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We're so happy to have you here to our technical session which is entitled, Safer Together, How Disability Inclusive Disasterous Management Project Protects Lives and Builds Resilience, which has been organized by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery in the Japan National Assembly of Disabled Peoples International.

So we are here to address a critical aspect of disaster risk management that affects the lives of millions of people around the world. As we all know, disasters do not discriminate, but each person feels their effects differently.

Persons with disabilities often face heightened risks to hazards like flooding, earthquakes and storms, due to various barriers, social, physical limitations and communication, and this is important as well because more than one billion people worldwide with an estimated 800 million living in lower income countries experience some form of disability.

So inclusive disaster risk management ensures that persons with disabilities are empowered to engage and act across all stages of disaster risk management. So today, what we're going to do, we're gonna have a panel discussion with various experts to focus on practical interventions that address disability inclusion within disaster risk management programs.

So what I'd like to do now, just to set the scene a bit, is to share with you a video of some work that is being supported by the World Bank in the Pacific Islands. Oops. Nope. I've, all right, my high tech, here we go.

The Pacific is one of the most exposed regions in the world to natural hazards and climate change. It lies in the geologically active Pacific Ring of Fire. The islands experience the impacts of tropical storms and cyclones, and climate change is increasing the frequency of both droughts and floods.

Rising sea levels and accelerated coastal erosion are already impacting communities in vulnerable, unprepared areas with low levels of individual and community resilience. Natural hazard events can become catastrophic disasters.

To assist governments in the region to prepare for these hazards, the World Bank, the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, GFDRR, and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade are supporting a range of disaster risk management projects.

To develop inclusive disaster risk management, it is vital that people with disabilities, around 15% of the population, are involved and empowered to make decisions and take actions in their own best interests.

This leads to stronger climate actions and more resilient societies. In 2022, a study was undertaken to examine disability inclusion gaps and propose a series of recommendations to make disaster preparedness and recovery strategies more inclusive.

The report makes 16 key recommendations that address the gaps in policies and practices. It encourages building strong working relationships among persons with disabilities and their representatives and developing practices that will support greater inclusion in all phases of disaster risk management.

As a result, GFDRR is supporting national governments in addressing the lack of disability data. Countries will also work to foster better adherence to accessibility provisions in building codes and land use planning and support emerging technologies with built-in accessibility features that are improving the availability of information like the common alerting protocol for weather warnings.

Finally, national governments should provide resources to support organizations of persons with disabilities. Together, we can build long-term resilience to support the most vulnerable and help the Pacific to adapt and thrive.

Great, so hopefully that gives you a flavor of some of the work that's happening on the ground and we'll hear more now from our panel. So to get us started, I'd like to invite our chair slash moderator up to the stage.

So I'm going to pass it over to Jianvun, who is senior disaster management specialist working in East Asia in the Pacific region at the World Bank.

Thank you very much everyone. Good morning to you all. So I'd like to invite the panelists on stage. First we will introduce Ms. Midori Hirano, who is the chairperson of the Japan National Assembly of Disabled Persons International of DPI Japan.

Ms. Midori became a paraplegic in 1988 after a spinal tumor operation. And since 2014 she has served as the chairperson of Disabled People's International in Japan. Ms. Midori -san, arigatou gozaimasu.

Next I would like to invite Dr. Raed Arifat, who is the Secretary of State for the Department for Emergency Situations in the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Romania. Dr. Arifat has been the Secretary of State since 2014.

He's recognized across the European Union and globally for his leadership and experience in civil protection, with his team leading the partnership with the US Federal Emergency Management Agency. Thank you very much.

Let's give a round of applause. Our third panelist is Dr. Genora Joseph, who is the project manager for the Housing Recovery Project and a senior engineer at the Climate Resilience Execution Agency for Dominica.

Dr. Genora was previously a chief physical planner in Dominica. And Dr. Joseph would like to see an increase in the momentum of partnerships between small island states like Dominica and US Development Partners so that these vulnerable states are propelled more rapidly towards their climate resilience targets.

Let's give a round of applause for Dr. Genora. Would you like to sit here? And we'd like to now invite Mr. James Miyazoi, who is the project management unit manager of the Ministry of Public Works, Infrastructure and Utilities in the government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

James' position currently with the Ministry is to oversee and manage all infrastructure projects across the entire government of the Marshall Islands, including projects with bilateral and multilateral partners such as the World Bank.

