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SESSION SUMMARY

Session Title: Community-led recovery

Session Type: Thematic session

Date and Time: Monday, May 13, 11:00 am-12:30 pm, Room 4

Key Speakers and Agencies:

Co-Moderators:

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

Speakers:

- **Josephine Castillo**, Grassroots leader, DAMPA Federation and the Huairou Commission
- **Gerald Potutan**, Recovery Expert, International Recovery Platform (IRP)
- **Mario Flores**, Director, Disaster Risk Reduction and Response, Habitat for Humanity
- **Hirabayashi Atsutoshi**, Senior Advisor on Recovery and Reconstruction, Community Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency

The session highlighted the importance of community-led disaster recovery and discussed how agencies and organizations involved in recovery and reconstruction processes can work with communities as partners. Involving communities in recovery is absolutely essential as only 10-20% of disaster-affected people are assisted by outside agencies. Most disaster-affected people rely on themselves and their communities for recovery.

Josephine Castillo, of the DAMPA Federation and the Huairou Commission, shared experiences from the Philippines, where after Typhoon



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Haiyan/Yolanda well-organized communities were deeply involved in both recovery planning and implementation. She stressed the importance of trusting communities to lead recovery efforts and work with them as knowledge holders and partners.

This was seconded by **Gerald Potutan**, International Recovery Platform, who presented lessons from several recovery case studies that show the importance of preparing communities for recovery before a disaster happens. He also stressed that recovery always must consider the specific socio-cultural dynamics and that there can't be any standard recipes or blue-prints.

Mario Flores, Habitat for Humanity, also stressed that community-led recovery is about "context, context, context". He views the major role for external organizations and agencies in facilitating and enabling communities and presented examples of simple measures such as supporting families with filling-in applications for reconstruction grants (Nepal) or providing tools and construction expertise through mobile units that reach affected communities directly (Philippines).

Hirabayashi Atsutoshi, from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), presented how experiences with community-involvement were successfully transferred from Japan to the Philippines, where community workshops improved post-disaster land-use and relocation planning. He recommended focusing on non-structural measures and developing tools that can easily be disseminated to other affected areas.

The session showed that engaging directly with communities and making them equal partners in planning, implementing and monitoring recovery and reconstruction ensures that these strategies align with community-needs and increases their effectiveness. While meaningful community involvement may seem to take time, it leads to smoother implementation of recovery programs and more sustainable long-term results. The panelists agreed that there is further need for strengthening community capacities and building trust between grassroots organizations and local and national governments.

PHOTO FROM THE EVENT:

