

Session 3-2 People's Participation and Disaster Management



Chairman

Yoshiro Yanagawa

News Commentator, Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), Japan

- Nagoya city in Aichi Prefecture are disaster-prone areas. This area was hit by the Nobi Earthquake 100 years ago, which led to today's earthquake engineering and earthquake-resistant engineering. More than 1,000 people were killed in the Tonankai Earthquake in 1944. The area surrounding Nagoya was the center of Japan's aircraft industry at the time, and it is said that the total collapse of the plants lost most of Japan's ability to continue the World War II. Furthermore, 2,300 people were killed in the Mikawa Earthquake that occurred the following month. The Ise Bay Typhoon in 1959 claimed 5,000 lives due to storm surges.
- Japan has achieved high economic growth during the thirty years without a major disaster. Aichi Prefecture became Japan's top-ranking prefecture in terms of industrial output. However, we must keep in mind that this was partly due to luck.
- During the past 3 or 4 decades of high economic growth, the environment has undergone dramatic changes. Shinkansen bullet trains, high ways, petrochemical complexes, skyscrapers, and underground shopping malls have never been subjected to large-scale earthquakes. Urbanization, which is the theme of this conference, has proceeded quite rapidly during the past three decades, and population concentration in urban areas, particularly in coastal zones, is quite conspicuous. Same trend is seen in other prefectures as well as in other countries. Adding to the situation, the aging of the population has increased the number of disaster-vulnerable people. The increase in nuclear families is causing rapid loss of opportunities for verbal transmission of disaster experience. In other words, our society—both in tangible and intangible aspects—has become increasingly vulnerable to disasters, and this fact is forgotten. It is extremely important that we take note of this.
- Also, there is a strong tendency among citizens to rely on the local administration. For instance, questionnaires reveal that most families do not store emergency water. Most people polled answer that they do not have to worry, as their ward office would distribute water with a water-supply vehicle. But the best disaster countermeasure is to face it head-on rather than to run away. At the same time, although self-preservation is supposedly a fundamental principle, reality does not confirm this. Residents overcome disasters together with their neighbors. How do other countries deal with the need to overcome a disaster through public participation? What are the problems in such a system? I'd like to welcome active discussion on these issues.



Speaker

Hideji Aoyama

Director-General, Department of General Affairs, Aichi Prefectural Government, Japan

"Aichi Prefecture's Efforts against the Tokai Earthquake and Approaches to the Residents"

- As a result of the Tokai Earthquake Theory made public in 1976, a special law was enacted. We have implemented countermeasures against the Tokai Earthquake following this law. The location and scale of the Tokai Earthquake have been estimated, but when it will occur is unknown. Various organizations in the country have established an observatory network to determine when.
- Over a decade has passed since the damage estimation survey was conducted. In the interim, changes in lifestyle and in urban structure, rapid aging of the populace, the

liquefaction phenomenon, and other new challenges have emerged. Therefore, beginning in 1991, a comprehensive revision of the damage estimation survey has been conducted

- We have made several damage estimates: predictable, unpredictable and those involving three different factors of season, time and climate. Damage to property and loss of human life, countermeasures for this damage, as well as the public impact of damage to lifeline systems were reported. Results of surveys of natural phenomena were revealed in June 1993. Damage estimates will be available in 1994
- A general media news embargo will be lifted thirty minutes following the committee's decision regarding information dissemination on the Tokai Earthquake. Aichi Prefecture has introduced a system for summoning 300 staff members for deployment during an emergency and for emergency communication within 30 minutes by combining NTT telephone lines and computers. In 1988, we improved the Aichi Prefectural General Radio System for Disaster Prevention Administration, which includes a high-speed facsimile transmission between the prefectural government and disaster-prevention organizations, including all municipalities. The most effective method for municipalities to disseminate information to residents is to use the Doho Disaster Prevention Administrative Radio System, which can target home receivers or outdoor speakers. Financial support has been extended to municipalities
- It is important to prevent secondary disasters. We have organized a women's firefighting club, because women often use fire in home, and we have also organized a similar club for boys. We have promoted the establishment of voluntary disaster prevention groups to protect their own residential areas through neighborly cooperation during an emergency. Since 1978, we have continued supporting these activities by providing necessary equipment: since 1990, we have provided educational activities and training. In 1990, the initial year of IDNDR, we held the first Aichi Prefectural Voluntary Disaster Prevention Organization Promotion Convention. At the mid-point and in the final year, we will hold the second and third such conferences to expand the organizations and to foster leadership.
- In 1983, we established a system to register volunteers. Its purpose was not only for protection of one's own home but also to encourage transregional cooperation. However, due to absence of large-scale disasters, no results were achieved. Activities include assisting in disaster-relief operations and in other activities that are not dangerous. They are covered by volunteer insurance to compensate them for any accidents they may have while carrying out these activities. Social awareness of volunteer activities remains low in Japan. The method of accepting volunteers should be improved. I hope to take this opportunity to learn the situation in other countries
- It is important to begin disaster prevention education and training in early childhood. Recognizing this, we have continued efforts at raising awareness among all citizens, by distributing brochures to school children, by providing opportunities for experiencing earthquake simulations, and by other such initiatives.



