

SUMMARY REPORT ON CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Day 1: 25 June 2007

Opening Ceremony

1. On behalf of the host government and as conference chair, H.E. Victor Khrapunov, Minister for Emergency Situations, Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Chair of the Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction 2007 (ACDR2007), welcomed the participants. He stated the support of the government for ACDR 2007 and expressed appreciation to ADRC of which Kazakhstan has been an active member since 1998. He noted the importance of the conference as he mentioned the prevalence of disaster risks in the 21st Century and the significant damage they bring to people, economy and ecology. He conveyed the intention of the government to be of assistance to others in enhancing national capacity as called for by the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and to strengthen cooperation in disaster reduction among countries in Asia. He also conveyed the greetings of the Prime Minister to the participants and the message of the President that the country's internal and external security will be built upon its strong disaster reduction measures.
2. In his opening remarks, Mr. Haolian Xu, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Kazakhstan, cited the opportunity the conference provides to discuss critical issues on disaster risk reduction in the framework of the HFA. He expressed appreciation for holding the conference in the region, the crossroad between Asia and Europe, which has had all types of natural hazards. He stated that disaster risk reduction is crucial to ensuring sustainable development and that development choices play a major role in preventing risks from becoming disasters. He also cited UN and national efforts to raise awareness on disaster risk reduction, to mainstream it into national planning, to highlight its need at all levels, and to strengthen international and regional cooperation. He considered the conference as an excellent opportunity to explore cooperation among national governments, UN and other international organizations.
3. In his opening remarks, Prof. Shigeru Itoh, ADRC Chairman, expressed profound gratitude to the host government and welcomed all the participants. He mentioned the commitment of ADRC to regional cooperation and capacity enhancement of member countries in disaster risk reduction and to the implementation of the HFA. He informed on various international cooperation and partnerships, including recent projects with UN, WMO, IRP, ASEAN, SAARC, and with national governments such as Armenia, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Mongolia. He explained that disaster risk reduction has to be addressed with a broader perspective as it is intrinsically linked with poverty alleviation, development policy and planning, environment, education and health, among others.
4. On behalf of WMO Secretary General, Mr. Michel Jarraud, Dr. Ming Chung Wong congratulated the host government and its partners for hosting the event. Citing CRED statistics on disaster prevalence and losses, he informed on the efforts of WMO in promoting disaster risk reduction, particularly in reducing the impacts of weather, climate, and water related hazards, and on its wide-range of services to network members. He acknowledged the excellent structure for cooperation at all levels which the HFA has provided. He cited many current challenges such as addressing capacity enhancement, investing on modernizing services, strengthening regional cooperation for

more accessible hazard analysis and forecasting information, and implementing national and regional projects with partners.

