to close the gap between relief and development. Several participants including donor country representatives expressed interest in contributing to the IRP activities.

Welcome Address

Mr. Toshizo Ido, Governor of Hyogo Prefecture

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to extend a sincere welcome to all of you to Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture.

The International Recovery Platform (IRP) was launched in Hyogo on 11 May 2005. The opening ceremony of the IRP Hyogo Office was attended by numerous distinguished guests and stakeholders. Today we are holding the International Seminar on Post Disaster Recovery to identify challenges and devise solutions for achieving effective recovery from disasters.

In 1995, this area was devastated by the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. The direct damage caused by that quake was valued at approximately 10 trillion yen and as many as 6,433 fatalities have now been attributed to it. Since that time, we have been devoting our fullest efforts towards recovery and reconstruction activities, and many lessons have been learned in this process. Many natural disasters have occurred throughout the world since that time, including major earthquakes in Turkey, India, China and Iran. Moreover, the terrorist attacks in New York on 11 September, 2001 represented another great disaster.

Given our experience with a major earthquake ten years ago, we have empathized with those affected by the major disasters that have occurred in other parts of the world. We have tried providing support and aid by collecting donations and delivering them to disaster-stricken areas. In fact, donations are still being collected for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Disaster. But we have been doing more than just sending money. In response to the earthquake in Turkey, we also created a scholarship fund for children orphaned by the disaster. In India, we constructed dormitories for elementary schools and junior high schools. In China, we helped rebuild elementary schools. And in Iran, after consulting with the governor of Gujarat, we decided to provide educational programs aimed at facilitating the reconstruction of school buildings.

Had IRP existed back when all this was happening, these discussions and consultations could have been handled more smoothly. In the past, we had to seek out communication channels and find ways to engage in consultations on our own. This made us aware of the need for institutions that can play coordinating roles in the recovery process after a large disaster. Also, given the tremendous difficulties we experienced in trying to communicate with other affected areas and with victims, I have great hopes for the kind of role that IRP is going to play. Its intended role as a coordinator of various international institutions is sure to prove extremely useful to disaster response and recovery. Thank you very much.

Opening Remarks

Prof. Shigeru Itoh, Chairman of ADRC

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Shigeru Itoh, and I am the chairman of the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC). Many people from all over the world attended the World Conference on Disaster Reduction which was held in Kobe last January in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. At this conference, Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi noted the importance of sharing the lessons Japan has learned over the past ten years with the rest of the world. He indicated the need for a new framework to facilitate international cooperation on post disaster recovery. IRP was therefore launched, with the cooperation of Government of Japan, Hyogo Prefecture and UN agencies to fulfill this role.

I would like to make two points about IRP.

First, the IRP Hyogo Office is located in Kobe. The city of Kobe is Japan's one of the most international cities, and is located in Hyogo prefecture. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, much information from abroad came into Japan via Kobe, from where it was disseminated throughout the country. We can therefore confidently say that the people in Hyogo and Kobe are some of the most internationally minded in all of Japan. We are pleased to have been able to launch IRP in this kind of environment, and we hope that those of you who have come from abroad recognize the advantages of this location as well. We also hope that the installation of the IRP Hyogo Office in Kobe demonstrates Japan's strong commitment to engaging in international cooperation in this area.

The second point I would like to make is that Japan is a kind of laboratory for various disasters. Japan is prone to earthquakes, typhoons, volcanic eruptions, and several other types of large-scale disasters. About four years ago, there was a large volcanic eruption on Miyake Island, a very small island located within Tokyo Prefecture. The four thousand residents of Miyake Island had to relocate to the city of Tokyo, and only now, four years later, have they been able to return to their home island.

