

Japan

Statement by Mr. Shigeki Habuka
Vice Minister of Cabinet Office of Japan
at the Ministerial Session of
the 7th Asia Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
3 November 2016, New Delhi

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am Shigeki Habuka, Vice-Minister of Cabinet Office of Japan, in charge of disaster risk reduction.

It is my great honour to speak at this Ministerial Session.

I would like to express my gratitude to celebrate November 5th, the World Tsunami Awareness Day, in India, during the period of this conference with the Ministers and distinguished participants.

It is my pleasure to inform that the World Tsunami Awareness Day was adopted by consensus at the UN General Assembly in December 2015.

In Japan, evacuation drills for tsunami have been and will be conducted in many areas in November.

I would like to propose that the World Tsunami Awareness Day be the day to promote the importance of tsunami evacuation globally.

Mr. Chair,

Due to the impact of climate change, there is a growing concern that disasters might be more intensified and cause the unprecedented levels of heavy rains in many places of the world.

In this context, the theme of this conference 'developing community resilience' is a very critical issue of today.

It is also relevant for the '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.'

Mr. Chair,

I would like to highlight that the national and local governments need to develop strategies, policies and plans for DRR and implement them.

The importance of such strategies is clearly stated in the Sendai Framework.

In Japan, the national government and all the local governments have already developed DRR plans and implemented their actions.

Today I would like to underline three points; what we need to do as global leaders for DRR.

First, we need to increase investment in DRR.

Hard investment, such as development of infrastructure, is necessary.

This effort must be steadily and continuously made in the long term. For example, Japan set a target that 95% of housings will have anti-earthquake structure by 2020.

A synergy effect will be created by having hard and soft measures together.

Evacuation plans and development of high levees must be accompanied together to save people's lives and livelihood.

For example, in Japan, the national government is developing an evacuation plan in view of the case that several millions of citizens in the Metropolitan Tokyo have to evacuate in unprecedented flooding.

Second, we need to encourage citizen's participation in DRR.

The importance of enhancing resilience at the community level was recognized based on the lessons from the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011.

The Community DRR Plan system was established in Japan recently to provide citizens' platform for dialogue so that they can discuss local risks and plan their own actions.

This planning system is able to accommodate local knowledge and needs according to the choice of the citizens. For example, Community DRR Plan can take into account where vulnerability exists in the neighborhood, such as where senior citizens and disabled people live.

Such information will be useful to understand local hazards and propose actions for evacuation.

Furthermore, as one of the soft measures, education for preparedness ensures that citizens are able to understand disaster risk correctly and take proper actions by themselves.

Almost all elementary and junior high schools in Japan conduct evacuation drills regularly.

Knowledge and practical skills for DRR will be acquired as a part of their lives.

Third, we need to promote 'Build Back Better.'

Japan has experienced many disasters and has recovered from them using lessons learned from the past.

Sharing experiences, both successful and not-successful, among the entire nations will enrich the global practices for 'Build Back Better'.

As stated in the Sendai Framework, the International Recovery Platform (IRP) serves as a policy dialogue platform to share experiences and lessons on recovery and reconstruction.

I would like to close my remarks with my wish for the success of this Conference.

Thank you very much.