Let's give a round of applause to Mr. James. Thank you very much. Okay, so thank you very much again, panelists, for joining our session. And we would like to really acknowledge Ms. Midori -san for being co -chair of the session.

Thank you so much for helping us to organize the event, as well as go through the questions and make sure that everything is appropriate for the session. So I would like to ask some of the panelists some questions.

We'll go from one by one through the panelists. I'll start with Ms. Midori -san. If I can please ask the panelists to keep your responses around a few minutes each. So Japan is excellent at preparing for and dealing with disasters.

So Midori -san, how do DPI Japan and other organizations of persons with disabilities ensure that these methods consider people with disabilities? And what are some of the challenges you have faced? Arigato.

Thank you very much for inviting me. I will answer to the first question. For the last three decades, Japan has been attacked by several huge earthquakes, such as Hanshin Awaji, Tohoku, and Kumamoto, my hometown, and Noto Peninsula this year.

As a matter of fact, I experienced the horrible earthquake in my hometown, Kumamoto, in 2016. In terms of disaster recovery of persons with disabilities who have vulnerability,

it is unfortunate that priority for persons with disability is still considerably low, even in Japan.

Although Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction 2015 through 2030, stipulated its importance. In Kumamoto, just after the earthquake, we started independent SOS Center for Persons with Disabilities to handle any requests and inquiries, because the governments could not deal with detail and various needs of persons with disabilities.

Through this experience, we strongly recommended the disability awareness training among the government officials in non-disaster period. And also, we pointed out the importance of persons with disabilities participation as members of disaster risk reduction planning.

Actually, Kumamoto City and Kumamoto Prefecture offices has invited us as lecturers to new coming official training course. However, we have not been... Our persons with disability in my hometown has not been appointed as a member of disaster risk reduction planning.

It's unfortunate, I think, by now. It's a kind of challenge. We still urge them to include us as a members, because we have the severe experiences and know how to deal with the persons with disability by ourselves.

So question number one is that's all.

Mm -hmm.

Thank you very much, Midori -san. It was very nice to hear about some of the lived experiences of people with disabilities, and I think particularly the point where we need to do more disability awareness training, including with people with disabilities.

I might move to now Dr. Arafat, and then we'll come back to some of the second questions, Midori -san. Okay. So Dr. Arafat, the World Bank has been working with your

country, particularly on emergency preparedness and response systems, including through support from the government.

So Dr. Arafat, what I'd like to ask you is how does your department, the Romania's Department of Emergency Situations, collaborate with civil society organizations to include the needs of people with disabilities in emergency preparedness and response?

Thank you very much.

Thank you. So the basic line is that to serve the persons with disability and to be prepared to help them in difficult situations, we need to work with the persons with disabilities. So we need to work with persons with disabilities for the persons with disabilities.

And this is what we were doing in the last period under the World Bank project. So amongst the things we have done, we are working with the civil society representatives from the Association for Deaf People, the Association of Blind People, and other organizations that work with persons with disabilities.

We have a portal which is called Be Prepared, which by law it is obligatory to have a link on every public site in Romania. Now we are adapting together with the persons with disabilities. Based on their advice, we are adapting the guidelines and we are including accessibility versions like for example recorded messages, not only the ones that are written and mime co-gestual communication for people that need this so that we can really have everyone benefiting from this site.

So this is one thing that we are doing at this moment. Other things that we are doing are that on the site we adapted the emergency plan recommended for the population to fill for the persons with disabilities.

And under the CADDDO, we have foreseen targets that 10,000 people will be helped, 10,000 to fill up the plan for emergencies and disasters to be ready to deal with such disasters. We also are looking at our RoE Alert system, which is our warning system for

the population using the cell broadcasting to adapt certain messages to be easier understood by persons with disabilities.

So this is all work that is done with the community and that we hope that we have a positive impact and will save lives in the future. Thank you.

Thank you so much, Dr. Arafat. I think it's really important to remember that people with disabilities are a diverse group among themselves, and so it's great that the government of Romania has been able to consult with such a range of diverse people with disabilities, including the blind and the deaf.

And what I also like is that you mentioned about the CAT DDO. I think a lot of people have heard that in this forum. It's not just about the financing, but about the reforms and about the support for the 10 ,000 people with disabilities in Romania.

