



**KOBE REPORT draft**  
**Report of Session 4.5, Thematic Cluster 4**

**Environmental Management and Disaster Reduction: Building a Multi-Stakeholder Partnership**

**1. Summary of the session's presentations and discussions**

Environmental degradation combined with human activities are at the origin of numerous catastrophes such as flooding, desertification, fires, as well as technological disasters and transport accidents."

Around the world, a growing share of the devastation triggered by 'natural' disasters stems from ecologically destructive practices and from putting ourselves in harm's way. Many ecosystems have been frayed to the point where they are no longer able to withstand natural disturbances. Comprehensive understanding of natural systems coupled with the application of management tools such as environmental evaluation and risk assessment can make a major contribution to a reduction of risks and mitigation of any impacts. An important aspect is the involvement of a broader range of partners in such a process, and to fully engage the resources and interests of the private sector in prevention and mitigation.

The session highlighted the role that comprehensive environmental management can play in reducing the risk of disasters, and to mitigate the consequences if they should nevertheless occur – both on human lives and on the broader ecology. It explored the link between environmental systems and disasters, and also the synergies between man-made and natural disasters. The session specifically examined the need for a multi-stakeholder partnership that links local governments, private sector entities, and civil society organizations in order to facilitate more effective disaster prevention and mitigation. It illustrated successful partnership models between corporations, communities and the government, examining the way entities prepare for disasters themselves, as well as the need to be part of a larger partnership that strengthens local communities' ability to prevent, mitigate and recover from disasters.

**2. Primary issues**

- Disaster risk reduction should look at strengthening nature's own abilities to act as buffers and barriers to the impacts of disasters.
- Partnerships and collaboration are critical to bring a diverse range of resources and skills to manage the environment, and at the same time reduce and manage risk from disasters,
- Addressing risks associated with present day climate variability enhances capacity of vulnerable communities to withstand future climate change impacts
- Environmental management systems, part of the ISO 14001 standard, can easily be adopted to include aspects related to disaster management needs

**Innovative affordable financial instruments need to be developed to reduce the disaster risk faced by communities, and enable them to return to normal as quickly as possible. This includes microfinance and micro-insurance for the low-income groups**

**Suggested targets and indicators to measure accomplishments**

- ✓ ***Incorporation of environmental issues in disaster management plans – both for forecasting disasters (at the local and regional levels), and for recovery from disasters***
- ✓ ***Mapping and monitoring of local and regional environmental assets by the community to understand and map the areas of vulnerability and to plan for preparedness strategies***

### **3. Partnerships**

- ✓ *UNEP-ISDR Joint Global Programme*
- ✓ *UNEP DTIE Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at the Local Level*
- ✓ *UNEP Asian Tsunami Task Force*

### **4. Name, affiliation and contacts of presenters and titles of presentations**

- Svein Tveitdal, Director, UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, Nairobi, Kenya – *Session facilitator and closing remarks*
- Yuriko Koike, Minister of Environment, Government of Japan, Tokyo, Japan – *Keynote Speech*
- Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director, UNEP, Nairobi, Kenya – *Keynote Speech*
- Muneharu Nakagai, Mayor, Toyo-oka City, Japan – *Special Presentation on the Tokage Typhoon (Typhoon no. 23 of 2004)*
- Pasi Rinne, Chair, UNEP Asian Tsunami Task Force, Geneva, Switzerland – *Report on the UNEP Asian Tsunami Task Force*
- Gerhard Putman-Cramer, Director, UN-OCHA Kobe Office, Kobe, Japan - *"Highlighting Environmental Impacts of Disasters in Humanitarian Assistance"*
- Lolita Bildan, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, Bangkok, Thailand - *"Interlinkages between Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management"*
- Ana Maria Bejar, Save the Children UK, Havana, Cuba – *"Partnerships for Community Risk Management"*
- Iksan van der Putte, International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) Geneva, Switzerland – *"Environmental Management Systems for Risk Reduction"*
- Joanne Bayer, Intl. Institute of Applied Systems Analysis, Laxcenburg, Austria – *"Financial Industry in environmental Risk Reduction"*

#### **b) Name, affiliation and contact of person filling in the form**

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