

KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIP WEEK

Partnership Forum: Innovation for Resilient and Smart Communities

Asian Development Bank Workshop

Multi Function Hall 1-3, Annex Building, Headquarters, Asian Development Bank

- Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this Partnership Forum on Innovation for Resilient and Smart Communities.
- I am particularly pleased that this forum is being held with the participation of so many representatives from ADB's knowledge partners and the private sector. I strongly look forward to receiving innovative ideas, practical know-hows and various inputs from our partners for advancing our central theme of "Resilient and Smart Communities".
- I would like to make brief remarks on building "resilient communities". As Vice President Groff clearly explained a few minutes ago, we see an increasing trend of "urbanization" in Asia and Pacific, which poses opportunities, as well as multi-dimensional challenges. And this is not unique to developing countries, but is also an important policy issue for developed countries, including my country Japan.

- Several weeks ago, a strong earthquake of 7.8 scale hit Nepal and caused devastating damages, including loss of many lives. Rescue operations are under way, but the people are still being scared of aftershocks. I extend my deepest sympathies to the people and government of Nepal.
- As we all know, Asia and Pacific suffer from severe disasters, including earthquakes, floods and typhoons. Between 1970 and 2010, 1.7 million hazard-related deaths were recorded in this region, which is slightly more than half of the global total. With the increasing trend of urbanization and more people living in cities, we need to seriously tackle the problem of building resilient communities; otherwise, with the increasing frequency, intensity and impact of natural disasters and climate change, the cost to human and physical assets could increase at an uncontrollable pace.
- There are various aspects for disaster risk management, including sharing of disaster information with general public, taking initial disaster relief and rescue operations, and reconstructing and building communities with resilient infrastructure. There is also an aspect of mobilizing financial resources to strengthen these actions. We believe that, in every step for our response to disasters, the governments and development community should learn from our knowledge partners and the private sector to improve our response and increase the level of disaster risk management. (As VP Groff mentioned,) Business-as-usual will simply not achieve sustainable urban development and smart cities.

- With our history of natural disasters, Japan is very serious about combatting disaster together with our partners. For example, Japan hosted the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March this year in Sendai, Japan, with thousands of participants attending. There, several key concepts have emerged, such as i) recovery and reconstruction to “Build Back Better” and ii) a broader and a more people-centered preventative approach.
- We believe that Japan’s public sector can share lessons learned, while the private sector can share its innovative technologies and solutions, with developing member countries and development partners. We will proactively participate in this continuous endeavor involving our technology and solution providers.
- I would also like to congratulate ADB management for its prioritization of disaster risk management. At the recent Annual Meeting in Baku, we were pleased that ADB committed to developing disaster risk financing instruments, such as disaster insurance for small island countries and mega cities.
- We recognize that ADB emphasizes in its Midterm Review Action Plan on Strategy 2020 the development of an institutional framework and modalities to adopt new and innovative cost effective technologies and products. These are exciting developments.

- In this regard, we commend ADB for initiating a knowledge matching exercise for resilient and smart city development with private sector firms that have innovative solutions and technologies. It is my sincere wish that this forum will help ADB staff increase their capacity to develop and incorporate innovative ideas into their project design.
- I look forward to positive contributions from our knowledge partners and private sector representatives visiting Manila.
- Thank you very much.