



MIKTA-UNISDR Seminar

Strengthening the Role of National and Local Governments in Reducing Economic Losses and Building DRR Capacity

19 October 2018

Your excellency, Ambassador Ji-ah Paik, of the Republic of Korea

Your excellency, Ambassador Andreano Erwin, of the Republic of
Indonesia,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon.

I would like to express my appreciation to MIKTA - the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Australia, Indonesia, and Turkey – for hosting this event today and for their continued commitment to disaster risk reduction and the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

We are here to mark the International Day for Disaster Reduction and explore the theme “Reducing Economic Losses from Disasters”. The

topic is chosen in line with Target (c) of the Sendai Framework and is one of the key challenges in building resilience to disasters, adapting to climate change and eradicating poverty.

We are all painfully aware of the impacts of disasters and I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt condolences to the government and people of Indonesia on the tragic loss of some 2,000 lives and the injuries sustained by so many in the earthquake and tsunami which hit the island of Sulawesi on this day three weeks ago.

Unfortunately, the economic impacts of such disasters can have far reaching effects on development, growth and society. The latest estimate is that this event has resulted in US\$530 million in economic losses, destroyed a lot of critical infrastructure and left almost 70,000 people displaced.

Last week, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its report on global warming at 1.5°C which emphasized the benefits of not exceeding that target set out in the Paris Agreement on climate change.

If the world can achieve that target by reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, we can avoid hundreds of millions of people being plunged into poverty, and reduce risks across the energy, food and water sectors.

This is especially the case in least developed countries which contribute little to greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate change is likely to act as a risk multiplier with sea level rise, prolonged drought and desertification, affecting large parts of these two regions.

A report that we published with the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) for the International Day, highlights that total recorded economic losses for the last twenty years come to almost US\$3 trillion; and an enormous US\$2.2 trillion of that is attributed to climate-related disasters.

At the same time, we must recognise that there is little or no economic data for 87% of disasters in low-income countries. Even for high-income countries, data is missing for 47% of disasters.

This lack of data may be skewing disaster risk management efforts in some countries as it is difficult to manage disaster risk if you are not measuring your disaster losses.

Currently, UNISDR is supporting at least 90 countries in the maintenance of disaster loss databases and it is a programme that we are willing to extend to others in need of support.

Apart from climate change, other factors driving risk include a drive towards urbanization that is often unplanned; environmental

degradation; poverty; and weak governance and under-resourced institutions.

Nonetheless, despite the sometimes daunting scale of the challenges, the world is moving from commitment to action.

We are seeing fewer deaths in disasters which would have caused large-scale loss of life in the not-too-distant past thanks to better preparedness and early warning systems.

This year we have had Regional Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and just last week we met in Tunis with Africa and the Arab States. In early November, we will move the conversation to Rome for the European Forum.

Next May, UNISDR will convene the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva when we expect to have a very good overview of progress to date in the collection of disaster loss data and overall progress on reducing disaster losses.

This overview is being made possible by the UN member states that are now using the Sendai Framework Monitor to upload data on disaster losses which will be presented in the Global Assessment Report for Disaster Risk Reduction which will be ready for launch at the Global Platform.

The outcomes from the Regional Platforms and the Global Platform will feed into the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development next year which will take stock of progress on SDG 13 on climate action.

This underlines once more the importance of ensuring the coherence of efforts to implement the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement and the SDGs.

I would also emphasize the Sendai Framework's call for progress on including women, youth, indigenous peoples and vulnerable communities in disaster risk management. They have proven time and time again, not only to be more affected by the impacts of disasters, but also capable of being agents of change in their communities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today we will hear useful reflections on these efforts, from member states, the World Bank and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

We see our partnership with the members of MIKTA and this discussion today as a key part of our advocacy work towards implementing the Sendai Framework and achieving risk-informed development and a resilient future for all.

I would like to close with a special word of thanks to Ambassador Paik and her staff at the Korean mission for their hard work in organizing this event.

And I hope it will be the first of many International Days celebrated in this manner by the MIKTA group of countries.

I look forward to our discussions today and I thank you for your attention.