5. In his keynote speech, Minister Khrapunov acknowledged the incentive provided by the HFA for further developing existing national platform for disaster reduction in Kazakhstan. He explained that protecting the country's interests from disaster impacts is a priority concern of the government in its long-term national development strategy. He informed of the enormous work accomplished in this regard, particularly in enacting laws and regulations, and implementing infrastructure projects for disaster reduction. He cited public safety and earthquake risks as major concern for the country and acknowledged the related assistance and grants received from the Government of Japan. International cooperation in disaster reduction is considered a priority as the role of the country in ensuring regional stability increases. The minister also cited the conference as a forward step towards implementing the courses of action of the first session of the Global Platform.
6. In his keynote speech, Mr. Koji Suzuki, ADRC Executive Director, informed on the progress of regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction in Asia. He cited the various initiatives and activities of ADRC in line with the five priorities for action of the HFA. They included the promotion of TDRM, capacity development of member countries, development of community-based hazard mapping tool, Sentinel Asia Project, emergency observation activities, public forum on winning against disasters, support to IRP, and collaboration with ADRRN and ASEAN. He also informed on the present preparation of the baseline status report on disaster risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with UN/ISDR and ADPC, to help monitor progress of HFA implementation.
7. On behalf of Ms. Helena Molin Valdez, Deputy Director of UN Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Ms. Goulsara Pulatova presented "The remaining challenges to reduce disaster risks: Implementing the HFA". She explained the intensiveness and extensiveness of disaster risks in our midst as well as their global trends. She highlighted the important progress in implementing the HFA in each of its priority areas, as well as the activities on reporting their progress. She mentioned that reporting and its related requirements will be a subject for discussion at the forthcoming ministerial conference in November to be hosted by the Government of India. She also explained the next steps and follow up to the Global Platform Meeting and the role of ISDR system and ISDR secretariat, particularly in coordination, strategic information, and provision of tools.
8. Mr. Haolian Xu delivered the message of Mr. Salvano Briceno, Director of UN/ISDR. In his message, Mr. Briceno thanked the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting the Conference and ADRC for providing excellent organizational and logistical support. He made two appeals to the participants: First, to build on what has been achieved, to focus on specific steps to increase national capacities in the region, to coordinate actions in each country, to realign policies and practices in each sector, and to develop multi-hazard and hazard-specific risk reduction actions. Second, for the participants to use the Conference to prepare for the upcoming ministerial conference in November. Moreover, Mr. Briceno expounded on the need to sustain and improve preparedness for effective response, the need for early warning capacities to reach the communities, and the need to change our development practices in order to achieve HFA goals. Finally, he enjoined the participants to review the outcomes of the first Global Platform meeting and continue to review progress in the region.

9. In his opening remarks, H.E. Katsuei Hirasawa, Senior Deputy-Minister for Disaster Management, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, and Conference Vice Chair, welcomed the participants and thanked the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting the Conference. He also thanked ADRC and UN/ISDR for their efforts and support. He recalled the major disasters that had occurred in the region since WCDR and related the numerous bitter disaster experiences of Japan. He cited the high priority given by the Government of Japan to disaster risk reduction and his role in promoting it as policy within the government. He also recognized the opportunity the Conference presents to the participants, especially for sharing ideas and methods and reporting on progress in each country. Finally, he paid tribute to workers and practitioners of disaster risk reduction and hoped that hard work will continue to bear fruit.

Part I: Governance of Disaster Risk reduction at National Level

10. The first session of the conference introduced and discussed the topic of governance of disaster risk reduction at national level.
11. Ms. Aynura Alymbekova, National Disaster Reduction Advisor of UNDP Kyrgyzstan, together with Mr. Anarkul Aitaliev, Director of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Kyrgyz Republic, reported on governance of disaster reduction at national level in the country. They informed on the integration of disaster risk reduction into development policy and planning, citing government provisions in its country development strategy, development of UNDP training module on disaster risk reduction, and mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into democratic governance programme since last year. Moreover, the presentation expounded on multisectoral national platforms, institutional basis, legal regulatory frameworks and financial resources for disaster risk reduction.
12. Ms. Charlotta Benedek, UN/OCHA Associate Humanitarian Affairs Officer, discussed strengthening disaster risk reduction through preparedness with reference to Priority 5 of the HFA. She explained the mandate and structure of UN/OCHA and the guiding principles of preparedness which they promote. She cited evidence of good preparedness practices in India, Turkey, and Cuba. She identified two key challenges: political commitment and political cost; and funding. She pointed out that a dollar invested today in disaster risk reduction saves three to seven dollars in future cost of relief and rehabilitation.
13. Dr. Ming Chung Wong, Assistant Director of the Hong Kong Observatory of WMO, presented and explained the services and mechanisms of WMO in support of disaster risk reduction. He demonstrated the support mechanisms for scientific and technical capacities, the regional coordinated networks in support of early warnings, specialized services and training, and example of regional cooperation in global tropical cyclone early warning system. He identified the common challenges today as governance, coordination, technical capacity, education and training.
14. Mr. Aloysius Rego, ADPC Disaster Management Systems Team Director and Leader, presented lessons learned from innovation and good practice in governance for disaster risk reduction in Asia. In accordance with HFA Priority 1 and the UNDP Global Review on Disaster Risk Management Institutional and Legislative Systems, he cited the initiatives of ADPC and RCC to address priorities for capacity building for national systems and for mainstreaming disaster risk management in priority sectors such as agriculture, urban planning and infrastructure, and housing, among others. Mr. Rego

