

Draft Closing Remarks for Chief Representative SAKAMOTO Takema
5th JICA Chair (DRR), at ADMU, on Sep 5th, 2024

- President of ADMU, Fr. Roberto Yap,
 - Professor of Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Dr. Emma Porio
 - Director of Japanese Studies Program, Dr. Kristine Santos
 - Deputy Administrator of Office of Civil Defense, Asec Bernardo Rafaelito Alejandro IV
 - HE Ambassador of Japan to the Philippines, ENDO Kazuya
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- Participants from various government agencies and universities

Magandang hapon po sa inyong lahat.
Konnichiwa

It's my pleasure to join you all today for the 5th JICA Chair lecture.
As always, ADMU's beautiful campus provides me a sense of calmness and invigoration.

I believe that our topic today, Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience, is very relevant and timely. This is something that concerns all of us, especially during this season when strong typhoons frequently visit the Philippines. Last July, Typhoon Carina has caused heavy flooding in many areas. Many families were affected, and properties were damaged seriously. And, sooner or later, a disastrous earthquake, the "Big One" might occur.

Disasters come in many forms, and we are always reminded on the importance of minimizing risks. How can we efficiently prevent, prepare, and respond to calamities?

Japan and Philippines are both disaster-prone countries, and the discussions today provided an important opportunity to reflect and learn from each other's DRR experiences and lessons learned.

Let me sum up and re-emphasize the 3 key take-aways from today's discussions;

- 1) First, **pre-disaster or prior investment** is critically helpful.
Japanese experiences have already showed that pre-disaster investment, in **both structural and non-structural fields**, reduced the damage caused by disasters.
Such prior investments can limit the amount of necessary expenditure on rehabilitation and reconstruction compared to the absence of such investment.
United Nation's report also pointed out that USD 1's prior investment saves USD 15's future costs.
- 2) Second, **awareness raising and education campaign** are crucial.
DRR is not the responsibility of government alone, but everyone should make efforts to contribute to or align with the measures by the government.
Let's start from the simple action, such as disposing our garbage properly to avoid clogging of drainages and waterways, preparing evacuation bags that we can immediately grab when needed, and checking hazard maps in advance for safer evacuation.

Share our knowledge with each other, what to do and not to do, with the sense of Bayanihan.

3) Third, **early warning and follow-up** are key.

Timely and accurate information on disaster risks enables rapid and proper response.

In addition to the serious preparedness actions by people, communities, and national and local governments, early and appropriate information sharing can prevent the loss of life and economic damages.

Until now, JICA has been working with the Philippine Government and communities for over five decades in making the country more resilient to natural disasters.

We have been jointly tackling challenges in wide-ranging areas, such as resilient infrastructure, flood control, and monitoring, forecast and/or early warning of earthquakes, volcanos and extreme weather conditions.

Based on our long journey, today, I also stress that it is important to address these challenges **both in soft and hard components**.

JICA has various cooperation schemes, like financial cooperation, technical cooperation, introduction of Japanese innovative technologies, and grass-roots cooperation, for every DRR phase, even in the preventive phase, and we can seamlessly collaborate with Filipino friends through the said various cooperation schemes.

Actually, JICA has been working with various government agencies and communities toward disaster-resilient society.

To name a few,

- a) Construction or refurbishment of flood control facilities, such as river improvement, floodwall, retarding basin, and so on,
- b) Development of radar and monitoring stations for accurate early warning and forecasting,
- c) Uplift of the awareness, through education campaigns,
- d) Enhancement of human resources and institutional capacity, through trainings and scholarship programs, and dispatch of Japanese experts and volunteers,
- e) Provision of Emergency Relief Assistance during disasters, such as (i) Japan Disaster Relief Team, (ii) emergency relief goods, (iii) Quick Impact Projects and (iv) Budget Support including “Post Disaster Stand-by Loan”.

Moreover, we also recently launched a new technical cooperation project with GSIS, which aims to enhance resilient insurance system.

As shown in Prof. Nishikawa’s lecture, DRR policies evolve, and government should always revisit and evaluate if the policies and measures have been efficient.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Therefore, it should always be adaptable to the local conditions.

And, lessons learned should always be revisited and reflected.

In addition, the whole government joint collaboration, in other word, **inter-agency coordination** is really crucial.

It is not enough for PAGASA to forecast the weather, for PHIVOLCS to share timely warning, or for DPWH to build infrastructures. The role of other government agencies, such as DENR, DOH, DSWD and LGUs, and also local communities are equally important, when it comes to DRR.

As you may know, the Philippine government will host ***the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on DRR*** this October in Manila. Taking this opportunity, too, JICA is honored to share good practices and lessons learned. JICA is willing to contribute to the resilient society for all of you and for future generations.

JICA is always with you, and supports your initiative.

Kasama niyo kami!

Sama sama tayo!

Through today's JICA Chair lecture, I hope that everyone has now broader understanding on DRR.

And, now you know how our two countries can learn from each other's valuable experiences and wisdom to address common challenges together.

I wish that you could enjoy a productive and dynamic exchange of ideas, and we sincerely hope to share more of Japan's development experiences and broader discussion in various fields in the future lecture series.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Maraming salamat po.

Good afternoon to all of you.

(end.)