

Panel Discussion

Effective International Cooperation for Disaster Reduction against Multi-Location/Complex-Hazard Disasters

Facilitator:

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Panelists:

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Dr. H. Sarwidi (Advisor/Steering Member of the National Agency for Disaster Management (BNPB) of the Republic of Indonesia)

Dr. Linsheng Gu (Director of the Center for Public Safety Planning and Research, Urban Planning and Design Institute at Tsinghua University, China; Professor and Assistant Director of the Institute for Disaster Management and Reconstruction at Sichuan University-Hong Kong Polytechnic University)

Mr. Isamu Sato (Mayor of Kurihara City, Miyagi Prefecture)

Commentators:

Dr. Mikio Ishiwatari (Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist of the World Bank Institute (WBI))

Mr. Oliver Lacey-Hall (Head of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA))

Ms. Akiko Domoto (President of the Women and Disaster Network Japan and former Governor of Chiba Prefecture)

Dr. Hiroko Hara (Vice-Representative of Japan's Network for Women and Health (WHJ))



[Dr. Kawata]

This panel discussion will focus on international cooperation for disaster reduction against multi-location/complex-hazard disasters. We can learn many lessons from experiencing a disaster. But if we do not make effective use of these lessons, they remain nothing but knowledge. Unfortunately, in Japan, there is great concern about the potential occurrence of very large-scale



disasters, such as a Nankai Trough megathrust quake or a Tokyo metropolitan earthquake. Japan is not well prepared to handle such large-scale disasters and would not be able to recover without international assistance, partly because Japan's population is shrinking and rapidly aging, which could lead to a significant shortage of manpower in the future. In such circumstances, there will be no other option but to wait for foreign aid.

In order to achieve a more resilient world, consideration for women, children, the elderly, the disabled, and foreign residents is important in terms of security for all human beings. When the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake occurred 17 years ago, we received a large number of offers of rescue assistance and healthcare services from abroad. Unfortunately, however, arrangements for matching with onsite needs did not work out well. During the last 17 years since we have experienced many disasters and I think our society has gradually become mature. Specific consideration for those I have listed is important in preparing for future disasters and would also be beneficial for the general public. In this context, it is essential for us to be constantly prepared so that we can address gender issues, the needs of the disabled, and other challenging issues that may arise following a disaster.

[Dr. Thiruppugazh]

I would like to talk about international cooperation, in particular, about what I have learned from the Gujarat earthquake.

The earthquake that occurred in the Gujarat State in the east of India on January 26, 2001, was the most devastating since the independence of India. The death toll exceeded 13,000 and the number of the injured was about 167,000. More than 222,000



houses were totally destroyed and more than 910,000 houses were partially damaged.

Today, I would like to focus on two issues. First, India does not request international assistance

but accepts it. Secondly, the final decision on what assistance to accept from foreign countries, and when, from whom, and how are made by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. In addition, the Government of India limits the number of countries from which they accept assistance to six, including Japan.

One of the problems is the delay in receiving assistance. Even if assistance is received immediately after a disaster, it is the government that allocates funds for recovery and reconstruction using international resources. In addition to the delay in receiving assistance at the beginning, there will also be delays in distributing relief supplies after receiving them.

There is also “conditional assistance.” If we receive conditional assistance, additional conditions are later imposed incrementally, which are often attacked by the media, posing a dilemma for the government.

We are grateful that rescue teams are sent to India, but due to many procedural requirements, they usually cannot reach the affected areas in the first 24 to 48 hours, which is the most important time for rescue. If they arrive after 24 to 48 hours have passed, it is often too late. And if the rescue team members do not understand Indian languages, that also creates problems. It is also very important to make efforts on disaster risk reduction. Many countries are prepared for disasters before they occur. Donors should provide funds before a disaster occurs, instead of merely waiting for a disaster. If funds are provided before a disaster occurs to help the country prepare for an emergency, I think many lives would be saved.

[Dr. Sarwidi]

I will focus on three issues: current trends concerning disasters in Indonesia and international cooperation, relief operations during disasters, and policies and disaster management.