Large landslides have also occurred in Japan. A lush, green mountain range runs right through the heart of Kobe. Looking at it today, one might think that it has always been this lush and green, but it was actually completely bare up until about 70 years ago. Land used to slide down the side

of that bare mountain into Kobe, causing significant damage to the city. Eventually, the people of Kobe and Hyogo Prefecture, working together with the national government, planted trees along the mountain range to prevent such landslides. Ten years ago, when the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake struck, my greatest concern upon hearing the news was that landslides might have caused massive devastation. I heard about the earthquake while en route to Tokyo from Europe, just as we were flying over Anchorage. When I returned, however, I found that the mountains had caused no serious damage at all, thanks to the efforts made by our ancestors, our grandfathers and grandmothers, to plant trees and prevent just such a disaster.

Based on above backgrounds on location, knowledge and experience, I hope that IRP will make significant contributions towards helping and supporting those who are the most vulnerable to disasters throughout the world.

Thank you.

Keynote Speech

Dr. Allan Lavell, Coordinator of the Social Study of Risk and Disaster Programme at the Secretariat General of the Latin American Social Science Faculty (FLACSO)

Dr. Allan Lavell presented an analysis based on some generic and general perspectives critical to the whole issue of recovery. He highlighted the following three main issues:

- the nature and complexity of certain multi national and multi sector disasters such as those associated with the recent tsunami in the Indian ocean and hurricane Mitch affecting the Central American region, as opposed to the more simple, single area, but no less relevant disasters, associated with the earthquakes in Bam in Iran or Armenia in Colombia;
- the whole distinction and debate around recovery versus reconstruction and relationships to development;
- finding the 'third way' to recovery, combining reconstruction with sustainable development.

The number of disaster events and impacts are on the rise and global climatic change may lead to further increase in their numbers and complexity. He reflected on the fact that despite emphasis on prevention and mitigation in recent years, large amounts of humanitarian assistance still go to relief and immediate response and little to preventive risk reduction. Further, only about ten to twenty percent of the international assistance promised immediately following an event, actually reaches the affected countries and the people. For example, in Hurricane Mitch only about USD 2 billion out of 9 billion promised had reportedly reached the people.

While it is possible to identify and find parameters, criteria and facets relating to different kinds of disasters, it would be very difficult to find and identify a standard model of intervention in terms of reconstruction and recovery. This is due to the fact that the context and situations relating to socio-economic and political factors mostly vary from one event to the other, from very developed and modern to very poor and under-developed societies and impacts on societies where modern and traditional are juxtaposed and/or related such as in the areas affected by Mitch and the Asian tsunami. Recovery and reconstruction needs to be primarily looked at in the context of underdevelopment and poverty as around seventy percent of the people in many areas like Latin American and Asia still live below the poverty line, and poverty is at the root of the coping mechanisms and vulnerability of the people.

This actually brings us close to the 'development debate' and this should really reorient the 'disaster debate' and not the other way around. The focus needs to be on process rather than on product where decentralization, participation, delegation and appropriation ought to be the key words leading to an integrated and holistic approach to getting the affected societies back on their feet. Beyond just the physical aspects the recovery process will also have to deal with the mind, perceptions, feelings and attitudes of the people, which are invariably hurt, shaken, broken and even destroyed, in a disaster. Recovery under conditions of poverty and material and animic deficit can not just be seen as getting people back to "normal". This would mean reconstructing the very conditions of vulnerability and risk that contributed to the disaster in the first place. Recovery must thus be seen as the promotion of sustainable development, transition and change, and not just status quo, where disaster risk reduction is just one more facet of increased human security along with those directed to improved every day living conditions.

1) Presentations from countries

The three country presentations from Indonesia, Maldives and Malaysia covered the following aspects in a general manner while recounting their experiences in the wake of the recent tsunami.

- a) Reflections on the existing gaps in promoting efficient recovery;
- b) Proposals for supporting, solutions, mechanisms and frameworks for assisting post disaster recovery;
- c) International support to close the gap between relief and development.

