

Official Statements: Incheon Metropolitan City of the Republic of Korea

Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2019

May 17, 2019

Your Excellencies and all distinguished participants,

On behalf of Incheon Metropolitan City of the Republic of Korea, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the Government of Switzerland and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for establishing this Global Platform.

A decade ago, in 2009, the Incheon Declaration was proclaimed at a conference hosted by the UN Secretary General, urging for active participation and cooperation of local governments as key players in disaster risk reduction and climate change response. This served as an opportunity to launch the Making Cities Resilient Campaign a year later in 2010.

In 2013, Incheon was the first Korean municipality to join in the MCR Campaign, and has since exerted its full effort to put the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction into practice. A case in point is that, in order to achieve the Target e), Incheon has remained consistent with the national policy and regulations while establishing and updating annual safety management plans aligned to the Sendai Framework. Also, we strengthened governance for the local government, city council, experts, and civic groups to participate in devising, implementing, and monitoring plans for sustainable development every two years.

Nevertheless, as in many cities around the world, disaster risk factors are on the rise in Incheon due to extreme weather events and urban overcrowding.

Specifically, as it is situated on the west coast, Incheon is exposed to damage from the fine dust pollution in spring. Additionally, various other disaster risks caused by drastic climate change are present, such as localized torrential rain in summer, heat wave, cold snap and heavy snowfall. Being home to the Incheon International Airport and Sea Port also increases the chance for the city to become a route of infectious diseases.

Furthermore, as 11,688 factories are located in its ten industrial complexes, Incheon has a greater chance of major industrial fire accidents.

In the summer of 2017, localized heavy rain took a toll on Incheon, flooding 6,101 houses and buildings and taking the life of one person. This alerted us to the danger of natural hazards and raised the need for the city government to reinforce its prevention measures.

Since then, Incheon has focused its efforts in realizing an ICT-based risk information management and networked system with the relevant organizations, strengthening protection of the vulnerable populations, raising safety awareness of the citizens, and ensuring sustainable development with appropriate climate change response and disaster risk reduction. We have improved the GIS-based situation management and information transfer system to ensure that they are seamlessly connected to disaster scenes.

From the time of planning for the Incheon Free Economic Zone on reclaimed land, Incheon has aimed to build ‘a city resistant to climate change and disaster’. IFEZ has been developed as a resilient smart city that had been networked from the planning stage.

In addition, given the importance of disaster risk reduction education, we have regularly conducted safety education programs including the Sendai Framework, for the public servants, citizens, students, and businesses, facilitating the people-centered safety movement. The Korean school safety program, jointly created by the Incheon city government and UNDRR ONEA-GETI has been well received, and is practiced nationwide with active support from the Ministry of the Interior and Safety. This can be one example of bottom-up success.

At present, for international cooperation and contribution, 15 international organizations are based in Incheon, including the UNDRR ONEA-GETI, the GCF Secretariat, and the UNOSD. The city provides eight million dollars annually for those partnerships.

We, Incheon city, are very pleased that our support has contributed to providing a platform to share the knowledge, information and experiences of Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change adaptation, and Sustainable Development and would like to continue our support to practice the Sendai Framework on a global, national, and city level.

Keeping in mind that to prevent and mitigate disaster risk is the primary responsibility of a local government, who would be the first to respond to disaster, Incheon will continue to pursue policies and programs for disaster prevention and mitigation, applying the Sendai Framework in the process.

Thank you.