

Holistic Approach to Disaster Reduction

– Total Disaster Risk Management (Part 2)

“Government – NGO Collaboration for Disaster Reduction and Response”

(English only)

13:30 - 15:20 (Wednesday, 15 January 2003) Venue: Room 401/402

Successful disaster reduction strategies involve careful efforts to combine knowledge, technology, expertise, institutional capacities, management skills, and practical experience for optimum results. They would not be possible without proper collaboration between the two key players: government and civil society. As one of the steps to promote the collaboration among the players, the ADRC and the OCHA/ADRU established a collaborative network “Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN)” among emerging NGOs to have played active role for disaster reduction in Asia as a successful outcome of the workshop held in February 2002.

In the session, the experiences and best practices of the inter-sectoral collaboration for disaster reduction initiatives in different countries were introduced. The problems to be solved for establishing intense collaboration among all the sectors, such as governments, NGOs, private sector, media, and the strategies for strengthening partnerships to address the challenges were discussed.

To ensure effective and sustainable collaboration and cooperation among various stakeholders, political will and legal frameworks for coordination, clearly defined roles, reliability and mutual trust, and proper recognition of contribution were identified as the essential factors.

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Rapporteur: Ms. Takako Izumi (OCHA/ADRU Kobe)

Speakers:

- Mr. Satoru Nishikawa, ADRC, “The Crucial Role of Non-Governmental Sectors for Disaster Reduction and Response”
- Ms. Ang Siok Hui, Singapore International Foundation, “Government-NGO Collaboration in Disaster Response – a Singapore Experience”
- Mr. Hitoshi Motegi, The Tokio Marine Risk Consulting Co., Ltd., “Disaster Prevention by Joint Cooperation between Enterprises and Local Authorities”
- Mr. Nhim Vanda, National Committee for Disaster Management, Cambodia “Cooperation and Coordination between the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) and United Nations Agencies/International Organizations (IOs) and Non-governmental Organizations”
- Mr. Nimal D Hettiarachichi, Director, National Disaster Management Centre, Sri Lanka, “Government-NGOO Collaboration for Disaster Reduction and Response”
- Mr. Richard Grove-Hills, IFRC, “Government-NGO Collaboration for Disaster Reduction and Response”
- Mr. Hiroshi Oe, Yokohama YMCA
- Mr. Thomas Brennan, UNDP

Session Summary

Mr. Satoru Nishikawa (Executive Director, Asian Disaster Reduction Center) emphasized the critical roles of NGOs and the multi-sectoral coordination for disaster reduction activities. We were also informed about a successful example of their cooperative project with the PNG government regarding the Tsunami Awareness Programme. That example proved how the disaster reduction strategy was effective in minimizing the damage and encouraged us to develop our own strategies in each country in cooperation with NGOs, governments, disaster experts, and international/regional organizations.

Ms. Ang Siok Hui (Director, Singapore International Foundation) pointed out the importance of cooperating with overseas NGOs, local authorities and other organizations in order to provide more effective assistance. Those partnerships are also very helpful in finding areas of synergy and leverage off each other's strengths, forming mutually beneficial alliances and reducing territorial confusion. The Singapore International Foundation supports the continued building of a network of contacts with Asian and international NGOs through its annual Humanitarian Relief conference for local and overseas participants and as a member of the recently established Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN).

Mr. Hitoshi Motegi (Manager, The Tokio Marine Risk consulting Co., Ltd.) discussed involvement and cooperation in the area of disaster preparedness and response activities by Japanese enterprises. He also pointed out the three issues which have to be considered and strengthened: 1) voluntary disaster preparedness by corporations, such as hazard map information sharing, 2) roles of corporations in local disaster preparedness such as utilization of corporations' management resources and 3) collaboration between administrations and corporations. His presentation showed us beneficial examples of future possible cooperation and collaboration among governments, NGOs, regional/international organizations and enterprises.

HE. Mr. Nhim Vanda (Senior Minister, National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia / First Vice President, National Committee for Disaster Management) presented information concerning the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) which provides coordination in disaster management efforts throughout the country not only through ties with government agencies, but mostly with UN agencies, International organizations and NGOs in disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and rehabilitation. He emphasized the importance of a legal framework supported by a clearly defined working group in order to bring about effective coordination within the government structure, NGO and internal communities.

Mr. Nimal D. Hettiarachchi (Director, National Disaster Management Centre, Ministry of Social Service, Sri Lanka) discussed examples of collaboration among the government, international organizations and NGOs for implementing relief and rehabilitation assistance programs in Sri Lanka. At the same time, barriers for collaboration between NGOs and the government still remain. Lack of coordination between governments, agencies and NGOs is a main obstacle in disaster reduction and response. Furthermore, in order to develop better cooperation between NGOs and the government, an effective system for information sharing, great community participation, and a matrix of NGO capabilities would be required.

Mr. Richard Grove-Hills' (Head, Regional Delegation Beijing, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) presentation showed how effective disaster preparedness programs were in cases of hurricane in Cuba, flood in Mozambique and cyclone in Bangladesh.

However, we still need a broader risk reduction agenda to protect the people's livelihoods and development since 200 million are still affected every year by urbanization, poor urban planning, environmental degradation, etc. For further success in risk reduction, for example, the more of the following tools would be required: early warning systems, evacuation systems, ensured building codes and aid spent on risk reduction.

In addition to the above presentations, two more speakers shared their views regarding key issues for successful disaster relief assistance and disaster reduction.

Mr. Hiroshi Oe (Chief Director, Center for Global and Local Community Services, Yokohama YMCA) stressed that the key factors for successful relief assistance would be information, resources, reliable partners and networking.

Mr. Thomas Brennan (Regional Disaster Reduction Advisor, Bureau for Crisis Prevention UNDP) emphasized that disaster reduction is connected closely to vulnerability reduction. Also, vulnerability reduction should be included as part of the development process. A holistic approach, a risk management agenda and cooperation among NGOs, governments, and civil societies are indispensable for reducing vulnerability.

During the panel discussion, the roles of national and small NGOs which have close access to local communities were emphasized. While the number of NGOs involved in disaster preventive activities has increased, the difficulties of collaboration among NGOs still remain. However, it is possible to alleviate those difficulties through establishing partnerships.

Furthermore, during the panel discussion, the issue of how we can sustain the partnerships among NGOs, governments, international/regional organizations, and communities was raised. The importance of political will (government's commitment), legal framework, coordination, and recognition of NGOs was signed out.

Conclusion

Overall, during the session 2 on 15 January, it was stressed in the presentations that focus should be placed on disaster risk reduction as well as relief assistance. For more effective disaster reduction, numerous sectors should be involved in the activities to fill in the gaps in the disaster reduction cycle. Networking among governments, NGOs, regional/international organizations, communities, and corporations is essential in achieving a holistic approach to disaster reduction. Networking can facilitate investment and also information sharing, best practices, expertise, volunteers and critical resources for disaster reduction activities such as an early warning system, flood control and relief operations.

For successful cooperation among all the sectors, the following factors are essential: multi-sectoral coordination at all the phases among all the sectors and partnerships; involvement of corporations and local communities in disaster reduction and response; a legal framework for coordination within the government structure, NGO and internal communities; clear definition of the roles of the government and NGOs; and a broader risk reduction/management agenda. In addition, political will (government's commitment), a legal framework, better coordination and recognition of NGOs will be required in order to sustain the partnership among NGOs, governments, regional/international organizations.