Speaker

Sadok Znaidi

Secretary General, International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO),
Switzerland

*" Disaster Relief Activities and Problems of Civil Protection
Organizations in the World "*

- During the 20th century, the world population exceeded 1 billion and is now reaching 10 billion. This fact is often overlooked. The increased risks of natural disaster and man-made disasters to the national economy, environment and the people have mounted at an unprecedented rate.

- The civil protection movement is contributing to the mitigation of the national disaster rate. ICDO, at the forefront of this field, has emphasized the important role of civil protection authorities in each nation. In particular, we have emphasized the disaster preparedness, relief, mitigation and particularly their necessity in developing countries. Effective measures can also contribute to the economy. So we must see the economic impact of a disaster.
- The 20th United Nations General Assembly was convened in 1965. It was suggested that each state formulate an optimum, integrated relief system, and the suggestion was adopted as Resolution 2034. Consequently, state-level civil protection organizations were established in each state
- The mission of the organization is to strengthen, organize, and make policies on relief activities. Disaster prevention schemes are also included in emergency planning, which is part of the civil protection activities
- The international community must note that natural disasters have had adverse effects on many regions in the world, with a particularly severe structural impact on the economies and societies of developing countries.
- From the beginning, the ICDO, has made efforts to instill international recognition of the concept of civil protection and safety, and has advocated concepts that concurred with the UN resolution. The National Civil Protection Committee has been established in which all the cabinet ministers participate under the leadership of the prime minister and the government. This committee can formulate a civil protection bill and action plans for the mitigation of disaster damage.
- In many parts of the world, civil protection organizations have ensured tie-ups and affiliations on a bilateral or multilateral basis with other countries to ensure internationally or regionally organized support.
- Besides bilateral and multilateral agreements, we have created guidelines that have three objectives to facilitate communality among EC nations: 1) Establishing guidelines; 2) People in charge of civil protection support the organizations by mobilizing the resources of the 12 member states so that they can react to risks; 3) Assessing the needs of disaster-stricken countries through the guidelines.
- There are three major keywords to describe the regional approach of disaster prevention plans: harmonization, cooperation, and communication.
- Civil protection is long-established in the world. But some countries are hesitant, and civil protection is sometimes low on the list of development priorities.
- One of the reasons is that the term civil protection does not necessarily have a universal definition. Another reason is financial difficulty.
- Also, recognition of civil protection organizations differs greatly due to differences in history, cultural background, political options, level of reception, and economic requirements
- ICDO thinks that this civil protection organization should be given substantial authority that is adequate for day-to-day and emergency requirements.
- Although civil protection has a cost, a disaster could cause a nation serious economic loss. If the nation had invested in disaster-prevention measures, the investment could become a positive factor for that nation's economy.
- ICDO believes that civil protection organizations should direct their activities in such a way that they can fully meet their responsibilities in disasters of socioeconomic and human significance



Speaker

Lei Zhiyan

Vice-Chief of Section, Disaster Relief Office, Sichuan People's Government, China

"The Disaster Reduction Role of Government in Enhancing People's Participation"