So thank you very much, Dr. Arafat. I'll now turn to Dr. Genora. I believe that we're working with you on a housing recovery project in Dominica. So what I'd like to ask you, Dr., is how has the housing recovery project in Dominica incorporated disability inclusive disaster management measures to help ensure the community's resilience and protection?

Thank you.

Okay, thank you once again for inviting me to speak at this forum and to contribute the experiences that we have in Dominica on disaster risk reduction, especially as it pertains to inclusivity of people living with disabilities.

I am project manager of the Housing Recovery Project and I would like to provide a bit of context to the Dominica experience and our experience of Hurricane Maria category five storm in 2017, it has basically reframed a lot of the questions that we have asked ourselves about our development and we have come about we have developed the climate residents and recovery plan 2020 to 2030 and the plan sets us sets out 20

targets which we seek to achieve by 2030 which is aimed at ensuring the resilience of Dominica on a whole.

Now we recognize that the resilience of Dominica cannot be achieved if we do not include every sector of our society and that means that we have to ensure that people with disabilities are also accounted for in our development goals.

So we are looking to ensure that our communities can operate safely and independently for 15 days after a disaster. We saw that about 90% of our housing stock suffered damage and even destruction after Hurricane Maria so we are looking to ensure that the housing stock is rebuilt to resilient standards.

So the Housing Recovery Project is one such project in Dominica which is seeking to ensure that we build our housing stock resiliently. Now the project caters for a very broad section of Dominica's society and in terms of we have different vulnerabilities we have to cater to people with disabilities as well as indigenous people, women and people with young families and so on.

So we really have to ensure that the needs of this diverse group of beneficiaries is captured by the project and what we have done is we have ensured that our partners include the Dominica Association of People with Disabilities.

So even in the planning and design stage of the project the consultations with this group were very key to ensuring that the project objectives included considerations for people with disabilities. Now the project is unique in that it is beneficiary driven so a large part of the project is ensuring that the housing meets the needs, the specific and individual needs of the beneficiaries.

So even the design of the individual houses will cater for the disabilities that people are living with and ensure that they have, if they have impairments in terms of mobility that that is catered for in the design.

Now I would say that in not only do we seek to do so in provision of housing but what we have been trying to do in Dominica is ensure that the regulatory environment also is inclusive and so we have been looking at the building code ensuring that when we do these types of development and infrastructure projects that there is the mandate to ensure that inclusivity is a component of the design of these types of projects.

Thank you so much, Dr. Genura. I think it's always a good point. Some people think maybe too late, what can we do for disability inclusion? But sometimes it does take a disaster event to remind us, how can we really incorporate inclusive principles in the reconstruction program?

So it's really great to hear that, and that it's not just all talk. You've got it in an indicator. And so the World Bank, we now must have all post -disaster recovery projects that we finance, must be disability inclusive, including a project indicator.

So it's not just talk, we're actually making sure we do what we preach. So Mr. James Miozui, if I can ask you a question. So as you know, we've been working together on implementing the Urban Resilience Project in the Republic of the Marshall Islands since 2022.

The project supports something that Dr. Genura just mentioned on building code implementation. It's so important, as well as coast protection and resilient public facilities. So Mr. James, I think we'd like to ask you about your National Building Act, which was approved very recently, just in March 2024.

And the question is, how can building codes be used to advocate for inclusivity? Please go ahead, Mr. James.

Yeah, thank you, Gian, and good morning, everybody. This is a really good question because it revolves around one key social issue we have in the Marshall Islands, which is that a lot of our existing infrastructures are not catered towards people with disability.

And it really hinders their access to basic services, such as public transport, health and education services, access to information and communication. And of course, the big one is opportunities for employment.

And this is really unfortunate because in our national strategic plan, one of our goals is to make sure that all of our infrastructures are resilient, which means that it'll be able to reduce the exposure to natural or man-made hazards, both for the people and the assets inside.

And I can guarantee that if a person with a disability was to be in these buildings during an evacuation or emergency situation, they wouldn't be able to effectively evacuate on a timely manner. So this is where the building code and the Building Act comes into play, similar to how Dr.

Genoa just mentioned, which is, we're very fortunate to have this building code since in the past we've usually had to rely on foreign building codes, but as of now where we have our own building code, which is more catered to our context and our environment, the needs of our people instead of other foreign codes.

