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The Workshop “Towards Coherent Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy Development, Implementation and Monitoring among the SAARC Member States” *9-11 July 2019, Gujarat, India*

As a first step in a process proposed to revise the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Comprehensive Framework on Disaster Management, UNDRR and the SAARC Secretariat jointly organized the workshop “Towards Coherent Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy Development, Implementation and Monitoring among the SAARC Member States”, 9-11 July 2019 in Gujarat, India. The IRP Secretariat and IRP SC Members UNDRR and the Asian Development Bank supported the implementation of the workshop as facilitators and session organizers, along with IRP SC Observers JICA, ASEAN, and SEEDS, and a range of participating partners from more than a dozen international agencies, national and local governments.

The workshop hosted 25 participants for the three-day training event, hailing from all eight SAARC member states, and representing disaster management authorities, the Ministry of Planning, and the Ministry of Finance. Participants worked collaboratively to identify gaps, needs, and opportunities to realign current DRR strategies and implementation action plans to inform a regional DRR framework. Participants considered the unique strengths that a regional platform could offer, where integration could be deepened, and where collaboration could be scaled to reduce the risks and impacts of disasters.

The IRP Secretariat convened and moderated a session on building back better, with a focus on post-disaster housing reconstruction. The session served as an initial consultation for a forthcoming ADPC publication on post-disaster housing reconstruction, and as a thematic session on recovery to engage and support participants as they considered Priority 4 elements for the potential revised framework.

The IRP Secretariat opened the session with a presentation giving context on the state of post-disaster housing

reconstruction and on progress in guidance to build back better in housing recovery. The presentation explored the arguments for more people-centred, demand-driven approaches. The presentation set the stage for the consultation to follow and the panel discussion, pointing to where there is continued need for knowledge generation and knowledge exchange.

Mr. Aslam Perwaiz, Deputy Executive Director at the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, delivered a presentation on a new knowledge product, currently in development, on housing reconstruction. Mr. Perwaiz shared the research methodology, and the consultative process toward developing the final product. The presentation highlighted a selection of the key areas addressed by the study, including the opportunities and challenges associated with an owner-driven reconstruction process.

The panel drew on a range of perspectives on housing recovery, including from international financial institutions, civil society, and official development assistance. **Mr. Steven Goldfinch**, Disaster Risk Management Specialist at the Asian Development Bank (ADB) shared reflections on three cases from the ADB’s work in housing recovery, in Pakistan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Fiji. The cases in Pakistan and Fiji looked at the successes and challenges of owner-driven housing reconstruction approaches at a large scale, including training and certification.



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The Kyrgyz Republic took a contractor approach to an urban housing reconstruction programme. In rebuilding at scale, the programme was challenged in meeting the needs of residents, as well as with procurement, permitting, labor and protecting cultural assets.

Mr. Manu Gupta, Co-Founder of SEEDS, gave examples from the local Gujarat context, highlighting the importance of not just knowledge transfer, but knowledge exchange - coupling local wisdom and external technical support. He shared the origins of owner-driven housing principles, and questions that persist about inclusion, technical and financial support. Finally, **Mr. Koza Nagami**, Senior Representative, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), remarked on recent housing reconstruction efforts in Nepal. Mr. Nagami agreed with preceding speakers on the merits of owner-driven approaches. However, with anecdotes and evidence from the recovery from the 2015 Nepal earthquake, he noted where bottlenecks continued to hinder recovery and the lessons that can be learned from this experience. He underscored the importance of effective communications, giving an example of build back better messaging that local residents had memorized, yet did not have a clear understanding of actions they needed to take. He also highlighted the importance local context, for example families might prioritize livelihoods over housing during the growing season.

“Fostering Social Inclusion through Culture in City Reconstruction”

*World Reconstruction Conference 4 Thematic Session
13 May 2019, Geneva Switzerland*

The IRP Steering Committee Chair, **Mr. Josef Leitmann**, GFDRR, and Co-Chair, **Ms. Setsuko Saya**, the Cabinet Office Japan, led this session. Serving as moderator, Mr. Leitmann stressed that culture can be a powerful building block for social inclusion, risk mitigation, and recovery preparedness. He highlighted the importance of urban settings for disaster risk reduction, in the context of unprecedented urbanization and development, risk exposure and the continuing threat of climate change. He stressed that “cities are not just a collection of buildings, but they are about people and their interaction with each other, and their cultural identity. Therefore, city reconstruction needs to ensure social inclusion, promote economic development, and manage complex social, spatial, and economic transformations.”

Ms. Saya shared the importance of culture in the recovery from the 2016 Kumamoto earthquakes. She described the reasons Kumamoto Castle became a top priority in the Kumamoto Reconstruction Plan. People have strong connections to their cultural heritage, and a sense of ownership. The city mobilized communities and global support using Kumamoto’s mascot “Kumamon” as part of

its communications strategy. By paying attention to culture, the reconstruction of Kumamoto Castle offers an important case of building back better and will serve as a reminder to prepare for future earthquake risks.

The Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery (CURE) framework was introduced as a culture-based approach in fostering social inclusion and resilient recovery. CURE provides a roadmap for post-disaster economic development and management of complex social, spatial, and economic transformations, and for enhancing effectiveness and sustainability of current recovery practices.



Recovery Preparedness for Nankai Trough Earthquake

6 - 7 June, 2019, Osaka, Japan

IRP Secretariat staff participated in the “6th Earthquake Technology Expo”, 6-7 June 2019, Osaka, Japan to gain insights on disaster recovery.

Most sessions emphasized preparedness for a significant earthquake along the Nankai Trough, expected to strike beneath Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka within the next 30 years, causing flooding from tsunami. While many discussions were focused on emergency response, the scenarios offered insights on recovery preparedness. To facilitate faster recovery from the projected impact of Nankai Trough Earthquakes, the local governments can consider the following recovery preparedness activities.

- **Pre-Disaster Mitigation.** Local governments can reinforce vulnerable buildings and infrastructure. Recovery will be faster if the expected damage is reduced or prevented.
- **Business Continuity.** Based on the scenarios, local governments and businesses should develop strategies for continuity of services and operations. Activities such as pre-disaster recovery planning, pre-agreements, pre-contracts, and energy continuity can be arranged now to support future recovery.

The potential for artificial intelligence (AI) was also highlighted for its capacity to detect in ‘real time’ disaster-related photos and messages shared in social media. By extension, another proposed application of AI was to assess post-disaster needs or Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), which is significant to inform recovery planning and financing.