



Opening Speech

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(Citation)

KOBE UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON SUMATRA TSUNAMI DISASTER AND RECONSTRUCTION

(Issue Date)

2006-03

(Resource Type)

other

(Version)

Version of Record

(URL)

<https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14094/80020090>



Opening Speech

*Mr. Pitono Purnomo,
Consul General of The Republic of Indonesia In Osaka*



Prof. Kitamura, Director & Vice President, Kobe University, Prof. Yasuo Tanaka, Research Center for Urban Safety and Security, Kobe University. Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am greatly honored to be given a chance to say a few words at this remarkable workshop which will focus on the current process of reconstruction in the northern part of Sumatra Island after the devastating tsunami that hit the area in December 2004. Your presence today represents the depth of our commitment to the efforts of disaster reduction and reconstruction to the affected area.

Let me therefore express once again the gratitude of the Indonesian Government and people for the outpouring of compassion, solidarity and assistance that was extended to us in the hour of our greatest need.

That quick and vigorous response from governments and world leaders, NGOs, private groups and individuals of all races, religions and cultures saved countless lives. It also enabled us to complete the emergency rescue and relief phase in a few months and to make an early transition to the ongoing rehabilitation and reconstruction phase. To those who helped and who are still helping, we can never thank you enough. We will never stop expressing our gratitude for what you have done.

Being human, many victims of the tsunami's devastation continue to grieve over their tragic losses, but their grief today is mitigated by hope and faith in the ultimate success of the rehabilitation and reconstruction program. Based on what you see in the presentation that will be made today, I am sure you will agree that their hope and faith are well founded.

Our reconstruction efforts are far from over. We have to provide new homes for the hundreds of thousands of homeless. We are moving as fast as we can, building more than five-thousand houses every month.

There are still much more to be done: we need to stimulate the economy and provide jobs. We need to get entrepreneurs back on their feet. We need to meet the needs of not just the cities, but the outlying villages too.

With the establishment of a Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency, the rebuilding of Aceh and Nias is being carried out with dignity, transparency and strong community involvement.

This is not to say that the rehabilitation and reconstruction work is encountering no problems. In

Aceh and Nias, we do face many challenges that stem from the sheer magnitude and complexity of the task that we are trying to accomplish. There are logistics that are not moving fast enough, supplies lying idle in warehouses, difficulties in coordination, delay in the issuance of permits and clearances, and mistakes being made.

You will therefore get a more balanced view of the situation in Aceh and Nias today in the course of today's presentation. You will get an idea of how much we have accomplished in what areas, and what more needs to be done.

You will get a clear perspective on what is being done to address the many challenges and obstacles that stand in the way of a smooth implementation of the master plan for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Aceh and Nias.

Just as important as the presentation is your response by way of sharing your observation, insights, suggestions, and even criticisms if you feel they are warranted. After all, we are here neither to celebrate our achievements nor to justify ourselves. We are here for a reality check.

One reality that we in the Indonesian Government are exceedingly keen on is the effectiveness of our efforts to ensure accountability and transparency in the flow and use of resources in the rehabilitation and reconstruction work.

In the same spirit of accountability and transparency, and as a way of expressing our gratitude and appreciation for all the help we are getting, the Department of Foreign Affairs is carrying out a programme of humanitarian diplomacy. Through this programme we keep our friends, supporters and well-wishers in the international community up-to-date on the progress of the work in Aceh and Nias.

At the same time, we are doing all we can to ensure that if ever similar natural disaster descends upon this part of the world, we will be ready for it. We will be able to mitigate its fury and devastation – and save lives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude, I share the expectation that this workshop could generate fruitful ideas related to the planning of rehabilitation process in Aceh and Nias based on scientific design for urban safety planning. The success of such implementation in Aceh and Nias could be utilized as a model for reconstruction of other natural disaster affected area on the other parts of the world.

Thank you very much.