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Global Platform Highlights Thursday, 16 May 2019

Discussions on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience continued at the 2019 Global Platform for DRR (GP2019) in Geneva, Switzerland, in two high-level dialogues, a ministerial roundtable, and many working sessions. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced its new Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) framework in the afternoon, and the Sasakawa Award ceremony took place in the evening.

This bulletin covers the high-level events and a selection of working sessions.

High-Level Dialogues

Risk-informed Public and Private Sector Investment:

Davis Eades, Allday Media, moderated the morning panel, inviting ministers from the Dominican Republic and Zambia, representatives of the UN Global Compact and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), and the Chairman of property developer SM Prime to share their experiences of risk-informed investment.

Hiroshi Yamakawa, JAXA, described the agency's work with the Sentinel Asia consortium in coordinating Earth observation, providing images of disaster-affected areas to support emergency response, and precipitation data for early warning purposes. He noted a major challenge is that of co-designing systems with end-users.

Isidoro Santana, Minister of Economy, Planning and Development, Dominican Republic, and Sylvia Chalikosa, Minister in the Office of the Vice-President, Zambia, highlighted the importance of policy frameworks and partnerships, such as standards for climate-resilient buildings.



Sasakawa Award winners pose for a "family photo" with the organizing team.



(L-R): **Isidoro Santana**, Minister of Economy, Planning and Development, Dominican Republic; and **Sandra Wu**, UN Global Compact

Panelists discussed how to overcome the private sector's prioritization of profits over resilience. Hans Sy, SM Prime, cited his practice of putting 10% of development investment toward resilience, and his work with the National Resilience Council of the Philippines on working with informal settlement dwellers in Metro-Manila to reduce security risk. Sandra Wu, UN Global Compact, anticipated a world of "radical transparency" as investors demand more data on how companies are addressing environmental, social, and governance issues.

Speaking from the floor, Aris Papadopoulos, Resilience Action Fund, noted that most residential and light commercial property developers, unlike SM Prime, are not long-term builder-owners but usually aim to re-sell developments within three years. He called for including "the segment of the economy that is creating the risk" in the Global Platform. Chalikosa noted the twin challenges of corruption and enforcement of existing policies and standards, and discussed Zambia's efforts to address charcoal burning through promoting alternative energy sources and replanting trees and bamboo. Santana highlighted the need to foster trust in public institutions.

Leaving No One Behind - Investing in Local Action and Empowering those Most at Risk: Veronica Pedrosa, journalist, opened the afternoon dialogue, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) presented a video showing that many are "left off the map" when governments create risk reduction plans.



(L-R): **Alex Mung**, World Economic Forum; **Kate Levick**, CEO, Third Generation Environmentalism; and **Shaun Tarbuck**, CEO, International Mutual Insurance Association (ICMIF)

Elhadj As Sy, Secretary-General, IFRC, urged considering human dignity in DRR, prioritizing “the last mile” in humanitarian response, and building trust between governments and local communities before disaster hits.

Kerryann Ifill, Chairman, CARICOM Advisory Panel on Disabilities, reminded participants that awareness, education, and accessibility policies for DRR should be established in advance of disasters. Alexandra Ocles, National Secretary of Risk Management, Ecuador, elaborated on her country’s prioritization of people with disabilities through its laws that address accessibility and employment opportunities.

Nella Canales, Stockholm Environment Institute, described innovative financial solutions such as index-based insurance that can provide funding to communities after disasters. Mohamed Béavogui, Director-General, African Risk Capacity, agreed that index-based insurance can be helpful in closing the finance gap when post-disaster humanitarian aid is delayed. Ifill added that middle-income countries, such as some in the Caribbean, may not qualify for humanitarian aid, noting that almost 40% of Dominica’s households are still under repair two years after a hurricane event.

Thomas Helfen, Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany, agreed that donor funds must be available more quickly after a disaster, and called for greater attention to the nexus between fragility, conflict, and violence in relation to DRR, noting that more than half of post-disaster deaths occur in the world’s 30 most fragile states. Deepak Malik, HelpAge International, reported study findings that indicated a lack of attention to older people in DRR, and urged further data collection and analysis.