- A variety of natural disasters have occurred frequently and widely in Sichuan Province, and losses have been heavy. To mitigate losses from disasters, the government has established and implemented a set of policies which necessitated much money, many personnel and material resources. Our resistance to natural disasters has been greatly improved.
- Millions of volunteers, citizens and military personnel organized under the leadership of the Sichuan government have participated in disaster damage mitigation activities. Several hundred thousand cooperative relief teams have been set up, and their ability to limit disaster damage has been strengthened.
- Sichuan Province, which has a varied topography and climate, is vast and is one of the most severely disaster-prone provinces in the country. The cost of damages reaches an annual average of 300 million yuan.
- Unique geographical conditions and climatic features have resulted in five disaster characteristics:
 1. Many kinds of disasters occur, such as flash floods, rainstorms, heavy snow, drought, inundations, floods, earthquakes, mud flows, storms, hail and forest fires. Sometimes two or three natural disasters occur concurrently.
 2. Vast areas are struck by disaster. According to informal statistics compiled over the past 10 years, more than 100 regions have been struck by natural disasters annually, and 2 577 million people are affected by disasters every year.
 3. Damage to agriculture and industry is particularly serious. The impact on agriculture is great and relief operations must be made mainly in agricultural areas. Those affected are the poor who cannot withstand disaster damage.
 4. Drought and inundations are the most common disasters.
 5. Several different disasters can occur in one area concurrently or consecutively.
- The power of society and the government is more important than the power of an individual in disaster prevention. The Sichuan government has implemented the following measures to promote awareness of disaster prevention.
 1. Formulating disaster reduction policies such as strengthening earthquake forecasting and disaster relief work
 2. Disaster mitigation authorities analyze the status quo and make efforts to introduce disaster-resistant facilities.
 3. Establishing the Disaster Prevention Committee to facilitate activities and exchanges of scientific research of public organizations. Advice is provided to citizens.
 4. Investing large sums on construction of disaster installations to rescue those affected
 5. Establishment of a command system for disaster reduction.
 6. Promoting the practical application of scientific research
 7. Establishing an emergency summoning system for the military and police for swift reaction to disaster.
- To raise citizen awareness, we have continued the following activities.
 1. Increasing public knowledge of natural disasters
 2. Presenting awards to model individuals and units for successful disaster reduction
 3. Individuals from various circles are urged to associate with those affected through various social activities
 4. Publishing disaster prevention measures in Sichuan province
 5. Training qualified persons
 6. Establishing disaster insurance and mutual aid funds for humanitarian reasons.



Speaker

Frank T. Blackburn

President, Portable Water Supply System Co., Ltd., U.S.A.

" A Review of Volunteer Relief Activities in San Francisco Following the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake "

- Before reviewing the volunteer activities that followed the Loma Prieta Earthquake in 1989, I would like to look farther back into history
- San Francisco has experienced large disasters for many years. This fact has convinced us that it is important for a society to conduct volunteer activities. Volunteers made a major contribution to the city's firefighters after the San Francisco Earthquake and subsequent fires in 1906. There have been changes in the city's administrative laws that have organized volunteers into a semi-public firefighting organization.
- From this lesson, the city officially established an organization called the Fire Reserve. This is a citizen volunteer firefighting organization whose job is to help the Fire Department during a disaster. They work only in emergencies and without pay. If they are injured, the city pays their medical fees and rehabilitation expenses.
- It is very important to define the job assignments of these volunteers. It is also necessary to identify their functions in an emergency as well as their communication method with the public authorities.
- We must ask only for realistic assistance from volunteers, and we must be sure to specify tasks that interest them. We must avoid requesting very complex jobs of them.
- We have asked them to control traffic during disaster prevention exercises. This enabled us to perform large-volume water supply exercises for several hours, which give us invaluable experience. What also deserves attention is that we have the participation of several other volunteer groups
- In the 1989 San Francisco Earthquake, an extensive area along the bay was damaged. The San Francisco area as a whole received serious damage. More than 20 fires broke out in the city.
- Volunteer activities are divided into two stages: the actual emergency and the post-disaster stage
- Volunteers assisted firefighters on the morning following the earthquake. Firefighters were exhausted because they continued relief operations for three days in succession. The volunteers' assistance was of great help to them.
- There are many volunteer organizations in San Francisco. Emergencies have occurred more than 300 times a year in San Francisco County alone. There are small but well-trained volunteer groups. They are trained well enough that we can rely on them in an emergency. That is the situation of volunteer activities in San Francisco.
- The 1989 San Francisco Earthquake proved the importance of citizen volunteer organizations. They contributed greatly to mitigating a large-scale disaster. Volunteers are there to help or supplement full-time firefighters who are unable to do everything when faced with an overwhelming disaster.



