

Natural Disasters and Efforts to reduce Disaster Risks in DPR Korea

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Dear Participants, and

Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all, I'd like to express my deep gratitude to the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of India for the kind invitation of our delegation and sincere efforts to host the 2nd Asian ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and also to the UN disaster reduction related organizations for their active support to this meeting.

This conference is a good opportunity for us, the Asian countries, to reach common understanding for action and promote the regional cooperation in the field of disaster reduction and contribute to sustainable development.

The tsunami disaster in 3 years ago showed us clearly that the natural disaster affects greatly to the sustainable socio-economic development, and that it is extremely important to get prepared in advance to respond adequately and promote the international cooperation in this area.

The natural disasters are also significant concern in our country as they inflict greatly the economic development and peoples' livelihood.

We still remember the severe floods due to heavy rains with the intensity of 400mm per hour in 1967 which had caused severe damages in Daedong-river basin areas including inundation of whole capital city, Pyongyang and in recent years the adverse impacts of the climate change have been happening frequently in our country.

The country is affected by 3 to 4 times of typhoons on average every year and the disasters by storm surges are also increasing in the coastal areas.

In the last decade the disasters including floods, droughts and storm surges undermined severely the agricultural production and peoples' livelihood in the country. This year also in August and September there were heavy

rains(900-1000mm in one month which is over 80%of the total annual precipitation) which caused severe disasters like big number of people were died or disappeared , roads and railways were cut down impeding the communication ,and a lot of houses were destroyed, washed away and larger size of rice paddy fields, were submerged making it difficult to get any harvest this year.

Today these disasters are one of the main obstacles that jeopardize the national sustainable development, so the strengthening the disaster resilience capacity has been considered to be as one of the very important measures for the sustainable development.

1. Policy and institutional system for disaster management and preparedness, efforts to integrate disaster reduction management in to national development plans

The government of DPR of Korea which embodies the human being-centered socialist principle in all socio-political aspects of the country, sets as one of the main important policy the protection of peoples' life and its property from natural disasters, and pays due attention to the disaster reduction management.

- The Great Leader **Kim Jong Il** set the polices to strengthen the conservation and management of soil and water in order to prevent or mitigate the disasters and secure the ecological stability of the country and leads wisely the land management work in a participatory manner .

There was already established in nationwide, land management campaign, one month each in spring and autumn, which is country driven , and are taken place every year. Within this framework, a wide scope of land and environmental protection as well as disaster prevention activities are organized and implemented according to the national and regional development plans.

Considering seasonality of the natural hazards, the non-standing national flood disaster control committee is established during the period of June – September, the flood prone season, involving representatives of relevant governmental institutions

and headed by Prime Minister. It ensures also organization of disaster prevention and control committees at local community levels. . These committees at all levels develop and implement disaster preparedness planning which include the identification and mitigation of flood risks, repair or reinforcement of flood control infrastructures such as dams and embankments and terraces. Those institutions are also responsible for the relief and disaster recovering activities in emergency cases.

- The government pays attention to the strengthening capacity of early warning system in the area of disaster reduction and management.

These include, among others, establishment of updated hydro-meteorological monitoring system, upgrade of observation equipment for early warning of the meteorological disasters like typhoons and storm surges and heavy rains and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of short, medium and long-term forecasting of climatic changes.

And particularly it focused on the development of improved flood forecasting and storm surges warning models and update of earthquake forecasting system based on modernized earthquake observation and assessment facilities.

- There are activities related to public awareness raising on disaster reduction;

The mass media including TV, broadcasting and newspapers inform about knowledge and code of conduct to response to the disasters and encourage the participation of the public in the disaster recovery and humanitarian assistance.

There are scientific institutions related to disaster reduction which conduct studies on their specific hazardous natural phenomenon and provide to the relevant agencies with necessary information of effective disaster management and also public awareness raising activities.

2. Measures to be taken for the future disaster prevention, reduction and management

Although the Government is devoting its efforts in nationwide to reduce the natural disaster, there are still issues to consider and to be improved. In brief, the constraints are;

- the lack capacity of human resources and public awareness to address adequately the disasters,
- lack of technical competence for early warning, communication and rapid responding, and
- Shortage of fund resources for disaster management and cross-sectoral collaboration.

To overcome these constraints, we need to take further active measures and improvement of current disaster reduction management system.

- First we are going to strengthen the current system to integrate the disaster management issues into the national and local development planning process.

And at the same time, the local communities should also develop and implement immediate and long term disaster risk management plans. For this it is necessary to allocate enough funds for disaster risk reduction and disaster management so as to effectively response to the disaster early warning and disaster emergencies.

-Secondly we are planning to improve preparation and preparedness measures including strengthened early warning system for disaster risk reduction.

Although there are established the forecasting system nationwide, it is not enough to do effective warning on disaster risks and ensure necessary disaster risk management.

The information service and communication system related to disaster risk management including updated early warning system should be further strengthened like upgrading of material and technical capacities of the relevant institutions and close collaboration and information sharing among them- selves.

- 3rdly we are going to improve assessment of the disaster risks and the disaster rehabilitation system.

It requires the improvement of the methodologies and technologies for disaster assessment and rapid rehabilitation based on the advanced Hi-tech and on the other hand strengthening the local capacity for disaster risk reduction and conduct public awareness and interpretation activities so that the people can be rapidly mobilized for the disaster rehabilitation.

- The 4th but not the last one we are going further strengthen international cooperation and information exchange in this field.

Many of disasters in Asia including tsunami were cross-boundary issues having the effects, beyond the national scale, on to the regional and global levels.

Therefore, the disaster reduction management could only be effective when it is dealt with in a coordinated and collaborative way with neighboring and other countries as well as in cooperation with international communities involving all international and regional organizations.

There are clear evidences that bilateral and multilateral collaborations in Asia are on-going and the international disaster management related agencies are engaged actively in the field of disaster reduction.

I have no doubt that this conference will provide important platform for sharing experiences and lessons among the Asian countries and establish new regional framework for joint action to manage properly natural disasters in this region.

To conclude my speech, I would like emphasize again that our government will do its best to strengthen the national resilience capacity for natural disasters risk management and, at the same time, foster the regional and international cooperation and collaboration with Asian countries, in this field.

Thank you very much for your attention.