

Draft minutes of the Second Plenary Session for the Platform on Water Resilience and Disasters in Sri Lanka

Date: Wednesday, March 28, 2018 (13:25-17:00)

Venue: Conference Room at Irrigation Department (Colombo, Sri Lanka)

1. Opening Remarks

Co-chair, Prof. Koike, Hon. Minister Gamini Wijith Wijayamuni Zoysa, and Director General of Irrigation (DGI), Eng. Mohanarajah delivered opening remarks. Prof. Koike introduced the recent progress in the key global agendas on their linkage with Platform on Water Resilience and Disasters in Sri Lanka. Hon. Minister expressed his thanks to ICHARM and introduced his expectations for future collaborations for effective management of water related issues in Sri Lanka. DGI expected further collaboration and support from ICHARM on capacity building and flood mitigation activities.

2. Special Lecture on Economy

Prof. Naoyuki Yoshino, Dean of Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), delivered a lecture on “An Empirical Analysis of Disasters on Regional Economy - Case Study of 2000 Flood Disaster in Japan by use of regional GDP data” via video conference system. Following the lecture, the participants discussed on the recent flood disasters in Sri Lanka, and the availability and limitations of data for a study in Kaleni basin. The summary of discussions was as follows,

- Damage data was collected from urban areas during 2016 flood for compensations only.
- Central Bank may have damage assessment data on GDP but there is no comprehensive study on economic loss.
- GDP is partly available; therefore, tax revenue of affected areas and non-affected areas can be compared in the study.
- Start the studies using of tax revenue data from affected and non-affected areas for the economic assessments.

3. Review of the First Plenary Session and Report of progress from Japan side

- Dr. Ikeda reviewed the First Plenary Session and the events after the First Plenary Session in August 2017 including Disaster Resilience Forum in November 2017, 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Summit in December 2017, and 8th World Water Forum in March 2018, in which the Sri Lankan experts participated.
- ICHARM researchers presented their updated research works and future direction for supporting the Platform activities in Sri Lanka.

4. Presentation from Sri Lankan Organizations

- Irrigation Department: Dir. Eng. Janeki Meegasthenna introduced the critical river basins in Sri Lanka and emphasized the need for the training and capacity building of engineers in flood modelling and advanced technologies.

- NBRO: Dr. Gamini Jayathissa introduced activities of NBRO on sediment disaster related risk identification, risk communication and community based approach for disaster management. He also expressed NBRO's expectations on improving of risk identification techniques, expanding rainfall monitoring system to be used for early warning and risk communication.
- DMC: Ms. Anoja Seneviratne expressed expectations for the Platform at the national level such as (i) Inter-agency co-ordination, (ii) Data information sharing, (iii) Planning and decision making, and (iv) Knowledge and experience sharing. She also emphasized that the Platform should involve all the sectors to enhance the co-ordination and minimize the gaps in those four areas mentioned above.

5. Discussions

- Prof. Koike summarized the presentations in the first half session and introduced UN endorsement of this Platform activities.
- Prof. Koike also acknowledged the proposal from Ms. Seneviratne and their importance for benefit of this Platform.
- Ms. Seneviratne pointed out the necessity of involvement of economist and sociologist in the Platform. She mentioned that our findings should be translated into different simplified sub-stories and languages in such a way that economist/sociologist/decision makers can easily understand them.
- Dr. Asiri Karunawardena, Director General of NBRO pointed out that the Platform should invite Department of National Planning, Department of Statistics, and Universities. He also stated that the ensemble based forecasting is very important for decision making, and that the building confidence of the people is very important.
- Prof. Koike mentioned the necessity of engineers and technical staffs to understand the current trends in the world and proposed to utilize the ICHARM's educational program such as Master Course and PhD Program.
- The participants discussed to identify focal point of each department and coordinators of the Platform.
- Prof. Koike introduced data sharing guidelines and asked each organization to identify the category of their data to be shared and prepare their list and metadata information for utilizing the DIAS and its experiences.
- Dr. Ikeda referred to the progress in Sri Lanka since last flood disaster on flood monitoring, prediction and forecasting, and he emphasized the importance of sharing the common recognition through the Platform to be well prepared for this year floods.
- **Data sharing guidelines of the Platform on Water Resilience and Disasters were agreed by all participating organizations unanimously.**

6. Closing remarks

Prof. Koike summarized the discussion on progress, data sharing guidelines and future activities of Platform including identification of focal points and co-coordinators. Dr. Karunawardena gave the closing remark by emphasizing the importance of flood damage mitigation through the effort of the Platform.