IRP Participation
Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2017

Cancun, Mexico
22-26 May 2017
REPORT

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Executive Summary

With the overarching theme “From Commitment to Action”, the International Recovery Platform/Asian Disaster Reduction Center (IRP/ADRC) had actively engaged in the fifth session of the Global Platform by: (i) putting up a booth at the Market Place, (ii) delivering a talk at the Ignite stage; and (iii) organizing a side event in line with Priority Four of the Sendai Framework. The IRP/ADRC events were aimed at advocating for:

- Closer cooperation with development partners, regional intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations, and regional platforms for disaster risk reduction by promoting effective build back better outcomes
- Wider dissemination and information sharing of knowledge and experiences on build back better in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction

The outcomes of these events contributed to the Chair’s Summary, which addressed the priority action areas that emerged from the meeting.

**IRP/ADRC Booth at the Market Place:** The booth featured knowledge products (e.g. guidance notes and tools) on build back better and resilient recovery. The materials were drawn from IRP members and partners. At the end of the global, the following were achieved:

- Distributed over 400 CDs containing case studies, tools, and guidance on build back better
- Handed out over 500 printed brochures on IRP and recovery (e.g. IRP and members’ brochures, guidance notes, and reports)
- Showed promotional video on Build Back Better as well as related videos from members
- Displayed banners bearing key messages on IRP works on build back better

**IRP/ADRC Ignite Stage Presentation:** At the Ignite Stage, the value addition of IRP/ADRC Guidance Notes on Recovery was demonstrated by presenting the case of Japan, and why it can build back better. Based on analysis of the case studies on recovery from Japan, the following insights were drawn. Firstly, Japan demonstrates “readiness to recover”. This can be observed in the number of existing pre-disaster recovery plans and pre-agreements prior to disaster such as the one prepared by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government in preparation for the Nankai Trough earthquake. Secondly, Japan deliberately corrects the mistakes in policy, infrastructure, and societal systems during recovery phase. This is clearly evident when Japan Government updates the building codes and relevant legislation following a disaster. Finally, Japan persistently promotes a “culture of resilience” by integrating readiness to recovery in people’s lifestyle. This is promoted through massive information dissemination, awareness-raising, and regular drills.

**IRP/ADRC Side Event:** The IRP/ADRC Side Event was jointly organized with JICA. In this session, innovative programs on build back better – as presented by the speakers from JICA, India, and Guatemala – commonly highlighted “good governance of recovery process” as one of key factors for successful implementation.
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Background

1. The 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Cancun, Mexico on 22-26 May. It was the first time the most important international forum dedicated to the disaster risk reduction agenda has been staged outside Geneva. The Global Platform marked the first opportunity for the international community to review global progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was adopted in Japan in 2015. More than 5,000 participants participated in the event, including policy makers and disaster risk managers.

2. Launched in 2007, the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is recognized by the UN General Assembly as the main global forum for strategic advice, coordination, partnership development and the review of progress in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and its successor the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

3. The function of the Global Platform is articulated in paragraph 28 (c) of the Sendai Framework and UN General Assembly resolution 70/204. In particular, it is expected to: i) forge partnerships; ii) assess progress on implementation; iii) share practice and knowledge on disaster risk-informed policies; programmes and investments, including on development and climate issues; and iv) promote the integration of disaster risk management in other relevant sectors.

4. The first Global Platform since the adoption of the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 2017 Global Platform is an opportunity for the international community to take stock of early implementation and accelerate progress towards the implementation of the Sendai Framework’s seven global targets. Specifically, the Global Platform outcome documents, including the High level Communiqué and Chair’s Summary, will provide valuable input to the work of the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council through the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development helping to ensure that a risk-informed approach is at the centre of the implementation and review of the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. The combination of increasing disaster risk and more frequent and intense extreme weather events due to rising global temperatures is one of the greatest impediments to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It threatens to reverse progress made towards sustainable development and inclusive growth. Urgent action on disaster risk reduction is needed. The 2017 Global Platform is a unique forum for disaster risk reduction policy makers and experts to convene with their counterparts in sustainable development and climate change adaptation to share experiences, discuss innovative solutions, and chart the course for an integrated approach at the international, regional, national and local levels.
6. In view of this, there is an urgent need to move from managing disasters to managing disaster risks in order to focus on prevention, reduce uncertainty, lower costs and create value. Countries can improve disaster risk reduction governance and strengthen legislation and institutions in order to reduce disaster losses and to have effective national and local strategies in place by 2020. Economic losses due to disasters are a serious threat to sustainable development, gradually eroding or wiping out years of development gains. Disasters pose a major threat to industry worldwide with the potential to disrupt vital industries and global supply lines, creating a cascading series of problems.