When a massive tsunami triggered by the huge earthquake that occurred in the Indian Ocean

hit Indonesia in 2004, Aceh was severely affected. Further disasters followed this event in Indonesia, leading to a financial and economic crisis. The damage in Aceh was estimated at 500 million US dollars and, by 2010, 1.3 billion US dollars were spent for relief in small to mid-sized disasters. Many people, particularly those in international communities, have extended their support to our country.

Around 2004 to 2006, even if a disaster occurred, it was difficult to coordinate response operations among government ministries because there was no designated responsible authority. The Government of Indonesia enacted the first law concerning disaster management in 2007,



and in 2008 established the National Agency for Disaster Management (BNPB), a government agency dedicated to addressing disaster issues. The Five-Year Disaster Prevention and Reduction Plan was also developed and a local disaster management office was opened. In addition, regional offices with similar responsibilities were set up in 491 prefectures.

Indonesia not only receives assistance but also offers assistance to disaster-affected countries. As I have mentioned, Indonesia has already initiated systematic disaster management in terms of policy efforts.

The population of Indonesia is about 250 million, which is widely distributed over a long archipelago but mainly concentrated in Java and on small islands. Because roughly 200 languages are spoken in the country, it is not possible to provide information on disasters in one standard language. Some speak Malay. There are also more than 200 different cultures and the relationship between men and women is not equal. All these issues need to be addressed in the future.

[Dr. Gu]

Let me begin with the Great Sichuan Earthquake. The total number of dead and missing persons was about 90,000 in this earthquake. In the long Chinese history, however, this figure is quite small compared with the figure of 240,000 in the Great Tangshan Earthquake that occurred in 1976. One of the most notable aspects to the damage in the Sichuan Earthquake was that as many as 7,400 school buildings were destroyed.

I will focus on three issues related to the subject of today's discussion. Firstly, the disclosure of information. If a developing country seeks assistance from foreign countries, it is essential for that country to disclose information. After the Sichuan Earthquake, China, for the first time, released information about the disaster to the



public throughout the nation, including areas deep in the mountains. Secondly, China accepted offers of foreign assistance. I will later explain the details, but after the Sichuan Earthquake, China accepted international rescue teams for the first time. In addition, the strong network of cooperation among Chinese people around the world played an important role.

The third issue concerns NGOs. The year of the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake is said to be the first year of the recognition of “NGOs” in Japan. I think the same thing can also be said of the Great Sichuan Earthquake in China. Many volunteers came from overseas. There were volunteers also from Kobe. Thirty-six years ago when the 1976 Tangshan Earthquake occurred, the Government of China refused to accept offers of international assistance, even

though 240,000 people were killed. The United States offered aid on the day of the earthquake; the UN and the UK on the following day; and Japan on the third day but all offers were rejected. At that time, China believed in “self-reliance” or believed that human beings can conquer death. After the Great Sichuan Earthquake, a large amount of assistance was extended from outside the country. The first thing we received from Japan was disaster-related documents. The documents containing information on life support and reconstruction plans in Japan that were useful as reference materials. Of them, one million letters were translated into Chinese, which was published in the form of a booklet three months after the earthquake. One booklet each was provided free of charge to each of the executives of local government agencies in all the affected areas. Based on materials received from Hyogo Prefecture and Kobe City, the Government of China provided those concerned with information on a wide range of issues, such as daily life assistance for elderly people living alone, management of volunteers, construction techniques for temporary housing units, how to develop reconstruction plans, earthquake insurance, and issues of school insurance.

[Mr. Sato]

I will talk about the role played by Kurihara City concerning the activities of the medical assistance team sent by the Government of Israel to Minamisanriku-cho in Miyagi Prefecture, when it was severely damaged by the tsunami following the Great East Japan Earthquake. The Israeli medical assistance team, consisting of 60 members in total, provided medical care to those affected by the disaster in Minamisanriku-cho. The team stayed in Kurihara City as their base camp for two weeks from March 27 to April 10, 2011. When they completed their mission and left Japan, many people in the affected area expressed their gratitude for the work undertaken by the team members.



