

Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction

March 14, 2015

Disasters are a threat to which human being has long been exposed. A disaster deprives people of their lives instantly and afflicts the survivors. A disaster also wipes out the achievements of long-term development by destroying economic and social infrastructure instantly and obstructs the efforts of the international community for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Disasters are therefore a threat to human security, threatening the existence of individuals and society with dignity. Japan has experienced numerous disasters to date, and renewed this recognition from the experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011.

From this perspective, efforts toward disaster risk reduction are essential to eliminate this threat to the human security of individuals and to realize poverty eradication and sustainable development. This requires not only developing facilities for disaster risk reduction but also promoting the “mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction,” where governments make disaster risk reduction a policy priority, introduce the perspective of disaster risk reduction in all development policy and planning, and expand investment in disaster risk reduction, thereby building a society that is resilient to disasters. The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, which is to be adopted at this Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, is a guideline for the international community for that purpose. It is also necessary that disaster risk reduction is clearly positioned in the post-2015 development agenda, which is to be adopted at the UN Summit in September this year, so that resources for development are duly mobilized toward disaster risk reduction.

Disaster risk reduction is also important from the perspective of adaptation to the impacts of climate change. It is pointed out that some of the extreme climate and large-scale natural disasters that are occurring worldwide in recent years relate to climate change. Climate change negotiation is underway to adopt a new agreement that is fair, effective and applicable to all Parties at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change at the end of this year. On the negotiation table, in addition to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation), efforts for adaptation measures against the impacts of climate change have drawn high attention, especially from developing countries that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Firm efforts toward disaster risk reduction will greatly contribute to the climate change negotiation.

Japan has suffered from numerous disasters in its long history due to geographical and meteorological factors. However, Japan has repeatedly accumulated knowledge and technology for disaster risk reduction after each disaster and has utilized these for domestic measures for disaster risk reduction. Furthermore, in order to share this knowledge and technology with the international community, Japan has promoted international cooperation for disaster risk reduction, hosted the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction three times including this one and led the discussion of the international community on disaster risk reduction. Consequently, damage caused by disasters has been drastically reduced in Japan, and Japan has been the top donor both in quantity and quality in international cooperation to this issue.

Japan has thus taken pride in being “a country advanced in disaster risk reduction,” but it is also a fact that Japan remains prone to various disasters, including the Great East Japan Earthquake. Japan hereby announces the “Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction” as our contribution plan to build “a society that is resilient to disasters” together with the international community along with the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, of which Japan has contributed to the formulation, and through sharing its knowledge and technology as a country advanced in disaster risk reduction, on this occasion of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

I Basic Policies

A. Japan attaches particular importance to the three points in disaster risk reduction policies outlined below, building on the experience of the past 10 years since the formulation of the Hyogo Framework for Action. Japan will continue to emphasize these basic policies not only at this Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, but also at the international discussions on disaster risk reduction from now on.

(i) Investment in disaster risk reduction from the long-term perspective

Building resilience to disasters cannot be realized if only emergency response and recovery measures are taken at each occurrence of a disaster. Prior investment in disaster risk reduction, namely securing budget and taking measures toward disaster risk reduction from a long-term perspective, is important. The necessary costs of such prior investment are less in sum than costs necessary for emergency response and recovery after the occurrence of a disaster, and are therefore cost-effective. Also, prior investment in disaster risk reduction protects the achievement of development from disasters and

thus contributes to sustainable development. In fact, Japan has a history of building a society that is resilient to disasters through prior investment in disaster risk reduction, which has supported Japan's economic development.

(ii) Build Back Better

The post-disaster phase provides an opportunity to implement drastic measures to build countries and regions that are resilient to disasters, including the review of land-use plans and building standards, and the development of infrastructure for disaster risk reduction. It is necessary not only to simply recover the same situation as existed prior to the disaster, but to overcome the vulnerabilities based on the lessons learned from the disaster and reconstruct toward a society that is more resilient to disasters – namely “Build Back Better.” It is important to continuously spread the efforts for “Build Back Better,” including the efforts for reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake in the Tohoku region, widely to the international community. Japan will also provide emergency assistance and recovery and reconstruction assistance in a seamless manner.

