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Global Platform on DRR Bulletin

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2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction Highlights

Thursday, 25 May 2017 | Cancún, Mexico

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The Fifth Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) continued in Cancún, Mexico on Thursday, 25 May 2017. In the morning, delegates met in a plenary session to consider national and local DRR strategies. This was followed by three parallel working sessions on science and technology, local authorities and community resilience.

In the afternoon, they reconvened in a plenary session to discuss reducing the vulnerability of countries in special situations. Thereafter, delegates met in three parallel working sessions on DRR governance; ecosystem protection, management and resilient agriculture; and inclusive and people-centered DRR.

Side events were held over the lunch break. In the evening, delegates attended the Sasakawa Award Ceremony, followed by a reception hosted by the state of Quintana Roo.

PLENARY SESSIONS

NATIONAL AND LOCAL DRR STRATEGIES PAVE THE WAY FOR ACTION BY ALL

Session Moderator Shri Kiren Rijju, State Minister, India, opened the plenary, informing delegates that the summary of the session will be presented in a Chairs' summary to be forwarded to the UN Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2017.

Session Co-Chair Joaquín Roa, Minister for National Emergencies, Paraguay, shared the holistic perspective used in Paraguay to integrate the realities, commitments and possibilities among all sectors, actors and institutions to reduce current risk and ensure that new risks are not exacerbated. Session Co-Chair Denisse Ugalde Alegría, Mayor of Tlalneantla, Mexico, noted that the conference will serve as a basis for more resilient cities and stressed that local governments bear the responsibility of implementing actions to achieve tangible results and ensure the well-being of those they represent.

Stressing the need to consistently improve on risk reduction efforts, Melchior Matakai, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Solomon Islands, suggested that the key to successful risk management is a proactive, coordinated approach that enables integrated action at all levels of government. He suggested identifying existing capacity and building upon it, explaining that long-term capacity building should not focus on international experts filling the gap, but rather should promote local leaders filling the gap themselves.

Christos Stylianides, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, emphasized that DRR strategies must: include a comprehensive understanding of disaster risks; define roles and responsibilities for all of society; and be an integral part of economic policies. He reiterated the value of exchanging experiences to develop a common foundation to address unprecedented natural disasters, naming private public partnerships, horizontal policy integration and education as essential tools.

Kathy Oldham, Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, UK, underscored the need to include DRR throughout urban development policy, including linking it to social and economic choices.

During the discussion, delegates spoke about the need for inclusivity, in particular, the role women play in DRR; insurance to address residual economic risk; and the challenges posed by considering climate change, disaster risk and development in separate silos. They called for, among other things: greater accountability and compliance with DRR strategies at all levels; people-centered and people-inclusive DRR strategies; discussions to promote an international disaster coordination center, as well as regional and national coordination centers; and coordination in academic institutions to foster local and national leadership in DRR strategy design.

REDUCING VULNERABILITY OF COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Australia, Fathima Thasneem, Ministry of Defense and

National Security, Maldives, and Fekitamoeola Utoikamanu, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked and Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), co-chaired the session.

Thasneem called for greater support for financing and for enhancing governance of countries in special situations. Utoikamanu urged stakeholders to listen to those most vulnerable to disaster risk, as they suffer disproportionate losses in disasters.

Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Jamaica, drew attention to the multiple sectors affected by natural disasters in his country, including the economy, agriculture, water, health service delivery, and tourism. Krishna Bahadur Raut, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Nepal, outlined Nepal's efforts to formulate a DRR plan, utilizing multistakeholder and multi-step approaches to specify the responsibilities of all sectors of society. He pointed out that, despite having national sustainable development, climate change, and adaptation strategies, there is a need to do more to protect against multi-hazard risk exposure.

Yande Mwape, Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit, Office of the Vice President, Zambia, outlined steps the country is taking to enhance resilience, including enabling the movement of people, goods and services within and beyond their national borders. She outlined the ways in which disaster risk profiles for landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) differ, and stating that disasters hamper LLDCs' ability to focus on long-term development.