On the occasion of this forum, I have again reviewed this assistance project to identify the successful factors. My conclusion is that, first of all, there was a strong will of the Israeli team to rescue those affected, as well as their sense of generosity. Due to the disaster-stricken situation, there were many restrictions imposed on the team. Despite such circumstances, the Israeli team always respected the decisions made by the Japanese side. Without their cooperative stance, the project would not have been completed successfully.

In addition, a quick response was received both from the national government and the prefecture. Kurihara City is a small local municipality and the city itself was also affected by the disaster. Without the timely response from the national and prefectural governments, it would not have

been possible for the city to accomplish the large-scale project to assist other municipalities in cooperation with a foreign team.

Lastly, I would like to talk about what I felt about playing an unprecedented role as the intermediate coordinator of an assistance program involving a foreign team. A disaster-affected local government is busy helping those affected and providing care to evacuees in shelters, and therefore it is almost impossible for it to coordinate and make preparations in cooperation with relevant organizations in responding to offers of assistance from abroad. I think a public organization is needed to support affected local governments.

I also think that some temporary measures, such as deregulation, should be taken in an emergency in order to facilitate response operations, such as life support for disaster-affected people. It is also important to establish a cooperative system among the organizations responsible for responding to major emergencies, such as massive earthquakes. The Government of Japan, foreign embassies in Japan, prefectural governments, and other relevant organizations should play an authoritative role and give instructions in a flexible manner with the highest priority on the needs of those in the disaster affected areas.

[Dr. Kawata]

According to the views and comments presented by The four panelists, there are many stages in international assistance efforts and each country has its own unique culture, which suggests that, even if we develop a manual common to all countries, we are not sure if such a manual can be effective. In the following discussion, let's focus on how to prepare for the next disaster.



First of all, each of you must have some ideas about how to better prepare for the next potential disaster based on what you have learned from past experience. Will you please briefly describe your ideas. Dr. Thiruppugazh, would you please begin?

[Dr. Thiruppugazh]

What I have learned from the Gujarat earthquake is the necessity of a legal framework. We did not have the concept of disaster management before the Gujarat earthquake. We learned from the disaster that disaster management is essential. In 2003, the government announced that it would involve itself in disaster management from 2005.



The second lesson we learned was that, when a disaster occurs, many different organizations should be involved in responding to it. We therefore established the Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority to be prepared for post-disaster recovery and reconstruction. We then formed a permanent committee to be responsible for developing disaster prevention plans, providing training, and developing human resources. In 2005, the Government of India established the Disaster Management Division. The Division is responsible for overall supervision, while local municipalities are implementing their own disaster prevention measures. Under the new system, local governments prepare themselves for disasters so that they can assist the central government and, in an emergency, the central and local governments cooperate with each other to offer emergency relief.

The third lesson is that we have to be fully prepared for disaster prevention and reduction before any disaster occurs. It is, of course, also important to respond to post-disaster emergencies. The national government has therefore set up the national disaster management fund. This fund has two objectives: one is post-disaster relief and the other is disaster prevention. Both are considered equally important. I think, in the future, more importance will be put on prevention than relief.

The fourth is the necessity of a clearly defined protocol. No matter how strongly needs are expressed on a municipal level or even on a national level, the national government cannot take effective action unless a request is made in a comprehensive manner, rather than separately. Each state should also take leadership in seeking assistance from the central government and the central government should respond to their requests. We thus need a protocol that clearly defines who should be responsible and how to address emergency needs.

Lastly, we need a full-time system, or in other words, an organization to cultivate a large number of stakeholders, including researchers, engineers, media professionals, and NGOs. To meet this requirement, we established a research institute called the “National Disaster Management Institute.” A similar institute has also been established in Gujarat. Based on the institute, a training organization has also been set up.

These are the lessons we have learned and the actions that we have taken.

