

MORE THAN SIXTY COUNTRIES RENEW COMMITMENTS TO BOOST DISASTER RISK REDUCTION GLOBALLY

(4 July 2012, Sendai, Japan) The [World Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction](#), organized by Japan and the United Nations, concluded today, calling for increased investment in disaster preparedness and recovery.

The Conference and its [summary document](#) contribute to the discussion on renewing the Hyogo Framework for Action, which serves as a crucial guideline for international disaster reduction work, 2005 - 2015. The document recommends integrating disaster reduction initiatives in public policies and development plans, and calls for efforts to build resilient societies prepared to manage disasters, including prevention, mitigation, emergency response, recovery and reconstruction.

In his closing statement, Japan's Foreign Minister Kōichirō Gamba reiterated Japan's commitment, recently announced at Rio+20, to pledge over US\$ 3bn to international disaster reduction initiatives, and to fully support the post-Hyogo Framework for Action.

Participants representing 63 countries and 14 international organizations acknowledged that disaster reduction and recovery are public goods and that regular citizens, local governments and communities, the private sector and civil society, all have an important role to play.

“Greater participation of women, a focus on knowledge, including the increased risk from climate change, and a commitment to partnership of all stakeholders, public and private, are critical factors necessary to build resilience to disasters and protect development achievements”, said Jordan Ryan, Director of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, at one of the panel discussions today.

2011 was the costliest year ever in terms of natural disasters. Approximately US\$ 380 billion was lost globally, which is nearly two-thirds more than the US\$ 220 billion worth of damage caused by disasters associated with natural hazards in 2005, the previous record year.

“The poorest people pay the highest cost of disasters, including malnutrition, displacement and destroyed livelihoods,” said Gwi-Yeop Son, Corporate Programmes Director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). “We need to work together - using Japan's experience and expertise - to strengthen humanitarian coordination systems, create an enabling environment for preparedness, and build community resilience so that people can better handle disasters”.

The Conference took place in Sendai City and included sessions in some of the areas most affected by last year's earthquake and tsunami disaster, such as Ishinomaki City.

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