

GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
16-19 June 2009
Geneva, Switzerland



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Shinichi KITAJIMA
Ambassador, the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations
and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the
International Flood Initiative Special Event on Charting Global Agenda for
Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction - A follow-up on the report of the High-
level Expert Panel on Water and Disaster/UNSGAB-HLEP
(Geneva, 19 June 2009)**

*Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my great pleasure to provide opening remarks to the Special Event on “Charting Global Agenda for Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction - A follow-up on the report of the High-level Expert Panel on Water and Disaster/United Nations Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation.”

The convener of this event is the International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM), which provides a secretariat function to the International Flood Initiative (IFI). IFI is a framework for promoting collaboration on flood risk reduction with partner organizations, including UNESCO, WMO, UNU and ISDR, serving as a thematic group of the ISDR system. ICHARM was established in March 2006 under the auspices of the UNESCO and hosted by the Public Works Research Institute, Tsukuba, Japan.

The mission of ICHARM is to provide localities, nations, regions, and the globe with the best practicable strategies for managing the risk of water-related disasters and help them implement those strategies to enhance professional capacity and promote local advancement, particularly for developing countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

According to the “*Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*,” launched by United Nations on 17 May 2009, our exposure and vulnerability to weather and climate hazards are growing, resulting in continued rises in the numbers and costs of disasters. Water-related disasters have been a major cause of economic damages and death tolls in recent years. With ongoing climate change signals, we may see more of tragedy events, even worse than Hurricane Katrina in the United States,

Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, and Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh in recent years, if we do not take actions now.

Then, the question is, “what actions should be taken now?”

With such a significant need, “*Water and Disaster*” *Action Plan* was launched at the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul, March 2009 by the founding chair of H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea as you heard his video-message this Wednesday. This work is corresponding to one of the six areas of so-called, “Hashimoto Action Plan,” the initiative proposed by the former Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, who unexpectedly passed away in 2006.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to expect that today’s session will make further progress on identifying concrete follow-up actions on the Panel recommendations with experts and partner agencies here.

I trust the IFI, the only global network to reduce water-related risks linked with the ISDR system, would take a key role for actions.

Distinguished Participants,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to invite you to join the efforts in the Panel follow-up actions lead by the IFI members and ICHARM.

I wish you a great success for a fruitful discussion today.

Thank you.