[Dr. Kawata]

Thank you for providing us with many pieces of valuable advice. I was particularly impressed by the creation of the fund based on the idea that more emphasis should be placed on pre-disaster planning than on post-disaster response. Unfortunately we do not have such a fund in Japan. When I participated recently in the annual meeting of the World Bank and the IMF in Sendai, the Pakistan Minister of Finance also said that such a fund is necessary for developing countries but that it is not possible to set up such a fund in poor countries, such as Pakistan, where the per-capita GDP is less than \$1,000. Today Dr. Ishiwatari is joining us from the World Bank. Could you please give some comments on how financial arrangements for disaster prevention have been made and what kinds of funds are available for developing countries to help them prepare for an emergency?

[Dr. Ishiwatari]

As Dr. Kawata has just mentioned, how to allocate money for preparing for disasters in developing countries was one of the greatest discussion topics in the meeting concerning disaster prevention and development held in Sendai over the previous two days. Japan has long been failing to allocate money in a well-planned manner for pre-disaster preparation and so have developing countries. There are however some insurance-like systems and also other systems similar to the Phoenix Mutual Aid System, under which a certain amount of money is set aside in a fund in advance so that the money can be utilized when a disaster occurs. The World Bank has a system where money becomes available from a standby fund immediately following a disaster to be used for relief in disaster-affected areas. So I think it is possible for an international organization, for example, to establish a system to build up a fund in preparation for disasters.



[Dr. Kawata]

Now I'd like to ask a question to Dr. Sarwidi. In Indonesia, are you planning to establish a fund for disaster prevention? Like Japan, Indonesia is a very disaster-prone country. I think lessons learned from the sufferings caused by disasters in the past have been reflected within various kinds of systems in your country. I am particularly interested in this subject.

[Dr. Sarwidi]

Indonesia and Japan are common in that both have experienced many disasters. In that sense, I

think more efforts should be placed on strengthening international cooperation. The creation of funds is helpful and, furthermore, if there are countries that have a special framework for an emergency situation, it is possible for us to establish an exchange program. We can also promote exchanges of experts. With regard to funds, private funds are more flexible and can cope with disaster reduction more quickly than any government funds. Private funding organizations can take action speedily, facilitating international coordination and making it possible to provide the fund promptly upon request.

[Dr. Kawata]

I understand that NGOs in Indonesia have long been very active. After the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, did private groups play an active role in cooperative efforts?

[Dr. Sarwidi]

Yes, very much. At that time, there were no relevant laws and regulations and no organizations dedicated to disaster prevention. Under these circumstances, coordination was very difficult. However, we now have offices for NGOs and a special organization was also established. After enacting a law, the challenge is how to implement



it. In addition, more efforts are needed to strengthen the system. Our history is still short and human resources at the organization are not sufficient. There are still many shortages within our organization.

[Dr. Kawata]

Now I'd like to ask a question to you, Dr. Gu. China recovered from the disaster in three years, which I think proves that China has become a leading economic power. After the disaster, I have been told that China shared various types of information with Japan in preparing for future disasters. Following the Great Sichuan Earthquake, the only problem was the acceptance of an emergency response team immediately after the disaster. However, I think, the role China will play in the international community will be increasingly important. You have talked about your efforts within the country but are you also considering extending efforts to other countries?

[Dr. Gu]

As you have mentioned, there is an increasing number of voices saying that China should play an active role internationally in preventing and reducing disasters. We have formed the National Emergency Rescue Team (NERT), with the China Seismological Bureau playing a leading role and including some military personnel. The team has so far joined rescue operations in Turkey, Nigeria, and Indonesia. In China, however, there are no laws concerning dispatching rescue teams abroad, unlike in Japan. We need to develop a law to address this issue.



One of the objectives of the Institute for Disaster Management and Reconstruction is to train people who will be useful in reducing disasters internationally. One program is for executives in China who will be involved in overseas emergency relief and recovery operations. Another program is designed to train people from developing countries. China has been receiving trainees annually from developing countries in the Third World. I believe that China will play an important role as an economic power in international disaster rescue operations and disaster prevention, along with Japan, the United States, and the EU.