Dr. Oktoraldi, Head of Subdirectorate for Regional Research and Information, BAPPENAS, Indonesia

Indonesia mentioned about the institutional arrangements, which were activated in the aftermath of the disaster. Aceh-Nias Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency was created and was being guided by an appropriate policy framework at the sectoral and regional levels. A Master Plan had been put in place with the vision to undertake rebuilding with engaging people in dialogue. *See CD 1.1.

Mr. Mohamed Imad, Director-Spatial Planning, Ministry of Planning and National Development, Maldives

In the wake of its first ever disaster, Maldives had also undertaken a nation-wide programme of reconstruction and recovery which is aimed at creating better opportunities socially, as well as economically. Improved and better standards were being adopted so as to reduce the vulnerability of the people and mitigate future risks. *See CD 1.2.

Dr. Jamilah Mahmood, President, MERCY Malaysia / Chairperson, Asian Disaster Reduction & Response Network (ADRRN)

The presentation coming from a non-governmental organization, highlighted its efforts in the areas of education, women related programmes and promotion of the concept of 'living with risk'. Partnership of all stakeholders was at the core of their efforts. Shake table demonstrations along with sharing of best practices has been used to sensitize the school children and the community members. *See CD 1.3.

2) Panel Discussion

Mr. Toshizo Ido, Governor, Hyogo Prefectural Government

Impacts of the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake

- It led to a birth of disaster culture after the earthquake. How to recover and how to get ready for the future Tokai Earthquake became the main concerns;
- The aging society is particularly vulnerable to this kind of disaster;
- People in the society are very important in the recovery process.

Mr. Fumio Takeda, Deputy Director-General, Cabinet Office of Japan

Talk about the disaster prevention measures from the central government point of view and also, the international assistance that Japan provides.

- Lessons from major earthquakes and typhoons in Japan to better Japanese laws on disaster prevention, recovery, reconstruction and mitigation, by the government;
- Based upon the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, making liaison with local governments, the Japanese government has taken various measures for disaster prevention in the future, as well as recovery measures, investment for disaster prevention, partnerships, and improvement of the awareness of citizens, and of legal frameworks and systems;
- The main earthquakes of the past years in Japan were not expected to hit in the area where they happened. That's why the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake caused great damage. Since a large earthquake can then hit anywhere in Japan, the government has been enforcing disaster prevention measures all over Japan (ex. volunteers, local government consciousness, mutual help among the community, etc...);
- Japan has extensive knowledge and know-how about disasters. Japan would like to share its experience with the international community. That is one of the reasons why the Hyogo Framework for Action was developed. The goal is to include risk mitigation measures in countries over the world with regard to disasters;
- It is gratifying that IRP was established in Kobe-Hyogo where extensive lessons from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake have been learned.

Mr. Ian O'Donnell, Senior Officer, ProVention Consortium

Definition of prevention according to Mr. O'Donnell: a form of collaboration among a various set of organizations. The goal is to mainstream risk reduction into development planning and policy.

5 important points:

- Challenge of matching the resources that are often available after disasters with the intention that is needed before the next disaster. There is a lack of linkages between those who invest in risk reduction measures and those who benefit from those measures. How do we bring the benefits of risk reduction forward?;
- Integrating risk reduction and risk assessment into recovery activity. There is an important relation between the micro and the macro level;

- The relation between the community level and government level is important. Recovery and development are interrelated. Community surveys are important to get all-levels perspective on the recovery process;
- Question around risk reduction and redistribution of risk;
- Need to develop standards for recovery, or some sort of certification process. They provide flexibility for adaptation and implementation.

Dr. Johan Schaar, Special Representative for the Tsunami Operation, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

The link between the global and local communities is important. What are the best and most efficient tools to help the communities recover? The IFRC has a strong responsibility and a big challenge in terms of disaster reduction measures elaboration. 5 year emergency and recovery plan has been set up, thanks to the resources coming from the public. Unique and unusual position, because of the fact there was no governmental donor. The way emergency assistance is done has a great impact on the way recovery is done.