So this gives us the jurisdiction to decide if a building is compliant, does it meet the minimum standards, is it accessible for people with disability? And of course, it includes all of these standards, for example, the ADA standards.

Like does a building have elevator, does it have ramps, railings, restrooms that are more catered toward people with disabilities? Does it have a corridor that is wide enough and unobstructed during a means of egress or evacuation or parking disability, sorry, disability parking, or interior features like alarm systems that will be used during evacuation, signs with brails for those that are visually impaired.

And I mean, I could go on on how many things are in there, but it definitely sets a tone on how future infrastructures in the Marshall Islands can be more inclusive and definitely being aware of these concerns that these vulnerable groups have when it comes to our infrastructure developments.

Thank you.

Thank you so much, Mr. James. And I think it's really impressive your government has, for the first time in its entire history, established a building code department under your ministry that you hope to oversee.

And so these are very ambitious but important targets to the list of things that Mr. James has mentioned. They're actually considering a lot of these things in the infrastructure that we're working on together.

So it's very impressive. So thank you, Mr. James, for sharing those experiences. I might now turn back to Ms. Midori -san. So Midori -san, you've just heard some experiences from some of these other countries, from Romania, Dominica, and the Republic of Marshall Islands.

The second question I would like to ask you, Midori -san, is how might other countries use the experiences and lessons from Japan, but also from your organization, DBI Japan, and other organizations for people with disabilities, to help engage persons with disabilities and build their resilience to disasters.

Arigato.

Thank you.

Thank you. After Hanshin Awaji earthquake, Yume Kaze Foundation has established, and this foundation has started the helping hands and donation focusing on refugees with disabilities. They worked very hard after Tohoku earthquake too, and Kumamoto earthquake as well.

In non -disaster period, they appealed the necessity of strengthening the resilience to disasters for persons with disabilities. As you know, Japan is the country where various

kinds of disasters would happen, such as earthquake, water flood caused by heavy rain, and they would happen anywhere in Japan.

We strongly request the national and local governments to make their plans for resilience, including the accommodation of persons with disabilities, as I mentioned before. And also, I have a member of Women with Disabilities Network in Japan.

As you know, Women with Disabilities has multiple disability hardships. In the disaster period, it is very severely revealed. Through our members' experience, the government should know that people with disabilities have a gender, and each person has special needs.

We request the governments to include women's planning for non -disabled women, including the persons with disabilities too. That's important. In my friend's experience, she has a small baby. She is using a wheelchair, but she asked the government to request child food care.

But they did not admit that they had qualified for the service with disabled people. However, she is also a mother. She needs special care for the mothers too. But it's not understood by the government.

We will strongly request multiple disabilities, especially in the disaster period. It's very hard for the poor. Through our experiences with disasters, and also I significantly understand that it is very important to be noticed as a local resident in my communities.

Sometimes, the people with disabilities have the connection with the service givers or governments. However, because of their disability, they did not appear in the community activity or something like that.

It's very important in the disaster period, we have been noticed. Oh, she is there or he is there. That's very important. As a member, as a people with disability, and also as a people with disability, as a resident in a community, it's very important, I think.

Thank you so much, Midori -san. And I think this is when we designed the session together. We wanted to make sure we heard from NGOs as well as from government officials so we can learn from each other how to work with each other.

And the importance of, as I said before, disability is unique like a fingerprint. Everyone has a different experience of disability. A woman with a disability versus, you know, a child with a disability, for example.

So Dr. Arafat, I think building on what Ms. Midori -san has mentioned about, you know, making sure we partners and government officials understand how to work with people with disabilities. In your department in Romania, what training do first responders receive to effectively assist individuals with disabilities during emergencies?

And can you share with us some successful practices?

Yes, well, first responders need training to deal with disabled persons when they have interventions, when they are going to emergencies, whether we are talking about the daily emergencies or during disasters, evacuation and so on.

So we started the project to train at the beginning 500 firefighters, first responders, and in order to train them, as I said before, we work with the disabled for the disabled, we had trainers from the disabled community, from the community of disabled persons to come and train the firefighters.

So at the beginning, everybody was thinking, we know everything, we don't need training. And then when the disabled persons were involved in their training and when they started creating scenarios and role -playing and so on, everybody was discovering that there is a lot to learn.