Speaker

Lourdes C. Masing

Director, Philippine National Red Cross, Philippines

"Activities of Volunteers in Disaster Management in the Philippines and Their Problems"

- We are considering the issue of citizen participation from the viewpoint of disaster-vulnerability in the Philippines.
- The most important issue to face is that of the problems of metropolitan and urban areas. The recent and continuous influx of many people to metropolitan areas has been pointed out, and environmental problems are being aggravated.
- I'd like to present an explanation of various volunteer activities in the Philippines and I would also like to offer some suggestions
- What are volunteers? The important thing is that they help those affected find a way of living. Volunteers have participated in disaster prevention and mitigation efforts by working as organizers in their communities. However, the government is responsible for encouraging people to participate in disaster prevention systems in local communities.
- How to organize local citizens is a crucial problem. Newcomers are moving into cities and living in crowded slum areas, squatting illegally in landfills and so on, and increasing their exposure to disasters.
- Organizational activities are important in communities and volunteers often visit people in their communities.
- Volunteers participate in disaster management teams and get training. We need to note that disaster prevention management is not performed by the government alone, and the volunteer plays a particularly important role in the management and training of the disaster prevention administration.
- The following are the roles of volunteers:
 - 1) rescue, first aid, nursing; 2) providing public information; 3) relief operations 4) search and rescue; 5) forming communications groups; 6) forming volunteer medical and nursing groups; 7) food services; 8) psychiatric counseling and social work; and 9) driving, general labor, and clerical work.
- Volunteers have been regarded as being well-trained and very experienced, and they comprise a disaster management organization that functions well. However, at the same time, volunteers are always being faced with restrictions and regulations. Particularly in urban areas, there are the following problems. 1) the diversity of those affected; 2) inadequate coordination among government agencies; 3) insufficient medical and welfare infrastructure; 4) rivalry and competition among government agencies; 5) competition among NGOs and among other private aid organizations; 6) problems between NGOs and beneficiaries; 7) political intervention; and 8) rapid influx of people from rural to urban areas



Commentator

Naruko Takanashi

Senior Researcher

The Institute for Future Technology, Japan

- The difficulty of increasing disaster prevention awareness is a problem common to many countries. A great interest was shown in the problem of how we should develop or rebuild the system of disaster prevention involving private volunteers. Behind

such mounting interest, there are two different approaches to disaster prevention initiatives, namely, one is driven by highly specialized administrative systems, such as that of Japan, and the other is a system centered around private volunteer groups. I'd like to have your comments on how we can develop these systems and solve these problems

