International Recovery Platform Herald Vol. 34

The Fifth World Reconstruction Conference Organized Under the Umbrella of IRP

May 23-24, 2022

Introduction

The fifth edition of the World Reconstruction Conference (WRC5) was held in a hybrid format during the preparatory days of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 23-24 May 2022 in Bali, Indonesia. For the first time, the conference was jointly hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank- Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) under the umbrella of the International Recovery Platform (IRP). More 1,600 participants attended in-person from national and local governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, and international organizations in 160 countries

Organized under the theme, **"Reconstructing for a Sustainable Future: Building Resilience through Recovery in a COVID-19 Transformed World"**, the WRC5 focused on addressing the unprecedented recovery needs from the impacts of the pandemic and recent disasters, while taking stock of and rethinking how recovery is planned, financed and managed in a world facing the multiplicity and complexity of crises due to the pandemic, disasters, climate change, rapid environmental degradation, conflict, displacement and migration.

The WRC5 agenda was organized under three sub-themes within three plenary sessions and 10 technical sessions: 1) addressing the social and economic effects and impact of Covid-19 pandemic on "hard-won" development gains, 2) social, infrastructural and economic recovery from disasters as an opportunity to reset the development pathway towards a greener and resilient future, and 3) rethinking recovery governance models: planning, financing,andmanaging recovery from complex and interconnected disaster-conflict events in the post Covid-19 world.

The outcomes of the discussions at WRC5 have been published as the Joint Communique on Reconstructing for a Sustainable Future, which is downloadable on the IRP website (**https://bit.ly/3O3cGCp**). The WRC5 Knowledge Report summarizes each of the sessions, with a focus on actionable recommendations from each (**https://bit.ly/3f3Mg7z**). The sessions are all available to watch on-demand on IRP's Youtube page (**https://bit.ly/3o25CLJ**). This 34th edition of the IRP Herald reports on the two technical sessions led by the IRP Secretariat and UNDRR.

Technical Sessions Organized by IRP

Responding to recovery challenges in the urban environment

The session provided insights into recovery challenges in urban areas. It offer ed case studies from Sendai City (Japan), Barcelona (Spain), Palu (Indonesia) and Wenchuan County (China) showing innovative solutions and strategies to build back better with greater resilience, sustainability and improved development prospects in urban areas. It discussed informal settlements and secondary cities and the need for data to respond to the

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specific needs of the urban poor and for increased community engagement. It highlighted peri-urban considerations and the shift to a mindset of preparedness and resilience through ex ante investments in cities. **Mr. Steven Goldfinch**, Disaster Risk Management Specialist, Asian Development Bank moderated the session.

Ms. Kazuko Kori, Mayor of Sendai City, Japan said that building back better has been the main guiding principle in the recovery of Sendai City from the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami (2011). She pointed to the Sendai City basic plan that was developed, which aims to create a sustainable and resilient urban environment through concrete disaster risk reduction measures incorporating environment and climate change considerations and strengthened partnerships with the university, private sector and communities.

Mr. Patta Tope, Professor, Universitas Tadulako, and former Head of Central Sulawesi Province Development Planning Agency offered insights into the recovery of the City of Palu underscoring the challenges including compliance with building safety standards, risk assessment, land availability to resettle communities, urban planning and administrative overlaps in the provision of basic social services. He highlighted the important role of local knowledge, the need to implement DRR measures, and ensuring business continuity and peace in times of crises. He urged for actions on innovative financing, urban planning that ensures adequate provision of basic social services, land banking, risk communication, livelihood enhancement, and environmental sustainability.

Ms. Ares Gabás Masip, Chief Resilience Officer, Barcelona City Council introduced the program to transform Barcelona into a resilient city capable of tackling current and future challenges; placing the most vulnerable groups at the heart of resilience policies, contributing to a more equitable and cohesive society; building capacity that will enable the city to overcome socks and stresses in a proactive way; and guarantee the quality of life and security of citizens and visitors. She explained that Barcelona incorporates proactive, holistic and complex systems thinking approaches to resilience

building by prioritizing the identification of critical events and maintaining a register of critical events and a resilience atlas and register of critical events, undertaking impact analysis, taking action on lessons learned and opportunities, developing improvement proposals as a continuous improvement process, and conducting regular disaster/stress monitoring and analysis.

Ms. Elizabeth Riley, Executive Director, Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency, reported that the factors affecting urban recovery in the Caribbean are numerous, among which are public services and infrastructure concentrated in urban centers, poverty and inequality, presence of informal settlements, limited compliance to building codes, development in high-risk areas, and land tenure and land rights issues. She described the Caribbean's focus on resilience through the Caribbean Resilience Framework, which consists of five pillars including social protection for the most vulnerable and marginalized, enhancing economic opportunity, safeguarding Infrastructure, environmental protection, and operational readiness and recovery; and focuses on nine enabling factors such as policy, legislation and regulation; information and communication technologies; governance; capacity development; disaster risk financing; public participation; research and data management; political economy; and youth participation. She reiterated that enhancing recovery in urban areas requires an institutional framework for recovery, and should address the underlying drivers of risk and locational vulnerability, implement socially inclusive and gender sensitive recovery, and support climate change and hazard resilient infrastructure through ex-ante recovery planning.