**IRP Engagement**

7. With the overarching theme “From Commitment to Action”, the International Recovery Platform/Asian Disaster Reduction Center (IRP/ADRC) had actively engaged in the fifth session of the Global Platform by: (i) putting up a booth at the Market Place, (ii) delivering a talk at the Ignite stage; and (iii) organizing a side event in line with Priority Four of the Sendai Framework. The IRP/ADRC events were aimed at advocating for:

- Closer cooperation with development partners, regional intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations, and regional platforms for disaster risk reduction by promoting effective build back better outcomes
- Wider dissemination and information sharing of knowledge and experiences on build back better in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction

8. The outcomes of these events contributed to the Chair’s Summary, which addressed the priority action areas that emerged from the meeting.

**IRP/ADRC Booth at the Market Place**

9. The booth featured knowledge products (e.g. guidance notes and tools) on build back better and resilient recovery. The materials were drawn from IRP members and partners. At the end of the global, the following were achieved:

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IRP/ADRC Ignite Stage Presentation

10. At the Ignite Stage, the value addition of IRP/ADRC Guidance Notes on Recovery was demonstrated by presenting the case of Japan, and why it can build back better. Based on analysis of the case studies on recovery from Japan, the following insights were drawn. Firstly, Japan demonstrates “readiness to recover”. This can be observed in the number of existing pre-disaster recovery plans and pre-agreements prior to disaster such as the one prepared by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government in preparation for the Nankai Trough earthquake. Secondly, Japan deliberately corrects the mistakes in policy, infrastructure, and societal systems during recovery phase. This is clearly evident when Japan Government updates the building codes and relevant legislation following a disaster. Finally, Japan persistently promotes a “culture of resilience” by integrating readiness to recovery in people’s lifestyle. This is promoted through massive information dissemination, awareness-raising, and regular drills.

IRP/ADRC Side Event

11. The IRP/ADRC Side Event was jointly organized with JICA. In this session, innovative programs on build back better – as presented by the speakers from JICA, India, and Guatemala – commonly highlighted “good governance of recovery process” as one of key factors for successful implementation. To achieve this, the following actions were specified.

12. First, it is important to promote local ownership of the recovery process. The findings based on JICA’s comparative study of Hurricane Mitch, Indian Ocean Tsunami, and Typhoon Haiyan revealed that local ownership of recovery process is fundamental to achieving build back better. Ownership of the process promotes a more decisive and accountable decisions. It implies learning from past experiences to effectively achieve the recovery vision. It was argued that the stronger the local ownership, the lesser the role of international actors. However, it was noted that local ownership does not necessarily mean denying external support and assistance.

13. Second, it is necessary to ensure responsibility with authority. The experiences of India pointed that responsibility with authority includes strong institutional system that effectively handles political dynamics and continuity of efforts. It includes ability to delegate roles such making use of experts, consulting with stakeholders, community engagement, timely decision-making, effective coordination, and application of lessons from previous experiences.

14. Finally, it is useful to adopt a National Disaster Recovery Framework. The Framework helps promote effective governance of the recovery process as this specifies the recovery protocols, roles of stakeholders, and tools to use for planning. In the case of Guatemala, the country adopted a National Disaster Recovery Framework in 2013 and was effectively put into practice during the recovery from the San Marcos Earthquake of 2014. The same municipality was impacted by earthquake in 2012. The Framework facilitated a more effective recovery for the following reasons:

- it resulted to a more coordinated role sharing among agencies of the public sector due to prior knowledge and understanding;
it allowed better distribution of resources in short-term and mid-term phases
it reduced information gaps. With Guatemala’s experience and readiness to build back better, the country was able to provide technical assistance for recovery in neighboring Ecuador following the earthquake in April 2016

**Build Back Better in the GP17 Chair’s Summary**

15. As indicated in the Chair’s Summary of GP 2017, risk information contributes to recovery preparedness and guides efforts to “build back better”. However, in order to be effective, build back better efforts require a whole of society approach, including the engagement of all stakeholders, strong partnerships to support scientific and technical research and its applications, and clear political commitment before and after disasters. In addition, the following important elements are identified in the Chair’s Summary to enhance build back better efforts:

- Risk-informed preparedness and recovery plans
- Strengthened multi-stakeholder platforms at both national and local levels, in accordance with Sendai Framework, for effective collaboration and coordination among national, local governments, and communities
- Having a policy framework and legal system for reconstruction in place in advance to facilitate the recovery process
- Community capacity development
- Local ownership