- As our disaster prevention initiative, we have established a mutual support system in which neighbors lend a helping hand. This kind of system has been put into practice to some degree in every community, because this is very necessary to halting the spread of a disaster. However, voluntary aid activities from outside the affected area are insufficient.
- There are two ways to give aid from outside the community. One is indirect aid by way of donations of money and materials; the other is direct support through human contributions of special skills. I would like to raise these two points mainly about Japan.
- Mr. Aoyama of Aichi Prefecture pointed out that the spirit of volunteerism in Japan is rather low. However, the situation has changed significantly from the past, when support was in the form of money or supplies. Nowadays, many people give support as volunteers. While volunteers help enhance the administrative response, in some cases they might be serious obstacles. In the case of Okushiri Island, many volunteers rushed into the small office of the Okushiri local authority, without arranging their own water or food or lodging. Lack of ethics in volunteers could also become a problem.
- Let me cite an example of effective volunteers. One was a transportation company that offered special skills by utilizing a helicopter and sorting relief supplies in Okushiri island in the wake of disaster, or the religious group that arranged the relief supplies and cleared the disaster sites with effective organizational abilities.
- The basic principle of Japan's disaster prevention has been to exclude private volunteers because of the fear of injuring ordinary citizens, or their uncertain availability. A different tendency is now emerging, and Aichi Prefectural disaster prevention volunteers are a typical example. The movement is spreading to Kanagawa and Tokyo prefectures, which are now beginning to organize volunteers. The importance of well-organized volunteers with expertise and sufficient training had been pointed out by the Chinese and Philippine presentations.
- How to deal with the issue of private-level disaster prevention is our first challenge. In case of Japan, we need to identify the areas in which private volunteers can operate. In the midst of changing circumstances surrounding disasters, we need to identify demands. On the other hand, how we integrate volunteers with initiative into the disaster prevention administration is our challenge. How we manage such volunteers after a disaster is another challenge. There is a report that, in the case of the Mississippi floods, personal computers were used to summon volunteers very smoothly. So, use of electronic media is an option. We also have the challenge of how to maintain an organization, such as through countermeasure meetings or operational centers for coordinating private disaster mitigation groups and facilitating their smooth operation. We need good advice on management skills.
- The second challenge for us is distribution of aid money, supplies and personnel. As Ms. Masing of the Philippines reported, a similar trend is emerging in Japan. For example, ¥17 billion was raised for relief of the earthquake off southwestern Hokkaido. Also, people sent in a total of 240,000 boxes of aid supplies to the island, which was about 100 boxes per home, which was too much for one home to accept. On the other hand, awareness of more common disasters such as landslides remains low and very little is donated. A feeling of inequality is mounting among those affected. This is our big challenge.
- Unequal media coverage may be behind such unequal distribution of aid. To solve this problem, we need to formulate a disaster relief law that covers fundamental disaster aid. Volunteer activities should be omnipresent. Volunteer activities are based on free will, so psychological factors affect them. Media coverage needs to be reexamined.

Discussion

Yoshiro Yanagawa

It became clear from several presentations that relations with citizens differ greatly according to historical background, traditions, and climate. What differs most is the issue of volunteers. In fact, there is no Japanese equivalent to the term volunteer. There is no Japanese translation for volunteer, nor has the spirit of volunteerism existed in Japan. Having said this, it cannot be said that a sense of helping others is lacking in Japan. But giving of one's own labor has not been practiced. To be sure, during the past few years, volunteer activities have become popular to some extent. However, the perception is that volunteer activity—providing assistance to someone at the expense of oneself—has not become entrenched in Japan yet. I'd like to have comments from each country about volunteerism. First, I'd like to invite Mr. Higashiura of the Japanese Red Cross, an expert in the field of overseas aid.

Hiroshi Higashiura

Volunteer activities during emergencies have become rather popular in Japan in recent years, but I have found various problems. One is the uneven relationship between NGOs and government agencies. Japan's voluntary self-defense organization is mostly led by government agencies. For example, many voluntary defense groups such as flood-fighting and firefighting groups are created on the orders of the government.

Some people even misunderstand that voluntary defense organizations and disaster prevention volunteers should compete. Voluntary defense organizations are very important in the sense that people should help each other right after a disaster, but one or two days later, it is more important that we have outside people. For example, the disaster countermeasure headquarters needs to be staffed, but outside people can substitute in this role. People from outside the community who have common perceptions should be more involved. Japanese people tend to think that they should not rely on others. For this purpose, some prefectures are trying to organize disaster prevention volunteers. But we need to build a trans-prefectural volunteer data bank, from which volunteers with expertise are summoned, as with the computer data bank used in the Mississippi flood.

The second point concerns the so-called volunteer nuisance. We need to establish a system to accept unorganized spontaneous volunteers who go to disaster sites without water, food or lodging. Organizations to facilitate communication between such volunteers should be established.

What kind of compensation is given to volunteers if they get injured or sick in other countries? How is this financed? I'd like to know about the situation in other countries.

We are in an age when we need aid supplied by corporations but not by individuals. For example, 240,000 boxes representing 8,000 tons of aid supplies were donated to Okushiri Island, but one third had to be incinerated. Many staff were needed to organize the supplies. The mass media, the Ministry of Posts & Telecommunications, JR and related organizations should review the problem of aid supply.