Focusing on informal settlements and secondary cities, **Mr. Arne Janssen**, Urban Environment Specialist, Cities Alliance, highlighted the key role of the urban poor in recovery and building resilience. He urged to fight against urban poverty through investing in local resilience by providing adequate financing for cities; recognizing the importance of secondary cities, which are expected to get the main share of urban growth, and adopting inclusive approaches to building back

better. Recognizing the city as a system should start with the weakest link and following the evidence from the grassroots to promote local innovations and stronger partnerships. He called for innovative solutions in recovery that maximize co-benefits to sustainable development, climate change and local resilience.

Ms. Saini Yang, Professor, Beijing Normal University, pointed to the enormous recovery challenge that one single, catastrophic event like the Wenchuan earthquake brings when it affects multiple cities. She exemplified the recovery policy developed after the disaster, which provided the legal basis and allowed for comprehensive recovery planning with strong financial support and a scientific approach to recovery. She explained how the counterpart support program, where several provinces and municipalities adopted severely affected cities, expanded funding sources, prioritized critical infrastructure construction, addressed the livelihoods of vulnerable populations, and promoted wider participation of stakeholders especially the private sector.

Pre-disaster recovery planning

The session, moderated by **Mr. David McLachlan-Karr**, Regional Director for Asia Pacific, United Nations Development Coordination Office, provided insights and lessons to support leaders and practitioners with pre-disaster recovery planning (PDRP). Speakers shared challenges, barriers and success factors on implementation especially during COVID-19 and in engaging with communities. The discussion highlighted the importance of planning at the national and subnational levels, and developing scalable PDRP programs that can be applied elsewhere in the world.

In the opening presentation, **H.E. Mr. Inia Seruiratu**, Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management, Republic of Fiji, spoke on the challenges to recovery based on the Fiji experience including (i) access to disaster risk financing which delay the recovery process, (ii) strengthening building standards, and (iii) integration of climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) and addressing siloes. He said that PDRP ensures that opportunities are not missed to recover in an effective manner and requires a review of policies, regulations and partnerships that will enhance governance arrangements, enable whole of society engagement, and lead to transformative, practical and affordable actions that can be replicated across the region.

During the panel discussion, **Ms. Cynthia Spishak**, Associate Administrator, Office of Policy and Program Analysis, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Government of the United States of America discussed how successful recovery is facilitated by established relationships with communities, and the consideration of the unique aspects of each community when engaging in PDRP. She highlighted the importance of integrating CCA, economic development, and capital improvement plans and opportunities across sectors such as energy, transportation, and public health in pre-disaster planning and sustainable recovery; considering scalability to have clear priorities and the ability to meet incoming support, whether it is personnel or resources; and factoring in future conditions due to uncertainty and the changing hazard landscape.

Mr. Takeo Murakami, Director, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan presented examples from Japan demonstrating local level PDRP implementation. He noted that over 60 percent of the local governments in Japan have started a pre-disaster recovery planning process. To support local governments, the Government of Japan provides national support for PDRP, providing guidance such as the Pre-Disaster Planning Guideline for City Reconstruction (2018) and Recovery Handbook (2021), and a recovery practices database featuring 718 case studies with recovery lessons and best practices from 54 disasters. The Guideline supports preparing institutional arrangements for recovery, steps and timelines for recovery, conducting reconstruction exercises, collection and analysis of basic recovery data, and pre-development of reconstruction goals. Mr. Murakami shared two case studies of local governments linking pre-disaster recovery planning efforts with local disaster risk reduction strategies and the

town master plan for development. The cases demonstrated how PDRP enables local governments to enact their vision for long-run resilience and sustainability through recovery, while addressing the challenges of population ageing.

Ms. Lesley Cordero, Senior Disaster Risk Management Specialist, World Bank and **Mr. Renato Solidum Jr.**, Undersecretary, Department of Science and Technology, Government of the Philippines, discussed the Ready to Rebuild Project, a flagship training program focused on pre-disaster recovery preparedness for national and local governments. They showcased the feasibility of conducting scalable capacity building of mayors, disaster risk management officers and technical staff in preparing baseline data, risk-informed pre-disaster recovery plans and risk financing strategies prior to disasters. Ms. Cordero stressed the need to develop recovery playbooks and frameworks, and address challenges on pre-disaster baseline data and local financing. Dr. Solidum noted that readiness for recovery entails defining policy and guidance and developing operational tools and systems such as the Plan Smart App and GeoRiskPH integrated platform, which enable easy access to national level databases on hazard and exposure data, linked to their pre-disaster recovery planning application.

Mr. Jeremias Cabral, Recovery Project Coordinator, National Service for Civil Protection and Fire Brigades, Government of Cabo Verde, presented the initiatives related to PDRP under the Building Capacities for Resilient Recovery – Phase II Project funded by the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg through the United Nations Development Programme. He illustrated how establishing the legal framework and putting in place institutional mechanisms for post- disaster recovery, the creation of a National Disaster Observatory to support reporting of damage and losses, and gender mainstreaming form the essential priorities for resilient recovery in Cabo Verde.

Mr. Raul Salazar, Chief, Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), reflected on the themes highlighted by the panelists especially on the importance of having an effective governance mechanism, and shared the experience in the Americas on risk transfer and contingency financing, and developing regional capacities in national level recovery. He emphasized that multi-stakeholder approaches and systemic thinking are necessary in addressing compound shocks.

Both of these sessions are available to watch on-demand on the IRP's Youtube channel:

• Technical Session "Responding to recovery challenges in the urban environment":

https://youtu.be/_M3VSC2-_kI

• Technical Session "Pre-disaster recovery planning":

https://youtu.be/oJCe_q-0Fi8

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