

Organizing Committee Report

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【Introduction】

In the presence of His Imperial Highness, The Crown Prince, indeed it is my great honor to deliver the Organizing Committee Report, representing the committee of Tokyo Conference on International Study for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience. Our explanatory sub-title is “Towards a new science and technology to consolidate disaster risk reduction and sustainable development”.

As all the participants of this conference may well understand, this year, it is the year of disaster prevention and global environments, because United Nations will have the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, in March, also have final discussion over Sustainable Development Goals in fall in New York, together with further progress on global warming issues and Future Earth. Eventually, throughout this year, we are thinking of the interaction between the earth and our civilization. That is, the present level of our civilization brings about changes of global environments, and then in turn, natural phenomena gradually threat appropriate living environments for us or suddenly destroy them by severe natural disasters. Therefore, I believe that a series of events organized by United Nations and other organizations on human activities and global environments this year should be considered mutually related and should be understood that we have to manage our civilization or even our daily activities to harmonize with global environments.

From this point of view, we invite speakers with wide range of expertise in science and technology and roles in the international society to discuss this matter fully:
The panelists we have this afternoon are as follows in alphabetic order:

-Mr. Rolf Alter, Director, Public Governance and Territorial Development, OECD /
Member, Global Agenda Council of the World Economic Forum

-Mr. Kiyoshi Higuchi, Senior Vice President, JAXA

- Ms. Sari Söderström Feyzioğlu (サリ・ゼーダーシュトレーム), Director, Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience Global Practice, World Bank

- Prof. David Johnston, Director of the Joint Centre for Disaster Research, Massey University

- Mr. Shigeru Kiyama, Vice President, JICA

- Mr. Jerry Lengoasa, Deputy Secretary General, WMO

- Dr. Bindu N. Lohani, Vice President, ADB

- Dr. Anisul Islam Mahmud, MP Honorable Minister of Water Resources, Bangladesh

- Ms. Flavia Schlegel, Assistant Director-General for the Natural Sciences, UNESCO

- Ms. Vivi Stavrou, Senior Executive Manager, ISSC

I am sure that we will have stimulating discussions in this high level panel session.

【Hanshin-Awaji and East-Japan Earthquakes、 Role of Japan】

This year, on January 17th, we will have 20th anniversary of Hanshin-Awaji Great Earthquake in 1995, which killed more than 6,400 people. And we will have 4th anniversary of Great East Japan Earthquake, which caused more than 18,000 casualties. Besides these severe natural disasters brought about by earthquakes and tsunami, we had typhoons and sever rainfalls every year in Japan, which caused a lot of casualties as well. Therefore, Japan is called a country of natural disaster. However, disasters are not always caused by nature. Sometimes, natural disasters trigger man-made disasters as well such as Fukushima Dai 1 Nuclear Power Plant accident, which still refrain more than 100 thousand people lived in exclusion zone(避難指示区域) before the accident from returning to their home towns in Fukushima. As a county of natural disasters, we have to pay full attention to safety and security of man-made facilities including new clear power plants.

Taking this opportunity, I, on behalf of all Japanese people, would like to thank all the people in the world for their warmhearted help to the victims of those disasters. It

is our duty to disseminate the lessons we have learnt from these disasters to prepare for, prevent, and reduce damages of natural hazards in the future. Among them, science and technology is situated in very important positions especially for prediction, early warning and evacuation guidance in disasters as well as the effective construction and reinforcement of man-made facilities against strong external forces.

At the same time, I would like to stress that one of the important lessons we drew from these disasters is that science and technology must be understood by many people including the people living in vulnerable areas to disasters. Therefore, scientists and experts should not forget continuing dialogues with the people to share the latest knowledge.

【Our assessment of the present status and key directions】

In general, manmade factors such as globalization, population growth, poverty, urbanization and changes in land use are aggravating negative consequences of natural hazards. The losses are increasing in both developed and developing countries. Furthermore, in this inter-connected world, the impact of an event immediately crosses borders and can lead to cascading consequences, even to geographically remote areas. Although we have increased scientific knowledge and technology, we have not been successful in demonstrating concrete methodologies for disaster risk reduction and in convincing those who are not familiar with disaster risk. We need to consolidate disaster risk reduction and sustainable development, in pursuit of human security.

For addressing these problems, what should we do? Policy-makers and practitioners are requested to be fully aware of the latest scientific knowledge on disasters, and be capable of utilizing those scientific findings. We should empower national platforms as focal fora to incorporate science and technology into real practice. National and local governments should improve their preparedness for better response and better recovery of households and communities.

【Discussion points】

Based on these recognition, I would like to propose the following three items as major points of our discussion in the coming three days.

First of all, it is highly likely that the global loss by natural disasters increases in the future, with the economic loss predicted to rise to US\$ 20 billion per year by 2030. Considering that it is vital for the sustainable development to take early action in

recognition of disaster risks and build secure, healthy, wealthy and resilient nations and communities, we seek the possibilities to collaborate with the “Future Earth” in the field of earth environmental sciences, and with the Group on Earth Observations (GEO). Then, we should consolidate cooperatively a concept to contribute to the SDGs goal-setting for disaster reduction.

Secondly, to reduce disaster risks, it is necessary to implement disaster preventive measures based on scientific findings at regional, national, local, community levels and even at residential neighborhoods. However, real practices at any of these levels are below our expectations. We will demonstrate several tested “best practices” of disaster reduction that are based on scientific findings and simultaneously organize discussions with participants from all relevant stakeholder groups, which is called trans-disciplinary study approach.

Thirdly, we have learned from the recovery processes after the GEJE that it is essential to take a comprehensive multi-hazards approach in order to implement effective and efficient disaster preventive measures in our society. We would like to identify better ways of scientific collaboration for avoiding hazards being converted to disaster risks, and for upgrading disaster risk awareness to decision-making & implementation process. We would like to propose concrete initiatives to support such processes and discuss our directions for the scientific community in this regard. We will also discuss common indicators to measure our progress based on science and to drive HFA2 forward.

【Diagram national disaster reduction body, important role of S&T】

Bearing these viewpoints in mind, we will make proposals as follows as a product of the conference:

- 1) Close coordination should be established between sustainable development and disaster risk reduction at all aspects of policy-making, planning and programming of infrastructure and social systems, human resources mobilization,
- 2) Creation of structures and mechanisms to implement disaster risk reduction are necessary at all levels of society, and
- 3) Incubating innovative science and technology would guide us in all phases of disaster management cycle.

I would like to show you a diagram representing what we should do to strengthen our world-wide disaster risk reduction activities. The entire activities are managed by various UN agencies including UN-ISDR to cover every area vulnerable to natural

disasters. But most important roles must be played by national disaster reduction bodies, drawn in the center of the diagram. Political, economic, academic, citizen's powers should be integrated at national level to be connected to practical disaster risk reduction activities. International and regional institutions and experts in various fields would provide generous supports for those national activities. HFA2 (Hyogo Framework for Action 2), GAR(Global Assessment Report), Post Disaster Reviews, IRDR programs, Global Platform for DRR all give national bodies useful ideas, advices and assistances to strengthen their practice in each area.

In this conference, we would like to find answers on how we can support national platforms to practice evidence-based disaster risk reduction, and for promoting such supports, how we can mobilize existing networks of scientific and research institutions at national, regional and international levels.

Thank you for your attention.