

Name of Event: [Roundtable] Public Investment – Where Disaster Risk Reduction Really Makes a Difference

Date of Event: May 11, 2011

Reporter: Juan Pablo Sarimiento

Contact Details: Juan-Pablo.Sarmiento@fiu.edu

Panellists:

- Mr. Ivan Morales, Exec. Secretary, Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (Chair)
- Mr. Manuel Dengo, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
- Mr. Luis Miguel Castilla Rubio, Vice Minister for Finance, Peru
- Mr. Manuk Mkrtchyan, Deputy Minister for Education, Armenia
- Dr. Senendra Upreti, Chief of the Curative Division, Ministry for Health, Nepal
- Mr. Salim Al-Moghrabi, Commissioner for Environment & Sustainable Development, Aqaba Special Economic Zone, Jordan
- Mr. Ivo Menzinger, Managing Director, Swiss Re, Switzerland

1) Outline

Public investment in developing countries faces important pressures from different sectors, where daily needs of functioning prevail. There is some evidence that suggests the convenience of integrating investment in DRR within national budgets, in particular, in lifelines and critical infrastructure. Two sectors: education and health, have demonstrated the benefits of maintaining a sustainable policy of investment promotion in DRR in physical infrastructure, along with raising awareness and capacity building processes.

2) Key messages, outcomes, recommendations

- It is critical to build networks with key players before a disaster. Simulations are an important tool to help get all the relevant actors working together.
- The importance of preparedness at community and household level was emphasized. We need to engage the whole of society, beginning with citizens themselves.

- Anticipated benefits in the future are not enough to stimulate resource-poor communities to prioritize preparedness. We need to do better at articulating the immediate present-day benefits of preparedness work.
- Preparedness slips between the humanitarian and development stools for funding. More successful fund-raising requires that we document, detail and price the consequences of major disasters – and measure preparedness better – in order to stimulate investment.
- Many lessons can be found in our experience of pandemic preparedness over the past 5 years. The Towards a Safer World initiative will pull together these lessons, leading to a conference in Rome September 15-16.

3) Conclusions

- The starting point for DRR integration within a public investment scheme is determined by the knowledge of risks, through systematic multi-hazard assessments based on reliable methodologies that allow identifying risk factors associated; and probable social, economic, and environmental impacts to determine feasible interventions in development processes. This should start with financial protection from the state, in sectors such as health and education, as well as critical infrastructure and vital lines.
- Financial protection includes aspects related to disaster funds, contingent loans, insurance and reinsurance as well as other financial markets instruments. It is important that these financing and public investment themes are developed along with sustainable accountability processes.