

SP14 RISK MITIGATION: ROAD AUTHORITIES PREPARATION AND RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES

The world is very vulnerable to natural disasters, regardless of whether a country is rich or poor.

This means that we have still a lot to do as far as preparedness and responsiveness in relation to the road sector. Many countries are in the same situation and they need the information on how to best prepare for unexpected disasters and to form the best possible system to respond to unexpected events for the road sectors.

Lots of questions raised in this session are related to these matters. Responsible authorities need the information. They know they have to do something to improve their situation against natural disasters but don't know exactly what to do in a practical way.

At the same time we learned a lot from the cases where post-event reactions or responses did or didn't work well. For instance, lack of preparedness of society and of redundancy of the road network has shown to make things much worse. In contrast, systems that are prepared well in advance in the engineering sense and in the sense of crisis management based upon past experiences, worked very well.

Again, we can never stress enough the importance of knowledge and imagination in advance on any kind disasters and of course the importance of the ability to learn from the unfortunate experiences of others and naturally, of their own. This is more easily said than done. How can one expect any country to invest a lot of money and to act properly against disasters without any painful experiences of their own? These facts show how important and vitally necessary it is to disseminate the various information and knowledge on hazards and at the same time, the successful examples of responses and reactions taken at the time of disasters in other countries.

It may be concluded from the discussions and comments in this session that there are a lot of matters for PIARC to address in order for many countries to acquire the necessary knowledge in both the engineering and social aspects and prepare for crucial events they are currently facing or haven't yet faced but might face in the future.

Finally, PIARC SP-14 suggests that each road authority conducts an inspection and assessment on the safety of road structures and implements the retrofit (or strengthening) works with the necessary investment and that PIARC should play a vital role to make these things happen through its activities of the dissemination and transfer of relevant knowledge and technologies.