

Statement by Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Norikazu Suzuki at a  
Ministerial Side Event: Community empowerment and participatory policy planning to  
reduce tsunami and water-related disaster risk  
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the  
Pacific (ESCAP)

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the government of Japan, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for attending this event.

Asia-Pacific is a disaster prone region. In Japan, disasters occur every year, such as the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, the Hokkaido Eastern Iburi earthquake, and the torrential rain in western Japan last year. In August 2018, Yamagata Prefecture, my hometown, suffered heavy landslides and floods due to record rainfall. Today, I'd like to point out a couple of important concepts gained from these experiences and introduce Japan's efforts in the field of disaster risk reduction (DRR).

The first point is that disasters affect people in various ways due to differences in the types and levels of vulnerability and exposure. Women, children, elderlies and persons with disabilities have been disproportionately affected by disasters, and therefore require particular attention.

The concept of the SDGs, "no one will be left behind", should be reflected in all disaster risk reduction policies, strategies, plans and actions.

The second point is the mainstreaming of DRR.

One of the main targets of the Sendai Framework, target E, is to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local DRR strategies by 2020.

It is important to promote the mainstreaming of DRR by incorporating such aspects into all development policies and programs.

Let me introduce some of Japan's efforts in the field of DRR. Japan will chair the G20 Osaka Summit this year. G20 Development Working Group side event for DRR was held this March, and I participated in this side event. With regard to mainstreaming and prior investment in DRR, which were considered important in this side event, we would like to promote these aspects in cooperation with the United Nations and related countries.

Another initiative taken by Japan is the promotion of "World Tsunami Awareness Day", unanimously decided by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2015. Last autumn, Japan hosted the Third World Tsunami Awareness Day High School Student

Summit with participation from about 50 countries. I sincerely hope that they will play important roles as leaders in the area of DRR in their respective countries in the future.

In Japan, people of all ages, from small children to the elderly, continue to prepare for disaster risks and conduct evacuation drills. These measures would also be beneficial for other countries at risk of large-scale disasters. From this point of view, Japan, in cooperation with the UNDP, has been providing assistance in the implementation of tsunami evacuation drills at local schools in 18 countries in the Asia-Pacific region since 2017.

Lastly, by the end of 2018, Japan provided 5 billion US dollars in total and training for 70,000 government officials and local leaders for the Sendai Cooperation Initiative for DRR adopted in 2015.

Japan would like to embark on considering a new initiative this year, when we host G20 Summit and when the first SDGs leaders' meeting will be held.

Let me conclude my remarks by hoping that active discussions at this side event will lead to the Disaster Risk Reduction around the globe.

Thank you very much.