4 principles that have to be taken into account when doing emergency assistance:

- Need to be conscious that people who are affected by disasters are not primarily objects of the IFRC's assistance, but they are actors and subjects in their own life and communities. The first assistance always comes locally. We must support this natural willingness to assist one's neighbors. It is important to consult local communities. The "revival of the heart" or the "recovery of the mind" is very important to take into account. So, in summary, we have to treat people as subjects, and not as objects;
- Local resources should always be engaged. We should always consider local resources as being the most important resources to be considered (economy, infrastructure, business, etc.);
- We should as much as possible use the livelihoods approach when we do emergency relief, that is to give people the means themselves to make their choices about what their priorities are;
- We should take into account the different roles of men, women, young and older people.

These 4 points should be the principles that should guide emergency relief, which will facilitate the recovery process in local communities

- Final point about the ability or inability of donors to support those processes. Donors themselves tend to invest in their own response capacity, they design their own assessment tools, and because of this change of focus, they become unable to fully support the local capacities. We have to be careful, because this leads to the neglect of the importance to build the local resources to respond.

Mr. Larry Roeder, Policy Adviser on Disaster Management, US Department of State

Focus on a few points important for IRP. Every point is based on the premise that it is not enough to return society at the point it was before the disaster struck. What we need to do is to develop societies that can resist hazards, so those hazards do not become disasters.

- Speed is important. Need to reengineer how to do the recovery, already knowing the response. Need of a smart recovery. A lot of work needs to be done prior to a disaster;
- Recovery needs to take into account the complexity of sustainable development. Protection of animal welfare is important, and is linked, to protect the animal industry, the culture (endangered species, zoos, etc.), and to enhance disease prevention;
- Telecommunication and information sharing are also important for recovery. When a disaster occurs, local communities need to be quickly informed. The disaster manager and the citizens need an effective telecommunication system so they can receive better early warning;
- Local population needs to be involved. The local population often has the answer to problems.

So how is this going to help IRP? Who's the lead? Someone has to be in charge, to give directions. That's missing a little bit. It can't be run by a committee, a committee can advise. There should be some thoughts about how UN/ISDR's could coordinate its National Platforms, which should include experts from NGO's, governments, industry, etc.... It is important that UN/ISDR coordinates these platforms in order for the Platforms to share information with each other.

3) Comments

Mr. John Richardson, Chairperson, Australian Disaster Recovery Subcommittee, Emergency Management Australia (EMA)

- Notion of common language. It is a challenge for IRP to come up with a common terminology. It is very important;
- From this common language can be developed a set of standards or principles, even though these concepts are rigid (every disaster is not of the same level, there is a complexity we need to consider);
- Out of these principles and standards, then comes the notion of trying, equipped. Confidence in people;
- The ability to evaluate the areas where differences could have been made and the ones where they couldn't represents the final outcome.

Ms. Farah Najam, Development Planner and Business Development Executive, Dubai Humanitarian City

- Involvement of community participation is very important, because it brings an element of sustainability to the recovery process. It is important to pass information to local communities. The community participation should go on further, not only to be involved in needs assessment, but also in decision making, because we need to satisfy all the stakeholders;
- It is a good idea to make comparisons between similar countries, to bring out some of the issues that have been overlooked, where the standards have not been maintained.

Mr. Thomas Schaef, Senior Planning Officer, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

- Sustainable development integrates disaster reduction in sustainable development efforts. Some frameworks have to be used as a much more decentralized participatory manner as they are used at the moment, but they can be used to integrated disaster reduction;
- More methodology is needed, and important to integrate risk analysis much more systematically in the development of national and regional plans. Also, there is a need for work on standards of relief.