During discussions, Mongolia shared her country's experiences in engaging and supporting local communities in DRR. The UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Indonesia discussed establishing an international integrated monitoring framework tracking multilateral agreements and their role in fulfilling the 2030 Agenda. India highlighted the need to prioritize mandatory financial commitments towards DRR for SIDS, and Austria shared his country's experience in creating a multifaceted warning systems.

Delegates also highlighted the need to increase capacity with improved data and fast-tracked financial management during a crisis, and referenced opportunities in DRR through engagement with displaced people.

Fierravanti-Wells outlined priority recommendations including: taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the mutually reinforcing 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement when implementing the Sendai Framework; promoting stronger multistakeholder partnerships which could increase financing, transfer knowledge and best practices to drive risk reduction efforts; and calling for effective disaster risk governance, as well as inclusive institutions to drive implementation and promote a preventive approach to DRR.

WORKING SESSIONS

ACCELERATING EFFORTS IN BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO DISASTERS

Co-Chair Win Myat Aye, Minister of Social Welfare, Myanmar, invited participants to share experiences to identify key elements in establishing resilience, and Co-Chair Elhad As Sy, Secretary-General, International Federation of Red Cross, differentiated community reaction from community response, in order to go beyond awareness and be able to establish coping mechanisms and strategies.

Mayra Bermúdez, Mesa Nacional Incidencia de Gestión del Riesgo, Honduras, stressed that empowered women and children are agents of change within their communities. Anna Akwango, Development Network of Voluntary Indigenous Associations, Uganda, explained that community integration begins at the design level and is maintained through accountability.

Kiyoshi Murakami, Senior Executive Advisor, City of Rikuzentakata, Japan, illustrated the recovery experienced in Tohoku after the 2011 tsunami, which was achieved through inclusive, engaged societies. Iván Andrey Brenes, President, National Commission for Prevention of Risks and Emergency Response, Costa Rica, shared voices from resilient communities, highlighting the importance of preventative measures.

Vicente Raimundo Núñez-Flores, European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), linked early action to local action, saying that, for example, early funding can be attained through local funding. Observing that social contracts cannot be underestimated, Elisabeth Longva, Norway, said trust is a key element in building resilience in communities.

CONTRIBUTION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO ACHIEVING THE 2020 SENDAI TARGET

Session Co-Chairs Renato Solidum, Undersecretary for DRR and Climate Change, Department of Science and Technology, the Philippines, and Juan Carlos Villagran, Head, UN Platform for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), opened the session, noting its objective to help bridge the divide between science and policy and the important role that science and technology play in the implementation of the Sendai Framework. Panelists Gordon McBean, President, International Council for Science (ICSU); Royol Chitradon, Director, Hydro and Agro Informatics Institute, Thailand; Irina Rafliana, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Indonesia; Ian Clark, European Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre, European Commission; and Marcial Bonilla, Director of Basic Research, Mexican National Council of Science and Technology, discussed, *inter alia*: promoting dialogue between the scientific community and other stakeholders; supporting multi-disciplinary science programmes at all levels; overcoming public resistance to scientific communications; enhancing scientific endeavors in developing countries; and promoting coherent data approaches to reduce uncertainty. Panelists and discussants presented additional information on national scientific networks and programmes, global research partnerships, and youth science programmes.

In response to questions from the audience, panelists addressed issues such as evidence-based decision-making, knowledge sharing, conducting integrated research at scale, and enhancing the role of social and other 'soft' sciences, particularly with regard to assessing best practices.

ACHIEVING THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK AND SDG'S TARGET AT LOCAL LEVEL

Riadh Mouakhar, Ministry of Local Affairs and Environment, Tunisia, and Relinda Sosa Perez, President, National Confederation of Women

Organised for Life and Integrated Development (CONAMOVIDI), Peru, co-chaired the session. Violeta Seva, Makati, the Philippines, highlighted three components of DRR implementation necessary for local areas: creating an enabling environment for DRR implementation; understanding risk as the foundation of disaster risk management (DRM); and defining specific strategies to facilitate implementation.

