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

6-1. The Establishment of 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 IRP, was held at Hyogo House on 11-13 May 2005. IRP was officially established in Kobe.

6-2. The Governance Structure of IRP

IRP consists of 16 governments, UN agencies, and international organizations including ADRC (as of March 31 2017).^{*} 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 IRP Strategic Framework 2015-2020, IRP Secretariat is located in Kobe and

responsible for convening IRP Steering Committee meetings and disseminating information on IRP activities and knowledge products.

* IRP members: Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), Cabinet Office of Japan, Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de los Desastres Naturales en América Central (CEPREDENAC), Hyogo Prefectural Government, International Labour Organization (ILO), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Swiss Agency for Development and Coordination (SDC), the World Bank, United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), World Health Organization (WHO).

6-3. IRP Activities in FY 2016

6-3-1. “International Recovery Forum 2017”

“International Recovery Forum 2017 ~ Build Back Better Towards Resilient and Healthy Communities ~” was organized on 24 January 2017 at Hotel Okura in Kobe, Japan. It gathered over 140 participants from 33 countries, including government officials, practitioners, experts, policymakers, and students.

Background

Health is recognized in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in many other landmark international frameworks and agreements – indicating the urgency of addressing the complex challenges and gaps along this area. Mandated to act as an international mechanism for sharing of experiences and learning on build back better among countries and all relevant stakeholders, IRP adopted “Build Back Better Towards Resilient and Healthy Communities” as the overarching theme of the International Recovery Forum 2017.

Objectives

The main objectives of the Forum are:

- Explore how “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction can be addressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and
- Explore knowledge and understanding of “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction through sharing of country experiences; and
- Explore strategies and actions on health in the context of “Build Back Better” through sharing experiences on integration health agenda into disaster recovery, including consulting on the updated edition of Guidance Note on Recovery for Health.