

PL-4 Stakeholder Communication for Informed Decisions: Lessons from and for the Displaced Communities of Fukushima

14:00-16:00, 23 July 2014

The aim of the UNU-IGES joint session is to promote an exchange of views between the two projects and to draw in relevant international expertise on the role of and the challenges pertaining to stakeholder communication in facilitating informed decisions and policy-making. On the one hand, it draws on experiences from Fukushima to highlight the critical junctures where there is room for improving stakeholder communication and information provision. On the other hand, the session draws on international experiences from other disasters to understand how such critical junctures could be addressed effectively in the policy-making process. In this sense, the objective of this session is to draw on both the lessons from as well as for the displaced communities of Fukushima.

Prof. Takeuchi, Senior Vice-Rector, UNU, provided opening remarks, during which he explained that the session would focus on multi-stakeholder communication and informed decision-making. He emphasized that consideration would also be paid to what we can learn from the experiences in Fukushima.

Mr. Kanno, Mayor of Iitate Village, spoke about his role in making decisions and leading the evacuation of the entire village of Iitate. He took into consideration both the people's living conditions as well as the potential for future rehabilitation of the village in his decision to evacuate to locations within one hour of the village.

Prof. Suzuki, IGES fellow, provided insights into the nuclear accident and the recovery process, which differs from post-disaster recovery from natural events. He also stressed the importance of local roundtables as a platform to facilitate stakeholder dialogue and informed decision-making.

Dr. Sekiya, Associate Professor, University of Tokyo, spoke about the lack of an investigation on evacuation activities during the emergency period, although there was proper investigation of the nuclear power plant accident. He stressed that one lesson from the post-disaster evacuation was the importance of nuclear disaster risk reduction.

Dr. Tsutsumi, Research Fellow, UNU-IIGH, spoke about the connections between disasters and mental health. He pointed out issues related to the lack of standardised information being provided by the scientific community during emergencies, e.g. political conflicts arising due to advice from individual experts.

Key messages of the session

The rehabilitation of livelihoods after the nuclear power plant accident will be a long-term process. Local roundtables with balanced representation were proposed as an information platform and a mechanism for improving stakeholder communication and informed decision-making. It is also important to accumulate local and grassroots level good practices for rehabilitation of livelihoods, and to share this information with the public. A number of lessons learnt were also shared, including the need for the development of nuclear disaster risk reduction, based on experiences gathered in Fukushima with emergency evacuations.

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