

6. The International Recovery Platform (IRP): History and Current Activities

6-1. The Establishment of the IRP

While the capacity of the UN system for disaster response and humanitarian assistance are widely recognized, there is currently a vacuum in terms of the UN's capacity and system-wide mechanisms for post-disaster recovery efforts, particularly those with a risk reduction focus.

Experience increasingly affirms that the post-disaster recovery phase provides a critical opportunity to shift the focus from saving lives to restoring livelihoods, and is an important time for introducing measures to reduce future disaster risk. Recovery can help close the gap between relief and development, and can transform disasters into opportunities for sustainable development. This occurs when efforts are made to support local and national recovery processes at an early stage, when risk reduction considerations are factored into all recovery activities, and when the synergies between development, humanitarian, and other actors involved in the response phases are properly channeled. A successful recovery effort, then, is predicated on having advance agreements and mechanisms in place so that the recovery process is effectively conceived and managed, and is initiated in a timely manner. This includes such measures as appropriate assessment methodologies, pre-established resource mobilization mechanisms, surge capacity to support UN Country Teams, and standing coordination mechanisms.

Shared concerns related to the UN approach and processes for post-disaster recovery have resulted in the formulation of a joint initiative, the International Recovery Platform, by the UN system, ADRC, and other partners, with the encouragement and support of Japan as well as other donors and key program countries. This initiative was discussed at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) during session 4.9 on Post Disaster Recovery. Representatives from the UNDP, UN-HABITAT, ADRC, ADPC, ILO, and other concerned UN agencies expressed their respective agency commitments and support for the proposed international platform for recovery. The meeting resulted in a recommendation for the establishment of the International Recovery Platform (IRP)

Only four months after the WCDR, the International Seminar on Post Disaster Recovery, in support of the IRP, was held at the JICA Centre in Kobe and at Hyogo House on 11-13 May 2005. The IRP was officially launched in Kobe.

6-2. The Governance Structure of the IRP

The IRP currently consists of 13 governments,* UN agencies, and international organizations including ADRC (as of March 2011). The IRP focuses on the following three priority activities for recovery, respectively based in Kobe, Turin, and Geneva: (a) Knowledge

Management and Advocacy, Kobe, (b) Training and Capacity Building, Turin, and (c) Enhancing Recovery Operations, Geneva.

As described in the Terms of Reference, the IRP Kobe functions as the IRP secretariat and is responsible for convening IRP steering committee meetings and disseminating information on IRP activities and outcomes.

* IRP members: Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), Hyogo Prefectural Government, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Labour Organization (ILO), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Cabinet Office of Japan, Swiss Agency for Development and Coordination (SDC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), United Nations Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN/OCHA), and the World Bank.

6-3. IRP Activities in FY 2010

6-3-1. International Recovery Forum 2011

The International Recovery Forum 2011 highlighted the importance of pre-disaster recovery planning to help avoid diverting scarce resources, originally intended for development programs, for recovery after a natural disaster. Attendance at the Forum was over 150 participants from 26 national governments and 10 international organizations. It brought together key players in pre-disaster recovery planning, including FEMA United States, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, ASEAN, ADB, and a number of other organizations to discuss the modalities of planning, options, and experiences.

At the opening session, the Governor of Hyogo Prefecture, the Chair of IRP Steering Committee, and the Associate Administrator of FEMA-ORR commonly communicated the key message that pre disaster recovery planning can increase the efficiency of recovery activities including debris removal, utility restoration, management of funds, and coordination amongst stakeholders. The Guidance Notes on Recovery was also launched to provide global best practices to be integrated in recovery planning processes. Additionally, reports on recovery initiatives from Haiti, China, Myanmar,



Fig.6-3-1-1 International Recovery Forum 2011