Unequal financial distribution is an issue to be solved. For example, we can establish a system such as a mutual fund.

Yoshiro Yanagawa

I'd like to ask a question of Mr. Blackburn. Recently, in the United States, poor social safety, high crime rates, drug addiction and many other problems prevail. After the Loma Prieta Earthquake, we were worried that looting, violence and arson would occur. However, on the contrary, crime rates at the time were lower than we expected. Instead, many volunteers protected the city. During the Mississippi floods, many volunteers drove a few hundred or a few thousand kilometers to the disaster sites. What is the driving force behind volunteerism in the United States?

Frank T. Blackburn

I am surprised to hear of the volunteer problem in the Hokkaido Okushiri Earthquake. In the United States, basically, there is a spirit of Christianity behind the volunteers. Volunteer activities and cultural activities are based on the Christian spirit. Americans learn the spirit of volunteer service and helping others while they are raised.

The reason for the low crime rates after the earthquake was that the city police took certain countermeasures against crimes. As a result, crime rates remained low and people helped each other. This shows a cultural characteristic. Having undergone numerous disasters, people in California know very much that they need mutual assistance among neighbors

Volunteer activities are limited to certain areas in San Francisco because of previous experience. In the United States, with its federal government system, each state and county has self-governing authority, which encourages local-level activities. It is possible to manage the volunteers because they are working at the local level. Volunteer groups know each other well so communication among them is smooth.

We need to prepare good organizations. Volunteers must know what to do. Police, firefighters and other official organizations need to know how they can use the volunteers. We know from experience that volunteers will function well if we can do this. In fact, we use volunteers regularly. In San Francisco, there is Red Cross Emergency Corps that serves food to firefighters and police staff, or provides temporary housing to people who have lost their homes. There are four hundred such events per year, so they have vast experience. Even small groups perform their duty, teaching inexperienced members. Fire and police departments supervise these volunteer groups well. For a large fire, firefighting support corps drive to the site and help the firefighters. The same members go to the site every time to acquire skills. Even volunteers are gaining experience.

Volunteers may have to overcome cultural gaps. In organizing them, the points I raised would be necessary and training is important

Yoshiro Yanagawa

I'd like to make a comment to Ms. Masing. I think the volunteer activities in the Philippines were better than those in Japan. As an Asian country, what do you think is different in the driving force of volunteers in the Philippines and that in Japan?

Lourdes C. Masing

Our country is vulnerable to natural disasters. For centuries, people have maintained a spirit of cooperation. Culturally we have a volunteer spirit. This is interpreted as cooperative spirit, mutual help, or neighborly help. The spirit of helping others is nurtured at the community level.

Another factor is the activities characterized by the Red Cross. Particularly in the 1990 Earthquake, the Red Cross dispatched 7,000 volunteers for relief operations at the site. Among them, there were well-trained experts in relief medicine, rescue, home nursing, transportation, and distribution of supplies. When reports are submitted to chapter administrators, volunteers are dispatched. Well-trained people are mobilized and obtain their assignments. People get satisfaction from helping others. Many people, especially the young, participate in the Red Cross volunteer activities.

We have organizations for youth. Actually, most of the volunteers dispatched to disaster sites are young people. They go there spontaneously. For example, if a young man comes from southern Mindanao Island to the central Philippines, he registers with a local authority such as the Red Cross volunteers. When a report comes to the disaster site, he knows that many volunteers from various parts of the country participate in the operation and this gives him tremendous motivation. If he can obtain self-satisfaction through volunteer activities, he would like to participate more.

Yoshiro Yanagawa

To Mr. Znaidi: Would you give us some advice on Japan's volunteer activities?

Sadok Znaidi

Government should be responsible for and should assign roles for civil defense organizations and civil protection. But the definition of the term is not clearly established. One thing that I can say is that civil protection includes all possible measures and means. Civil protection is a service to be provided in every country. But in reality, it is a service provided by the government in most countries.