Dr. Gianmarco Macchia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy

- It is necessary to include the person in the recovery process. It's important not to confuse the instrument with the aims. It is essential to remember the centrality of the human kind. It is a long term process which should be started since the beginning. The help provided is destined to affected people, in order for them to look into the future. It is important to work with bricks and to work with brains;
- There is a need to reinforce what has been done about recovery, and avoid as much as possible duplication, which is unnecessary.

Mr. Andrew Maskrey, Chief, Disaster Reduction Unit, UNDP/BCPR

- "International Recovery Platform" poses a problem: what is it meant by recovery? It is not just a theoretical question, it is a practical question, whose answer can be found in the field. It is important to consider histories (people, town ...). The context is important. The first thing to consider is the question "What is recovery?";
- Is the idea of IRP analyzed in terms of human process and not just physical assets? "Find out what people do and help them do it a little better", considering the history and context;
- Three key core areas of IRP:
 - a. Getting a base of knowledge from the past, be able to codify that experience

- into a set of tools, standards, guidelines, to help us stop reinventing the same mistakes over and over;
- b. Tools which can help us improve assessments of losses and needs of recovery processes, which do involve all different stakeholders, are needed. Those tools don't exist right now. The recovery planning tool does not exist. IRP can help build those tools the community can use;
 - c. People who understand this and can use those tools are needed on the ground. The efforts on training and capacity building are important. The collective effort is important.
- Based on the 3 pillars, how can those tools turn into actions, into deliverables. It's important to come up with a workable government structure. IRP is a pillar of UN/ISDR.

4) Concluding Remarks

Ms. Norah Niland, Chief, Policy Development Section, UN/OCHA

- Importance of local engagement;
- Psychological idea of disasters, it is important to move beyond economics and physical infrastructure to understand how disasters affect people;
- There is a need to have a paradigm shift in order to give priority to energy and commitment to prevent the number of deaths that tend to occur during a disaster;
- The issue of not rebuilding risk, not rebuilding vulnerability. It is not a question of going back to where we were prior to the disaster, but rather helps societies to be more resilient to hazards;
- It's essential to be more aware and better able to address the relationship between poverty and inappropriate development models. There is a need to focus also on different contexts and histories;
- It's important to speak about the human rights and disasters. There are different people with different needs. Disasters do affect people in different environments;
- There is a two way process in a dialogue. It is important to be better able to demonstrate the value of addressing risk reduction. This is a question of dialogue. Having a dialogue is very important in the process of climbing out of disasters, in the sense it is productive.

5) Conclusion

The Session discussed the challenges on the road to post disaster recovery and the solutions that could make the process of recovery effective in the long term. There was a consensus that the national and international systems were largely geared and well

developed for immediate disaster and humanitarian response, but not for undertaking effective recovery operations. This gap and the apparent challenges relating thereto needed to be recognized and addressed in order to make the whole process of recovery more effective and to move towards sustainable development.

It was felt that the post disaster recovery phase offers an excellent opportunity for bringing about a paradigm change in the approach towards rebuilding lives and livelihoods, and ensuring that the risks are not rebuilt. An effective recovery process can transform disasters into opportunities in helping societies understand better the underlying causes of risks and undertake a journey towards a safer and secure future.

It is necessary to recognize and identify the gaps and challenges that have existed between relief and recovery by systematic documentation and sharing of lessons with the community and various other role players as well as stakeholders.

Human dimension, however, is a paramount importance in the whole process. And therefore the focus needs to be on the process rather than the product. The guiding principle and the overall philosophy of recovery has to revolve around the centrality of the people, i.e. their body and mind, their feelings, perceptions, attitudes and not just about replacing the physical assets lost and destroyed in the disaster.

The process of sustainable development being complex and long, it was necessary to engage in a participatory mode involving the affected communities in all stages of recovery, including needs assessment and decision making about the choices for the kind and mode of development keeping in sight their past history, culture and practices. It was hoped that IRP will be able to recognize, fill the gaps and help the communities and nations in meeting the challenges of effective recovery incorporating risk reduction and move towards a safer future.