And this is what happened in this training session. So the first 500 firefighters were trained by such training courses and among the things that were touched was the

communication skills, the empathy that has to be, you know, expressed towards persons with disabilities during emergencies, to understand them.

And then the other issue is to keep this sustainable. So 22 firefighters are trained as trainers in a train of trainers session and they will be used in the future to train furthermore other firefighters.

So we hope that within the next two, three years, this will be spread to the whole country in our system and will become part of the training of any first responder. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you very much Dr. Arafat. 500 FIFARDS. That's an impressive amount of people being trained. Another indicator, hopefully. In a short period, this is an impressive number.

important thing that this is just the beginning and we hope that it will go on with much larger numbers.

Exactly, exactly. And with the train, the train, it ensures the sustainability in the longer term. So that's really quite impressive, Dr. Arafat. And I might turn now actually back to Mr. James if I can, because it's quite interesting to hear from the post -disaster side of how the government of Romania has trained the responders for disaster situations.

In the government of, or in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the government is working with the World Bank on the Urban Resilience Project, and as I mentioned. So it's a little less about emergency response.

But James, I'd like to ask you, can you share with us some collaborative efforts between your government agencies and local advocacy groups, such as where Midori -san comes from, to foster a more inclusive environment for people with disabilities?

Yes, thank you, Ji -yeon. And this is an interesting question because, as you mentioned, my office does not work with these disability groups on a daily basis. Usually in the martial islands, we would have the mid -pool office, which stands for Martial Islands Disabled People Organization.

And this office is usually the central point for these groups in making sure that their rights and interests are protected, facilitating or coordination between these NGOs and the government, and working on different capacity building and financial opportunities for these different vulnerability groups.

But that doesn't mean that us, the government offices, can work with these different NGOs and vulnerable groups on our own. And for example, which is the URP project, as you mentioned, Ji -yeon, which is a World Bank project, we conducted a disability workshop, just end of last year.

And especially since this project is still in the planning phases, we want to make sure that it's very inclusive of all different stakeholders, including the vulnerable groups. So we had different representatives from the mid -pool office, the Special Parents Association, the Death Floor Association, patients from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education Special Ed, the Elderlies.

There's just a wide variety of different vulnerable groups that were represented in that workshop. And we were able to conduct breakout sessions or exercises to really get a deeper understanding of their voices, their concerns, what are their recommendations, and how we can better improve our project.

And especially someone from me who doesn't work with these groups on a daily basis. All I do is just sit around in a non -disability inclusive office, or go to meetings in non - disability inclusive offices.

For me, it's very eye -opening to really work with these different groups and really hear their concerns. And I really realize that it is vital to have these groups be part of the initial designs and decision -making part of the project in order to make sure that the project has a more successful outcome in the future.

So one thing that we are now including in our infrastructure investment planning is the JETC inclusion, which stands for Gender, Quality, Disability, and Social Inclusion, which includes different criteria like does this project have disability accessibility?

Does it involve cultural sensitivity? Does it help provide financial opportunities for these vulnerable groups and so on? And so having these JETC inclusions to our planning is very important, making sure that we're having an active participation with these vulnerable groups and making sure that we have these outreach activities with these disability interest groups.

So definitely recommend other government agencies and NGOs to collaborate with these groups. Thank you.

Thank you so much for your advice, Mr. James. And I can show if James does not just sit around. You're doing a lot of work in managing the portfolio in RMA. But it's so great and refreshing to hear, you know, government or all three government officials, you know, showing such commitment to disability inclusion from the planning stage.

You know, often it does happen as a bit of a reaction when things go wrong. So it's really great to hear that all three government agencies represented here are working with people like Midori Sun from the NGOs in their respective countries.

The final question I have, and hopefully you can think of a couple of questions from the audience. I think we have another 10 minutes. But we'll have one final question from Ms. Junor first. So please have a think.

What would I like to ask Ms. Junor? We've heard a lot about workshops and trainings from Mr. James and Dr. Arifat. What I'd like to hear from the government of Dominica, Dr. Junor, is what specific strategies, initiatives and policies has the government of Dominica implemented to address the needs and challenges of persons with disabilities in the context of housing resilience and disaster risk management.

Thank you very much.

Thank you for that question. And I would like to say that Dr. Arafat, the conversation including the voices of people with disabilities always important, it's always critical, because one of the things that we, people who do not have disabilities, they are not always aware of the challenges that people with disabilities face.