(iii) Collaboration between the central governments and various actors

The central government of each country has the primary responsibility to protect its people's lives and assets from disasters. But it is necessary to build a system where all actors, including local governments, private companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), research institutes, and the media collaborate and play their respective roles with the central government taking the initiative. In addition, in the case of international cooperation, it is effective to address with networks including international organizations and regional organizations relating to disaster risk reduction.

B. Japan will take the following perspectives into consideration in implementing cooperation for disaster risk reduction in order to enhance its quality and effectiveness.

(i) The human security approach and promoting women's participation

As mentioned above, disasters are a threat to human security, and a perspective on the threat they pose to individuals, namely the human security approach, should be taken in addressing disaster risk reduction. While every affected individual faces vulnerabilities at the occurrence of a disaster, it is necessary to address disaster risk reduction by taking into consideration the specific situation and needs of women

and those who tend to face particular vulnerabilities, including children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, and in a manner where these people participate in these efforts.

In particular, as a lesson learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake, Japan attaches importance to gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as women's participation in decision making at all stages from disaster prevention, through disaster relief to recovery and reconstruction. It is also necessary to develop human resources to enhance women's leadership for that purpose.

(ii) Cooperation based on the perspective of adaptation to the impacts of climate change

Cooperation for disaster risk reduction contributes to adaptation to the impacts of climate change. Japan will provide assistance on disaster risk reduction as one of the priorities to those countries vulnerable to the impacts of climate change including small island states and least developed countries. Through this assistance, Japan will contribute to the adoption of a new agreement applicable to all Parties at the climate change negotiation.

(iii) Utilizing Japan's knowledge and technology

As mentioned above, Japan has accumulated knowledge and technology in the area of disaster risk reduction through overcoming numerous disaster experiences. Japan can make a distinctive contribution to the international community by utilizing its knowledge and technology in a manner that local communities can introduce for themselves, not only by introducing the achievements of cutting-edge science and technology, such as disaster observation, analysis and prediction that utilize innovative earth observation and information and communication technology, but also properly combining both "soft" (non-structural) and "hard" (structural) measures. In particular, based on the fact that most of the technology is developed and accumulated by the private sector and local governments, Japan will promote cooperation for disaster risk reduction by actively introducing suggestions from various actors including the private sector and through public-private partnership as well as partnership with local governments.

II Concrete measures

As concrete measures, Japan will provide cooperation through effectively combining (i) non-material assistance, including assistance for establishing legislation, institutions and systems, as well as human resource development, (ii) material

assistance, centering on the development of economic and social infrastructure and (iii) global and region-wide cooperation. For this purpose, in the four years from 2015 to 2018, Japan will provide 4 billion US dollars in total to the area related to disaster risk reduction and train 40 thousand government officials and local leaders to play a leading role in national efforts for disaster risk reduction and post-disaster “Build Back Better.”

(i) Non-material assistance

Japan will provide technical assistance including the dispatch of experts to assist establishing legislation, institutions and systems as a fundamental basis for national efforts for disaster risk reduction. Japan will also provide technical assistance including the dispatch of experts for developing systems on disaster risk reduction and provide training for government officials for disaster risk reduction and other people relating to disaster risk reduction (NGO actors, development experts and education experts, etc.).