[Dr. Kawata]

After the Great Sichuan Earthquake, I also visited the affected area to conduct a survey. As Dr. Gu has just said, damage was particularly severe to schools, leaving nearly 10,000 children dead. As the saying goes, in both Japan and China, “Children are treasures.” In China, however, due to its single-child policy, when planning for the restoration of family life after a disaster, one of the issues to be addressed concerns families who have lost their child. Gender issues are not openly raised in China but, after many children were lost in the Sichuan Earthquake, has more attention been paid to vulnerable people?

[Dr. Gu]

The deaths of children has become a serious social issue. The Sichuan Provincial People’s Government formed a special team dedicated to address school-related issues within the Disaster Relief headquarters. Parents are calling on the government to take responsibility for seriously damaged school buildings. This is a very complicated problem for the government. The responsibility lies with the government, the department responsible for construction, the department responsible for design, the contractors, and the school principal. On the whole, there

are insufficient funds. When money is collected, everybody seeks to gain profits from constructing school buildings. If we pursue the responsibility, everybody could be blamed for what happened. For this reason, unlike in Japan, the United States, or Europe, the Chinese government settled the matter in a conciliatory manner without making a thorough investigation to determine the precise cause and liability. In some aspects, decisions were made based only on rough estimates. There are still some that remain discontented but a large amount of compensation was paid out.

Under the single-child policy, parents who lost their child are allowed to have another child. In general, the greatest progress in the government's approach in responding to the Great Sichuan Earthquake was consideration for the weak. We do not have the concept of mental health care or emotional care in China. On the occasion of this disaster, for the first time, we received specialists in mental health care from universities in the United States and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In addition, "mental health care" was also included in the national reconstruction plan. In China, we have an expression "to create the homeland of one's mind." This idea is borrowed from the reconstruction plan for Kobe.

[Dr. Kawata]

Let me ask you a question, Dr. Hara. There is an international trend, regardless of developed or developing countries, that we need to address issues concerning vulnerable people, particularly gender issues. Where is the origin of this trend?

[Dr. Hara]

We had a meeting in Yokohama before the one held in Hyogo. In the Yokohama meeting, consideration for gender issues was already discussed. It was not, however, incorporated into Japanese disaster relief efforts. After the meeting in Hyogo, it wasn't either. Finally, quite recently, the gender concept has been reflected in the

relevant Japanese law. However, even when the concept is incorporated into law, women are still categorized as "vulnerable." In order to make women free from the category of the weak and have them participate in planning decisions more actively, it is women who have to empower themselves. At the same time, we should stop regarding the disabled and elderly simply as vulnerable and have them participate in planning decisions. In addition, more consideration should be given to sexual minorities. I'd like to encourage them also to participate in planning processes.



Foreign residents may be included in those affected by a disaster. What if they don't speak the local language? How can they participate in rescue operations? Can they receive the services they need? We should consider all these issues. Another concern is about foreigners who have not completed alien registration and may be victims of human trafficking. When a disaster occurs, we have no way to know who to look for, and where, and who are actually missing. I would like to think about how it is technically possible to secure their well-being and offer them assistance, from a global perspective.

[Dr. Kawata]

As our society becomes more affluent, we cannot avoid addressing such issues. People will voluntarily participate in and more readily commit themselves to the process. The question is how their actions will be recognized by society as a whole. China is in transition towards becoming economically affluent. Currently people's attention is focused on school-related issues. People's complaints were not openly exposed in the past, but easier access to information does not permit this anymore. As Dr. Gu said, there are many contradictions but information on contradictions should be made open, instead of hiding it, to be exposed to criticism. In this way, we can take one step forward. In this context, it is very important to understand that the Great Sichuan Earthquake served as a trigger for China to make information more accessible to the public in its efforts to respond to disasters.

Now, Mayor Sato, I'd like to ask your opinions as the representative of a municipal government, Kurihara City. Gender-related issues have gradually been recognized on the national government level. However, local governments significantly lag behind. It seems that they are only satisfied by appointing women to managerial positions in their efforts to achieve gender equality. Will you please give your opinions on what should be improved?

