IRP Shared Experiences of Integrating “Build Back Better” into DRR Plans

17-20 April 2018, Gujarat, India

In support of the Making Cities Resilient Campaign, the International Recovery Platform Secretariat dispatched a resource person to the “Urban Risk Reduction and Resilience: Capacity Development for Making Cities Resilient to Disasters” workshop, 17-20 April 2018 in Gujarat, India. The event was jointly organized by the National Disaster Management Authority of India (NDMA), and the Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM) in collaboration with UNISDR ONEA-GETI.

Forty-one participants, including city government officials and representatives from the NDMA, attended the four-day workshop, which aimed to guide government planners in integrating the Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient into their respective Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Plans. These “Ten Essentials” can be categorized into three groups of actions.

Commit to Resilience: Political leaders need to voluntarily commit to make the municipality resilient to disasters. Leaders who make a commitment to resilience can facilitate the following enabling essentials: (1) Organize for disaster resilience; (2) Identify, understand, and use current and future scenarios; and (3) Strengthen financial capacity for resilience.

Improve Activities for Resilience:
Lessons from past experiences show that building resilience is a continuous process, where activities are regularly improved to adapt to recent trends and conditions. Activities under the following operational essentials need greater consideration: (4) Pursue resilient urban development and design; (5) Safeguard natural buffers to enhance the protective functions offered by natural ecosystems; (6) Strengthen institutional capacity for resilience; (7) Understand and strengthen social capacity for resilience; and (8) Increase infrastructure resilience.

Prepare for Disaster: Cities and municipalities that are resilient to disaster begin response and recovery efforts even before a disaster happens. They institute mechanisms and systems beforehand to address anticipated challenges from a disaster. Preparedness activities are highlighted in the following build back better essentials: (9) Ensure effective preparedness and disaster response; and (10) Expedite recovery and build back better.

The IRP Secretariat shared experiences and lessons, particularly for Essential 9 (Ensure effective preparedness and disaster response) and Essential 10 (Expedite recovery and build back better), which were mostly drawn from IRP Guidance Notes on Recovery.
At the end of the workshop, participants developed suggested actions and projects to strengthen resilience for their cities and communities. For instance, to prepare for the projected increase of heat waves, many local governments suggested exploring cool-roof and passive ventilation techniques to achieve thermal comfort in residences (Essential 9). Additionally, pre-contracts for housing materials (e.g., lumber, roof, and ventilation) or pre-agreements of support among neighboring local governments can be undertaken to expedite recovery efforts (Essential 10). The suggested actions and projects will be further deliberated among stakeholders of their respective local governments before finally integrating it into their DRR Plans.

IRP’s participation in the 5th Earthquake Technology Expo

31 May - 1 June, 2018, Osaka, Japan

The 5th Earthquake Technology Expo was held in Osaka, Japan from 31 May to 1 June, 2018. The Expo hosted more than 11,000 attendees (accumulated entries) from local governments, the private sector, academia, non-governmental organizations and international organizations.

The Expo showcased the latest disaster countermeasure products, technologies and services, such as life-saving shelters, emergency nutrition and sanitation products, and large capacity batteries. Examples of the innovations presented at the Expo are depicted in the photos below.

Hyogo Prefecture hosted a booth at the event, where it presented its disaster control programme and activities. The booth featured an IRP poster presentation “Contributing to the International Society on the Theme of Recovery and Reconstruction from Disasters”, and shared various IRP publications with participants, including the IRP Herald.

The event held 50 parallel sessions, featuring officials and experts from national and local governments, non-governmental and international organizations and the private sector, sharing their experiences on disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction and management. Dr. Yuki Matsuoka, Head of the UNISDR Office in Japan, presented on “Global Initiatives on Disaster Risk Reduction - UNISDR and Sendai Framework”. She introduced the Sendai Framework including roles by the private sector and presented an update on progress in implementation. Dr. Matsuoka’s presentation also included mention of IRP’s work, including the Guidance Notes on Recovery series of publications and the annual International Recovery Forum, which she encouraged Expo participants to join in the future.