

## **DRR 'represents a business opportunity'**

***By Andy McElroy***

**INCHEON, 15 September 2015** – Korea's advance towards a national integrated public-safety communications network was today heralded as an example of how disaster risk reduction represents a major business opportunity.

The country aims to launch its world-leading system – the so-called Long Term Evolution (LTE) public safety network – in 2017, and several commercial bids are expected from various major telecommunications carriers to implement the ambitious project.

The round-the-clock network will serve 200,000 users from 324 agencies including police, fire, emergency medical services, coast guard, military, provincial administrative offices, electricity, gas and the forest service.

The new system, overseen by the Ministry of Public Safety and Security, represents a major leap forward from the previous network that was for emergencies only and did not integrate between various services or provide full geographic coverage.

Prof. Daehyoung Hong, the Chair of the SafeNet Forum of Korea, told senior executives from the private sector, academia, and civil society that the network was an important part of Korea's high-profile national safety agenda.

"The development of the national public safety network is an example of how Korean business will develop one of the country's strategic industries and, in so doing, provide an opportunity for companies to go on and lead in what will be a global market," Prof. Hong said.

"This network is a good opportunity to adopt and apply ICT (information communication technology) in disaster situations and meet a global business demand."

Prof. Hong was speaking at a high-level forum titled "Networks and Communication in Disasters: Risk Reduction as a Business Opportunity", hosted at UNISDR's Global Education and Training Institute, in Incheon, Korea.

The President of Korea Red Cross, Ms Sungjoo Kim, said a partnership approach – that includes the private sector – was essential for effective disaster risk reduction.

Ms Kim is well placed to make such an observation: as Chairperson and Chief Visionary Officer of the Sungjoo Group (Korea) and MCM Holding AG (Germany), both major entities in the fashion industry, she combines leadership roles in the business and not-for-profit worlds.

"On my visit to Sendai (in March for the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction) I was very touched and moved by how everyone pulled together in that city. They have showed the world how to recuperate (after the earthquake and tsunami in 2011). I have great respect for Sendai," Ms Kim said.

In another example of innovative partnership, the Korean Red Cross is collaborating with the State University of New York (SUNY) – the first university to establish at Incheon’s Global Education Campus – to set up a Red Cross academy to increase DRR awareness among communities across Korea.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 highlights the important role of the private sector, partnership and how the application of ICT solutions can safeguard lives, livelihoods and assets. The global blueprint to substantially reduce risk and losses from disasters was adopted by 187 countries at the World Conference.

The development of Korea’s national public safety network comes in the aftermath of the April 2014 Sewol ferry disaster in which more than 300 people died, including many children.