[Mr. Sato]

This is the eighth year since I became Mayor and merged the towns to form Kurihara City. Our major challenge is to achieve a gender-equal society. I have never thought that appointing women to managerial positions would be enough, just as Dr. Kawata mentioned. The majority of city employees are women. Women account for 60% of those newly hired every spring. Top executives are mostly women. Kurihara City set up its self-governing disaster prevention organization after the earthquake. Once a disaster occurs, it is women who take the leadership of all who are involved in relief efforts. I would like to stress this point.



[Dr. Kawata]

Kurihara City may not have any problems but most municipal governments are very slow in their efforts. In most local governments, the number of female employees has been increasing gradually to become the majority, but very few of them are promoted to executives, causing many difficulties when a disaster occurs. Ms. Domoto, would you share your view on this issue as a former governor?

[Ms. Domoto]

When the earthquake occurred in Tohoku, women, particularly those who were pregnant or had delivered a baby just before or after the earthquake, experienced difficulties. It is true that disabled and sick people were the most severely hit. As Dr. Hara has said, the issue of “protecting the vulnerable” and the issue of “women’s involvement” should be discussed separately. And as Mayor Sato said, women worked very hard at affected sites. From this fact alone, I don’t think it is right to put working women and the vulnerable into one category.



When I was the governor, I suggested to hire more women but it was difficult to do so. In order for women to further improve their capacity, I think the whole of society should focus more efforts on promoting gender equality. Unless women’s roles are factored in when we prepare ourselves for a potential disaster, and women are encouraged to participate in decision making more frequently on a daily basis, they cannot fully respond to a disaster. The same thing can be said of children and those who need care.

I organized a national survey conducted by the National Governors’ Association on the theme of women and disasters. As of 2008, in response to a question asking if the prefectural government sought women’s opinions when they prepared the necessities to be placed at emergency shelters, to my great regret, none of the 47 prefectures responding to the survey said “yes.” The situation is better now but taking into account men’s perspective alone is not appropriate.

In terms of gender equality, when a disaster occurs, a relief plan should cover the needs of all affected people, both men and women. In addition to measures to make it easier for women and those who need particular care after disaster to cope with daily life, we should include the needs of men, because there are also many men who have difficulties. In Tohoku, men who lost their wives in the tsunami have been suffering bitterly. I would like to urge those concerned on local government levels to discuss and determine, before any disaster occurs, how to incorporate

women's opinions and needs as well as assistance for all affected people. The conclusion on the local level should be laid down in the national law. As our speaker from India said, I think it is important to include the gender perspective in the legal framework and the protocol.

[Dr. Kawata]

According to Mr. Lacey-Hall, the OCHA sends its staff to many places in the Pacific area. I also have opportunities to visit many developing countries to conduct surveys about disasters. In these developing countries, I found that women are rather more actively involved in relief efforts. How does the OCHA see the situation there when a disaster actually hits? How do you address gender issues?

[Mr. Lacey-Hall]

All of your opinions are valuable. I'd like to add some of my opinions, too. Gender is a truly challenging issue. Men, women, elderly people, people with disabilities and various other groups of people have their own unique needs.

In any disaster relief efforts, the role of women is very important. It is necessary for the local and national governments engaged in a disaster response and international organizations, including ours, to assess individual needs, instead of grouping diverse people into one category simply as "victims." The results of needs assessments should then be reflected in disaster response plans. Women should not only be regarded as victims or vulnerable. They can also make significant contributions to relief planning and reconstruction efforts. Thorough consideration should be made and the individual needs of women, elderly people, and people with disabilities should be taken into account when planning shelters, temporary housing units, and post-disaster life reconstruction. For example, when a disaster hits a coastal area, just because it is located by the sea, it is not sufficient just to provide fishing boats. Some women support their family physically and/or financially. In any case, the first step we should take is to make an accurate assessment of needs in order to understand diverse needs.



