

## HA/DR and Dividends in the Asia-Pacific:

Kuyoun Chung  
Research Fellow

Korea Institute for National Unification

### I. Rising disasters in the Asia-Pacific and HA/DR

#### 1. Source of Risk

- Types of disasters and source of corresponding risks and vulnerabilities has become diversified, generating unpredictable trajectories of disaster escalation.
- Both natural disasters such as hydro-meteorological, geophysical, climatological, technological and biological disasters as well as man-made disasters such as economic crises, civil conflicts, wars, and refugee crises generate consequences and negative cross-border externalities to victims of the very country experiencing the disaster and those of neighboring countries.
- While many have caused such consequences, climate change is figured to have mostly shadowed the process and even served as a source of another complex emergency.
- Disaster risk reduction has thus become one of the major instruments to fight the impact of the climate change.

#### 2. Resilience and HA/DR Approach

- Current complexities of disasters inevitably expand the humanitarian spatial and temporal dimensions for disaster risk reduction.
- The Sendai Framework for Action 2015 already acknowledges the importance of such expansion by emphasizing the following: 1) understanding disaster risk, 2) strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, 3) investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, and 4) enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to 'build back better' in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.
- While the recent two global initiatives, Hyogo and Sendai Framework for Action on disaster relief hugely contributed to forming a global framework for disaster risk reduction; it leaves much room for discussion on a region-specific framework. The followings have not been addressed yet:
  - Region-specific threats: how the risks from climate change at the global level might affect the Northeast Asia as a region has not been assessed. As this question would determine the scope of disasters that will be addressed, it should be immediately evaluated.
  - Regional multilateral dialogue for HA/DR: Northeast Asia remains as a missing link in the global disaster risk reduction effort as it does not possess the regional mechanism of coordination, funding, or standby arrangement for disaster relief in particular.
  - Regional link between HA/DR and development cooperation: while the Sendai Framework for Action emphasizes that the true resilience comes from the strong bonds within and between countries and that the public and private stakeholders should work together, it neglect the fact that such a 'whole of a society' or 'whole of a country' approach might not be feasible. In other words, improving government-to-government and private-public coordination through advance contingency planning and

capacity building, which is a component of resilience, might not be feasible, and if that's the case, then expanding the humanitarian dimensions would be impossible either. Besides, regular development cooperation, which is designed to strengthen domestic infrastructure, disaster preparedness, and indigenous response capacity, is a central element of building greater resilience. Then it becomes important to coordinate these two complementary but separate initiatives.

- Regional Strategic Assistance: As an important asset to address a large-scale and sudden occurrence of disasters, strategic assistance should be coordinated with actors in the public domains, private domains, as well as NGOs at the local level. Military to Military exercise help to prevent man-made disasters such as conflict arising from misperception, misunderstanding, or mistakes by a rogue commander.

## II. South Korea's HA/DR strategy

1. South Korea's strategy on HA/DR has shaped in line with development cooperation/humanitarian assistance policy, spearheaded by the Ministry of foreign affairs and recently the Ministry of defense, includes 1) the linkage between HA/DR and development cooperation for sustainable development, 2) the role of education in empowerment and capacity building of all stakeholders in various sectors, 3) participating in ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting-Plus(ADMM Plus) Disaster relief exercises.
2. Empowerment through education and training
  - South Korea recently established the UNISDR Office for Northeast Asia and Global Education and Training Institute for Disaster Risk Reduction(UN ONEA-GETI).
  - South Korea has been running the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat(TCS), an international organization to contribute to the further promotion of cooperative relations among China, Korea, and Japan. TCS regularly holds Table-Top exercise to simulate a disaster such as earthquake and to coordinate three countries' roles and their responses.
3. All stakeholders from the public, private, and NGOs are encouraged to participate in the initiative to effectively manage the linkage between HA/DR and the development cooperation and strengthen the resilience.
4. The linkage between development cooperation and HA/DR has been pursued in the perception of expansion of humanitarian space and time, but also to facilitate transition from disaster to normality more effectively and irrevocably.

## III. South Korea's Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI) and HA/DR

1. The current Park Geun-hye administration of the Republic of Korea has proposed the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI) as one of the diplomatic initiatives to concretize the 'trustpolitik.' It is the administration's leading regional policy proposed in the form of a multilateral dialogue process, in order to solve soft issues at the beginning, ultimately establishing sustainable peace and cooperation regime in Northeast Asia.
2. As the Northeast Asia has long been occupied with the 'Asian Paradox,' the NAPCI set the following three objectives: 1) to build trust in the region by accumulating a

habit of communication and cooperation among the regional partners, 2) to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and prosperity by establishing an order of cooperation in the region, and 3) to encourage every regional partners to engage one another, ultimately resolve the paradox.

3. The Park administration has initially tried to establish such practice of cooperation by arranging various meetings among the Northeast Asian countries on non-traditional security issues, and by revitalizing the existing cooperation mechanisms or expansion of participation by all Northeast Asian countries.
4. The NAPCI currently focuses on the following non-traditional security issues: environment, energy security, nuclear safety, disaster relief, cyber security, and drug trafficking. The NAPCI started out its effort with a discussion of non-traditional security issues because the threat posed by those non-traditional security issues are common to all regional countries. Therefore, countries in the region do have an interest to share information, pooling resources on those issues although the level of willingness to cooperate might vary from country to country.
5. HA/DR have emerged as an area in which NAPCI can be applied because of the absence of regional mechanism deals with disaster relief. In spite of the rising frequency and intensity of disasters within Northeast Asia, only Asia disaster reduction center in Japan, and UN ONEA-GETI in South Korea exist for a viable institution for dialogue among Northeast Asian countries.

#### IV. Suggestions

1. To facilitate the dialogue among Northeast Asian countries, it is vital to share knowledge as well as information.
2. Standardization of disaster relief process will facilitate not only the dialogue but also actual delivery of humanitarian assistance effort.
3. Finding the linkage of spillover to related issues will be critical to generate dividends in the region.