Juan Ernesto Zapata Silva, Secretary of Security and Governance, Quito Municipality, Ecuador, underscored the importance of understanding disaster risks prior to establishing response protocol. Adam Banaszak, Mayor of Kujawskopomorskie, Poland, outlined priorities for the European Union (EU) in implementing DRR, including: a grassroots approach; resilience by design; and financing disaster resilience through the private sector.

During the ensuing discussion, Matthew Lynch, World Council on City Data, observed that global frameworks can help cities establish disaster response approaches including minimum standards, and learn from past mistakes. On a question regarding civic engagement, Seva highlighted that the Philippines uses participatory risk assessments, which help trace the level of understanding and awareness of risk reduction within communities.

DRR GOVERNANCE

The session was co-chaired by Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, Minister of Disaster Management, Sri Lanka, and Robert Šakić Trogrlić, University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Yapa said that the “time is right” to take stock of existing national and local DRR strategies. Trogrlić noted that while governance is the umbrella under which DRR takes place, it acts as a bottleneck to effective implementation. Panelists María Luisa Romero, Deputy Minister, Panama; Fadi Hamdan, Disaster Risk Management Centre, Lebanon; Dilanthi Amarathunga, Chair, DRR Governance ‘Words into Action’ Working Group; Carlos Iván Márquez Pérez, National Unit for Disaster Risk Management, Colombia; and Natalia Ilieva, Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union, discussed, *inter alia*: national and local experiences in disaster risk governance (DRG); how to enhance DRR management actions through cooperation; disparate treatment of extensive versus intensive disaster risks; the role of accountability in effective DRG; and the role of media as an agent of change. During discussions, panelists considered gender sensitivity in DRG, existing gaps in achieving Sendai 2030 Framework objectives, multi-sectoral cooperation, and the role of media in creating accountability in DRG.

INCLUSIVE AND PEOPLE-CENTERED DRR

Co-Chairs Abul Kalam Azad, Principal Coordinator for SDGs, Prime Minister’s Office, Bangladesh, and Natalia Kanem, Assistant Secretary-General, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), opened discussions on how to broaden social inclusiveness in planning and responding to disaster. Kanem clarified that effects of disasters fall disproportionately on marginalized groups, urging for a shift from perceiving these groups as a burden, to considering them as sources of inspiration.

Lenny Rosalin, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, Indonesia, shared experiences in raising awareness and capacity building, and Raphael Obonyo, Kenya, referred to the youth’s potential to implement the Sendai Framework. Mary Jack, ActionAid, Vanuatu, speaking on behalf of 4000 women “whose voices have never been heard,” conveyed the message that women want to be a part of decision making, “not in consultation,” but with a seat at the table. Carlos Kaiser Mansilla, Executive Director, ONG Inclusiva, Chile, explained that if something is made safe for people with disabilities, it will be safe for everyone.

During discussions, representatives from youth, people with disabilities, elders, and displaced people shared testimonies highlighting how they should and can contribute to DRR planning and programming.

DISASTER ECOSYSTEMS PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENT AGRICULTURE FOR REDUCING DISASTER RISKS

Rustam Nazarzoda, Chairman, Committee of Emergency Situation and Civil Defense, Tajikistan, and Jane Madgwick, CEO, Wetlands International, co-chaired the meeting. Margareta Wahlström, President, Swiss Red Cross, urged stakeholders to work together despite differences in perspective, in order to address difficult issues that undermine DRR, such as “land grabbing.”

Adrian Fitzgerald, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland, stated that in the past, mistakes were made in agriculture planning, but these could be corrected by including provisions for biodiversity in DRR, such as incentives for farmers. Rony Estuardo Granados Mérida, Director, Instituto Nacional de Bosques, outlined examples of techniques used in Guatemala to increase disaster resilience. He urged for a shift in perception from farmers as victims of ecosystem degradation, to farmers as part of the solution.

In the discussion, several delegates reiterated the need for participatory processes and adequate political channels. Madgwick urged policy makers to first consider natural rather than built infrastructure as a means to address DRR.

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