The Nation

Japan, UNESCO to implement $4m flood warning project

ISLAMABAD - The Government of Japan and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have agreed to implement a project worth US$ 4.05 million to further improve flood warning and management capacity of the govt of Pakistan. An agreement was signed to this effect on Tuesday in the presence of Kazuyuki Nakane, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Takashi Katae, Chargés d'Affairs ad interim of Japan to Pakistan and Mitsuyoshi Kawasaki, Chief Representative of JICA Pakistan Office, signed agreements with Vibeke Jensen, Representative / Director, UNESCO Islamabad, Pakistan. This project is the second phase of the earlier project implemented by UNESCO with the financial assistance of Japan.

In the first project, flood forecasting systems using satellite technology, the Integrated Flood Analysis System (IFAS) and the Runoff-Inundation model (RRI model), have been successfully developed for the upper and lower catchment of the Indus River.

More than 39 districts are now being covered with the flood forecasting and early warning system of IFAS, and more than 53 million residents in 32 districts located in the lower Indus River Basin are now served with the new flood hazard maps generated by the RRI model. However, the Eastern Rivers are yet to be covered by IFAS and the RRI model; and the accuracy of IFAS should be further increased.

The Government of Japan ,therefore, decided to conduct the second project in collaboration with UNESCO and the govt of Pakistan for further improvement of the early warning system. This project will contribute to enhancing the reliability and accuracy of IFAS as well as expanding the coverage of IFAS and RRI model to Eastern Rivers. In addition, JICA and UNESCO plan to promote sharing of flood forecasting information among Pakistan and its neighbouring countries, especially Afghanistan.

At the signing ceremony, Nakane, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, expressed his hope that this project contributes to protecting more lives and properties from future floods.

He reaffirmed Japan's commitment to help Pakistan to be more resilient to future natural disasters. Referring to the "Third UN World Conference on Disaster Management" to be held in Sendai, Japan from 14 to 18, March, 2015, he also said, "We will work together with international society including Pakistan to reduce the number of people suffering from natural disasters as much as possible."

In her remarks, Vibeke Jensen, Representative/Director, UNESCO Islamabad applauded the govt of Japan's support to building effective flood warning systems in Pakistan. She expressed her deep gratitude to the Government of Japan for supporting the next phase which will be particularly helpful in extending the flood early warning models to the eastern rivers of the country.

She underlined the successful completion of the first phase of the project and reaffirmed UNESCO's strong commitment to continue building Pakistan's capacity in disaster forecasting and management.

She mentioned UNESCO's key role in strengthening tsunami early warning systems in the world and in Pakistan.

Disaster management is one of the priority areas in Japan's development assistance to Pakistan. Earlier, Japan helped the govt of Pakistan to formulate the "National Disaster Management Plan", the first comprehensive plan at the Federal level to address disaster management. Japan also installed the flood forecasting and warning system in the Lai Nullah River, which has contributed to reducing the number of flood victims.

Recently, Japan provided pumps and cleaning equipment to improve the sewerage and drainage system in Faisalabad and is implementing a similar project in Gujranwala, which mitigates damage of floods.

Japan also agreed in November 2014 to finance the establishment of the weather forecasting center in Islamabad.

Source: *http://nation.com.pk/islamabad/11-Mar-2015/japan-unesco-to-implement-4m-flood-warning-project*