[Dr. Kawata]

A survey in different countries on what should be improved for future preparedness has revealed that, as indicated by the lessons learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, it was not very clear, in the past, for whom disaster prevention and reduction efforts were being made. Victims of a disaster should not be viewed as a single group. Every one of them suffers

differently. It is therefore very important for the national government, local governments, and researchers to act from each victim's standpoint. After experiencing relief efforts, it is also important for them to participate in a later phase of disaster prevention and reduction planning for the future to reflect their opinions based on what they have learned.

In this era, when disasters frequently occur, many countries have reached a common basic conclusion that it is necessary to understand that the entire society has gradually become mature. Each country has its own culture. In Indonesia, 200 different languages are spoken. We need to coordinate our efforts taking these regional differences into account. To achieve this goal, as a premise, it is necessary for each country to establish its own legal framework.

With this as the conclusion for the first part of the discussion, let us move on to the next issue.

The next discussion will particularly focus on international cooperation for disaster prevention efforts in the future. Before starting this panel discussion, the main issues that needed to be addressed were considered to be limited to emergency aid, lifesaving, and healthcare assistance immediately following a disaster. However, the presentations that have just been made have made us aware of the necessity of a clearly defined framework for international relief efforts, not only in immediate post-disaster settings but also for long-term post-disaster recovery and reconstruction planning.

From my own experience in the Pinatubo volcanic eruption in the Philippines in 1991, many international assistance teams entered the affected area immediately following the disaster. However, for example, when the minority Thai hill tribe people had to deal with a resettlement problem, JICA was the only organization that provided advice. The greater the damage caused by a disaster, the longer it takes to recover. In order to respond to long-term reconstruction demands, the international community needs to be prepared for long-term assistance. In addition to life-saving assistance and healthcare assistance, more emphasis should be placed on longer-term support, including financial aid. What is your opinion about this matter, Dr. Thiruppugazh?

[Dr. Thiruppugazh]

As I have briefly mentioned, assistance should not be sought by the international community immediately after a disaster. Instead, there should be a system before any disaster occurs. There must be a well-organized disaster prevention program before the occurrence of a disaster. I think advanced countries can assist developing countries

in various ways in training and capacity-building. Technology transfer is an important issue for



India. The Indian economy is growing but a large number of people in India are still in poverty. Because many people live in poverty, when a disaster occurs, it is not possible to build earthquake-resistant houses. They have neither the techniques nor the money. It is impossible to construct quake-resistant houses using local construction materials. Before any disaster occurs, India should request the international community for the relevant technical support.

As mentioned before, the protocol is very important. It is important to ask what the recipient actually needs before you send relief supplies. International organizations that help coordinate assistance will leave the affected country after the various kinds of relief supplies have arrived and humanitarian support has been provided and when post-disaster restoration and reconstruction have started. International organizations come to provide assistance immediately after a disaster, but I don't think there is any system that encourages them to continue their assistance in a sustainable manner.

[Dr. Kawata]

According to Dr. Sarwidi, after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, large earthquakes and tsunami disasters repeatedly occurred in Indonesia and international technical assistance or privately-funded supports were needed. Has Indonesia received such support from abroad, Dr. Sarwidi?

[Dr. Sarwidi]

Assistance from the international community is of course very important. Our country alone cannot produce sufficient resources and funds. We have few human resources and little expertise. However, from my experience, it is difficult to benefit from long-term assistance. Because, if a country receives long-term support, people may just wait to accept the help being given without making any self-help efforts. In such case, people's way of thinking should be changed.



[Dr. Kawata]

You are saying that it is difficult to promote a long-term assistance program?

[Dr. Sarwidi]

Yes. Assistance itself does no harm but the problem is how to perceive such "assistance." Those offering assistance may become tired. I think it is important to help in capacity building for local organizations.

[Dr. Kawata]

In China, various kinds of assistance efforts have been made after the Great Sichuan Earthquake and I think you have discussed a lot about the substance of international cooperation. Could you tell us a little bit about it?

