

**National Disaster Management Authority,
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PRESS RELEASE

**IWDRI 2018 Day 1: Risk Management in key
infra sectors discussed**

NEW DELHI, MONDAY: Experts from about 25 countries representing a wide variety of development and disaster risk contexts, multilateral development banks, the United Nations, the private sector, academics and other stakeholders have gathered here to participate in an International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRI).

The two-day workshop, organised by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), was inaugurated by Union Home Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh, today (January 15, 2018).

The aim of the workshop is to identify best practices in the infrastructure sector, as well as key issues in existing practices and ways to address them.

“Urbanisation places a lot of demand on infrastructure. There is an urgent need to stop creation of new risks instead of trying to reduce them later” said Shri Kamal Kishore, Member, NDMA. This is important as all infrastructure is interdependent – both structurally and regionally – as disruption in one is bound to affect another.

Discussions during the first session, which set the tone of the workshop, highlighted the limitations of the existing practices; risks to which the current assets are exposed to, the direct and indirect socio-economic impact of the

disasters, the investment ecosystem, regulatory standards, sectoral roles and opportunities of building resilience in key projects of the future.

Technical sessions were held on issues pertaining to risk management in key infrastructure sectors, viz. energy, transport and telecommunications. The resilience of these sectors is critical for effective post-disaster response. Moreover, these sectors are likely to see the largest amount of investment in developing countries over the next fifteen years. Making them resilient makes for sound economic sense. One of the presentations also highlighted that contrary to general perception, building resilience in infrastructure costs very little if environmentally optimized and climate resilient designs are used along with locally available raw material.

One of the speakers highlighted the importance of structural measures to ensure the safety of lifeline buildings, especially schools. Resilient schools and student awareness can then be used as tools to build a conversation around disaster risk reduction in the society.

Deliberations were also held on how to build resilience in infrastructure that is specifically designed to protect people living in hazard-prone locations.

During the technical session on risk assessment, experts discussed the lack of standardisation in methods of collecting data and its implication on disaster risk assessments. Challenges in incorporating new disaster risk assessments to infrastructure, design standards and the role of regulations in ascertaining whether the prescribed standards are followed during infrastructure creation were also discussed.

Standards for developing resilient infrastructure, role of finance including risk transfer mechanisms, and reconstruction and recovery of key infrastructure sectors after disasters will be discussed during technical sessions tomorrow. Shri Kiren Rijiju, MoS, Home Affairs, will deliver the valedictory address during the closing ceremony.

Background

The Asian region will see huge infrastructure projects in the coming years. A large proportion of these will happen in India. An estimate suggests that India needs about \$1.5 trillion investment in the infrastructure sector in the coming 10 years. While this sounds exciting, the challenge lies in building infrastructure that is sustainable and resilient enough to handle extreme weather events.

During a disaster, poor quality - weak infrastructure not just results in loss of lives, but also in livelihoods. It results in significant economic loss as well. For a country like ours, this could have been better utilized in various welfare projects. It is, therefore, extremely crucial that the new (as well as existing) infrastructure is strong enough to take on the hazards mentioned above. Having realised the importance of “prevention and mitigation”, investment in mainstreaming risk reduction is inevitable.

Various international agreements have also reiterated the importance and long-term benefits of investing in resilient infrastructure. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), 2015-2030, which is the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda, identifies investing in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for resilience and to build back better in reconstruction as priorities for action towards reducing disaster risk. Similarly, Goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognizes disaster resilient infrastructure as a crucial driver of economic growth and development.

India was one of the first countries to align its National Disaster Management Plan with the SFDRR. Investment in Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and enhancing collective global strength and solidarity were the two major highlights of the Prime Minister's ten-point agenda on DRR, outlined during the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) held in New Delhi in November 2016.