Assistance for establishing laws, institutions and systems

- ◇ Laws and regulations relating to disaster risk reduction (basic acts on disaster countermeasures, laws and regulations relating to the use of land (including laws and regulations relating to disaster risk areas), laws and regulations on building standards, etc.)
- ◇ Basic plans for disaster risk reduction, master plans for flood control, master plans for urban planning, land-use plans, urban planning and related institutions, etc.
- ◇ Assistance to and strengthening setup of disaster risk reduction branches in government (both central and local), consideration of response including financing in the countries that face strong financial risks (including the Stand-by Emergency Credit for Urgent Recovery (a Japanese ODA loan))
- ◇ Assistance to build and strengthen partnership systems among the public and private sectors and NGOs toward international disaster risk reduction and emergency and humanitarian response.

Human resource development and other technical assistance

- ◇ Disaster risk assessment (development of hazard maps, research assistance for adaptation to climate change, etc.)
- ◇ Technologies for disaster observation, prediction and warning (including information and communication technology, earth observation (space technology) and geospatial information)
- ◇ Community-based disaster risk reduction, disaster education
- ◇ Human resource development, training, exercise and technology transfer for

disaster risk reduction policy planning and emergency disaster relief (both domestic and international)

- ◇ Training to promote women's leadership in disaster risk reduction

(ii) Material assistance

Based on the basic policies in Section I, Japan will assist in the development of economic and social infrastructure as prior investment in disaster risk reduction by utilizing Japan's technology and construction methods, and also provide emergency and reconstruction assistance. In particular, the development of infrastructure for disaster risk reduction and infrastructure that is resilient to disasters is an important element of "quality infrastructure," which Japan is promoting.

Development of economic and social infrastructure as prior investment in disaster risk reduction

- ◇ Countermeasures against flooding, debris flow, landslides and storm surges, forest improvement including afforestation, etc. for disaster reduction
- ◇ Development of satellites necessary for disaster observation, prediction and warning and of information and communication infrastructure
- ◇ Improvement of buildings quality (earthquake resistance, wind resistance, etc.)
- ◇ Provision of equipment related to disaster risk reduction
- ◇ Development of transportation facilities, lifeline facilities and public facilities that are resilient to disasters, and of information and communication facilities relating to disaster risk reduction, etc.

Post-disaster emergency and reconstruction assistance

- ◇ Post-disaster emergency assistance
- ◇ Recovery and reconstruction assistance

(iii) Global cooperation and region-wide cooperation

Since damage caused by disasters can affect multiple countries, as well as global supply chains due to economic globalization, disaster risk reduction is a global challenge that requires trans-boundary efforts. It is also necessary to build a system that properly follows up on the status of the achievement of the efforts under the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. Japan will therefore strengthen its assistance for the Secretariat for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), which plays a role in disseminating and promoting disaster risk reduction activities worldwide and coordinating related international organizations.

Furthermore, Japan will strengthen its assistance for the setup and activities

of the International Recovery Platform (IRP) in order to strongly promote “Build Back Better” that will be clearly positioned in the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

Japan will also provide region-wide cooperation for countries that have similar disaster situations, social and cultural backgrounds, and vulnerabilities, and thus aims to share lessons learned among the target countries and expand the effect of cooperation.

- ◇ Assistance for the monitoring of the global targets that will be newly included in the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, and for the improvement of its methods, as well as for the development of indicators that measure the progress of priorities for action, etc.
- ◇ Contribution to the development of international disaster statistics
- ◇ Dissemination of information on good practices of “Build Back Better” including efforts from the Tohoku region, and assistance for the activities toward human resource development for reconstruction and for the setup of systems for that purpose (member organizations of IPR including UNISDR)
- ◇ Assistance for efforts to build region-wide institutions and systems (Sentinel Asia, Asian Disaster Reduction Center, ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), etc.)
- ◇ Assistance for countermeasures against climate change that are deeply related to disaster risk reduction (50% of the assistance of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) are supposed to be spent for the area of adaptation to the impacts of climate change, and disaster risk reduction is an important pillar of adaptation. Japan will contribute 1.5 billion US dollars to the GCF subject to the approval of the National Diet.)
- ◇ Collaboration between regional cooperation of each region and Japan’s bilateral cooperation