Now, in terms of, I will speak from the housing recovery perspective, but also from other project perspectives. So in our resilient journey, there are a number of sectors that we are trying to improve and build resilience and the incorporate aspects of disaster risk management.

So shelters are a very critical area that we are looking at. And one of the policies that we have implemented for shelters, and it's something that has not been done to a large scale before, is ensuring that the shelter design, in the shelter design there is extensive consultation with civil society organizations that represent people with disability, so that at the end of the day, the design is purpose, it's purpose built and it can cater to the very diverse needs of people with disabilities.

From one experience that we had, we were building a shelter, the Kalinago multi - purpose emergency shelter in an indigenous community. And several iterations of the design, and from coming from the perspective of someone without disabilities, you think that this is fine, it has a sufficient number of bathrooms, it has enough space and so on.

But when we included the representatives of the persons with disabilities, we had a different perspective. And we had to go back to the drawing board and to ensure that this design was inclusive. So we are seeing that we have to, in building design, finalizing the building design, and ensuring that we have a finished product that meets the needs of the entire society, we have to ensure that the stakeholder consultations, stakeholder engagement plans, include the people with disabilities as a very important and essential stakeholders who can add their voices to what needs to be included into the design.

From the housing recovery perspective, what we have is a framework which allows persons with disabilities to engage fully with the project. So where they require

assistance in terms of communicating their various needs, in attending meetings, various stakeholder engagements, we ensure that this is also written into the project safeguarding requirements so that beneficiaries who have disabilities, they can nominate supporters, what we call supporters, who can allow them to attend meetings or represent them or tend on their behalf.

So what we are seeing is that we have to implement a framework which recognizes the needs of persons with disabilities and which ensures that these projects do not ignore those needs. When we do shelter management, we are also ensuring that the policies for shelter management, they include training of shelter managers and personnel who are working in shelters to ensure that these people recognize that persons with disabilities are frequently disadvantaged during a disaster.

It takes them longer to recover post -disaster so that the strategies that they implement and the methods that they use to manage the shelters account for those needs of these persons. So we are seeing that we are looking across the board, not just at the housing sector, at the shelters, at infrastructure.

We are not only looking at gender -inclusive and gender -responsive infrastructure, but we are also looking at infrastructure, for example, over roads, over bridges, that include sidewalks, that include ramps with gradients that allow for people with accessibility, mobility challenges to be able to access these infrastructure components.

So it is a very holistic view of looking at Dominica. And as we build a resilient Dominica, we want to take every section of society with us on that journey. And so that means that we have to look at the needs of all people who have vulnerabilities or people who are frequently disadvantaged during disaster and ensure that it is incorporated into the resistance journey.

And as you say, into the planning, specifically the planning, it's very difficult to undo things when we have arrived at the implementation stage. So it's really quite important in the visibility, in the planning stage that we incorporate the needs of persons living with disabilities.

Thank you so much, Dr. Jinnara. It's great to hear a little bit more about some of the policy work as well. You know, so I think the building code is an important policy. In addition, some of these policies that your government has to ensure consultations are inclusive and people who do sign language, closed captioning, it's really important to make sure that different types of disabilities are considered.

So thank you so much. Maybe I would just like to give everyone a round of applause on this panel for the excellent contributions. Dr. Arifat, you know, Dr. Jinnara and Mr. James. I believe we do have a little bit more time for questions.

So we do have one hand up already. Do we have a microphone on the room? Does someone have a microphone? Thank you. Do you have a spare one?

Good morning, and I hope it's still morning. Mr. Arafat, you discussed about Piberberet Romania. And as information specialist, we would like to know more about what kind of information are there, specifically to people who like challenge it and can't read or are deaf or what kind of messages there.

Okay, be prepared dot ro. If you go on it, it's in English. We have it in Romanian version. It is called fi pregatit dot ro. And be prepared dot ro is in English. And it's coming in further languages.

We are even translating it into Swahili and to other languages, into Arabic and so on, so that it can be accessible by any person who is in Romania who doesn't understand Romanian or English. And it can be accessed anywhere in the world.

Now what it has, it's messages on how to behave during emergency. So it's guidelines, first of all. So you have guidelines on how to behave for earthquakes. And it tells you when you go to the earthquake risk, it tells you what to do before to prepare, what you do during the earthquake, and what you do after.

