
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. Effective 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 (IRP), 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 2005 UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) during session 4.9 on Post Disaster Recovery. Representatives from the ADRC, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, 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).

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

6-2. The Governance Structure of the IRP

The IRP currently consists of 17 governments, UN agencies, and international organizations including ADRC (as of March 2014).* The IRP focuses on the following three priority activities for recovery: (a) Knowledge Management and Advocacy, (b) Training and Capacity Building and (c) Enhancing Recovery Operations.

As described in the Terms of Reference, the IRP at 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), the World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

6-3. IRP Activities in FY 2013

6-3-1. “IRP’s International Recovery Forum 2014”

“The IRP’s International Recovery Forum 2014 ~ The Role of Private Sector in Disaster Recovery ~”, jointly organized with ADRC, was held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan on 21 January 2014. Highlighting the important role of private sector in disaster recovery and reconstruction, the Forum showcased the lessons shared by policymakers, experts, and practitioners.



Fig. 6-3-1 “IRP’s International Recovery Forum 2014”

With over 155 participants from the national governments, international organizations, and universities around the world, the keynote speakers from IBM Japan/KEIDANREN, Federal Management Agency (FEMA), and Department of National Defense (DND) of the Philippines imparted the important message of engaging private sector in disaster risk reduction and recovery to further avoid greater economic losses. In addition, the speakers from International Organization of Employees (IOE), Development Bank of Japan, South Asia Association of Regional Cooperation Disaster Management Center (SDMC), El Colegio de Mexico, World Bank, Tohoku University, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and JICA presented specific initiatives that promote collaboration between private sector and public sector. The lessons from these initiatives are crucial in further accelerating the learning by conscious application to areas with similar situations.

The panel discussion, which dwelt on the role of private sector in the implementation of the