

Address by Ambassador Hiramatsu at the Opening Ceremony of  
2nd International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

Date: 19 March 2019

Venue: Taj Mahal Hotel

Mr. N. K. Singh, Chairman, 15th Finance Commission,  
Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog,  
Dr. P. K. Mishra, Additional Principal Secretary to Prime Minister of India,  
Dr. K. Vijayraghvan, Chief Scientific Advisor to Prime Minister of India,  
Ms. Mami Mizutori, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Representative of the  
Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, UNISDR,  
Dr. Junaid Kamal Ahmad, Country Director, World Bank Group,  
Shri Kamal Kishore, Member, National Disaster Management Authority,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to attend this 2nd International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. I extend my sincere respect for the leadership of Dr. Rajiv Kumar and Dr. P.K. Mishra of India, and to my good and long long term friend, Ms. Mami Mizutori, besides offering my deepest appreciation for everyone concerned for devoting themselves for this Workshop.

Last week, Japan observed the 8th Memorial Day of the Great East Japan Earthquake, which occurred on 11 March 2011, with the unprecedented magnitude of 9.0, followed by devastating Tsunamis. Taking this opportunity, on behalf of the people and the Government of Japan, I would like to show our heartfelt appreciation to all the people in the world, including India, for their strong and continuous support and encouragement.

We know by heart how Disaster Risk Reduction, or DRR, is one of the most important global challenges. I, therefore, appreciate the efforts by the Government of India to raise awareness for the need of resilient infrastructure and of international cooperation. A disaster resilient world would demand multi-layered approaches, including local, national, bilateral, regional and multilateral, the last being centred around the United Nations. Furthermore, various stakeholders, including the civil society and the private sector, should be involved. Japan has been actively contributing towards a disaster resilient world. Japan has hosted three UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 1994, 2005, and 2015. Japan has been a leader in establishing the concept of “Resilience” as one of the core concepts of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Sendai Framework aims at mainstreaming and integrating DRR within and across all sectors, and for enhancing to “Build Back Better”. Japan also led international efforts to incorporate DRR in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Natural disasters could wipe away long-term developmental efforts in an instance. Without DRR, sustainable development cannot be in our hands. SDG Goal 11 calls for making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

In ensuring resilience, infrastructure plays an indispensable role. Japan has been advocating “quality infrastructure”, which also emphasizes “resilience” among others. Japan, as it chairs G20 this year, is ready to expence much efforts to formulate principles of quality infrastructure investment, incorporating the factor of “Resilient Infrastructure”.

Here in India, Japan has been supporting India’s efforts to build quality infrastructure, through its ODA. As the biggest soft loan lender to India, Japan has actively been incorporating the concept of “Resilience” into its projects, be they may Metros, High Speed Rails, Dams, National Highways, or Power Plants.

In addition to the Japanese ODA loan, technical assistance projects for resilient infrastructure are also important. Under “Capacity Development Project on Highways in Mountainous Regions” and “Natural Disaster Management in the Forest Areas in Uttarakhand” , Japanese expertise is being shared with the Indian counterparts.

Yesterday, the 3rd Indo-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Delhi, with more than 120 high level participants from public, academic, and private sectors of both sides. We are very pleased to observe that the substantial progress has been made in Indo-Japan cooperation on the area of disaster risk reduction through three rounds of workshops in just one year period. I truly appreciate Dr. P. K. Mishra's leadership in this regard.

Japan, as a highly disaster-prone country, deeply appreciates the recent initiative by Prime Minister Modi to establish a “Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure”. In our efforts to mainstream Quality Infrastructure, which attaches great importance to “resilient infrastructure”, Japan is willing to cooperate with this initiative by sharing our expertise and experiences, for example, through the participation by Japanese experts, both public and private, in relevant conferences and workshops. In this regard, I am happy to see many experts from various fields from Japan are joining in the workshop today. Through such engagement, we would like to seek a synergy between the promotion of Quality Infrastructure and the Coalition proposed by India.

I would like to call for smooth coordination with the UNISDR, international financial institutions, and other stakeholders, including the private sector. Close coordination is a key to ensure effective operation of the idea around the Coalition. With this in mind, Japan is willing to participate in future discussions and to make contributions in every possible way.

In conclusion, I sincerely hope that discussions towards building disaster resilient infrastructure across the globe, including on the establishment of the Coalition, will be further elaborated, by taking advantage of the valuable occasion of this workshop today and tomorrow.

Thank you.