The Permanent Emergency Committee (PEC) of the Ministry of Interior, State of Qatar has requested for workshop on disaster recovery planning to ensure that the State’s development efforts are immediately back to normal in case of future disaster. While Qatar is a country that is less prone to disaster, the government is keen to strengthen their disaster risk management (DRM) system considering the disasters that happened in neighboring countries such as flooding in Saudi Arabia and the other parts of the gulf.

Additionally, Qatar is making sure that its disaster risk management system is adequately functional and effective, especially that they are hosting many global events including the World Cup in 2022. Against this backdrop, the International Recovery Platform (IRP) in collaboration with the UNISDR Global Training Education and Institute (GETI) had facilitated a workshop on disaster recovery planning, 12-14 May 2014 at the Civil Defense Club House, Doha Qatar.

The main objective of the workshop was to orient government officials with concepts of organizing recovery after a disaster. It was also intended to prepare the officials in formulating the Recovery Framework of the State of Qatar which is envisioned by the Civil Defense. With its experts in Doha, IRP, GETI, Hyogo Prefectural Government and UNISDR in the Arab States shared a collection of global experiences on disaster recovery, including lessons from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake, which served as reference in linking preparedness, recovery, and sustainable development. Further more, the workshop was also aimed at enhancing knowledge of government officials in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and how this knowledge can be adequately integrated in long term development programing.

55 government officials from the State of Qatar and representatives of the private sector participated in the workshop to explore strategies and actions for the recovery framework. Partners from UNISDR-Arab States, GETI, and Civil Defense of Qatar also contributed in the discussions to ensure that various stakeholders’ knowledge and experiences are shared.

The Secretary General of the Permanent Emergency Committee Brigadier Hamad Othman N. Al-Dehaimi, along with key officials from the Ministry of Interior, was present at the opening to highlight the expected outcomes of the workshop – i.e. enhanced knowledge on DRR and recovery for an enhanced DRM System. In this regard, the participants were exposed to various concepts and wide array of strategies and actions from the global experiences to reinforce the existing initiatives of the State of Qatar.

As way forward, the State of Qatar is contemplating of organizing a follow-up workshop to come up with a draft Recovery Framework.
On May 27, 2014, eight officers from the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) of the Philippine Government visited the IRP Secretariat in Kobe, Hyogo to further promote partnership, share information on new projects, and explore future activities that will contribute to building resilience from disasters.

OCD is the implementing arm of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC). It administers a comprehensive national civil defense and disaster risk reduction management program by providing leadership as well as measures to reduce the vulnerabilities and risks to hazards. It is also tasked to manage the consequences of disasters. OCD facilitated the formulation of National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan (NDRRMP) and provide leadership in the implementation.

During the visit, IRP provided an orientation on the concept of recovery. In particular, issues concerning resilient recovery, gaps in recovery operations, and future proposed actions on recovery to facilitate resilience were introduced. Although some officers were already oriented on these concepts, others were hearing it for the first time so it stimulated their interest.

For instance, one officer noted that “recovery/disaster risk reduction and sustainable development represent different sides of the same coin”. In other words, these concepts can hardly be separated. The visit resulted in substantive sharing of information, including DRR-related learning events in the Philippines such as the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, 4-6 June 2014 where OCD is part of the organizing committee that is headed by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). IRP participated in the ASEM Conference in Manila.

IRP and OCD have long history of partnership as highlighted in various activities including co-organizing the workshops on disaster recovery planning, participation in the international recovery forums, and producing lessons learned reports from mega-disasters in the Philippines.

Introducing Japan’s DRR initiatives through public-private partnership

On 17 June 2014, IRP Researcher as well as “IRP Herald” Editor Ms. Gulzar Qayyum paid a visit to “The 1st Earthquake Technology Expo” which was held in Osaka, Japan. With the primary objective of preparing for possible mega disasters, the exhibition showcased effective and efficient innovations and technologies from multiple Japan-based corporations.

The government of Japan has been promoting an important role of private sector in disaster risk reduction (DRR) by encouraging private companies and local small businesses to invest more in building resilience, including Business Continuity Plans putting in place to cope with catastrophes.

Various products and technologies were introduced in the exhibition, such as hot meals for rescue teams, water saving equipment for emergency period, well-prepared wagon vehicles for individuals, safety vest and emergency tents. Those products and technologies were exhibited to facilitate knowledge sharing and application in Japan and abroad.

Related seminars were also held in the same venue, where many municipal government officials and experts shared their cities DRR management experiences, policies and plans to prepare for disasters. The Expo is just one example to show the perspectives of the Japan’s public-private partnerships in disaster risk reduction field.

The DRR technologies and innovations introduced at the Expo are good reference not only to Japan but also to disaster prone countries all over the world. In this connection, the IRP Secretariat would further like to keep IRP Herald readers informed. For inquiry and comment, please contact Ms.Gulzar Qeyyum (gulzar@recoveryplatform.org).