In closing, Pedrosa presented the results of an electronic poll of participants’ views on who should lead efforts to reach those left behind, which showed more than 50% of participants saw it as a government responsibility.

Working Sessions

Unlocking the resilience dividend: Emily Wilkinson, Overseas Development Institute, moderated this morning session, opening with a question about how the DRR community can incentivize the private sector to invest in resilience.

Bärbel Kofler, Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid, Germany, highlighted the work of the InsuResilience Global Partnership for Climate and Disaster Risk Finance and Insurance Solutions, which is making insurance available to the world’s most vulnerable people. Noting the increasing scale of humanitarian needs around the world, she said that taking action earlier will help create a more effective humanitarian system.

Shaun Tarbuck, CEO, International Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation, cited industry examples of resilience-focused work, such as that of MBA, the world’s leading micro-insurance supplier, which covers 18 million people and delivers services to 140,000 community centers around the Philippines, providing USD 5 million annually for social investment.

Wang Yingzi, Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, China, highlighted China’s 30-city pilot project for resilient cities, based on improving sewage systems and rainwater capture and purification, which is being funded through government bonds, private-sector investment, and citizen donations. She also described action to reinforce old buildings to an earthquake-resistant standard.

July Moyo, Minister for Local Government and Housing, Zimbabwe, highlighted efforts to mainstream resilience in national economic planning, based on intensifying small-scale food and livestock production, nutritional security, and sustainable livelihoods.

Kate Levick, E3G, noted the European Commission’s Sustainable Finance Action Plan, a policy package designed to channel around €180 billion worth of additional investments into achieving climate targets. Alex Mung, World Economic Forum, noted that high-impact, high-probability risks are mostly related to climate and biodiversity, and will not “fall off the chart” in the future. Several speakers concurred that DRR makes good business sense, and Kofler highlighted the need to save livelihoods as well as lives, for example by allowing enough planning time to move livestock to safety. Tarbuck cited examples of investment strategies such as bonds that target reduction of food waste and building of green infrastructure.

Health in all DRM strategies: Emily Chan, Chinese University of Hong Kong, moderated this session in the afternoon. Keynote speaker Jaouad Mahjour, WHO, announced

the launch of WHO's Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management framework, which supports a multi-stakeholder approach to the nexus between health and DRR.

Raed Arafat, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Romania, described a pilot project integrating health into national disaster preparedness plans, which includes comprehensive laws on emergency medical care.

Ciro Ugarte, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), argued that health outcomes are also a consequence of investments and policies in other sectors besides public health. Based on regional monitoring by PAHO, he suggested the best performers are ones who embrace a multisectoral approach to health and disaster preparedness.

Vinya Ariyarante, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Sri Lanka, described how this community- and faith-based organization supports DRM by training first responders to provide first aid and psychological support, highlighting recent work in assisting the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in Colombo.

Marco Becerril, Children and Youth Major Group, noted that young people will experience the impacts of actions taken under the Sendai Framework.

Virginia Murray, Public Health England, said that the WHO Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management framework represents a paradigm shift from event-based, reactive, single-hazard responses to risk-based, proactive, all-hazard approaches. She noted that health is mentioned 38 times in the Sendai Framework.

Participants raised concerns about attacks on health personnel in conflict zones, outsourcing of emergency responses to the private sector, and the challenges of building capacity in health systems who may be overwhelmed by emergencies such as the Ebola epidemic. Ugarte stressed that community involvement is essential to protection of health workers. Arafat suggested that, depending on the situation, sometimes military protection is needed for medical personnel, and may be helpful in providing and transporting much-needed supplies. He noted the growth of commercial emergency response services, which, he said, should not be allowed

to access public funds in competition with public-sector providers, citing Romania's experience of successfully fighting this issue in its constitutional court.

