

APEC

High Level Policy Dialogue on Disaster Resiliency

Honolulu, Hawaii , United States, 11 Nov 2011APEC

We, APEC ministers and senior government officials, along with private sector leaders, met in Honolulu, Hawaii for the High Level Policy Dialogue on Disaster Resiliency, under the chairmanship of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan on March 11 along with additional earthquakes, floods, wildfires, typhoons and tornadoes among other events in the region, as well as the recent floods impacting Thailand, all remind us that the Asia-Pacific region is highly prone to the impacts of natural disasters. They also underscore the importance of reducing disaster risk and strengthening the resiliency of our communities. APEC, through its strong networks with the business sector, has a comparative advantage in encouraging greater private sector participation in disaster preparedness and resiliency efforts. With these challenges and strengths in mind, and recalling the commitments made under the Hyogo Framework for Action as well as the APEC Trade Recovery Guidelines, we call on officials to adopt and implement the following objectives:

Provide businesses with tools to help them prepare

- Promote voluntary standards for private sector preparedness to help businesses evaluate their own readiness and provide incentives for taking steps to prevent and mitigate the risks they face;
- Promote standards and indicators for measuring the effectiveness of disaster risk reduction at both the economy-wide and regional levels to guide public and private sector investments and improve quality and consistency in implementation;
- Promote and facilitate the use of Business Continuity Plans (BCPs), especially for SMEs, by appropriate means, including legal, market-oriented and social measures;
- Promote financial instruments that help to respond and recover from disasters, as well as to transfer risk;

Facilitate the movement of goods and services during disasters

- Recognize the importance of the supply chain and related infrastructure in the delivery of goods and services following a disaster;
- Work through APEC fora to enhance customs procedures, and reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers, including domestic regulations and licensing issues that affect logistics and supply chain movements responding to a natural disaster;

- Explore the use of customs and tariff waivers when host governments request humanitarian-related donations from the international community, taking into account existing guidelines and best practices;
- Educate the public, business and government leaders on best practices for effective and appropriate donations to minimize the disruptions unsolicited donations can have on disaster response efforts;
- Develop mechanisms for tracking private sector resources and capabilities;

Promote community based approaches

- Recognize that communities are the first responders in disasters, and solicit participation and input from civil society, private sector, and local government stakeholders;
- Promote early and frequent engagement of community groups and leaders in developing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) processes and policies, and assist communities in identifying practical steps to improve community resilience;
- Encourage technical assistance, research of best practices, innovation and training for decision makers at all levels, taking into account community-based and gender-based DRR approaches and incorporating traditional, local, and scientific knowledge;
- Promote community-centered education on disaster risks and risk reduction through existing community groups;

- Provide early warning assistance through technical monitoring of incipient disasters and timely early warning dissemination through to the community-level, and build early warning capacities within economies to evaluate rapidly-evolving threats such as tsunamis;
- Encourage an enabling environment for community-centered DRR activities through local governance and economy-wide policy engagement;

Support research and education

- Promote increased disaster resiliency by sustaining and improving early warning systems through increased data exchange networks, improved forecasting skills and training, and reliable dissemination strategies;
- Emphasize the relationship of training, education, and outreach to decreasing community vulnerability to hazards;
- Actively engage and support scientific and technical communities to inform decision making;
- Support efforts to improve executive education to develop a new generation of disaster management leaders and promote interdisciplinary research as well as platforms for prototyping tools arising from that research;
- Recognize APEC's efforts to make schools safer in response to seismic and tsunami threats; and

- Advocate for the inclusion of natural hazard disaster preparedness as part of school curricula starting in primary schools.

Promote public-private partnerships

Partnership between the public and private sectors is essential as the private sector owns and operates a great deal of an economy's critical infrastructure and has experience and knowledge regarding resilient construction techniques, the development of sustainable urban areas, energy safety, and the protection of critical resources. Recognizing the need to incorporate the private sector more substantively in our emergency preparedness efforts, APEC economies will develop public-private partnerships within their own economies and report on their progress next year. In developing these partnerships, APEC economies will be guided by the following broad principles:

1. Adopt a "Whole of Society" approach to developing and strengthening public-private partnerships that support business and community resilience to disasters. This includes involving all levels of government, non-government, and the private sector;
2. Through public-private partnership programs, encourage a greater role for women in supporting disaster resilient businesses and communities;
3. Strengthen public-private partnerships by sharing information, drawing on best practices, and learning from experiences;

4. Leverage existing programs and resources, and strengthen partnerships that develop during disasters to sustain long-term public-private collaboration and avoid duplication of effort;
5. Establish partnerships based on shared responsibilities and resources, with mutually agreed upon roles and tasks;
6. Cultivate public private partnerships that are open to flexible and innovative ways of working together to build business and community resilience to disasters