

The 3rd ISDR Asian Meeting

Session Summary

5 February 2004

11:00-12:30 Panel discussion 1

Theme: “Building partnerships and networks for disaster reduction in Asia”

Disasters are a major drain on all societies and particularly devastating for the developing countries of the Asian Region. While the resources are limited on one hand the, hard won achievements of years and decades are eroded very quickly on the other. Every disaster thus pushes back the development process. Disasters are a major challenge for all countries, people and organizations which are working towards a safer and better society.

Disaster reduction and mitigation measures can be strengthened in the Asian countries through efficient and effective international cooperation. Keeping in view the transnational nature of many disasters a multi-lateral approach forging partnerships and networks combined with sharing of experiences and learning of lessons from each other is called for.

Objectives:

The objectives of the session were as follows:

- 1) To discuss how to build partnerships and networks for effective disaster reduction in Asia.
- 2) To share the methodologies and experiences of some existing partnerships and networks so as to draw lessons from them.
- 3) To consolidate and enlarge the networks to promote effective and meaningful cooperation.
- 4) To suggest practical and concrete measures for enhancing cooperation and information sharing along with better capacities for information management for effective disaster reduction.

***Facilitator:** Mr. Earl Kessler, Deputy Executive Director, ADPC

***Rapporteur:** Dr. Le Huu Ti, Economic Affairs Officer, UN/ESCAP

***Panelists:**

- Mr. Satoru Nishikawa, Executive Director, ADRC
- Dr. Li Tianchi, Programme Manager, ICIMOD
- Mr. Akira Sasaki, Deputy Director General, IFNet
- Mr. Haris Sanahuja, Programme Officer, ISDR Secretariat

***Commentator:** Mr. Thomas Brennan, Disaster Reduction Advisor, UNDP-Bureau for Crisis & Prevention Recovery (Bangkok)

Summary of discussion:

1. Importance of partnership and networking

In recognizing that disaster management is a MUST for sustainable development, all panelists confirmed that partnership and networking are absolutely necessary for effective disaster management, which involves multi-sectors and stakeholders. Partnership and networking provides greater opportunities for synergy of efforts. Partnership and networking with clear

objectives may become important instruments towards sustainable development, such as conceived by the International Flood Network (IFNet) to help break the vicious circle of threat caused by annual floods to poverty eradication and sustainable development.

2. Scope of partnership and networking

Partnership is recognized as an important instrument to influence policy makers in disaster management and to enhance public awareness and human psychology for better disaster reduction. As effective partnership and networking require standardized tools and methodologies, partnership should aim to develop and promote standardized tools and methodologies. All panelists recognized the importance of information communication and technology in disaster management, partnership should provide opportunities for better access to advanced technology, such as the Global Flood Alert System, which is expected to provide opportunities to more countries to get access to latest achievements in rainfall monitoring and forecasts using satellites for better flood forecasts and warnings.

3. Sustaining partnership and networking

From the experiences of past and existing partnerships and networks, the panelists considered essential that partnership and networking must be based on common interests and commitment. Effective partnership must be guided by clear and pragmatic shared vision and linked to the national platforms on disaster risk reduction.

4. Meeting future challenges

The meeting took note of the importance attached to partnership by the countries and international donor communities for disaster management in Asia such as demonstrated through the work of ADPC, ADRC, ICIMOD, IFNet and MRC. As the socio-economic impact of disasters continue to rise in Asia, it is important to consider partnership in that context. The Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held in Kobe will offer an opportunity to further development partnership and networking in Asia, it remains an important task for all to demonstrate how to address various partnership issues from now to Kobe Conference and beyond. For this purpose, several participants recommended to promote good practices through partnership and networking to effective learning and to promote public awareness with clear and detailed programmes of action.