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SESSION SUMMARY

Session Title: Inclusion vs. Exclusion: Risks and Opportunities

Session Type: Plenary session

Date and Time: May 14, 9:00am-10:30am, Room 2

Key Speakers and Agencies:

Co-Moderators:

- **Margaret Arnold**, Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank
- **Charlotte Viyuswa McLain-Nhlapo**, Global Disability Advisor, World Bank

Speakers:

- **H.E. Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum**, Governor of Borno State NIGERIA,
- **Kiyoshi Murakami**, Special Representative of the Mayor & Senior Executive Advisor, City of Rikuzentakata Japan
- **Dr. Pablo Suarez**, Associate Director for Research and Innovation, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, The Hague, Netherlands, and Visiting Fellow, Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future, Boston University
- **Mino Ramaroson**, Huairou Commission, Regional Coordinator, Africa and Global Land Specialist, Madagascar



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Margaret Arnold, Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank, welcomed participants to the plenary session on Inclusion vs. Exclusion: Risks and Opportunities. Disasters don't discriminate – but people do, and it is those expressions of exclusion that contribute to people's vulnerability to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. Poor and marginalized people face higher risk in the face of hazard events and of being adversely affected or left worse off from relief and recovery if they are not included.

If reconstruction and recovery programs are to achieve the often-stated goal of making communities more resilient to future hazard events and climate change, three things are required:

1. a clear understanding of the pre-existing social, political, and economic factors that contributed to the vulnerability of the poor and marginalized before the disaster;
2. recognition and understanding of how relief, recovery, and reconstruction interventions can reduce, reinforce or increase those vulnerabilities; and
3. investment in actions to ensure these groups are effectively reached and empowered and that their capacities are mobilized.

There are costs incurred when we exclude people. And there are real opportunities when we ensure an inclusive approach. These risks and opportunities, and how to take advantage of these opportunities, are what were explored in this session.

The plenary session was opened by **H.E. Prof. Babagana Umara Zulum** who spoke about crisis recovery in Borno State in Nigeria which lacked community participation. Inclusion means the community needs to be consulted to evolve integrated approaches in tandem with its cultural values and aspirations. This requires time, patience, and engagement with the community. Besides physical infrastructure such as hospitals, water supply, security, and the provision of livelihood support, policy implementation needs to reach the hearts and minds of the community to be truly inclusive.

Another vital component of inclusion is the ability to effect reconciliation for which it is essential that people should be able to articulate their grievances. Policies need to be community-driven, with a bottom-to-top approach.



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Kiyoshi Murakami, Special Representative of the Mayor and Senior Executive Advisor, City of Rikuzentakata Japan, spoke of post-tsunami disaster recovery efforts in the town of Rikuzentakata in the Iwate prefecture of Japan, where buildings stood strong while 1,800 died and 13,000 were displaced, from a population of 24,000 people. Of the forest cover of 70,000 pine trees, only one tree remained, which has become symbolic of the recovery and reconstruction efforts of the city.

The recovery and reconstruction efforts focused on Building Back Better from below zero, creating a resilient city, and inclusiveness and accessibility. The city was rebuilt on higher ground using a conveyor belt to move construction material from the mountain to the city, with 42-foot high sea walls. Action Plans for reconstruction entailed detailed discussions with diversified groups including people with special needs. The reconstruction was predicated on the ideal that no one should be left behind. Evacuation exercises highlighted the process of inclusion. The goal is to transform the city based on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Eight years later, despite unrelenting coordinated inclusive effort, 675 people are still living in 275 temporary housing units, emphasizing the need for a long-term policy and sustained effort.

Mino Ramaroson, from the Huariou Commission, a grassroots movement of women in over 50 countries, shared that the Government-led efforts towards recovery in the Chimani district excluded women, which came at a significant cost as cultural norms were not addressed. The gender bias that excluded women's participation in the recovery planning meant that some lessons learned were not received by the community. Women had local strategies that could have been shared to aid in the recovery; hence the loss was greater. As a result, the same vulnerable groups suffer from repetitive loss due to flooding year after year.

Existing organized groups that study risk and do mapping must include women to harness the skills available in the community and to integrate lessons learned. This will also lead to decreased corruption, with vulnerable groups benefitting more from relief. Even in investment and financing for recovery, women must be meaningfully included; not just in theory, but as inclusion is practiced on the ground.

Lastly, the focus on recovery is not enough. Preparedness is everything, because one must be proactive, not reactive. Grassroots women are real



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stakeholders in the recovery process, and they need to build capacity and share key learnings.

Dr. Pablo Suarez initiated an interactive session with participants by showing a series of interesting cartoons to enable the asking of difficult questions related to inclusion, exclusion, challenges, opportunities, and reconstruction, and to start a conversation around them. The idea was that humor enables difficult conversations. Participants worked in small groups to come up with interesting questions for panelists.

Mr. Murakami answered a question on how to fast track the uptake of innovation. He said they spent the first one and a half years in discussions with local residents and others to get as many new ideas as possible to include in policy.

Dr. Suarez urged participants to look at the conveyor belt as a metaphor for the flow of information, people, and decisions. Who decides what is put on the belt, and who decides how what's on the belt is delivered, and to whom?

H.E. Zulum was asked how to involve affected populations in the reconstruction phase. He emphasized the importance of participatory planning for effective reconstruction. For example, in the construction of toilets, the water closet system is not in use in Nigeria, so any design that included water closets for toilets would be the beginning of failure. Also, implementation would not work without participatory learning.

Mino Ramaroson answered a question on how to stop corruption from the Government sector by emphasizing that information is power, and must be shared transparently to thwart corruption.

Charlotte Viyuswa McLain-Nhlapo, Global Disability Advisor, World Bank, summarized the presentations as underscoring the fact that natural disasters do not discriminate and the poor people are disproportionately affected by disasters.

Prof. Umara shared how the Boko Haram insurgency has devastated the social and economic fabric of Borno state, pushing people further into poverty. He emphasized the fundamental need to understand the root causes of exclusion and the need for an integrated approach to recovery that is flexible and



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adaptable. Empowering the community and community participation is central to community resilience.

From the Japan example, recovery did not happen overnight, and eight years later, they are still working on reconstruction, which is being framed using the SDGs. In addition, the principles of BBB, inclusiveness and accessibility, universal design features and ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities, and ensuring that any kind of infrastructure that is rebuilt is resilient have been embedded in the recovery processes.

Mino Ramaroson shared lessons around women as key agents in the recovery process. She identified some missed opportunities where women were not included and what cost that brought to bear on society. She underscored the importance of meaningful participation, authentic participation, and robust participation. The focus should be on preparedness, because recovery is often too late.