cited good mainstreaming practices exemplified in the agricultural sector of Lao PDR and in the infrastructure sector of the Philippines. He also cited good practices of governance for disaster risk reduction in Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

Group Discussion

15. The group discussion in the afternoon enabled the sharing of information on progress among countries with respect to (1) establishment and strengthening of national platforms, (2) development of national disaster risk reduction strategies, (3) status of HFA implementation, and (4) new initiatives and achievements on disaster risk reduction.
16. In the plenary, moderated by Mr. Hajime Nakano, ADRC Senior Researcher, the groups presented the outcome of their respective discussions.
17. Group A, comprised of the representatives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, and Uzbekistan, with Mr. Syrym Gabbasov, Director of the Kazakh Ministry of Emergency Situations, as rapporteur, reported on (1) existence of functional national platforms in their respective countries and the emphasis and priority given by their respective governments to disaster risk reduction, as exemplified in national programs, laws and regulations; (2) national strategies for disaster risk reduction already exist in the region for which the HFA has provided impetus; (3) progress has been evident in the region as all the recommendations embodied in the HFA have been discussed in advisory meetings and consultation and reflected in national strategies, legislative reforms and strengthened disaster management systems; (4) new initiatives and accomplishments are in communications and exchange of expertise among the countries, use of satellite imagery and technology for disaster reduction, risk insurance, early warning systems development, and coordination for disaster management.
18. Group B, comprised of the representatives of Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Thailand, with Mr. Sugeng Triutomo, Director for Disaster Mitigation of Indonesian Bakornas PB as rapporteur, reported on various progress at national level: (1) Indonesia is setting up its disaster reduction system initiated by the national planning agency and the national coordinating board for disaster management. A new disaster management law has also been enacted in April 2007; (2) Lao PDR establishes disaster management committees at all levels and conducts training for military, police media and teachers; (3) Malaysia sets up its disaster management mechanism coordinated by the national security council and provides formal standard operating procedures for disaster management. (4) Thailand installs and develops its early warning system. The group also presented a matrix of their progress with respect to the five HFA priorities.
19. Group C, comprised of Bangladesh, Republic of Korea, Pakistan, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, with Ret. Lt. Gen. Farooq Ahmad Khan, National Disaster Management Authority Chair of Pakistan, reported on significant progress in establishing and strengthening national platforms as well as disaster risk reduction strategies in these countries. He mentioned the various accomplishments in education, awareness and community work in line with the implementation of the HFA. He cited the community risk assessment in Bangladesh and the regular community disaster drills in Singapore as among the new initiatives.

20. Group D, comprised of India, Nepal, Myanmar, Maldives, and Japan, with Mr. Rajiv Kumar, Director of Disaster Mitigation Division of Indian Ministry of Home Affairs, reported on the establishment and strengthening of national platforms and national strategies in these countries. In particular, the group informed on the status of the implementation of HFA priorities in each country.
21. Issues raised during the open forum concerned (1) arrangements for the conduct of emergency assessments; (2) cooperation and mutual assistance for rapid emergency assistance; (3) use of general classification of disasters; (4) funding; (5) standing national platforms, the need to declare their existence and to link with other national platforms as well as with regional and global platforms; and (6) strengthening or enlarging existing platforms as inspired by HFA.

Adjournment

21. Mr. Koji Suzuki, ADRC Executive Director, adjourned the session.