[Dr. Gu]

In the recovery and reconstruction phase, we received much assistance from around the world, including from Japan, Taiwan, the United States, Europe, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. Whether support is long term or short term depends on the economic situation of each affected area. For example, countries such as China, that are undergoing rapid economic growth, have a promising future and therefore can recover quite quickly if funds are invested. If no recovery is seen even after assistance has been provided over three to five years, there must be problems other than the actual disaster, such as problems in the regional economy and/or related systems. If external organizations that offer post-disaster assistance become involved in addressing such regional issues and the assistance is prolonged, everyone becomes exhausted. Post-disaster assistance from foreign countries, such as material and mental support, should be used as “outside help” but the country also needs its own “inside help.” It is important for the affected country to regain its energy on its own by using its own “inside help” with the support of “outside help.” The balance between “mental support to help maintain a positive attitude” and “material and financial support” should differ depending on the level of recovery and reconstruction.

One of the major problems that surfaced after the Great Sichuan Earthquake was the large difference between areas that were affected by the disaster and areas that were not. Disaster-affected areas were provided with aid according to a 20 to 30-year reconstruction plan and thereby they have been urbanized. On the other hand, non-affected areas have not changed at all. Some in these areas even say that they wish an earthquake would hit their area. Of course, we are very grateful to receive assistance from the international community but I’m afraid that assistance was concentrated in China and little was given to Indonesia and Haiti. I think it is important for the international community to draw a line between the minimum level and the maximum level of assistance.

[Dr. Kawata]

Both internationally and domestically, we should take account of the balance in the allocation of assistance to affected areas. If we take action that only focuses on disaster-affected areas, the longer it takes to recover, the larger the disparity with surrounding areas becomes. It is therefore necessary to set standards to address this issue.

Let me ask you a question, Mayor Sato. Kurihara City has made tremendous efforts but I have heard that many people think that there were some problems in terms of cooperation with Miyagi Prefecture, under which Kurihara City is controlled. What was the reason for these problems? Could you also tell us about issues associated with assistance?

[Mr. Sato]

The Governor of Miyagi Prefecture and I were both members of the prefectural assembly and we had a strong and trusting relationship. However, the prefecture itself faced severe financial conditions and the earthquake occurred in the middle of such a financial crisis. Therefore, it is true that, without depending on the national government and without their financial commitment, it was not possible to make progress in the recovery. This is exactly what you have mentioned. Therefore, the commander should take a firm stand and public servants should make every effort to make progress.

[Dr. Kawata]

“Just think of the face of each one of the disaster victims, and you, the governors, should feel more responsible, and make more efforts.” I think this is what Dr. Iokibe would like to say. Governors assume, under the Japanese Basic Act on Disaster Control Measures, significant responsibilities. We shouldn’t allow ourselves to say, “We can’t.”

In today’s panel discussion, we have learned that each country and each region has their own culture and therefore we should not establish one set of standards that do not take into account these differences in cultures and apply such standards to all. It is important to ensure that gender issues are included and that we take into account individual opinions. It has also been made clear that, regardless of whether in developed or developing countries, a disaster cannot be overcome simply by financial support and that it is desirable for each one of the victims to become stronger while going through the recovery process because people will thereby become more prepared for the next possible disaster. This is the conclusion of today’s discussions and I think, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution, the speakers have shown us important options for the directions we should take in our future activities.

As we were made aware of when the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake occurred, we should think of the face of each one of the victims when planning relief efforts. The panelists suggested that we need a variety of frameworks in order to incorporate the opinions of victims—both men and women. Such frameworks include not only financial support measures but also technical support and advice and knowhow from the private sector.

The Great East Japan Earthquake was a terrible and tragic event. The countries that today’s

panelists are from have also experienced catastrophic disasters. Unfortunately, these are not the last and the next disaster could happen at anytime because it is expected that global warming is proceeding, earthquakes are increasing, and volcanoes will become more active. In these circumstances, we need not only to provide post-disaster assistance but also to place more emphasis on capacity building before any such disaster occurs. To do so, we should incorporate the specific opinions of all the residents in each area in disaster response planning. This is what we have learned from today's panel discussion and will be central to our activities over the next ten years.

I'd like to organize a meeting ten years from now to review our activities. Your cooperation is highly appreciated. In conclusion, I would like to sincerely thank all the panelists for their views and comments.