Yoshiro Yanagawa

Governments in Japan, including local authorities, are fairly well established. So the administration is apt to come to the fore. Conversely, citizens tend to rely upon the authorities. I think it is somewhat risky. I'd like to ask Mr. Aoyama how we should consider the relations between the local administration and citizens.

Hideji Aoyama

Private enterprises both within the site and outside the site in the prefecture gave tremendous volunteer support following the Ise Bay Typhoon and Obara Flood.

It is important for us administrators to integrate the volunteer spirit into the disaster prevention system. For this reason, the Aichi prefectural government established a system for registering volunteer groups comprising at least 5 members. Many people from varied occupations have registered, from amateur radio operators to suppliers of transportation and emergency relief and even civil engineers. They are requested to participate in regular disaster prevention exercises and are trained for emergency rescue. These people are few and we will continue further efforts to develop this system.

Yoshiro Yanagawa

Mr. Lei from China, would you give us some comments?

Lei Zhiyan

In China, the citizens are supposed to participate in the relief or reconstruction activities performed by the government. The government and people work together in reconstruction operations. People participate in operations under the guidance of the government.

Yoshiro Yanagawa

I'd like to open the discussion to the floor. We have a question from Mr. Kobayashi.

Mr. Kobayashi

In order to act in an emergency, I feel that volunteers need sufficient training. Apart from what was described about San Francisco, what kind of training is provided?

When authorized organizations are deeply involved in relief operations, I wonder if ordinary people might be a nuisance to them. For example, we have flood-fighting corps, but basically they are to protect their own villages and they do not travel to other places.

Lourdes C. Masing

Volunteers need to be organized first and obtain training. It is difficult to go to a disaster site to help someone, so they need training.

Another important thing is that a volunteer should have a certain special skill. For example, if the area is susceptible to a specific disaster, we should prepare volunteers who are trained for that specific disaster. Also, we should train volunteers for specific disaster. I understand that they should protect their own area, but many volunteers come from other areas.

Volunteers are motivated by self-satisfaction as well as some spirit of adventure when they go somewhere to help people.

Yoshiro Yanagawa

Please give us a comment on the Red Cross, Mr. Higashiura.

Hiroshi Higashiura

For three years, we have made efforts at creating volunteer leaders in nationwide branches of the Red Cross. With the recognition that it is important to organize well-trained volunteers, we hold study meetings with would-be volunteer leaders from all

over the country at the head office. Then they return to their prefectures to train assistant leaders.

There are volunteer groups in the Red Cross. They participate in serving food and providing first aid in emergencies. This should be promoted. Other groups and individuals who wish to join in emergency activities can be trained in advance and organized. Also, we will establish a communication window for accepting people who wish to participate after the disaster.

There are various problems. How can we associate volunteers with the administration? The demand for volunteers in the administrative division is rather small. What can we do to raise social recognition of volunteers? These are the problems we are facing.

Many Japanese volunteers do not come to the site spontaneously; instead, they come on routes arranged by administrators. So how we can nurture motivation? It is also important for us to think of ways to lessen the financial burden of expenses such as transportation and accommodation. Even half the amount could be borne by the administrators.

I'd like to know the compensation paid to volunteers in other countries. The basic principle is to protect oneself. But some people ask, "Would you pay my medical fees if I get injured?" If we provide them with inexpensive insurance, they ask, "Would you pay the premium?" This kind of dependence dies hard. So some cities pay the premium instead in the form of paid volunteers. This kind of treatment is influencing the activities of NGOs. We need to think more seriously about solutions to this problem.

Yoshiro Yanagawa

There are many problems that we should seek solutions for. Should they be paid? What about insurance? These problems differ from country to country. I heard that the remuneration the volunteers in the Mississippi floods received was food, beverages, tetanus shots and band-aids, period. I was impressed with the difference between the United States and Japan. I wanted to discuss whether this is workable in Japan or in other countries, but to my regret our time is almost running out.

I think that the reason volunteer activities became rather popular is that they were stimulated by the volunteer activities in the United States following the Loma Prieta Earthquake, which was extensively reported by the Japanese mass media. I hope that the situation will be improved if we continue to exchange views on the status quo and the problems of each country while stimulating discussion through such international conferences.