For example, floods the same. How to prepare before, how to be ready. Then what to do during floods, what to do after. We added to it a chat bot based on artificial intelligence with which you can discuss and you can put questions regarding emergency situations.

If you try to put political questions, it will reject you. So it wants only questions on emergency situations. And it would give you the advice. For example, if you say to it, I am blocked in the elevator, what should I do?

It will give you an advice. If you tell it, I have a fire in the kitchen, what should I do? It will give you immediately the advice on how to behave and so on. Besides the guidelines, which are several, including first aid lessons, films and so on, there are also accessible data on how to do a plan for emergencies for your family.

And it helps you have the framework for this plan. This is where we are trying to do it. Also to adapt it for the persons with disabilities. And what we are doing with UNICEF also, is that we are going to translate the guidelines into the language for children or into a format, let's say better, that is more understandable by children between seven and 14 years old.

So any guideline you see now, it will have also a version for children, which is more friendly to them to understand the risk and how to behave. So it's accessible, you can access it, you can follow it.

If you have suggestions, send us an email about it. Thank you.

Thank you, Dr. Effett. I think there's another question there.

Hi, good morning. I wanted to ask a question to General from Dominica. How is the mental health and the well-being of people with disabilities addressed in the post-disaster scenarios?

Well, I would say one of the things that we realized post Maria is that not only mental health is not not only something that we need to pay attention to not just people with disabilities but for the entire population.

It is something that was quite overlooked in the efforts to rebuild. We were looking at ensuring that people had safe homes and access to running water and so on. But you know the trauma that comes with suffering a disaster that magnitude.

So what we are looking at in Dominica is mental health not just for people with disabilities but also the entire populace to ensure that people resilience not only starts with infrastructure but one of our key resilience targets is to ensure that our people have that collective consciousness and that mindset which encourages resilient practices which encourages them to be able to recover as quickly as possible after a disaster event.

So what we are looking at is having the conversations which ensure that we are paying attention to mental health, paying attention to the conditions that people suffer that reduce their ability to cope with disasters, to cope with emergency situations.

And so we are looking at it not just from an entire nationwide perspective but we do recognize that because people with disabilities have challenges that they face on a day to day basis and that in itself predisposes them to be in disability.

So we have to pay very specific attention to our society, marginalize in our society that we have to pay very specific attention to their needs, we have to pay very specific attention to the context and ensure that it is appropriate to help and the support that we offer to persons with disabilities.

So it is something that we have in our resilient journey is having to reframe a lot of the ways of thinking that previously existed on Ireland. We have to look at our society from a very holistic and global perspective and we have to look at things that typically as a Caribbean island in the sun we typically ignore and so we have to seriously look at the way we do development in Dominica and include mental wellness in that as well.

Thank you very much Dr. Junor. Another question up the front here.

Hi there.

First of all, thank you for this amazing session. It's very inspiring and I've learned a lot from just listening to what you're doing. And it also makes me wonder whether we as a scientific research community and also I think the development community are aware enough of this and what we can change and whether we need to maybe also give trainings to those people and not just the governments in countries.

And I think a session like this is a good start but it's not going to make it sustainable. One of the things that I was thinking about is our models, like when we do flood mapping or earthquake mapping or all these kind of things, the impact, they don't reflect the impact on people with disabilities or other vulnerable groups.

I think inclusivity is broader than just disability. And one of the reasons is also because there's not a lot of impact data that is disaggregated to all these smaller vulnerable groups. So what can we do to make sure that we start collecting more disaggregated data so that the disaster management planning, we can come up with more effective measures because now we design measures to reduce the impact on the big group but sometimes it's a lot cheaper or cost effective I think if you target the most vulnerable.

I don't know if this is a question you can ask here but I think it's something as a community we should think more about. And let's start with educating all the disaster management experts around the world on the importance of this.

So I just wanted to applaud you to raise this really important topic.

Thank you very much, Anahin. We'll take one more question and we'll respond to them together.

Hi, I'm coming from British Columbia, Canada, where Indigenous communities are very important to us in terms of inclusivity. So thank you very much for including that information. My question is for all of you, so whoever wants to tackle this in regards to goals.

