

ARISE Network Japan Launching Forum: Private sector contribution to SDGs through DRR and resilience



ARISE members in Japan pose for a photo with Robert Glasser.

UNISDR Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE)'s network in Japan held a forum on 11 March 2016, the fifth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, to explore the work going forward in achieving a more resilient and sustainable society. The event, titled “ARISE Network Japan Launching Forum - Private sector contribution to SDGs through DRR and resilience”, showcased the diversity of corporate approaches towards resilience and sustainability to 105 participants from the wider private sector, academia, and civil society.

The highlight of the forum, described by participants as engaging and informative, was a panel discussion where specialists from six ARISE member companies presented specific projects and business endeavors that contribute to DRR and resilience, and connections explored in a discussion led by the moderator, also from an ARISE member company.

Panelists introduced a diversity of approaches addressed environmental degradation and agriculture, such as technology for desalinization of disaster areas that are now also applied towards increasing agricultural yields (Japan Conservation Engineers & Co., Ltd.), weather index-based insurance for farmers (Sompo Japan Nipponkoa Insurance Inc.), and a long-running mangrove reforestation project tied into products as well as employee education that more than offset the entire corporate carbon footprint (Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co., Ltd.).

They also demonstrated how companies apply science and technology to understand and deliver risk and risk-related information, such as the use of big data to realistically model issues such as stranded commuters in megacities (Nikken Sekkei Ltd.), delivering reliable information in a timely manner to end users via diverse media (NEC Corporation), and adding real-time damage predictions and efficient information sharing functions to internal local government systems (Kokusai Kogyo Co., Ltd.).

The moderator, Mr. Shigeki Honda of InterRisk Research Institute & Consulting, Inc., said “like the integrated indivisibility of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, the efforts of companies to address specific issues and goals start them on a path to address even more issues related to disaster risk reduction and resilience”.

Ms. Sandra Wu, ARISE board member and focal point for Asia and Japan, said “the nature of the work going forward, be it the Sendai Framework or the Sustainable Development Goals, require us to meet the challenges with all hands on deck, and with a long-term perspective. Understanding this is not only important for meeting the goals of the UN agendas, but also for businesses to maintain and maximize their lead” and encouraged all private sector participants in the audience to join ARISE.

Opportunities for engagement within ARISE were jointly introduced by Mr. Akira Doi of Kokusai Kogyo Co., Ltd and Mr. Kazuya Miyamura of Association for Resilience Japan/ arise Japan collaboration committee/ PricewaterhouseCoopers Aarata, representing two previous UNISDR programmes that combined and consolidated to form ARISE in 2015. Both expressed a strong commitment to working together in Japan going forward.

Dr. Satoru Nishikawa, Executive Director of Research, Japan Center for Area Development Research, gave a keynote speech detailing legislative and policy development of disaster risk reduction in Japan, from past to present, and how key Japanese lessons learned were applicable in recent projects in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Kenya.

Mr. Kaoru Saito, Director, International Cooperation Division, Disaster Management Bureau, Cabinet Office of Japan, said “the Japanese government welcomes ARISE Network Japan as a partner in the effort to showcase Japan’s disaster risk reduction good practices to the world. They fill a niche by communicating the contributions of the private sector and the multistakeholder efforts towards resilience taking place in Japan under the Sendai Framework.”

“I am here to demonstrate UNISDR’s commitment to engage the private sector for the implementation of the Sendai Framework. We must communicate to businesses that assessing disaster risk and acting on disaster risk reduction is a business investment, not a cost” said Mr. Robert Glasser, head of UNISDR, who took the time to join the forum for closing remarks during his whirlwind first official visit to Japan.

The UNISDR Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE), launched globally in November 2015, builds on and integrates the work of the UNISDR Private Sector Partnership (PSP) and the RISE Initiative to support the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

Event link: <http://www.preventionweb.net/events/view/47955>

UNISDR event link (abbreviated): <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/events/47955>

News article link: <http://www.unisdr.org/archive/48373>