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## IRP's Strong Presence at the Third UN WCDRR

### Articulating "Build Back Better" in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

14-18 March 2015, Sendai, Miyagi, Japan

Recovery is gradually seen as a fundamental part of preparedness, disaster risk reduction, and the overall development efforts due to the growing incidence of both recurring and less frequent high-impact disasters. Nonetheless, the majority of recovery processes are still characterized by significant blind spots, time-gaps, deficits in stakeholder attention, and declining resource commitments. While chances for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and enhance resilience into recovery and development processes are perhaps the clearest in the aftermath of big disaster events, national and international stakeholders have not always been able to capitalize fully on these opportunities.

In recognition of these gaps, the International Recovery Platform (IRP), specifically the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) of the World Bank, UNISDR, and Cabinet Office Japan had organized two public forums at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction on March 16, 2015 in Sendai, Japan.

#### IRP Forum1: Effective Implementation of Recovery Plans and Programs



This session explored various contexts and perspectives of bridging research and experiences. It drew from the discussions critical recommendations on how to effectively implement recovery plans.

The panelists of this session affirmed that bridging academic findings and country experiences on recovery processes can be one of the options to help facilitate effective implementation of recovery plans and programs. There exists no shortage of data to show that inadequate or misguided recovery actions, even when driven by the best of intentions, results in unnecessary suffering and long-lasting detrimental effects for those impacted.

This session reaffirmed that when a disaster occurs, there exists a unique opportunity to conduct activities that might not otherwise be possible. Recovery affords impacted communities with the chance to not only reduce risk from the precipitating hazard, but also from many other hazards and conditions that have no bearing on the recent event yet still threaten the community henceforth. Recovery actions can also promote both physical and economic resilience, and prompt or facilitate investment in infrastructure upgrades and urban revitalization.



There exists significant variability in how disaster-affected communities fare. In fact, many suffer significant development lags that beleaguer the community and its residents for decades.

Successful recovery can be so effective in boosting community development that causes a leapfrog effect. Conversely, ineffective recovery can be so devastating to the character and viability of the community that residents see no other option for avoiding persistent suffering than to migrate elsewhere.

The principal problem facing those tasked with recovery is that recovery operations occur where two equal yet opposing needs converge: victims' desires to resume their lives and planners' needs to research and deliberate each of the many possible recovery solutions. The efficiency and effectiveness of both planning and operations ultimately determine whether poverty in the country is alleviated or exacerbated, whether lives and livelihoods are viable, and whether the recipients of assistance are accepting of their post-recovery status.

It was noted that in the disaster's aftermath little time exists to plan effectively. Rebuilding without fully considering the disaster's effects, new hazard information, and each of the options that exist to address risk reduction (and likewise development trajectory), is unwise and irresponsible.



### IRP Upcoming Events

25-28 May 2015

IRP Workshop on Disaster Recovery Planning  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

International Recovery Platform (IRP)  
Higashikan 5F, 1-5-2 Wakinohama Kaigan-dori,  
Chuo-ku, Kobe, 651-0073, Japan

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IRP Forum 2: Actions on Engaging Private Sector in Recovery



This session drew from the discussions recommendations on how to effectively engage the private sector in recovery programs at the national and local levels, outlining clear strategies and actions.

The panelists of this session affirmed that businesses are important and influential components in the communities where they operate, and their collective ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters can bring about dramatic shifts in a community's disaster resilience.

The prominent role of the private sector in disaster risk management is one that most businesses are only just recently starting to appreciate. Businesses are important and influential components in the communities where they operate, and their collective ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters can bring about dramatic shifts in a community's disaster resilience. Businesses are much more than the facilities that contain them or the equipment they require to carry out their work.

It was presented that businesses reduce their vulnerability to the impacts of unforeseen events, including major emergencies and disasters, by conducting business continuity planning (BCP).



Any major disruption to the community has the potential to adversely impact the private sector, and a lack of planning leaves businesses exposed. This is particularly true for the many small and medium-sized enterprises that even in the absence of adverse events are operating on the brink of survival. When disasters strike, business owners and operators have very little time to react to the needs of customers, creditors, and suppliers. At the same time, they are simultaneously trying to recover from direct damages to facilities, inventory, and equipment as well as possible human losses.

All businesses, regardless of sector, serve an important function in the community, and the preservation of community character is therefore tied to their resilience. Businesses allow access to vital goods, including food, gasoline, and construction supplies, and they provide important services such as medical care, childcare, entertainment, and banking. If the affected business or businesses are local-regional or national in their operations, the disaster's economic and social impacts can extend far beyond the directly-affected area.

One of the critical roles mentioned by panelists was that in addition to protecting their own facilities, operations, and employees, businesses can also play an active role in disaster risk management activities. The traditional view of disaster risk management is one of governmental and nongovernmental agencies working hand-in-hand to execute response and recovery while businesses play a small to nonexistent role.

Recommendations



For Effective Implementation of Recovery Plans:

- Understand Risk in the Context of Recovery.** Long-term development plans should consider how disasters might impact development and incorporate recovery actions and opportunities into change management plans.
- Strengthen Governance.** Recovery requires significant engagement of and support from political leaders. Leaders should be informed of anticipated recovery requirements and the benefits of building recovery capacity prior to the onset of disaster.
- Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning.** Pre-disaster recovery plans and/or frameworks should be developed, enacted, and maintained because post-disaster recovery operations draw upon a monumental reserve of human resources from the wide stakeholder community inclusive of the public, private, and nongovernmental sectors.

For Actions on Engaging Private Sector in Recovery:

- Promote Public-Private Partnerships.** The public sector holds the key to creating the access vehicle of the public-private partnership, and only government can invite the private sector into disaster response and recovery command structures. Fostering these partnerships post-disaster is too late.
- Harness Capacity.** Disasters create opportunities for the private sector. As a result, the private sector needs to make recommendations for how actors can reduce risk, build back better, and retain economic strength and investment wealth within the community.
- Promote Business Continuity Planning.** Governments must continue to promote business continuity planning efforts and provide the education and guidance to facilitate it (especially among small businesses where participation in such schemes is lowest).
- Incentives for the Private Sector.** Communities and governments can promote DRR in the private-sector by creating economic incentives. Government can offer tax benefits and subsidies to businesses that are willing to incorporate safer building practices.
- Business Standards on DRM Activities.** Risk reduction almost always translate to increases in up-front costs, although studies have shown risk reduction investments reap a four- to 10 fold return.



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