

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 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, Japan.

6-2. The Governance Structure of IRP

IRP consists of 17 governments, UN agencies, and international organizations including ADRC (as of March 31 2019).^{*} 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 Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), World Health Organization (WHO).

6-3. IRP Activities in FY 2018

6-3-1. International Recovery Forum 2019

Introduction

The International Recovery Forum 2019 focused on approaches to realize the benefits of building back better in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction, and to ensure that everyone is included, so that no one is left behind. Building back better has been embraced by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 as one of four key priorities for action. Building back better offers a critical opportunity to realize potentially wide-ranging benefits in recovery, including reduction of future losses, improvements in standards, practices, and technologies, stimulus for economic activity, and progress in other dimensions of development, to name a few. Yet, critical questions remain for decision makers, including how these benefits can be realized, how resources should be allocated, who should benefit, and how to ensure no one is left behind.

The International Recovery Forum 2019, “**Attaining the Build Back Better Dividend**”, convened distinguished speakers from governments, the private sector, academia, and international and civil society organizations to share their insights and experiences and to deliberate on these key questions. **Mr. Josef Leitmann**, Chair of the IRP Steering Committee and Lead DRM Specialist at the World Bank, opened the Forum, followed by welcome remarks from **Mr. Taku Kodaira**, Deputy Director-General for Disaster Management in the Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan, and **Mr. Kazuo Kanazawa**, Vice Governor of Hyogo Prefecture. The speakers affirmed the significance of hosting this Forum in the context of the 24th memorial of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, as an opportunity to build on the wealth of knowledge and experience that has accumulated in the time since this earthquake, and this