



## SESSION SUMMARY

**Session Title:** Inclusion As A Right For All

**Session Type:** High Level Plenary

**Date and Time:** Tuesday, May 14, 4:00-5:30pm, Room 2

### Key Speakers and Agencies:

#### MODERATOR

**Dr. Maitreyi Bordia Das**, Manager, Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience Global Practice, Global Lead for Social Inclusion, World Bank

#### SPEAKERS

- **Alexandra Ocles**, Minister of Disaster Risk Management, Ecuador
- **Toshizo Ido**, Governor of Hyogo Prefecture, Japan
- **Asif Saleh**, Senior Director, BRAC International, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- **Prof. Fatou Sarr**, Senior Lecturer at IFAN, Director of the Gender and Scientific Research Laboratory, University of Dakar, Senegal

The closing plenary has two-fold objectives: to arrive at a globally-shared and comprehensive view of various forms of inclusion (or exclusion) that need to be addressed and integrate these insights into a rights-based framework, and to provide guidance and outline actions to make sure the focus on execution and implementation of a rights-based global compact is translated into initiatives at the local, national, regional and global levels. The session will identify approaches enabling the realization of a rights-based paradigm and guide inclusive recovery systems in order to: ensure the full and meaningful participation of all groups and individuals in identifying and reducing risk, provide institutional guarantee that those at risk of being excluded are included in the recovery process, appreciate and respond to their diverse characteristics, capacities and vulnerabilities, and finally, contribute to



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resilience for everyone by removing barriers that keep excluded people out of the planning and decision-making process and transforming existing power relations.

**Alexandra Ocles**, Minister of Disaster Risk Management, Ecuador termed historically vulnerable social groups as priority attention groups. The government particularly focuses on these sections of the population to reduce inequality. Ecuador recognizes the diversity of society and ensures non-discrimination of any kind. The commitment to not leaving anyone behind is reflected in a number of initiatives linked to inclusion, such as guidelines for drawing up public policies and the implementation of services which ensure three basic obligations: respect, protect, and implement. Rights are guaranteed and respected through equality councils that coordinate policies, programs, laws and services which ensure that people are able to access and exercise their rights in terms of health, social rights, education, security. In terms of risk reduction, the inclusion of marginalized and other groups includes victims of domestic violence, children, disabled people, and native peoples. The best way to comply with the inclusion objective is to use tools that take into account the most vulnerable people, acknowledging their needs in various scenarios. She highlighted the importance of developing a platform to exchange best practices so that countries all over the world can share their experience and benefit from the learnings of others.

**Asif Saleh**, Senior Director, BRAC International, Dhaka, Bangladesh introduced the NGO BRAC, crediting its focus on community and people for its growth. He emphasized thinking of the community and its people as individuals with ideas and resilience who needed tools to support them, rather than considering them recipients of charity. BRAC began with financial inclusion in livelihood, and spread to education and so on, taking its lead from the needs expressed by the community. He stressed that one of the reasons for Bangladesh's success in achieving significant social indicators in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s is the partnership between NGOs and CSOs on the one hand, and the government on the other. The latter provided finance and infrastructure while the former linked government services with the community. He pointed out that with increasing urbanization, the nature of disasters in the country had changed, which necessitated a different kind of preparation to protect against them. The focus needs to be on relief but also on building back better to enable more effective prevention and relief in the future. Two lessons stand out: one, that there is a strong role for NGOs and CSOs in terms of inclusion in



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the relief and recovery space, and second, that the community is resilient, and needs to be supported with better technical assistance.

**Prof. Fatou Sarr**, Senior Lecturer at IFAN, Director of the Gender and Scientific Research Laboratory, University of Dakar, Senegal contended that work in the field showed that inequalities are being created, widened, and deepened because of the way conflict is managed when the population is displaced. These inequalities existed, but new interventions often aggravate them. This provides an opportunity to modify the intervention to create a paradigm shift so that new interventions can lead communities to a different dynamic that could reestablish the balance. She emphasized the need to work not only on emergency situations, but also to anticipate situations more accurately so that effective prevention measures can be taken to avoid their occurrence. She closed by suggesting that disasters be considered an opportunity to build back better.

**Toshido Izo**, Governor of Hyogo Prefecture, Japan shared how 50 – 60% victims of the great earthquake were either elderly and people with disabilities, and how they experienced secondary issues despite being successfully relocated to shelters due to the conditions prevailing at the shelters. Inclusion for recovery assumes the fundamental belief that no one will be left behind. This is best achieved by ensuring that vulnerable groups should participate in the policy planning process, and its implementation in order to reduce disaster risks. Support from local communities is essential to facilitate inclusion during evacuation of vulnerable groups in the face of disaster. This support can be as detailed as the creation of personal evacuation plans for people. Managers are trained to understand the particular situations involved in making these plans more effective. He closed by reiterating Japan's commitment to disseminating their experience and lessons learned from the earthquake, both at home and abroad to be better prepared for future disasters.

The time has come for us to talk about inclusion, as was clear from the focus on it in every session of this conference. For disaster reduction to be inclusive, it is important that advocacy and policy come together, which is now happening. Learning from the past and documenting the past is vital and forms the basis of building back better. Building back better is not just about building infrastructure, but about building a better society. So disasters can be thought of as opportunities for rebuilding entire societies on the basis of social inclusion. Finally, there is a need for more data, more evidence, and robust evaluations that work.