Disaster displacement and DRR: Andrew Harper, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), noted that climate change will become the biggest driver of population displacement in the near distant future, and called for infrastructure to be put in place to respond to future disruption. Walter Kaelin, Platform on Disaster Displacement, delivered a keynote address, arguing that data collection and policies must address the increased risk of disaster-induced displacement. Tasneem Siddiqui, University of Dhaka, said Bangladesh suffers from a lack of coherence across climate, migration, DRR, and urban policies, as well as from the sheer number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) resulting from disasters.

Jessica López Mejía, Ministry of Governance, Mexico, said inclusive policies must be based on human rights and on improving the resilience of local communities.

Kamal Abou Jaoudé, Governor of Bekaa, Lebanon, spoke of the pressure of displaced people on host communities, noting that the 1.5 million Syrians that have entered Lebanon represent one-third of the Lebanese population, and that increased unemployment and water scarcity have resulted. Guleid Artan, Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Kenya, said North-East Africa lacks a comprehensive legal framework for addressing cross-border migration in the context of natural disasters. Issues related to conditions under which migrants are permitted to stay and permitted to return, he argued, have yet to be addressed.

Panelists then discussed best practices in addressing disaster-induced displacement, such as initiatives to enable researchers from neighboring countries to collaborate on data collection, and engaging displaced people in policy planning in host regions. They also heard interventions from two young women from the Philippines and Indonesia, who drew from their own experiences to discuss policymakers' blind spots. These included, they said, the vital need for people with special needs to be better accommodated, and for local customs to be respected in shelters. Speaking from the floor,



Panelists at the working session on disaster displacement and DRR



Kris Fafoi, Minister of Civil Defence, Commerce and Consumer Affairs, New Zealand

representatives of, among others, France, the Philippines, and Saudi Arabia, voiced their commitment to prioritizing action on displacements due to disasters.

Ministerial Roundtable

Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for DRR, opened the roundtable in the morning on the topic of “risk-informed investments and economics of DRR.” She urged the private sector to integrate DRM into business models. Raymund Furrer, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Switzerland, cautioned that enhancing resilience requires sizeable funds from both public and private sources.

Keynote speaker Mauricio Cardenas, former Finance Minister, Colombia, proposed that finance ministries create public financing strategies for disasters.

Malaysia announced the creation of comprehensive hazard maps alongside further engagement of the private sector. Ghana said private funds are critical to meeting shortfalls in public funds, citing private sector investments in sanitation and waste management in its capital.

New Zealand described a multi-stakeholder resilience project launched after the 2016 Kaikoura earthquake. Jamaica stressed the difficulties of small island developing States (SIDS) in allocating contingency funds for disasters. Niger referred to the country’s use of pan-African risk insurances. Germany said public investment in resilience and anticipatory risk financing provides for stable economic development. India emphasized the need for better mechanisms to ensure that investments are risk-informed.

Bolivia said investments across sectors must include DRR considerations. Turkey described a project for improving the resilience of houses, hospitals, and schools. Somalia drew attention to its 2.6 million IDPs, the result of a combination of natural and man-made disasters. The EU stressed that risk-proof investments are a priority both within and outside its borders.

Zambia described its national DRM framework. Nepal noted the need to improve access to appropriate know-how to promote DRR. Mozambique announced the establishment of its post-disaster recovery and reconstruction office to assess losses related to two recent cyclones. Uruguay reported that it has established DRR plans at all levels of governments. Madagascar noted its vulnerability to cyclones and need for assistance. Fiji stated that Pacific SIDS require more assistance due to their isolation and vulnerability.

The US announced its 2018 Disaster Recovery Reform Act. Palestine lamented difficulties in DRR cooperation in its region, due to political issues. The Netherlands welcomed the new Global Center and Commission on Adaptation. Norway called for a “whole of society” approach to DRR. Nigeria described its national integrated infrastructure master plan. Finland underlined the importance of better and more accessible data to manage risks. Mongolia said that private-sector investment in DRR is encouraged.



Ministerial Roundtable participants discuss risk-informed investments and other issues related to the economics of DRR.