



2nd Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction

7-8 November 2007

High-level Round Table 3

Integrating Disaster Reduction into Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Activities

Background Note

Despite the various global, national, regional and local initiatives on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in development, disasters continue to strike various parts of the globe causing damages to life, property and infrastructure and providing setbacks to development. There are projections that increasing vulnerabilities of people, particularly those living in unsafe buildings and unplanned settlements in urban areas and the environmental changes precipitated by climate change would increase the incidents of disasters, particularly in the developing countries. This is reflected in the global disaster data for the last 15 years which definitely shows a rising graph of disasters.

Every major disaster is followed by massive efforts for rehabilitation and reconstruction by the national and local governments, international agencies and the global community. This provides opportunity for *building back better* so that similar disasters do not recur in the affected areas. This also affords an opportunity to further strengthen the techno-legal regime for safer habitat and for better construction and other practices in areas which are prone to disasters.

Unfortunately, our experiences for post disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction have not always been very satisfactory. While there are excellent examples of reconstruction that ensured that every house that is rebuilt and every infrastructure that is redeveloped is disasters proof, there are also many examples of reconstruction which has only served to

recreate the vulnerabilities by poor designs, technologies, materials and other practices. There are many instances where countries once affected by disaster could not withstand fresh disasters and had to suffer losses again.

An Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) study of the World Bank assisted reconstruction projects during the past twenty years has shown that over sixty percent of the completed projects in the disaster portfolio were either struck by a subsequent disaster during implementation or had their implementation process interrupted by disaster, and 40 percent of project-constructed infrastructure or project activities had been compromised to some degree. In 121 of 197 completed projects with a strong focus on mitigation, which were supposed to use disaster-resilient reconstruction standards, evaluations of 31 projects (26 percent) acknowledged flaws in the design, leading in 13 cases to severe damage by a subsequent event, and in 6 cases to partial damage. More recent projects are attempting to increase resiliency and prevent destruction through mitigation measures. Still, this is a disturbing finding, and more needs to be done.

The *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters* which was adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005 at Kobe, Japan emphasized the importance of integrating Disaster Reduction into rehabilitation and reconstruction. Paragraph 16 of the Framework enjoined upon the national governments to

“Incorporate disaster risk reduction measures into post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes and use opportunities during the recovery phase to develop capacities that reduce disaster risk in the long term, including through the sharing of expertise, knowledge and lessons learned”.

This High Level Round Table would provide an excellent opportunity for the countries to share their experiences for building back better, to learn from the good practices, and to develop new tools, methodologies and guidelines for better integration of disaster risk reduction in rehabilitation and reconstruction practices.