

## International Forum Calls for Focus on Disaster Recovery

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Globally, natural disasters have caused damages of nearly \$4 trillion over the past 30 years - and the frequency and intensity of these powerful storms, droughts and earthquakes continue to rise. Leaders from developing countries, civil society, private sector and agencies including the World Bank, European Union and United Nations are coming together this week to discuss how vulnerable countries can better prepare and protect hard won development gains by establishing recovery strategies and processes before disaster strikes. Carefully executed disaster recovery programs, however, present an opportunity to build back stronger and more resilient economies.  
To help countries attain this goal, the World Bank-managed Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the European Union (EU) are hosting the second World Reconstruction Conference (WRC 2) on September 10-12, 2014, at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C. The conference, to be opened by World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim, will bring together more than 500 leading experts, practitioners and policymakers from governments, civil society and the private sector to share lessons learned in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction.  
"While disasters pose a grave threat to vulnerable communities around the world, countries can capitalize on the lessons and good practice of governments and partner institutions around the world, said World Bank Group Vice President and Special Envoy for Climate Change Rachel Kyte. "It takes shared action to rebuild stronger physical infrastructures, and establish the policies and mechanisms necessary to create more resilient economies."  
Gina Caesar, Associate Administrator of UNDP and Andris Piebalgs, EU Development Commissioner, echoed Ms. Kyte's statement.  
"Far too often we have seen decades of hard work and billions of dollars in development wiped away by floods or an earthquake. It is clear that there can be no sustainable development without disaster risk reduction, she said. "Recovering after a disaster is not only about rebuilding infrastructure, but also about ensuring that people and communities are more resilient and better able to cope and persevere going forward, stated Ms. Caesar.  
"The European Union is present wherever vulnerable people are facing the consequences of natural and conflict-related disasters. We are committed to helping them to be better prepared to address, and recover from any future challenges. By working together with partners like the World Bank and the UN, we can do more, and better, to help countries increase their resilience and strengthen prevention, response and recovery", emphasized Commissioner Piebalgs.  
The conference will explore a range of themes related to post-disaster recovery, including the importance of international cooperation, methods for ensuring the efficiency of physical reconstruction, technological and green innovations, recovery in fragile and conflict situations, and reconstruction within the context of a country's overall development goals. It will also include special events like a TED Talks-style session featuring five inspirational speakers with powerful personal experiences of resilience and 3D art installations.  
Notable speakers include Jim Yong Kim, President, World Bank Group; Margareta Wahlström, Head, UNISDR; Sam Worthington, President, InterAction; Kåre Stormark, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway; and Roxana Baldetti, Vice President, Republic of Guatemala, Maria E. Casar Associate Administrator, UNDP and Rachel Kyte, Vice President and Special Envoy for Climate Change, World Bank Group.  
Building on the consensus developed at the first World Reconstruction Conference, held in Geneva in 2011, the WRC 2 will launch guides for both the Disaster Recovery Framework (DRF) and the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) developed by GFDRR, UNDP and the EU. These guides aim to help countries design and implement disaster recovery programs that contribute to long-term sustainable development. As a complement to the DRF Guide, GFDRR will also share findings from in-depth case studies conducted in nine countries, including among others Pakistan, Lao, Senegal, and Yemen.  
While recovery is essential for sustainable development, few countries have successfully incorporated disaster recovery into their policies and institutions say the World Bank and UN. At the conference closing, more than 30 countries and partner agencies will issue a joint statement affirming their support of the inclusion of resilient recovery in the successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action for Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA), in March 2015. The conference will also build momentum toward establishing post-disaster recovery as an integral part of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, which will succeed the Millennium Development Goals.  
About the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery  
The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) helps high-risk, low income developing countries better understand and reduce their vulnerabilities to natural hazards, and adapt to climate change. Working with over 300 partners-mostly local government agencies, civil society, and technical organization-GFDRR provides grant financing, on-the-ground technical assistance to mainstream disaster mitigation policies into country-level strategies, and a range of training and knowledge sharing activities. GFDRR is managed by the World Bank and funded by 21 donor partners.  
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