16. While the IRP side event provided inputs to the discussions in relation to Priority Four of Sendai Framework within GP2017, direct inputs were derived from the Special Session on Enhancing Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response and to ‘Build Back Better’ in Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction. This Special Session was co-chaired by Japan, Ecuador and a representative from Private Sector. Comprising high-level speakers from Zambia, Jordan, USA, and the European Commission, the session came up with the following seven recommendations:

- Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery is important for achieving the global targets in Sendai Framework
- Multi stakeholders’ platform for policy dialogue both at national and local levels is effective for collaboration
- all of society engagement including women, persons with disabilities, and indigenous people should be secured
- Importance of preparing a policy framework and legal system for reconstruction before an event (pre-disaster recovery planning embedded under policy framework)
- Importance of capacity building in communities
- International cooperation for disaster risk reduction was pronounced. A large-scale disaster might be beyond the capacity of one country, and in many cases, damage itself, goes beyond boundaries
- Implementation in coherence with policies for "Sustainable Development Goals" and "Climate Change"
17. Corollary to this, the consultative version of Sendai Framework Words into Action on “Build Back Better” in recovery. This was developed collaboratively by many recovery experts and advisors of a voluntary Working Group facilitated by UNISDR. IRP contributed to this process. The guidance outlines four related tasks. The first task is to develop an all-stakeholder, national-level disaster recovery framework (DRF). The second task is to enable and foster pre-disaster recovery planning (PDRP) efforts among all stakeholders. The third task is to institutionalize formal and inclusive processes and systems to effectively assess post-disaster damages and needs to formulate broad recovery strategies. The fourth task is to institute or strengthen policies, laws, and programs that promote, guide, and support build back better in both the public and private sectors, at various levels. This consultative version is for further inputs by community of practice (http://www.preventionweb.net/go/53213)

Priority 4: Highlights

18. As provided in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Priority 4 pertains to “Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction”, where several lessons and messages can be taken from the Global Platform.

19. There remains space for improvement to ensure risk information contributes to better preparedness as well as to guide efforts to “Build Back Better”. Such efforts require a whole of society approach, including the engagement of all stakeholders, strong partnerships to support scientific and technical research and its applications, and clear political commitment before and after disasters.

20. The Global Platform identified important elements to enhance existing “Build Back Better” practice, including risk-informed preparedness and recovery plans; strengthened multi-stakeholder platforms at both national and local levels, in accordance with the Sendai Framework, for effective collaboration and coordination among national, local governments, and communities; having a policy framework and legal system for reconstruction in place in advance to facilitate the recovery process; community capacity development; and local ownership.

21. The Global Platform also included examples of how countries, including less developed ones, can successfully design and implement early warning systems. However, it was noted that operations and maintenance budgets remain insufficient and unreliable in Small Island Developing States, Landlocked Developing Countries and Least Developed Countries, hindering access to early warning and pre-emptive action to reduce vulnerability.

22. Increased efforts are needed to address the gap between demand and available resources for effective early warning systems in Small Island Developing States, Landlocked Developing Countries and Least Developed Countries. In this regard, the
Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative was recognized as a significant contribution.

23. An innovative concept for a global multi-hazard alert system was announced by the meteorological community, to strengthen the issuance of impact based warnings and information related to high-impact weather, water, ocean and climate events.

Some Conclusions at GP2017

24. The Chair praised the leadership of and support from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction in co-organizing the Global Platform and requested his support in taking forward the deliberations with fully coordinated engagement of, and support from, the United Nations system’s entities, through the UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience.

25. There was a broad appreciation expressed that the deliberations of the Global Platform were pragmatic and key to drive the further implementation of the Sendai Framework as well as instrumental in setting the agenda for the upcoming Regional Platforms in 2018 and the next Global Platform, to be hosted by the Government of Switzerland in 2019. In this context, the importance of reviewing every two years the implementation of the regional action plans and strategies was reaffirmed.

26. There was a general sense that the Global Platform was a fundamental mechanism to foster practical coherence in implementation with other international agendas, in particular the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, and to monitor progress. Its multi-stakeholder nature is at the foundation of the very fruitful deliberations and of the effective implementation of the Sendai Framework at all levels.

27. It was indicated that the Chair would formally convey to the President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council the Global Platform’s Chair’s Summary and the Cancun High-Level Communiqué as a contribution to the upcoming debates of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. In addition, there was a call on all countries’ representatives and stakeholders to represent the deliberations of the Global Platform in the preparation of the Forum’s outcome documents and during its deliberations.
Photos at the Global Platform 2017
PHOTOS AT THE GLOBAL PLATFORM 2017