So as we all know, being proactive in planning means that plans are not really fully tested until they can actually be used during a disaster or an emergency. So what type of tangible goal posts can be outlined for measuring...

successes of the protocols and plans that are put to use.

So do you mind repeating that final question, sorry?

I'm just wondering what types of tangible goal posts can be outlined for measuring the successes of any of these protocols and plans that are put to use for disability inclusiveness.

Thank you so much. That's a really great question. So I'll pass to any panelists who wish to answer that question on tangible goalposts.

Well, I think the collection of data during the disaster and being able to evaluate what we have been doing is not very easy to do. And it depends on the structures that are involved. And if anyone has planned to do this from the beginning and starts collecting the data, and the collection of the data itself may be hard, but it's not impossible.

But this has to be decided and planned before that we will collect data when the next disaster hits. But there are other ways of doing it, which is during full -scale exercises. So in Romania, we do full -scale exercises, and we will include in our next full -scale exercise the issues that were implemented with the vulnerable communities with the disabled so that we see if the plans that we have worked with them are functional if we need to do anything, if we can get feedback from them regarding what needs to be modified.

When I tell something like full -scale exercise, it's really full -scale exercise. This is about a five -day, four -night exercise where we test everything and where we go to as near possible to the reality of a disaster.

So this is a place where we can test what we are doing and get some feedback on it. During real disasters, that means you need really a strong system that can collect data parallel with the disaster that is happening or immediately post intervention and come with the data for us to be able to include it in our work.

Thank you very much Dr. Arifat. I think maybe we'll just double check on Mr. James or Midori Sun wanted to respond to any of the questions now. Otherwise we'll go ahead Mr. James.

Yeah, thank you, Gianna. And I'll probably just provide some inputs to the questions that were asked. And I'll get it from a perspective from my office, which only works in terms of infrastructures, not really in terms of disaster response or working with these vulnerable groups.

But from the infrastructure side, as I mentioned, we do have these strategic plans, making sure that these infrastructures are resilient or reducing their exposure of vulnerabilities to climate or manmade hazards.

And of course, all of that is all good in black and white on paper, but it really comes to the implementation phase. That's when we know how well these strategic plans are playing out. So I think as we're enforcing the building codes and making sure these accessibility features are included, we also need to do M &E frameworks, monitoring and evaluations, as well as setting KPIs, key performance indicators to really see how well are these buildings assisting people with disabilities during evacuation moments.

And as some of the audience mentioned, that it's not that easy to just start doing all these new ideas, and especially for a small island development state. It is very hard to... All of this all looks well on paper, but once we do the actual construction work, it is very

difficult since we have limited funding, as well as a very competitive priority for the government.

So there are times where the disability initiatives are just pushed to the side while other priorities are more elevated. So I think having these public awareness, making sure our decision makers are aware of these issues and how we can really be proactive to make these initiatives be fruitful is definitely important to make sure that these disability initiatives are well played out.

Thank you.

Thank you very much, Mr James. I think we're reaching the end of the session. So maybe just before I pass the zoe, I just want to check with our co -host, Midori -san, is any final quick remark you'd like to share with the plenary and all pass back to Zoe?

In Japan, in the Japanese cabinet, there is a bureau for the responsible for the disaster risk planning. However, they don't think I gather the collect data for the disabilities in a disaster period.

I would like to make them positive and also we should establish strong and good connections with them as an organization of people with disabilities.

Okay, so I want to first thank our distinguished panel of experts. So it was excellent, really great to hear all about your experiences and knowledge. And of course, the audience for your participation.

I found it inspiring because I think it's important not only to raise awareness, but also to have champions and to have these types of examples that we can point to. Because of course, this is a process, social inclusion, including persons with disabilities more as enabled people.

They have a role to play and they have a voice and making sure they're seen as Ms. Midori was saying rather than sidelined as part of the entire disastrous management continuum. But it is a process and of course, there are data gaps.

There are all sorts of issues that we need to solve. There's also the intersectionality of different parts of a person's personality, gender and other things to take into account. But I think we need to start taking whatever steps we can now.

And of course, hopefully then it falls within into a bigger picture and we can continue to do more and more. But I don't think we should be overwhelmed by how big the agenda is and not act. So I think we've heard of some really good examples today of what's happening around the world in different countries and of course in Japan and from different perspectives.

So thank you so much for coming. And I'm going to close the session. So round of applause for you.