

Remarks by Governor Ido at the UNDRR GP

Geneva, Switzerland on May 16, 2019

1. Introduction

I am honored to speak here today. I am Toshizo Ido, and I serve as the Governor of Hyogo Prefecture of Japan.

2. Reconstruction from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake

Do you remember the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake twenty-four years ago? The magnitude 7.3 earthquake instantly destroyed our daily lives in Hyogo, killing more than 6,400 people and destroying 250,000 houses and buildings and the highway. Clinging to hope and guided by our principle of Creative Reconstruction, we fumbled our way towards building back better than before.

We drew up the 10-Year Hyogo Phoenix Reconstruction Plan only six months after the earthquake. Our first priority was the reconstruction of livelihoods, economic activity, and infrastructure, then we designed the measures to each phase of emergency relief, recovery, and reconstruction for smooth progress in recovery.

During the latter half of the Plan, we focused more on non-physical approaches to meet the needs of individual citizens, such as watching over the elderly through regular visits by volunteers and reviving local communities and businesses to make Hyogo a safer place.

3. Expanding Hyogo's DRR knowledge

On the 10th anniversary year in 2005, the Second UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction took place in Kobe, and the Hyogo Framework for Action which placed great emphasis on the importance of DRR, was adopted. The essence of Hyogo's recovery, "Creative Reconstruction," was revised into "Build Back Better" in the Sendai Framework of Disaster Risk Reduction during the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 in Sendai City.

We have been openly sharing the wealth of knowledge we gained through our reconstruction efforts. Given that natural disasters have become more and more frequent on the Japanese archipelago, as seen in the devastation in East Japan, Kumamoto, and Hokkaido, we must step up our efforts to make our DRR knowledge better known across Japan and the world.

4. Hyogo's initiatives

To put Hyogo's DRR knowledge into practice, the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Memorial Institution, an earthquake museum as well as a research and investigative organization for earthquake disasters, was established. The DRI has provided training courses to over 10,000 government officials across Japan who are expected to become leaders in local DRR communities. In 2017, the

University of Hyogo established a Graduate School of Disaster Resilience and Governance. The program covers a wide range of research activities on topics such as disaster risk-informed sustainable development.

We also formed the Disaster Reduction Alliance with nearby members such as JICA, DRI, the Asian Disaster Reduction Center, the Hyogo Emergency Medical Center and the Japanese representatives of UNDRR, UNOCHA, and WHO.

5. Marking the 25th anniversary of the Earthquake

We will always remember the support, assistance, and encouragement we received from around the world that contributed to Hyogo's speedy recovery. Next year marks the landmark 25th year since the earthquake, during which our theme will be to prevent the memories of the earthquake from fading away. Keeping in mind the keywords of “remember,” “inform,” “utilize,” and “be prepared” for the future using our experiences, we are determined to work even harder so that a culture of disaster preparedness will take hold, both physically and emotionally.

6. Expectations for the GP

Finally, I extend my best wishes that the 6th Global Platform will end in success. Thank you very much for your time.